



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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EARLY ACTION VITAL TO COMBAT POLLUTION

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AGRICULTURAL WASTE FROM PIGS AND CHICKENS IS PERHAPS THE BIGGEST SINGLE POLLUTION PROBLEM THAT HONG KONG FACES, AND IT IS VITAL THAT EARLY STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH IT, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP DEBATE ON THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MR CHAMBERS SAID THIS EARLY ACTION WOULD BE NECESSARY IF HONG KONG WAS TO PREVENT ITS WATERS FROM BECOMING AND REMAINING UNACCEPTABLY POLLUTED. "TOLO HARBOUR IS ALREADY DYING," HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS DESCRIBED THE BILL AS HIGHLY TECHNICAL AND CONTROVERSIAL, AND HE SAID HE APPRECIATED THE GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND EFFORT WHICH MEMBERS HAD DEVOTED TO ITS EXAMINATION.

"I WAS ALSO VERY PLEASED TO HEAR THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN THIS AFTERNOON, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, VOICE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE AGRICULTURAL WASTE CONTROL SCHEME," HE ADDED.

HE SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL THAT MEMBERS HAD AGREED THAT THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CONTROL SCHEME SHOULD START ON JUNE 24, 1988.

REFERRING TO CONCERN EXPRESSED BY SEVERAL MEMBERS ABOUT THE TIME TAKEN TO SET UP EXPERIMENTAL FARM PROJECTS ON THE VARIOUS METHODS OF DEALING WITH ANIMAL WASTE, MR CHAMBERS SAID HE WOULD BE THE FIRST TO AGREE THAT THE PROJECTS AT TA KWU LING TOOK LONGER TO ESTABLISH THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN WISHED.

MR CHAMBERS NOTED THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF DISCUSSION ON THE 50:50 STANDARD WHICH THE DRAFT REGULATIONS REQUIRED WHEN THE WET MUCK-OUT METHOD WAS USED, AND WHICH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT BELIEVED WAS NECESSARY IF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS WERE TO BE ACHIEVED.

"WE HAVE AGREED TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THIS WITH THE AD HOC GROUP BEFORE THE REGULATIONS ARE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL," HE SAID.

FOR FARMERS WHO INTENDED TO GIVE UP KEEPING LIVESTOCK UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED A SCHEME PAYING SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED RATES OF COMPENSATION.

FOR THOSE WHO WISHED TO CONTINUE, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL LAST WEEK APPROVED A GRANT SCHEME COVERING HALF THE CAPITAL COST OF INSTALLING TREATMENT FACILITIES; FARMERS WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO OBTAIN LOANS TO COVER ALL OR PART OF THE REMAINING COST FROM FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

/"THE ESTIMATED .....

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"THE ESTIMATED COST FOR TAXPAYERS OF THESE SCHEMES IS ABOUT \$255 MILLION, AND I THINK NO ONE CAN ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT OF BEING UNGENEROUS IN ITS TREATMENT OF THOSE AFFECTED BY THE NEW PROPOSALS."

MR CHAMBERS NOTED THE HON PETER C. WONG HAD ASKED WHETHER A FARMER WHO HAD RECEIVED A LOAN AND THEN FOUND THAT HE COULD NOT ACHIEVE THE REQUIRED STANDARD, WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATION.

"THIS QUESTION CAN BE DISCUSSED, BUT I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL APPROVED THE GRANT SCHEME ON THE BASIS OF AN ONCE-FOR-ALL OPTION TO TAKE EITHER A GRANT OR COMPENSATION," HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON CONCERN THAT THE CONTROL AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN THE POWER TO SEIZE LIVESTOCK SUSPECTED OF BEING KEPT IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, MR CHAMBERS SAID: "THIS POWER IS NECESSARY AS A DETERRENT TO PREVENT BLATANT DISREGARD OF THE CONTROLS AND TO DETER REPEATED OFFENDERS.

"IT WILL, HOWEVER, BE USED WITH CAUTION AND ONLY IN CASES OF VERY SERIOUS POLLUTION WHICH HAVE TO BE STOPPED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE," HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID FARMERS WHOSE LIVESTOCK WAS SEIZED, BUT WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY NOT CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE UNDER THE BILL, WOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY TO THE DISTRICT COURT OR HIGH COURT FOR COMPENSATION FOR ANY LOSS ARISING OUT OF THE SEIZURE.

MR CHAMBERS SAID HE WOULD ALSO BE MOVING A COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENT TO THE BILL TO BRING FORWARD MUI WO BEACH AND ANGLER'S BEACH INTO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CONTROL PROGRAMME.

"THESE TWO POPULAR BEACHES HAVE BOTH BEEN DECLARED NOT SUITABLE FOR SWIMMING AS A RESULT OF SERIOUS POLLUTION DUE LARGELY TO ANIMAL WASTE, AND IT IS DESIRABLE THAT EARLY ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THEIR CONDITION," HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID IT WAS NOT THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION TO DRIVE LIVESTOCK-KEEPERS OUT OF BUSINESS, PROVIDED THEY OBSERVED REASONABLE STANDARDS OF POLLUTION CONTROL. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE OR ACCEPTABLE TO BAN LIVESTOCK FARMING COMPLETELY THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY, EVEN IF THIS MIGHT PROVE A CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT PROPOSALS.

HE ALSO SAID STAFF OF HIS BRANCH AND OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAD MET WITH THE FARMERS' REPRESENTATIVES ON 15 OCCASIONS DURING THE PREPARATION OF THIS LEGISLATION AND THE DISCUSSIONS WOULD CONTINUE.

"IN ADDITION BOTH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FARMERS WITH TECHNICAL ADVICE TO HELP THEM MEET THE REQUIRED STANDARDS.

"WE SHALL ALSO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AD HOC GROUP AND I SHARE MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG'S CONFIDENCE THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO FIND SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS TO THE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS RELATED TO THIS BILL AND ITS SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION," HE SAID.

LEGCO GROUP SUPPORTS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 IS IN FULL SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLE THAT OUR ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE PROTECTED AND AGREES THAT THOSE FARMERS WHO WISH TO CONTINUE LIVESTOCK FARMING IN CONTROL AREAS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO SO, PROVIDED THAT THEY MEET THE EFFLUENT CONTROL STANDARD, CONVENER OF THE GROUP, THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR CHEUNG SAID THE GROUP ALSO FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER GRANTING EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES TO FARMERS WHO COULD NOT COMPLY WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENTS AND ASSISTING THEM TO RE-ESTABLISH IN ANOTHER BUSINESS.

HE SAID THE GROUP HAD HELD A TOTAL OF EIGHT MEETINGS, INCLUDING TWO MEETINGS WITH THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK KEEPING ASSOCIATIONS AND FIVE MEETINGS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. A VISIT TO THE DEMONSTRATION FARM AT TA KWU LING WAS ALSO CONDUCTED ON AUGUST 24.

MR CHEUNG SAID HE HAD ALSO MET PRIVATELY WITH THE FARMERS' REPRESENTATIVES ON FOUR OCCASIONS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS.

"GENERALLY SPEAKING, I AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP HAVE BEEN GREATLY IMPRESSED BY THE EFFORTS OF THE FARMERS TO KEEP A COOL HEAD IN UNDERSTANDING AND DISCUSSING THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION," HE NOTED.

"DURING THE COURSE OF EXAMINING THE BILL, IT BECOMES EVIDENT TO THE AD HOC GROUP THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS (A) DETERMINED TO DEAL WITH THE WATER POLLUTION PROBLEM IN THE TERRITORY, AND (B) SINCERE IN PROVIDING A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO FARMERS TO CONTINUE LIVESTOCK FARMING IN CONTROL AREAS," HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG SAID THAT THE GROUP WAS GLAD THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD, ON THE ADVICE OF THE GROUP AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AGREED TO INCREASE THE RATES OF EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES BY 30 PER CENT AND TO INTRODUCE A GRANT AND LOAN SCHEME TOTALLING ABOUT \$130 MILLION OVER 10 YEARS TO PROVIDE FARMERS WITH FUNDS TO INSTALL TREATMENT FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEW CONTROL STANDARD.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GROUP ALSO FELT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S ENTHUSIASM IN PUSHING FOR PASSAGE OF THE BILL HAD NOT BEEN MATCHED BY ITS EFFORTS IN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO FACILITATE MEMBERS' EXAMINATION OF THE BILL.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID WHEN THE GROUP ASKED FOR A WRITTEN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO SET A RELATIVELY HIGH EFFLUENT CONTROL STANDARD OF BOD 55 MG/L : SS MG/L AND HOW IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT 70 PER CENT OF THE FARMERS IN THE TERRITORY WOULD USE THE DRY MUCK-OUT WASTE TREATMENT METHOD, WHICH WAS MUCH CHEAPER THAN THE WET MUCK-OUT METHOD, THE RESPONSE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION WAS VERY SLOW.

"ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT SUCH KIND OF BASIC GROUND WORK SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETED LONG BEFORE PRESENTING THE PROPOSED CONTROL SCHEME TO THE EXECUTIVE AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS," MR CHEUNG SAID.

"BUT THE FACT IS, DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS MADE AT MEETINGS, THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT PROVIDE THE AD HOC GROUP WITH THE RELEVANT PAPERS UNTIL LATE AUGUST.

"AFTER STUDYING THE PAPERS, THE AD HOC GROUP IS STILL NOT TOTALLY CONVINCED THAT SUCH A STRINGENT EFFLUENT CONTROL STANDARD IS NECESSARY."

AS FOR THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT, HE SAID THE GROUP HAD URGED THE ADMINISTRATION AS EARLY AS IN APRIL TO DISCUSS THE CONSULTATIVE PAPER TO CONTROL POLLUTION CAUSED BY ANIMAL WASTE, TO SET UP DEMONSTRATION FARMS URGENTLY SO THAT THE FARMERS COULD BE SHOWN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE HOW THEY COULD COMPLY WITH THE CONTROL STANDARD.

"IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT OUR ADVICE HAD NOT BEEN FOLLOWED UP EXPEDITIOUSLY AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL AUGUST THAT WORK ON THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT WAS COMMENCED. THIS RESULTS IN THE EMBARRASSING SITUATION THAT UNTIL TODAY, TWO OF THE THREE PROJECTS ARE NOT YET FULLY OPERATIONAL."

COMMENTING ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT OF THE BILL, MR CHEUNG SAID DESPITE THE FACT THAT A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE FARMERS, IT WAS OBVIOUS, AT LEAST IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC, THAT THE COMMUNICATION WAS NOT VERY EFFECTIVE.

HE SAID THE FARMERS HAD ALL ALONG BEEN OBJECTING TO THE CONTROL STANDARD OF 50:50. FIRST, THEY DOUBTED WHETHER SUCH A HIGH STANDARD WAS NECESSARY; SECOND, THEY DID NOT THINK IT WAS FEASIBLE; AND THIRD, THEY BELIEVED IT WOULD BE VERY COSTLY.

"I MUST SAY THE ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN MUCH TOO LONG TO PROVIDE SATISFACTORY EXPLANATIONS TO THE FARMERS BECAUSE TO DATE THE RESULT OF THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IS STILL ONLY A POSSIBILITY.

"THE FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION TO THE FARMERS IS ALSO VERY SLOW. FOR EXAMPLE, IT HAS TAKEN A LONG TIME FOR THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE MANUAL TO BE MADE AVAILABLE."

/ON THE .....

ON THE OTHER HAND, MR CHEUNG SAID HE HAD DETECTED A GREAT DEAL OF MISTRUST IN THE FARMERS TOWARDS THE ADMINISTRATION.

HE SAID NO DOUBT THE OFFICIALS CONCERNED MUST HAVE EXPLAINED TO THE FARMERS THE DETAILS OF THE BILL.

"IT IS THEREFORE INCREDIBLE THAT, TO QUOTE JUST TWO EXAMPLES, AS RECENT AS OCTOBER 5 WHEN WE MET THE FARMERS, THEY STILL HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL INCLUDED THE DISPUTED 50:50 STANDARD AND THAT THESE WOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE EFFECT WHEN THE BILL IS PASSED TODAY.

"ALTHOUGH THE AD HOC GROUP HAS REASSURED THE FARMERS THAT THE CONTROL STANDARD HAS YET TO BE FINALISED, THAT IT WOULD ONLY BECOME LAW BY WAY OF SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION TO BE MADE AFTER THE BILL IS PASSED, AND THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL WILL NOT COME INTO EFFECT BEFORE 24 JUNE 1988, SUCH MISUNDERSTANDING HAS ALREADY CAUSED STRONG REACTIONS FROM THE FARMERS OVER THE PAST WEEKS.

"I TRUST THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL LEARN ITS LESSON AND IMPROVE UPON ITS COMMUNICATION WITH THE FARMERS IN ORDER TO REGAIN THEIR TRUST," MR CHEUNG ADDED.

"I AM SURE A LOT OF PREPARATION IS NEEDED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD BEFORE THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL TAKE EFFECT. I CAN ALSO SEE THAT A LOT OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WILL ARISE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTROL MEASURES.

"LIFE WILL BE MUCH EASIER FOR ALL CONCERNED IF THE ADMINISTRATION SEES TO IT THAT AN EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE IS MAINTAINED WITH THE FARMERS," HE SAID.

LOOKING AHEAD, MR CHEUNG SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT THE LEGCO IN-HOUSE MEETING HAD AGREED TO ALLOW THE AD HOC GROUP TO CONTINUE TO EXAMINE THE REGULATIONS.

"IT IS THE GROUP'S VIEW THAT UNLESS THE ADMINISTRATION CAN DEMONSTRATE THE TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE 50:50 STANDARD, IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO REQUIRE THE FARMERS TO COMPLY WITH IT," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD AGREED TO DISCUSS THE REGULATIONS WITH THE GROUP BEFORE THEY WERE FINALISED.

MR CHEUNG ALSO CALLED ON THE FARMERS TO CONTINUE THEIR DISCUSSION WITH THE AD HOC GROUP AND THE ADMINISTRATION AND SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED, A SATISFACTORY CONTROL STANDARD WOULD BE ARRIVED AT.

AS FOR THE BILL ITSELF, HE SAID THE GROUP GENERALLY FOUND IT ACCEPTABLE EXCEPT FOR A FEW POINTS WHICH WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENTS.

THESE AMENDMENTS WERE:

- (A) PUTTING BACK THE IMPLEMENTATION DATE TO JUNE 24, 1988, I.E. ONE YEAR AFTER THE FIRST READING OF THE BILL;
- (B) PROVIDING A COMPENSATION CLAUSE FOR WRONGFUL SEIZURE OF LIVESTOCK; AND
- (C) ALLOWING SEVEN CLEAR DAYS ADVANCE NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE FARMER BEFORE GOVERNMENT APPLIED FOR A SEIZURE WARRANT SO THAT HE COULD PREPARE HIS CASE TO BE HEARD BEFORE THE COURT.

"ALL THESE WILL FURTHER SAFEGUARD THE INTEREST OF THE FARMERS," HE SAID.

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LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL PROGRAMME DESERVES SUPPORT

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THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 PROVIDES THE NECESSARY LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S 10-YEAR LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL PROGRAMME, THE HON PETER C. WONG, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"IT IS AN EXPENSIVE PROJECT, BUT NEVERTHELESS, ONE THAT DESERVES OUR SUPPORT," HE SAID.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT ANIMAL WASTE PRODUCED BY LIVESTOCK FARMING WAS A MAJOR SOURCE OF WATER POLLUTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WHERE IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT 70 PER CENT OF ALL STREAM POLLUTION HAD ITS ORIGINS IN ANIMAL WASTE.

IT WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR ABOUT 50 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL ORGANIC POLLUTION ENTERING OUR COASTAL WATERS, POSING A SERIOUS THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH, HE SAID.

MR WONG WELCOMED THE PROPOSALS AS CONTAINED IN THE BILL WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE PROHIBITION OF LIVESTOCK FARMS IN THE URBAN AREAS AND THE NEW TOWNS.

"ALSO PROVIDED ARE CONTROLS GOVERNING THE COLLECTION, STORAGE, TREATMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSAL OF LIVESTOCK WASTE IN THE CONTROL AREAS.

/ "SUCH MEASURES .....

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"SUCH MEASURES IF SUITABLY ENFORCED SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT FROM ONE OF THE MAJOR SOURCES OF POLLUTION."

HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT FOR THESE MEASURES TO SUCCEED IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE THE SUPPORT AND CO-OPERATION OF THE LIVESTOCK KEEPERS WHO WERE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE CONTROL PROGRAMME.

MR WONG SAID IT WAS IN THIS VITAL ASPECT THAT HE BELIEVED THE ADMINISTRATION HAD LEFT MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

HE SAID REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LIVESTOCK KEEPERS HAD MADE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP ON THE CONTROL STANDARD OF 50 BOD: 50 SS.

"THEY HAVE TWO DOUBTS: (A) WHETHER IT IS A PRACTICABLE STANDARD, AND (B) WHETHER IT IS ECONOMICALLY VIABLE."

MR WONG SAID THESE DOUBTS WERE CENTRAL TO THEIR OBJECTION TO THE CONTROL PROGRAMME, ALTHOUGH THEY SUPPORTED THE PRINCIPLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

"IN MY VIEW, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THIS STANDARD TO THE LIVESTOCK KEEPERS LONG BEFORE THE BILL WAS GAZETTED.

"AFTER ALL, THESE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SOME FOUR YEARS," HE ADDED.

MR WONG SAID WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED WAS PERHAPS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF BUREAUCRATIC LACK OF FORESIGHT OR PROCRASTINATION.

HE SAID THE DEMONSTRATION FARM AT TA KWU LING WAS ONLY SET UP AFTER REPEATED REQUESTS BY THE AD HOC GROUP AND THE MOST FRUSTRATING FACT WAS THAT TWO OF THE THREE PROJECTS WERE NOT YET IN FULL OPERATION.

"NEEDLESS TO SAY, I FULLY APPRECIATE THE LIVESTOCK KEEPERS' APPREHENSION, I.E. WHETHER OR NOT THE 50:50 STANDARD CAN ACTUALLY BE ACHIEVED.

"EVEN IF IT CAN BE DONE, WHETHER THE NECESSARY COST IN ACHIEVING IT WOULD BE SO PROHIBITIVE AS TO DRIVE THEM OUT OF BUSINESS."

MR WONG SAID THESE WERE THE QUESTIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NEED TO ANSWER IN THE FORTHCOMING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AD HOC GROUP IN FINALISING THE REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE PROPOSED STANDARD AND OTHER MATTERS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PROVIDE GRANTS AND LOANS TO LIVESTOCK KEEPERS TO HELP THEM COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONTROL PROGRAMME WAS A TIMELY MOVE WHICH MIGHT DEFUSE SOME OF THE TENSION THAT WAS BUILDING UP.

/HOWEVER, HE .....

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HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE WAS ONE PERTINENT QUESTION WHICH NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED.

"WHAT IF A FARMER SETS UP TREATMENT FACILITIES POSSIBLY WITH GRANTS AND LOANS AND THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES BUT SUBSEQUENTLY FINDS THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE REQUIRED STANDARD FOR REASONS BEYOND HIS CONTROL?

"IF HE IS FORCED TO WIND UP HIS BUSINESS THROUGH NO FAULT OF HIS OWN, WILL HE BE ELIGIBLE FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES? IF NOT, IS IT FAIR?"

MR WONG SAID THIS PROBLEM HIGHLIGHTED THE FACT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE AD HOC GROUP HAD A GREAT DEAL TO DO IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME BEFORE THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL TOOK EFFECT.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN ENACTING LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL PROGRAMME, COMPULSION MUST BE TEMPERED WITH COMPASSION.

"THE PRICE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MAY BE HIGH, BUT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO PAY A FAIR AND EQUITABLE PRICE TO THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION AS WELL AS FOR THE SALUTORY MEASURES PROPOSED," HE SAID.

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CLOSE CONTACT WITH FARMERS ON WASTE DISPOSAL BILL URGED

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IN DRAFTING THE WASTE DISPOSAL (LIVESTOCK WASTE) REGULATIONS 1987, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED SHOULD MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE FARMERS AND CONSULT THEIR VIEWS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON LAU WONG-FAT, URGED IN LEGCO TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MR LAU SAID COMMUNICATION WOULD ENABLE THE AUTHORITIES TO IDENTIFY THE FARMERS' DIFFICULTIES AND NEEDS AND THEREBY REACH A PRACTICABLE SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE FARMERS.

HE STRESSED THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAD TO PROCEED WITH GREAT CAUTION WHEN DRAWING UP THE REGULATIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID THINGS COMING TO A DEADLOCK OR A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FARMERS.

/ "IN PRINCIPLE, .....

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"IN PRINCIPLE, I SUPPORT THE SPIRIT OF THE PROPOSED BILL. HOWEVER, THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM LIES IN HOW TO DEVISE A SCHEME WHICH CAN IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT WHILE GIVING ADEQUATE SAFEGUARD TO THE INTERESTS OF THE FARMERS," MR LAU SAID.

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT AGRICULTURAL WASTES HAD BEEN CAUSING SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION, MR LAU NEVERTHELESS FELT THAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS SHOULD NOT SOLELY BE BLAMED FOR CAUSING THE PRESENT ENVIRONMENTAL CHAOS. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO BEAR PART OF THE BLAME, HE ADDED.

HE RECALLED THAT IN 1967, THREATENED WITH A SUSPENSION IN THE SUPPLY OF IMPORTED FOODSTUFF, THE GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT TO PEOPLE DEVELOPING THE FARMING INDUSTRY.

"IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT ALL ALONG THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE AND LONG-TERM POLICY TO PROTECT AND DEVELOP OUR FARMING INDUSTRY. IT ALSO FAILS TO DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITY OF GIVING FARMERS GUIDANCE ON TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT, TRANSFER MODERN PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO THEM AND PROVIDE THEM WITH ADVANCED EQUIPMENT TO COPE WITH THE MODERNISATION OF THE INDUSTRY.

NOTING THAT THE BILL HAD CAUSED GREAT DISSATISFACTION AMONG FARMERS, HE BELIEVED THIS WAS PARTLY DUE TO PROBLEMS ARISING FROM CERTAIN PARTS OF THE LEGISLATION, PARTICULARLY THOSE DEALING WITH THE TECHNICAL ENFORCEMENT ASPECTS. HOWEVER, THE MOST IMPORTANT CAUSE WAS THAT LIVESTOCK FARMERS WERE GREATLY WORRIED AND PERTURBED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR TRADE.

"PRIOR TO DRAWING UP THE DRAFT LEGISLATION, THE GOVERNMENT PLACED EMPHASIS ONLY ON IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT POLLUTION SITUATION WITHOUT GIVING DUE CONSIDERATION TO SAFEGUARDING THE LIVELIHOOD OF FARMERS," MR LAU POINTED OUT.

HE NOTED THAT THE FARMERS HAD BEEN ESCALATING THEIR ACTION FIRST THEY REQUESTED TO MEET LEGCO MEMBERS. THEN THEY HELD A MASS RALLY AND FINALLY ORGANISED A SIT-IN PETITION. HE BELIEVED THE FARMERS WOULD NOT HAVE RESORTED TO SUCH STRONG ACTION HAD THEIR PROBLEM BEEN LESS SERIOUS.

ALTHOUGH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD APPROVED A GRANT AND LOAN SCHEME TO HELP THEM, MR LAU SAID THE FARMERS' WORRIES ABOUT THE NEW CONTROLS WERE HARDLY DISPELLED.

MR LAU SAID FROM HIS FREQUENT CONTACT WITH LIVESTOCK FARMERS, HE KNEW THAT THEY WERE IN FACT VERY WILLING TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

"HOWEVER, THEY CONSIDER THE DRAFT WASTE DISPOSAL (LIVESTOCK WASTE) REGULATIONS 1987, ESPECIALLY THOSE PARTS CONCERNING TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND EFFLUENT STANDARD, TOO STRINGENT.

/THEY ALSO .....

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"THEY ALSO FEEL THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLY WITH CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS BECAUSE THE COST INVOLVED IN REARING LIVESTOCK WILL RISE TO SUCH A HIGH LEVEL THAT THE FARMERS WILL PROBABLY RUN INTO LOSSES AND BE FORCED OUT OF BUSINESS.

"JUDGING FROM THE AVERAGE EDUCATION STANDARD AMONG OUR FARMERS, IT CAN BE SAID THAT FARMING IS THEIR ONLY MEANS OF MAKING A LIVING, SO I AM OF THE OPINION THAT THEIR WORRIES ARE FULLY UNDERSTANDABLE," MR LAU SAID.

"I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE SOME 200,000 PEOPLE ENGAGED IN THE LIVESTOCK KEEPING INDUSTRY BE IN THE PREDICAMENT OF LOSING THEIR EMPLOYMENT, FOR SUCH A CRISIS WILL LEAD TO A SERIES OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH MAY INDIRECTLY UNDERMINE THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG," HE CONTINUED.

MR LAU SUPPORTED A PROPOSAL OF SETTING UP A COMMITTEE ON THE ISSUE. FURTHERMORE, HE URGED THAT A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT, OR THAT AN AD HOC GROUP BE SET UP BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TO GIVE GUIDANCE TO FARMERS ON TECHNICAL MATTERS AND TO HELP THEM RESOLVE ANY DIFFICULTIES WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LEGISLATION.

"ABOVE ALL, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET UP A COMPENSATION COMMITTEE, THE MEMBERSHIP OF WHICH SHOULD PREFERABLY INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF LIVESTOCK FARMERS, TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE AND RELATED COMPENSATION PAYMENT ON A REGULAR BASIS," HE URGED.

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ADEQUATE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY MEANS OF LEGISLATIVE CONTROL ALONE AND ADEQUATE POWER AND RESOURCES MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT SO AS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES.

THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987.

HE SAID HONG KONG'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM TODAY WOULD NOT HAVE BECOME SO ACUTE IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD EARLIER ATTACHED ENOUGH IMPORTANCE TO IT.

/IT IS .....

IT IS INDEED TOO LATE TO MAKE ANY REMEDY NOW. NEVERTHELESS IT IS HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, WHEN CONCEIVING AND FORMULATING ANY POLICY, WOULD LOOK INTO ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM WITH AN INSIGHT SO AS TO AVOID BEING PLACED UNDER THE PRESSURE CAUSED BY LATE REMEDIES," MR TAM SAID.

MR TAM SAID IN PRINCIPLE HE AGREED THE BILL WAS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS CONTAINING OR ALLEVIATING POLLUTION.

HE SUPPORTED THE SPIRIT OF THE BILL AND HOPED THAT THE PROPOSED CONTROL MEASURES WOULD IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

NEVERTHELESS, MR TAM FELT THE SUBSIDIARY REGULATIONS AND OTHER DETAILS REGARDING CONTROL MEASURES WERE OPEN TO QUESTION.

"SO FAR NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FARMERS ON THE METHODS TO BE USED TO CONTROL OR REDUCE THE LEVEL OF POLLUTION.

"NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THE PILOT SCHEME RUN BY THE AUTHORITIES HAS NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY REJECTED THE PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY THE FARMERS," MR TAM SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT WHEN INTRODUCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES, THE AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSIDER THEIR IMPACT ON OPERATORS.

MR TAM FELT A PREFERABLE APPROACH WOULD BE TO WORK OUT A PROGRAMME AND MODULATED SCHEME BASED ON A FINANCIALLY FEASIBLE CONTROL STANDARD.

IN SUMMING UP, MR TAM SAID HE HOPED THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD FURTHER DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH FARMERS WITH A VIEW TO ARRIVING AT A SOLUTION WHICH WAS BOTH EQUITABLE AND REALISTIC.

"I ALSO HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT MERELY TREAT THIS MATTER AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION PROBLEM, BUT WOULD CONSIDER ITS EFFECT ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMING INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG AT THE SAME TIME.

MR TAM MADE A NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS WHEN TAKING PART IN EXAMINING THE BILL. MR TAM FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED WHEN IT INTRODUCED THE BILL.

HE SAID IT WAS ONLY VERY RECENTLY, OR AFTER THE BILL WAS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL AND WHEN THE FARMERS RAISED STRONG OBJECTIONS THAT, THE GOVERNMENT INVITED THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC TO LAUNCH THE PILOT SCHEME.

RELEVANT TESTS ARE STILL UNDERWAY TODAY WHEN THE BILL IS UNDERGOING ITS SECOND AND THIRD READINGS.

/FURTHERMORE, THE .....

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"FURTHERMORE, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT EMPLOYED ANY SYSTEMATIC METHODS TO FIND OUT BY MEANS OF SURVEYS AND SITE VISITS THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF FARMERS WHO ARE ABLE OR WILLING TO ADOPT THE DEY MUCK-OUT WASTE TREATMENT METHOD," HE SAID.

MR TAM NOTED THAT ALL THESE HAD WEAKENED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDGEMENT AND PROPOSALS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND CONTRIBUTED LITTLE OF THE EFFECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MATTER BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

HE WAS WORRIED THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION PASSED THE BILL IN A HURRY AND SIMPLY BY ADHERING TO THEORIES AND PRINCIPLES, THE RESULT WOULD BE DISAPPOINTING.

MR TAM ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO BE HELD PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SITUATION TODAY.

HE SAID ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION WAS IN FACT A LONG-STANDING ISSUE. PROPOSED MEASURES WERE SUGGESTED BUT NOT IMPLEMENTED. YET THE PROBLEM MIGHT HAVE WORSENERED AND THE ENVIRONMENT HAD ALREADY DETERIORATED AFTER A LAPSE OF MORE THAN 10 YEARS.

HE REITERATED THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN VARIOUS MEASURES IN TIME TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM STEP BY STEP, HONG KONG WOULD NOT HAVE PLUNGED INTO A SITUATION SO TENSE AS TODAY'S.

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COMBINED EFFORTS REQUIRED FOR WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT  
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ANY IMPROVEMENT IN WATER QUALITY REQUIRES THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LIVESTOCK FARMERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS, PROFESSOR THE HON POON CHUNG-KWONG, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, PROFESSOR POON SAID IT REPRESENTED ONE IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD TO BRING UNDER CONTROL THE DISPOSAL OF LIVESTOCK WASTE.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT WHILE WE WERE DRAFTING REGULATIONS TO CONTROL INDUSTRIAL AND LIVESTOCK EFFLUENTS, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE THAT DOMESTIC SEWAGE COULD ALSO BE EFFECTIVELY INTERCEPTED.

HE SAID HE WAS VERY GLAD TO LEARN FROM THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS LAST WEDNESDAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD INVEST AS MUCH AS \$10 BILLION OVER THE NEXT DECADE TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

/"INDEED I .....

"INDEED I WOULD URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ATTEND TO THIS WITH THE GREATEST URGENCY," HE SAID.

"IF INDUSTRIALISTS AND LIVESTOCK FARMERS MAKE THE EFFORT TO OBSERVE THE APPROPRIATE REGULATIONS AND REFRAIN FROM POLLUTING THE WATERS, IT IS THEN ONLY TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ESTABLISH FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMS TO INTERCEPT DOMESTIC SEWAGE TO AS MUCH AS 99 PER CENT EFFICIENCY."

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STEPS TO ALLEVIATE LABOUR SHORTAGE OUTLINED

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THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT SUSTAINED PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH, COUPLED WITH FLEXIBILITY OF ADJUSTMENT IN THE LABOUR MARKET, PROVIDES THE ONLY REAL AND LASTING SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT LABOUR SHORTAGE PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR K.Y. YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN, MR YEUNG SAID IN THE FIVE YEARS 1982-83 TO 1986-87, THE GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ABOUT \$7.2 MILLION AND SPENT ABOUT \$4 MILLION ON TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MAJOR INDUSTRIES WHICH SEEK TO INVESTIGATE THE DETERMINANTS OF AND CONSTRAINTS UPON THE GROWTH OF MAJOR INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH.

"WHERE PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH HAS BEEN CONSTRAINED BY TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS, THE GOVERNMENT MAY COMMISSION SPECIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, WITH THE AIM OF PROVIDING OUR INDUSTRIES WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT WOULD HELP THEM TO INCREASE THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THEIR OUTPUT.

"A LITTLE OVER \$5 MILLION HAS BEEN SPENT ON THESE PROJECTS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS."

MR YEUNG SAID HKPC IS THE PRINCIPAL PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCY FOR PROVIDING PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SERVICES.

"OVER THE FIVE YEARS 1982-83 TO 1986-87, EXPENDITURE BY THE HKPC TOTALLED \$246 MILLION, RISING FROM \$33 MILLION IN 1982-83 TO \$77 MILLION IN 1986-87."

MR YEUNG SAID WHILE THE INCREASE IN THE HKPC'S EXPENDITURE REFLECTS CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION IN ITS ACTIVITIES, EVEN GREATER EFFORT WILL BE MADE IN THE FUTURE TO ENCOURAGE PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN MANUFACTURING.

/ "THIS EFFORT .....

"THIS EFFORT IS REFLECTED , FIRST, BY AN AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME RECENTLY ENDORSED BY THE IDB INCLUDING PROPOSALS TO HOUSE THE HKPC IN A PURPOSE-BUILT CENTRE IN KOWLOON TONG BY 1990 AND TO FUND THE HKPC WITH ADDITIONAL CAPITAL AND RECURRENT GRANTS, TOTALLING \$72 MILLION OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, TOWARDS THE COST OF DEVELOPING AND PROVIDING A WIDER RANGE OF PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SERVICES.

"SEPARATELY, DETAILED PROPOSALS ARE BEING FORMULATED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRE BASED IN THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE PLASTICS CONVERSION INDUSTRY."

MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER MAIN INITIATIVE IN ENCOURAGING PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN MANUFACTURING LIES IN THE VIGOROUS MARKETING OF THE INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HKPC, THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

"THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY LAUNCHED A PILOT INDUSTRIAL EXTENSION SERVICE AND WILL REVIEW ITS OPERATIONS IN DUE COURSE, WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINING WHETHER THERE IS A PERMANENT NEED TO MAINTAIN SUCH A SERVICE."

MR YEUNG ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE WITH THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES TO CONSIDER WHAT MEASURES MIGHT BE INTRODUCED TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE CURRENT LABOUR SHORTAGE.

"THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT IS CARRYING OUT A SPECIAL SURVEY WITH A VIEW TO IDENTIFYING WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE TENDED TO STAY OUT OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND, IF SO, WHAT MIGHT INDUCE THEM TO TAKE UP EMPLOYMENT.

"THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES THE POSSIBILITY OF INDUSTRY ESTABLISHING ADDITIONAL DAY CARE FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN, AS A MEANS OF ATTRACTING MORE HOUSEWIVES TO TAKE UP EMPLOYMENT."

HE SAID OTHER MEASURES ARE ALSO BEING EXAMINED TO SEE WHETHER GREATER USE CAN BE MADE OF THE EXISTING WORK FORCE.

"ON THE ADVICE OF THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD, THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING TO AMEND THE WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS (INDUSTRY) REGULATIONS TO PERMIT GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN THE CALCULATION OF THE AMOUNT OF OVERTIME WORK WHICH CAN BE UNDERTAKEN BY WOMEN UNDER THESE REGULATIONS.

"IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE PRESENT OVERTIME PROVISION SHOULD BE RELAXED TO HELP EMPLOYERS MAKE FULLER USE OF THE EXISTING OVERTIME QUOTA."

MR YEUNG NOTED THAT LABOUR SHORTAGE PROBLEM IS NOT ONE WHICH LENDS ITSELF TO A QUICK FIX.

"IN THE SHORT TERM THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM IN THE LABOUR MARKET, AND IT IS HOPED THAT THE VARIOUS SHORT TERM MEASURES WOULD HELP THE PROCESS OF ADJUSTMENT TO BECOME MORE EFFICIENT."

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SUFFICIENT TIME TO MAKE CHANGES

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONFIDENT THAT IF DECISIONS WERE TAKEN TO ADOPT ANY OF THE OPTIONS INCLUDED IN THE GREEN PAPER WHICH INVOLVE CHANGES TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SUCH DECISIONS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEXT SESSION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM ABOUT WHETHER THERE WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TIME TO IMPLEMENT ANY CHANGES TO THE EXISTING LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE 1988 ELECTIONS.

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SURVEY REPORT TO EXCLUDE REPORTED 'FALSIFIED' SUBMISSIONS

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) POINTED OUT THAT ANY SUBMISSION REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN FALSIFIED WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, MR FORD NOTED THAT UP TO YESTERDAY, THE SURVEY OFFICE HAD RECEIVED 101 REPORTS FROM INDIVIDUALS THAT SUBMISSIONS WHICH PURPORTED TO HAVE COME FROM THEM HAD IN FACT BEEN SENT WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE. AND THE OFFICE RECEIVED 72 FURTHER REPORTS OF A SIMILAR NATURE THIS MORNING.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THAT SINCE FALSIFIED REPORTS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, "THE ACCURACY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE REPORT WILL NOT THEREFORE BE AFFECTED".

MR FORD ADDED THAT AS THOSE SUBMISSIONS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REPORT, IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO DISCLOSE THEIR NATURE OR THEIR CONTENTS.

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OVERSTAYING FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS PROSECUTED

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT FROM JANUARY 1985 TO SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, 281 FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS HAD BEEN PROSECUTED FOR OVERSTAYING IN HONG KONG, ADDING THAT THEY WERE ALL CONVICTED OF THE OFFENCE.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT, AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ISSUED GUIDANCE NOTES TO FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEY WERE PERMITTED TO TAKE UP DOMESTIC WORK IN HONG KONG.

THESE CONDITIONS INCLUDED THOSE RELATING TO THE LENGTH OF TIME THEY WERE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG.

"IN THE NOTE IT IS CLEARLY STATED THAT IT IS AN OFFENCE IN LAW FOR THEM TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG LONGER THAN THE PERIOD STIPULATED.

"IN RESPECT OF CONTRACTS THAT ARE TERMINATED BEFORE THEY ARE COMPLETED, UNDER THE TERMS OF THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT, BOTH THE EMPLOYER AND THE EMPLOYEE ARE REQUIRED TO INFORM THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY OF THE TERMINATION," MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

AS REGARDS THE DETECTION OF OVERSTAYING, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATED ANY SUSPICIONS THAT A HELPER HAD OVERSTAYED AND VISITED PLACES WHERE IT THOUGHT OVERSTAYING FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS MIGHT BE WORKING.

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STEPS TO ENSURE HOME SAFETY OUTLINED

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL STEP UP FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES TO EDUCATE PARENTS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF LEAVING CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT IN THE LIGHT OF PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE RECENT TRAGEDY AT SAU MAU PING, THE WORKING GROUP ON THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES ORDINANCE HAD RECENTLY RECONSIDERED THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED THAT LEGISLATION IN THIS AREA WOULD BE NEITHER PRACTICAL NOR ENFORCIBLE, HE SAID.

/IN CONNECTION .....

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IN CONNECTION WITH FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, MR CHAMBERS SAID A SPECIAL POSTER HAD BEEN PRODUCED TO PUBLICISE MEASURES WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE SAFETY AT HOME.

"FAMILIES WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN TAKING CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE USE OF FACILITIES IN CHILD CARE CENTRES AND TO APPROACH THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR FINANCIAL AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.

"AT PRESENT THERE ARE OVER 28,000 PLACES IN CHILD CARE CENTRES, AND AN ADDITIONAL 1,600 PLACES ARE PLANNED FOR THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

"HOME HELP SERVICE IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THIS TOO WILL BE STEADILY EXPANDED," HE SAID.

ARRANGEMENTS WERE ALSO BEING MADE WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES FOR NEIGHBOURS TO HELP IN PROVIDING TEMPORARY CARE FOR CHILDREN ON A MUTUAL AID BASIS, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

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#### CHILD ABUSE PROBLEM OUTLINED

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A TOTAL OF 725 NEW CHILD ABUSE CASES INVOLVING 884 CHILDREN HAVE BEEN HANDLED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RITA FAN, MR CHAMBERS SAID AS AT THE END OF JUNE THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 403 ACTIVE CHILD ABUSE CASES INVOLVING 454 CHILDREN.

HE NOTED THAT ACCORDING TO POLICE RECORDS, AN AVERAGE OF 40 PERSONS WERE PROSECUTED EACH YEAR IN CONNECTION WITH CHILD ABUSE CASES DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS. THERE WERE 40 CASES IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, HE ADDED.

"PARENTS WHO HAVE ABUSED THEIR CHILDREN ARE PROVIDED WITH COUNSELLING BY SOCIAL WORKERS, WHO MAY REFER THEM FOR TREATMENT BY CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS IF NECESSARY," SAID MR CHAMBERS.

"IN ADDITION, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES ON PARENTHOOD AND SUPPORTIVE GROUPS ARE ORGANISED TO ENHANCE PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN BRINGING UP THEIR CHILDREN," HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS ALSO NOTED THAT IN HANDLING CHILD ABUSE CASES, SOCIAL WORKERS TRIED GO GET DOWN TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM AND TO HELP THE FAMILY AS A WHOLE TO PREVENT FURTHER ABUSE.

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REASONS FOR NOT PAYING FULL TAXI PREMIA EXPLAINED

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IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ASCERTAIN THE REASONS FOR SOME SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS IN A RECENT TAXI LICENCE TENDER EXERCISE NOT TO SETTLE PAYMENT OF THE FULL PREMIA AS THE DECISION WAS MADE BY THE TENDERERS THEMSELVES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON CONRAD LAM, MR LEUNG SAID THAT ONE POSSIBLE REASON COULD BE THE DECLINE IN MARKET PRICE OF TAXI LICENCES SOON AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE LAST TENDER EXERCISE.

"ANOTHER REASON COULD BE THE PRELIMINARY VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SOME DISTRICT BOARDS IN RECENT MONTHS ON A TAXI POLICY CONSULTATIVE PAPER FROM A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH TOUCHED UPON METHODS TO MINIMISE SPECULATION IN THE ISSUE OF TAXI LICENCES, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF RESTRICTING THEIR TRANSFERS.

"IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SOME PEOPLE SAW THESE VIEWS AS A CONSTRAINT ON THE MARKET VALUE OF TAXI LICENCES," MR LEUNG SAID.

IN THE RECENT TAXI TENDER EXERCISE FOR 100 LICENCES WHICH CLOSED ON JULY 17 THIS YEAR, 394 TENDERS FOR 513 LICENCES WERE RECEIVED. ACCEPTED TENDERS FOR THE 100 LICENCES RANGED FROM \$596,000 TO \$608,700 FOR EACH LICENCE.

HOWEVER, AFTER THE RESULTS OF THE EXERCISE WERE NOTIFIED TO TENDERERS ON AUGUST 28, SIX SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS FOR 68 LICENCES DID NOT SETTLE PAYMENT OF FULL PREMIA WITHIN THE PRESCRIBED PERIOD OF 14 DAYS, MR LEUNG SAID.

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WAYS SOUGHT TO SIMPLIFY TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME

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THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING AT WAYS TO SIMPLIFY THE PILOT TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME FOR THE DISABLED TO ENCOURAGE MORE TAXI DRIVERS TO TAKE PART, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAULINE NG, MR BRIDGE SAID IF THESE PROVED IMPRACTICABLE, OTHER WAYS OF ENCOURAGING THE INTEGRATION OF THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED INTO SOCIETY WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PILOT TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF IDEAS BEING EXPLORED TO HELP THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED INTEGRATE BETTER INTO THE COMMUNITY.

/ "ITS PURPOSE .....

"ITS PURPOSE IS TO SEE WHETHER THE PROVISION OF A TAXI TRIP EACH WEEK FOR SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL PURPOSES WILL HELP SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND, IF SO, WHETHER A VOUCHER SCHEME WOULD BE PRACTICABLE BOTH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE DISABLED PERSON AND OF THE TAXI DRIVER," HE SAID.

MR BRIDGE SAID THE PILOT SCHEME WAS STARTED ON APRIL 1 AND WOULD LAST UNTIL MARCH 31 NEXT YEAR.

"THE PILOT SCHEME APPLIES TO PEOPLE 15 AND OVER WHO ARE WHEEL-CHAIR BOUND, WHOSE FAMILY INCOME IS BELOW THE MEDIAN LEVEL FOR HONG KONG AND WHO DO NOT OWN A TAX EXEMPT CAR," HE SAID.

OF A TOTAL OF ABOUT 1,000 WHEEL-CHAIR BOUND PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, 245 HAD SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED TO JOIN THE SCHEME.

HOWEVER, MR BRIDGE SAID, PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS HAD SHOWN THAT THE TAXI TRADE WAS FINDING THE SCHEME SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO OPERATE.

"IN MOST COUNTRIES WHERE SIMILAR SCHEMES HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL TAXIS ARE OWNED AND OPERATED BY LARGE COMPANIES, BUT IN HONG KONG MORE THAN 90 PER CENT OF TAXIS ARE OPERATED BY OWNER DRIVERS," HE EXPLAINED.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE ALREADY SPECIAL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS TO HELP THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED GET TO AND FROM THEIR PLACES OF WORK.

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#### LIABILITY OF AIR-CONDITIONER OWNERS EXPLAINED

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A PERSON DROPPING OR ALLOWING AN AIR-CONDITIONER TO FALL TO THE DANGER OR INJURY OF ANY PERSON IN OR NEAR A PUBLIC PLACE COMMITS AN OFFENCE AND IS LIABLE TO A FINE AND IMPRISONMENT UNDER SECTION 4B OF THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

HE SAID IF THIS OCCURRED DURING THE COURSE OF REPAIR OR DECORATION OF THE BUILDING, THE PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR ON THE SITE AND THE CONTRACTOR CARRYING OUT THE REPAIR OR DECORATION ALSO COMMITTED AN OFFENCE.

/HOWEVER, THE .....

"HOWEVER, THE CONTRACTOR WOULD NOT BE CONVICTED IF HE COULD PROVE THAT HE COULD NOT REASONABLY HAVE PREVENTED THE AIR-CONDITIONER FROM FALLING OR THAT HE HAD TAKEN REASONABLE MEASURES TO PREVENT SUCH AN OCCURRENCE."

MR ASPREY SAID IT MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE AN EASY MATTER TO DEFINE WHO WAS LIABLE UNDER THE FIRST PART OF SECTION 4B DESPITE THE ABSOLUTE NATURE OF THE OFFENCE.

NO DIFFICULTY AROSE WHERE A PERSON COULD BE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING DROPPED AN AIR-CONDITIONER, BUT IT WOULD NOT ALWAYS BE SO SIMPLE TO IDENTIFY, AND PROVE THAT A PERSON HAD ALLOWED AN AIR-CONDITIONER TO FALL, ESPECIALLY IN THE NOT UNCOMMON SITUATION WHEREBY PREMISES WERE LET AND SUB-LET.

IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE, UNDER THE TERMS OF THE LEASE OR SUB-LEASE, TO MAINTAIN THE PART OF THE BUILDING WHICH FAILED (IF THAT WAS THE CASE) AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY SPECIFIC PROVISION FOR MAINTENANCE OF FIXTURES INSTALLED BY TENANTS, MR ASPREY SAID.

HE SAID ALTHOUGH THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE WAS THE MOST RELEVANT PROVISION ON CRIMINAL LIABILITY OTHER OFFENCES COULD BE APPLICABLE DEPENDING ON HOW THE AIR-CONDITIONER CAME TO FALL OR BE DROPPED FROM A BUILDING.

"IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT A PERSON WHO DROPPED AN AIR-CONDITIONER FROM A BUILDING COULD BE GUILTY OF MURDER OR ATTEMPTED MURDER, IF THE REQUISITE INTENT COULD BE PROVED.

"IN LESS EXTREME CASES, MANSLAUGHTER, INFLECTING GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM OR THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF ASSAULT COULD BE RELEVANT," HE SAID.

AS REGARD STATUTORY PROVISIONS RELATING TO CIVIL LIABILITY, IN SUCH CASES THE OCCUPIER'S LIABILITY ORDINANCE WAS RELEVANT, MR ASPREY SAID.

"UNDER THIS ORDINANCE, THE OCCUPIER OF PREMISES OWES A COMMON DUTY OF CARE SUCH AS TO ENSURE THAT VISITORS WILL BE REASONABLY SAFE IN USING THE PREMISES FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THEY WERE INVITED OR PERMITTED BY THE OCCUPIER TO BE THERE.

"SO, WHERE AN AIR-CONDITIONER FALLS FROM HIS PREMISES, AND INJURES A VISITOR IN CIRCUMSTANCES RESULTING IN A BREACH OF THE COMMON DUTY OF CARE, THE OCCUPIER COULD BE HELD LIABLE.

"THE LANDLORD COULD ALSO BE HELD LIABLE IF HE HAS A CONTRACTUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN THE AIR-CONDITIONER AND HAS FAILED TO DO THIS, AS A RESULT OF WHICH FAILURE THE AIR-CONDITIONER DROPS OR FALLS FROM HIS PREMISES, THEREBY CAUSING INJURY OR DAMAGE," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY .....

MR ASPREY SAID AN OCCUPIER OR LANDLORD MIGHT ALSO BE LIABLE FOR NEGLIGENCE UNDER COMMON LAW FOR INJURY TO PASSERS-BY, OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY CAUSED BY A FALLING AIR-CONDITIONER AS A RESULT OF THE AIR-CONDITIONER NOT BEING PROPERLY MAINTAINED OR SECURED.

"HOWEVER, IF THE DAMAGE OR INJURY WAS CAUSED BY THE DEFECTIVE FITTING OF THE AIR-CONDITIONER, THE PERSON WHO CARRIED OUT THE FITTING MIGHT BE LIABLE," HE SAID.

"PROVIDED THAT THE OCCUPIER OR LANDLORD HAD ACTED REASONABLY IN ENTRUSTING THE WORK TO AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AND HAD TAKEN STEPS TO SATISFY HIMSELF THAT THE CONTRACTOR WAS COMPETENT AND THAT THE WORK HAD BEEN PROPERLY DONE, THE OCCUPIER OR LANDLORD WOULD NOT BE LIABLE."

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ACTIONS AGAINST DRIPPING AIR CONDITIONERS  
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A TOTAL OF 6,732 COMPLAINTS CONCERNING DRIPPING AIR CONDITIONERS WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN APRIL 1, 1983 AND SEPTEMBER 30, 1987, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI ON THE NUMBER OF SUCH NUISANCE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, MR CHAMBERS SAID REMEDIAL ACTION WAS TAKEN ON MOST OF THESE CASES AFTER VERBAL WARNINGS WERE GIVEN OR NUISANCE NOTICES ISSUED.

OF THESE CASES, TWO OF THEM HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED, RESULTING IN ONE OFFENDER BEING FINED \$200 AND THE OTHER \$250, HE ADDED.

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VEHICLE THEFT CASES DECLINE

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WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC, POLICE EFFORTS IN COMBATING VEHICLE THEFT ARE HAVING SOME SUCCESS, SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES REPORTED MISSING EACH YEAR HAD BEEN DECLINING STEADILY FROM 5,353 IN 1982 TO 2,607 IN 1985 AND 2,407 IN 1986.

BASED ON THE FIRST NINE MONTHS, THE FIGURE FOR THIS YEAR SHOULD BE AROUND 2,270, HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF MISSING VEHICLES SUBSEQUENTLY CLASSIFIED AS "THEFT OF VEHICLES" HAD ALSO DECLINED STEADILY FROM 1,532 IN 1982 TO 589 IN 1985 AND 421 IN 1986.

THIS CLASSIFICATION WAS DIFFERENT TO THE OFFENCE OF TEMPORARILY TAKING SOMEONE ELSE'S VEHICLE WITHOUT PERMISSION BUT WITH NO INTENTION TO KEEP IT, WHICH WAS CLASSIFIED IN LAW AS "TAKING A CONVEYANCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY", HE SAID.

NOTING THAT MANY VEHICLES WERE TAKEN BECAUSE OF CARELESSNESS ON THE PART OF THE OWNER, MR JEAFFRESON SAID VARIOUS MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO COMBAT THE CRIME.

"BY MEANS OF PUBLICITY, POLICE CRIME PREVENTION SEMINARS AND DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME CAMPAIGNS, THE PUBLIC ARE BEING CONSTANTLY URGED TO LOCK UP THEIR VEHICLES PROPERLY AND TO TAKE THE IGNITION KEYS AWAY WITH THEM," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE POLICE WERE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MISSING VEHICLES AND PAID SPECIAL ATTENTION TO VEHICLES PARKED IN REMOTE OR UNUSUAL PLACES.

"THEY MAKE FREQUENT CHECKS ON BACK STREET GARAGES, VEHICLE REPAIR SHOPS AND SPARE PARTS OUTLETS FOR MISSING VEHICLES AND STOLEN VEHICLE PARTS," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON ALSO SAID THAT THE POLICE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH LOCAL MOTOR VEHICLE DISTRIBUTORS.

"IN RECENT YEARS, MANUFACTURERS HAVE ADDED TO THE SECURITY OF PRIVATE CARS AND OTHER VEHICLES BY, FOR EXAMPLE, IMPROVING IGNITION AND LOCKING SYSTEMS," HE ADDED.

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COUNTERFEITING SYNDICATES NEUTRALISED

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THE SPECIAL DIVISION OF THE COMMERCIAL CRIME BUREAU RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF COUNTERFEIT BANKNOTES AND OTHER SECURE DOCUMENTS HAD SUCCESSFULLY NEUTRALISED A NUMBER OF WELL ORGANISED SYNDICATES LAST YEAR, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN ON MEASURES TAKEN TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF COUNTERFEIT BANKNOTES, IN BOTH HONG KONG AND FOREIGN CURRENCIES, MR JACOBS SAID FIVE PERSONS WERE CONVICTED FOR CONSPIRACY TO MANUFACTURE HK\$1,000 BANKNOTES AND WERE SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT EACH IN JULY THIS YEAR.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE SPECIAL DIVISION WAS CONTINUING TO CONDUCT ENQUIRIES OF BOTH OVERT AND COVERT NATURE INTO THE COUNTERFEIT SYNDICATES NEUTRALISED LAST YEAR.

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RESTRICTION ON NON-SCHEDULED FLIGHTS

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NON-SCHEDULED PASSENGER FLIGHTS ARE USUALLY NOT PERMITTED AT KAI TAK AIRPORT BETWEEN 12.30 PM AND 4.30 PM, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI, MR JACOBS SAID THIS RESTRICTION WAS REVIEWED LAST JANUARY AND IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT NO CHANGE SHOULD BE MADE AT THIS STAGE.

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HOUSING AUTHORITY TO PLAY GREATER ROLE IN  
THE LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY

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THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL HAVE AN EVEN GREATER ROLE TO PLAY IN THE YEARS AHEAD ONCE THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW LONG-TERM HOUSING STRATEGY IS IMPLEMENTED.

THIS WAS STATED BY MR JOHN TODD IN THE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW CHAPTER OF THE 1986-87 HOUSING AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT Tabled AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

REVIEWING THE WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AUTHORITY AND ITS EXECUTIVE ARM, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, MR TODD POINTED OUT THAT CONSIDERABLE AND SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES.

/THESE INCLUDED .....

THESE INCLUDED THE CONCLUSION OF THE REVIEW OF TWO IMPORTANT ISSUES - HOUSING SUBSIDY TO PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS AND THE DOMESTIC RENT POLICY.

IN ORDER TO KEEP TENANTS INFORMED OF THE CHANGES IN HOUSING SUBSIDY AND RENT POLICY AS WELL AS OTHER MATTERS THAT AFFECTED THEM, THE AUTHORITY LAUNCHED THE PUBLICATION OF A QUARTERLY NEWSPAPER IN NOVEMBER 1986.

COPIES OF THE PAPER WERE DELIVERED TO EACH OF THE 530 000 FAMILIES IN 119 PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND 60 TEMPORARY HOUSING AND COTTAGE AREAS AS ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT BY THE AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH IMPROVED CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH ITS TENANTS.

DURING THE YEAR, THE AUTHORITY BECAME A MAJOR PARTICIPANT IN THE CLEARANCE OF THE KOWLOON WALLED CITY. A SPECIAL COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED TO ADVISE ON REHOUSING AND COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING COVERED BY MR TODD'S REVIEW ARE:

CONSTRUCTION  
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THE AUTHORITY COMPLETED 41 477 FLATS DURING THE YEAR DESPITE THE FACT THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL BUILDING INDUSTRY FACED PROBLEMS IN RESPECT OF FINANCE, SKILLED LABOUR AND MANAGERIAL STAFF.

NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENTS IN JUNK BAY AND MA ON SHAN CONTINUED TO MAKE GOOD PROGRESS.

WORK ALSO STARTED DURING THE YEAR TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THREE MORE NEW ESTATES IN FANLING, LAM TIN AND KWAI CHUNG. AT THE SAME TIME, PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME CONSTRUCTION WERE CONTINUING AT VARIOUS STAGES IN OTHER AREAS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
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THE AUTHORITY'S REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CONTINUED IN EIGHT MARK I AND II ESTATES AS 28 MORE BLOCKS WERE DEMOLISHED TO MAKE WAY FOR MODERN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS.

THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN ACCELERATED SINCE 1983 AND, IN VIEW OF THE GOOD PROGRESS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, IT IS HOPED THAT REDEVELOPMENT CAN BE COMPLETED BY THE MIDDLE OF 1990 - SIX TO SEVEN MONTHS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS WAS ALSO MADE IN REHOUSING THE FAMILIES LIVING IN THE 26 OLD BLOCKS COVERED BY THE EXTENDED REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ERP).

/WORK BEGAN .....

WORK BEGAN DURING THE YEAR ON FIVE SUPPLEMENTARY SITES TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF 4 990 FLATS TO REHOUSE OTHER FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE PROGRAMME.

AT THE SAME TIME, CONSIDERABLE EFFORT WAS MADE TO SECURE FURTHER SUPPLEMENTARY SITES TO ENSURE THAT THE AUTHORITY'S COMMITMENT TO REPLACE ALL THE OLD FLATS LOST UNDER THE ERP WAS ACHIEVED.

#### HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME

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A TOTAL OF 13 658 FLATS IN SIX HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME (HOS) AND TWO PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME (PSPS) PROJECTS WERE OFFERED FOR SALE IN THREE SALES EXERCISES DURING THE YEAR.

RESPONSE TO THE SALES WAS OVERWHELMING AND THE SALES EXERCISE LAUNCHED IN MAY 1986 IN RESPECT OF 5 898 HOS AND PSPS FLATS ATTRACTED NEARLY 90 000 APPLICATIONS - A RECORD NUMBER SINCE THE HOS WAS INTRODUCED IN 1976, INDICATING THAT THESE FLATS ARE INCREASINGLY POPULAR WITH BOTH PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS AND ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

IN RESPONSE TO A DEMAND FOR LARGER FLATS BY POTENTIAL HOME-BUYERS, THE AUTHORITY DURING THE YEAR INTRODUCED A NEW CRUCIFORM DESIGN IN WHICH 60 PER CENT OF THE FLATS HAVE THREE BEDROOMS.

#### ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING

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WITH THE SUSTAINED HIGH LEVEL OF PRODUCTION OF RENTAL FLATS, THE AUTHORITY WAS ABLE TO MEET ITS PUBLIC HOUSING ALLOCATION COMMITMENT DURING THE YEAR BY ALLOCATING 37 558 FLATS.

AS PART OF ITS PROGRAMME TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS, THE AUTHORITY PLANS TO PROVIDE SHELTERED HOUSING WITH WARDEN SERVICE FOR THE ABLE-BODIED ELDERLY AGED 60 OR ABOVE. ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ABOUT 140 ELDERLY IN NEW ESTATES WITH MORE THAN 3 000 FLATS.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, 16 SHELTERED HOUSING PROJECTS WILL BE COMING ON STREAM, AND THE FIRST IS EXPECTED TO OPEN IN HENG ON ESTATE, MA ON SHAN, THIS YEAR.

#### COMMERCIAL PREMISES

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THE AUTHORITY IS AWARE OF THE CHANGE IN THE MODE OF SHOPPING ON THE PART OF ITS TENANTS, AND IS MEETING IT WITH A MORE INNOVATIVE APPROACH, BOTH IN DESIGN AND IN THE MARKETING OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN ESTATES.

A FLEXIBLE MARKETING APPROACH ADOPTED DURING THE YEAR IN LETTING COMMERCIAL PREMISES HAS PROVED SUCCESSFUL.

/UNDER THIS .....

UNDER THIS NEW MARKETING STRATEGY, A LETTING-BY-NEGOTIATION SYSTEM SUPPLEMENTS THE DEPARTMENT'S TRADITIONAL TENDER METHOD TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEW COMMERCIAL TENANTS.

#### TEMPORARY HOUSING

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THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT CONTINUED DURING THE YEAR TO ACQUIRE MORE LAND TO BOOST THE TEMPORARY HOUSING SUPPLY. AS A RESULT, NINE NEW TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS FOR 10 003 PEOPLE WERE COMPLETED AND DEVELOPMENT OF 23 NEW AREAS WITH 30 409 PERSON SPACES WAS UNDERWAY DURING THE YEAR.

DURING THE YEAR, INSTALLATION OF INDIVIDUAL WATER METERS IN THE OLDER TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WAS COMPLETED, RESULTING IN AN ANNUAL SAVING OF ABOUT \$15 MILLION.

#### SQUATTER CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT

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DURING THE YEAR, THE AUTHORITY MADE THE 1984-85 SQUATTER OCCUPANCY SURVEY AN ADDITIONAL CRITERION FOR PERMANENT PUBLIC HOUSING. SQUATTERS NOT REGISTERED IN THE SURVEY ARE ELIGIBLE ONLY FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING.

THE ADDITIONAL CRITERION WILL HELP TO PREVENT QUEUE-JUMPING FOR PERMANENT PUBLIC HOUSING BY PEOPLE TRYING TO MOVE TO AREAS SOON TO BE CLEARED FOR DEVELOPMENT.

IN THE YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT'S SQUATTER AREA IMPROVEMENTS DIVISION SPENT MORE THAN \$17 MILLION ON 11 NEW COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN LARGER SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOME 23 000 SQUATTERS.

A PROGRAMME HAD ALSO BEEN FORMULATED TO INSTALL 600 PUBLIC LIGHTS IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN 40 SQUATTER AREAS WHERE NO COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS ARE PLANNED.

#### CLEARANCE

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THE DEPARTMENT CARRIED OUT A NUMBER OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCES FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PROJECTS, INCLUDING HOUSING ESTATES, SCHOOLS, PARKS, DRAINAGE SCHEMES AND ROADS.

AS A RESULT OF THESE AND OTHER CLEARANCES, 37 056 PEOPLE WERE RE-HOUSED - 20 614 IN PERMANENT PUBLIC HOUSING AND 16 442 IN TEMPORARY HOUSING.

NOTABLE AMONG THE MAJOR CLEARANCES WAS THE ONE CARRIED OUT ON A 52.9 HECTARE SITE IN TAI PO TO MAKE WAY FOR A PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE, HOS AND PSPS PROJECTS, GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES AS WELL AS PRIVATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP PROJECTS WILL PROVIDE MODERN HOMES FOR MORE THAN 20 000 PEOPLE.

ANOTHER MAJOR CLEARANCE WHICH BEGAN DURING THE YEAR INVOLVED SIX VILLAGES IN SHAU KEI WAN EAST AND THE REHOUSING OF NEARLY 11 000 PEOPLE IN PERMANENT PUBLIC AND TEMPORARY HOUSING.

THE VILLAGES ARE BEING CLEARED TO MAKE WAY FOR A LARGE PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE WITH 5 500 FLATS FOR 23 000 PEOPLE.

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PAROLE BOARD'S VIEWS CONSIDERED BEFORE PROSECUTION

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IN EXERCISING HIS DISCRETION WHETHER OR NOT TO INSTITUTE A PROSECUTION OVER BREACH OF A SUPERVISION ORDER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION BOARD, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, ASSURED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP DEBATE ON THE PRISONERS (RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION) BILL 1987, MR JEAFFRESON HAD NOTED CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED THAT IN THE CASE OF A BREACH OF A SUPERVISION ORDER, THERE MIGHT BE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST BETWEEN THE FINDINGS OF THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION BOARD AND THE DECISION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WITH REGARD TO PROSECUTION.

MR JEAFFRESON ALSO REFERRED TO THREE POINTS ON WHICH THE HON HO KAM-FAI HAD ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OR FURTHER ASSURANCES.

AS TO WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WOULD BE APPOINTED TO LOOK AFTER OFFENDERS RELEASED ON PAROLE, HE SAID THEY WOULD BE AFTERCARE OFFICERS OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, AS INDEED WAS THE CASE WITH YOUNG PRISONERS RELEASED ON SUPERVISION AT PRESENT. THESE AFTERCARE WORKERS WERE PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED, HE ADDED.

MR JEAFFRESON ALSO SAID THE PROVISION FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO REVOKE A SUPERVISION ORDER UNDER CLAUSE 14(3) HAD BEEN INCLUDED AS AN EMERGENCY PREVENTIVE MECHANISM FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC.

"IF HE HAS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRISONER RELEASED UNDER SUPERVISION IS ABOUT TO POSE A THREAT TO THE PUBLIC, IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO BE ABLE TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO RETURN THIS PRISONER TO CONFINEMENT," HE SAID.

/THE BILL .....

THE BILL HAD PROTECTIVE CLAUSES, MR JEAFFRESON WENT ON. FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER CLAUSE 15(2) THE COMMISSIONER WOULD HAVE TO REPORT THE FACT THAT HE HAD REVOKED THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION ORDER TO THE SUPERVISION BOARD AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, AND HE WOULD HAVE TO INFORM THE RE-IMPRISONED PRISONER OF THE REASONS WHY HE HAD REVOKED IT.

THEN THE PRISONER HIMSELF, UNDER CLAUSE 16(1) HAD THE RIGHT TO APPLY TO THE GOVERNOR, THROUGH THE BOARD, FOR A REVIEW OF THE COMMISSIONER'S DECISION.

REFERRING TO THE COMMENT THAT SOME MEMBERS FOUND IT UNDULY HARSH TO REQUIRE AN OFFENDER TO FORFEIT HIS EARNED REMISSION WHEN HE OPTED FOR RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION SCHEME, MR JEAFFRESON SAID HE HAD CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY WITH THAT VIEW.

"THE QUESTION OF THIS LOSING OF REMISSION, UPON OPTING FOR RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION SCHEME, WILL BE ONE OF THE POINTS THAT WE WILL VERY CAREFULLY RE-EXAMINE WHEN WE COME TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEME IN THREE YEARS' TIME," HE SAID.

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NEW PAROLE SCHEME WELCOMED  
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THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION AND PRE-RELEASE EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES FOR PRISONERS PROVIDED FOR IN THE PRISONERS (RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION) BILL 1987 WOULD BE WELCOMED AS A STEP FORWARD IN THE REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS, THE HON PETER C. WONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN HIS CAPACITY AS CONVENER OF A LEGCO AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL, MR WONG SAID THE TWO SCHEMES COULD BE REGARDED AS A FIRST ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPT OF PAROLE IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID IN 1972 A GOVERNMENT WORKING PARTY HAD STUDIED CAREFULLY A PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A SYSTEM OF PAROLE IN HONG KONG. HOWEVER, THE SYSTEM WAS NOT PURSUED AT THE TIME, LARGELY BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE AFTERCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

"WE HAVE SINCE THEN GAINED CONSIDERABLY MORE EXPERIENCE IN THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS," HE NOTED.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF A PAROLE SYSTEM WAS TO HELP OFFENDERS TO REFORM AND FACILITATE THEIR RETURN TO SOCIETY.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID PAROLE WOULD ONLY BE GRANTED TO PRISONERS WHO HAD A CHANCE OF REHABILITATION AND WHO WERE GENUINELY WILLING TO DISSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.

"THERE IS NO REDUCTION IN THE LENGTH OF SENTENCE TO BE SERVED BY A PRISONER UNDER EITHER OF THE TWO SCHEMES," HE NOTED, ADDING THAT THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WAS THAT THE PRISONER WOULD BE GRANTED A PERIOD OF PARTIAL LIBERTY SO THAT HE COULD ADJUST GRADUALLY TO COMMUNITY LIFE.

MR WONG SAID MEMBERS OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP SUPPORTED THE BROAD PRINCIPLES OF THE TWO PROPOSED SCHEMES. HOWEVER, THEY FELT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD MONITOR CAREFULLY THREE AREAS UPON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEMES.

THE FIRST AREA CONCERNED THE DIFFERENT BUT RELATED ROLES PLAYED BY THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION BOARD AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN REGARD TO THE HANDLING OF MINOR BREACHES OF SUPERVISION ORDERS.

HE SAID GIVEN THAT ANY BREACH OF CONDITIONS OF A SUPERVISION ORDER WAS IN EFFECT A CRIMINAL OFFENCE, AND THAT THE DECISION TO PROSECUTE WAS VESTED IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MEMBERS ANTICIPATED A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

"ALTHOUGH THE BOARD RECOMMENDS AGAINST THE REVOCATION OF A SUPERVISION ORDER AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY STILL DECIDE TO GO AHEAD WITH A PROSECUTION," HE NOTED.

"THIS COULD LEAD TO CONTRADICTIONS BECAUSE ONCE A RELEASED PRISONER IS CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE AND SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT, HIS SUPERVISION ORDER WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REVOKED," HE ADDED.

THEREFORE, GOOD CO-ORDINATION SHOULD BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO AVOID POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM MINOR BREACHES OF SUPERVISION ORDERS, HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID THE SECOND AREA OF CONCERN RELATED TO THE POWER OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO REVOKE A SUPERVISION ORDER.

HE SAID THERE SHOULD BE A CLEAR DELIMITATION OF THE COMMISSIONER'S POWER SO THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ACCUSED OF ABUSING HIS POWER.

THE THIRD AREA WAS THE LENGTH OF THE SUPERVISION PERIOD, MR WONG SAID.

"PRISONERS WHO OPT FOR THE PROPOSED RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION SCHEME WILL LOSE ALL REMISSION EARNED BY VIRTUE OF THE IMPRISONMENT SERVED BEFORE JOINING THE SCHEME," HE SAID.

/MR WONG .....

MR WONG SAID MEMBERS RECOGNISED THAT A BALANCE WOULD HAVE TO BE STRUCK BETWEEN THE INCENTIVES FOR PRISONERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SCHEME AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT HAVING THE SCHEME CONSTRUED AS A SOFTENING OF HONG KONG'S EFFORTS IN PREVENTING CRIME.

"BUT SOME MEMBERS CONSIDER IT UNDULY HARSH FOR A PRISONER TO LOSE HIS REMISSION UPON HIS OPTING FOR THE SCHEME, AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE EARNED REMISSION HE DEDUCTED FROM THE SUPERVISION PERIOD," HE SAID.

FINALLY, MR WONG NOTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD UNDERTAKEN TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TWO SCHEMES IN REFORMING OFFENDERS AFTER A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS SO THAT POSSIBLE ADJUSTMENTS COULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF THE OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW.

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PAROLE BILL WILL NOT SOFTEN ANTI-CRIME APPROACH

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THE PRISONERS (RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION) BILL 1987 SHOULD NOT BE PERCEIVED AS AN ATTEMPT TO SOFTEN THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINED APPROACH TO COMBAT CRIMES, ESPECIALLY THE VIOLENT AND SERIOUS ONES, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, DR HO SAID THE MAIN FEATURE OF THE BILL WAS TO RELEASE AN OFFENDER BEFORE HE HAD FULLY SERVED HIS SENTENCE. THE OFFENDER WAS THEN PLACED UNDER SUPERVISION, AND WAS GIVEN REGULAR COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE UP TO THE FULL LENGTH OF HIS SENTENCE.

"AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE LENGTH OF THE SENTENCE IS BY NO MEANS REDUCED, BUT THE OFFENDER IS ONLY GIVEN AN OPTION AS TO HOW HE WANTS TO SERVE HIS SENTENCE," HE SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, AN OFFENDER WHO CONTRAVENES THE CONDITIONS OF HIS SUPERVISION ORDER IS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$5,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR 12 MONTHS.

"AN OFFENDER WHO IS CONVICTED OF A NEW OFFENCE DURING HIS SUPERVISION PERIOD AND SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT WILL ALSO FACE THE PROSPECT OF HAVING HIS SUPERVISION ORDER REVOKED," HE ADDED.

DR HO SAID THAT THE PRIMARY AIM OF THE BILL WAS IN LINE WITH THE COMMUNITY'S SENTIMENTS TO REHABILITATE OFFENDERS ALONGSIDE PUNITIVE MEASURES FOR THEIR WRONGDOINGS.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL WERE ADEQUATE TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF BOTH THE OFFENDERS AND THE SOCIETY, AND THAT THE OFFENDERS MIGHT BE REIMPRISONED UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE BILL WOULD BE APPLIED JUDICIOUSLY TO ONLY THOSE OFFENDERS WHO WERE MOST LIKELY TO BENEFIT FROM IT, THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL WAS VESTED WITH THE POWER TO PRESCRIBE IN THE REGULATIONS THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION BOARD AND TO SPECIFY IN THE TWO SCHEDULES TO THE REGULATIONS PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE MAKING OF A SUPERVISION ORDER.

NOTING THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE RELEASE SCHEME PROVIDED FOR IN THE BILL RELIED HEAVILY ON THE QUALITY OF AFTERCARE SERVICES, DR HO SAID HE WAS GLAD TO NOTE THAT THE COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE CAPABILITIES OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OFFICERS HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED IN RECENT YEARS AS A RESULT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES UNIT AND THE COMMISSIONING OF TWO INTENSIFIED IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMMES WITH THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY FOR ITS OFFICERS.

NEVERTHELESS, DR HO RAISED THREE POINTS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO CLARIFY AND TO GIVE FURTHER ASSURANCES.

FIRSTLY, CLAUSE 10 OF THE BILL PROVIDED THAT SUPERVISION OF A RELEASED OFFENDER WOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY SUCH PERSONS AS SPECIFIED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES.

"IN PRACTICE, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WILL BE APPOINTED TO LOOK AFTER THE OFFENDERS? WILL THE APPOINTEES BE PERSONS OTHER THAN OFFICERS OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT? IF SO, WHAT QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED OF THE APPOINTEES AND HOW CAN THEY BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES?" DR HO ASKED.

SECONDLY, CLAUSE 14(3) PROVIDED FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO REVOKE A SUPERVISION ORDER, IF IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT PUBLIC INTEREST REQUIRED AN OFFENDER TO BE REIMPRISONED IMMEDIATELY.

DR HO THEN ASKED: "WILL THIS LEAD TO POSSIBLE ABUSES OF POWER? UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS WILL THIS CONCEPT OF 'PUBLIC INTEREST' BE INVOKED? HOW DOES THIS PROVISION RECONCILE WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE OFFENDER AS AN INDIVIDUAL?"

THIRDLY, DR HO SAID SOME LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS HAD FOUND IT UNDULY HARSH TO REQUIRE AN OFFENDER TO FORFEIT HIS EARNED REMISSION WHEN HE OPTED FOR THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION SCHEME.

HE SAID: "IN ORDER TO MAKE THE SCHEME FAIRER AND MORE ATTRACTIVE TO OFFENDERS, THEY PROPOSED THAT THE EARNED REMISSION BE DEDUCTED FROM THE SUPERVISION PERIOD."

"THIS PROPOSAL COULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEME IS REVIEWED AFTER A PERIOD OF OPERATION FOR THREE YEARS," HE ADDED.

SCHEMES FOR PRISONERS MAJOR STEPS FORWARD

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THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION SCHEME AND THE PRE-RELEASE EMPLOYMENT SCHEME FOR PRISONERS ARE MAJOR STEPS TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATIVE SYSTEM FOR OFFENDERS, THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN SAID THESE WERE THE VIEWS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS AND AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE HE FULLY ENDORSED THEIR VIEWS.

HE SAID THE COMMITTEE FELT THAT THE SCHEMES PROVIDED AN ADJUSTMENT PROCESS TO HELP PRISONERS WHO HAD BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SOME TIME TO RE-INTEGRATE INTO THE COMMUNITY.

"AS LONG AS THE SCREENING PROCESS IS DONE CAUTIOUSLY, THE SCHEMES PROVIDE AN INCENTIVE FOR REHABILITATION AND A STIMULANT TO STRENGTHEN PRISONERS' WILL TO LEAD A NEW LIFE AND TO STRIVE FOR IT."

HE SAID SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEMES DEPENDED ON THREE FACTORS:

- (1) INTENSIVE AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT MUST BE MADE BY THE RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION BOARD ON EVERY APPLICATION. THE GUIDELINES AND RULES FOR THE SCHEMES MUST BE CAREFULLY LAID DOWN. THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PRISONER UNDER REVIEW SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN GREAT DETAIL.
- (2) SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT: APART FROM THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS MUST AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE SUPPORT. ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF RESOURCES IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEMES.
- (3) SUPPORT FROM THE PUBLIC: BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF THE SCHEMES WILL BE SEVERELY RESTRICTED IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM THE PUBLIC. THE FACT THAT PRISONERS ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE AN EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT BEFORE THEY WOULD BE GRANTED EARLY RELEASE MAKES IT NECESSARY TO HAVE EMPLOYERS SUPPORTING THE SCHEMES BY OFFERING JOBS.

MR CHAN ALSO CONVEYED THE SOCIETY'S READINESS TO CONTRIBUTE ITS ASSISTANCE TO THE SCHEMES.

AMENDMENT TO BILL SUPPORTED

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A PROPOSAL BY THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NT) BILL THAT THE BILL BE AMENDED TO REMOVE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS AND OTHER PERSONS WAS SUPPORTED BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR ASPREY SAID HE HAD COME TO THE VIEW THAT A DISTINCTION IN THE TREATMENT OF DIFFERENT CLASSES OF PEOPLE UNDER THIS BILL WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE.

"IT IS NOT JUSTIFIED ON GROUNDS OF SAFETY OR PUBLIC HEALTH," HE SAID.

THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL, IN PARTICULAR THE STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, AND THE PROVISION FOR SEPARATE CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION FOR BUILDING WORKS, SITE FORMATION WORKS AND DRAINAGE WORKS, WOULD ADEQUATELY SAFEGUARD THE SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS OF VILLAGE HOUSES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

ONLY SOME 10 PER CENT OF SUCH HOUSES WERE BUILT BY PERSONS OTHER THAN INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS, MR ASPREY SAID.

HE SAID THE EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE WOULD REMAIN LIMITED TO THE NEW TERRITORIES.

"VERY FEW HOUSES WHICH MIGHT QUALIFY FOR THE EXEMPTION ARE IN FACT BUILT ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND IN KOWLOON, AND AT PRESENT THERE IS LITTLE PUBLIC DEMAND OR NEED TO EXTEND THE EXEMPTION OUTSIDE THE NEW TERRITORIES," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, IN REPLY TO MR CHENG'S POINT, THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS NOW EXAMINING THE FEASIBILITY OF ALLOWING EXEMPTIONS FROM THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIED MINOR BUILDING WORKS, INCLUDING SMALL HOUSES, THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

"IF PROPOSALS ON THESE LINES ARE EVENTUALLY INCLUDED IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, SEPARATE LEGISLATION TO LIMIT THE APPLICATION OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WILL NO LONGER BE NECESSARY," HE SAID.

SPEAKING DURING THE BILL'S COMMITTEE STAGE, MR ASPREY SAID IN CLAUSE 2 THE DEFINITION OF "BUILDING WORKS" EXCLUDED "SITE FORMATION WORKS, DRAINAGE WORKS OR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEAWALLS OR RETAINING WALLS".

"HOWEVER, ON FURTHER EXAMINATION, THE EXCLUSION OF RETAINING WALLS FROM THE DEFINITION OF 'BUILDING WORKS' IS UNNECESSARY AND CONFUSING," HE SAID.

/"RETAINING WALLS .....

"RETAINING WALLS ARE PART OF SITE FORMATION WORKS, AND IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE INTENTION THAT THEY MIGHT IN APPROPRIATE CASES BE EXEMPTED TOGETHER WITH OTHER SITE FORMATION WORKS.

"I THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT REFERENCE TO 'RETAINING WALLS' IN THE DEFINITION OF 'BUILDING WORKS' BE DELETED," MR ASPREY SAID.

HE SAID CLAUSE 5 AT PRESENT SAID THAT THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS MIGHT ISSUE A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN SPECIFIED BUILDING WORKS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

"THE USE OF WORD 'MAY' IMPLIES SOME DISCRETION BY THE DIRECTOR, WHICH, SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE, IS NOT THE INTENTION.

"THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 5 WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE DIRECTOR SHALL ISSUE A CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION WHERE THE BUILDING WORKS COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE," MR ASPREY SAID.

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RIGHTS OF VILLAGE HOUSE OWNERS PROTECTED

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR AND HEUNG YEE KUK CHAIRMAN, THE HON LAU WONG-FAT, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WELCOMED A MOVE BY THE AUTHORITIES TO MAKE APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NEW TERRITORIES) BILL 1986 SO THAT INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY AND THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY OWNERS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PROTECTED.

MR LAU WAS SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL.

ON BEHALF OF THE OWNERS OF VILLAGE HOUSES AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK, MR LAU THANKED THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL FOR ITS EFFORTS TO BRING A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE MATTER.

EXPLAINING THE ISSUE IN DETAIL, HE SAID VILLAGE HOUSES (I.E. SMALL HOUSES) HAD ALWAYS BEEN EXEMPTED BUILDINGS FOR WHICH THE OWNERS DID NOT NEED TO SUBMIT CONSTRUCTION PLANS.

/HOWEVER, WITH .....

HOWEVER, WITH THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN RECENT YEARS, THE LIVING STANDARD OF NT VILLAGERS HAD BEEN RAISED CONSIDERABLY AND THE KUK SAW A NEED TO IMPROVE THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF NEW TERRITORIES RESIDENTS. IT THEREFORE PROPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE THE PERMITTED HEIGHT OF SMALL HOUSES FROM 25 FEET TO 27 FEET IN ORDER TO GIVE RESIDENTS BETTER VENTILATION AND A BETTER LIVING ENVIRONMENT.

THE ADMINISTRATION FOUND THE PROPOSAL REASONABLE AND FELT THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO AMEND THE REGULATION CONCERNING EXEMPTIONS FROM PROVISIONS OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS ORDINANCE. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO INTENDED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO PROVISIONS GOVERNING THE STRUCTURE OF SUCH BUILDINGS AND TECHNICALITIES OF THE FOUNDATION WORKS.

HOWEVER, WHEN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NEW TERRITORIES) BILL 1986 WAS GAZETTED, THE KUK FOUND A LARGE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF THE BILL AND THE ORIGINAL INTENTION. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE BILL MADE A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR LAU NOTED.

NON-INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS HAD TO SUBMIT CONSTRUCTION PLANS WHEN THEY REBUILT THEIR HOUSES. MOREOVER, IN SUCH CASES, THE RECONSTRUCTION AREA HAD TO BE REDUCED CONSIDERABLY AND THERE MIGHT EVEN BE HOUSES WHICH COULD NOT BE REBUILT WHEN TOPOGRAPHIC FACTORS PREVENTED THEM FROM MEETING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, HE ADDED.

MR LAU SAID THE KUK CONSIDERED THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WERE NEITHER FAIR NOR REASONABLE TO NON-INDIGENOUS PROPERTY OWNERS.

HE ALSO SAID EARNEST EXAMINATION OF THE CASE AND DISCUSSIONS BY THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP AND THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED BROUGHT ABOUT APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL.

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EQUAL DEAL FOR INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS

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THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED THAT THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NEW TERRITORIES) BILL 1986 SHOULD BE REMOVED.

MR CHENG, CONVENOR OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL, SAID ORIGINALLY CLAUSE 5(A) OF THE BILL, WHICH PROPOSED TO RESTRICT EXEMPTION TO ONLY BUILDINGS BUILT BY INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES, HAD RAISED A NUMBER OF PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.

/AFTER THOROUGH .....

AFTER THOROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK, MEMBERS FELT THAT SUCH RESTRICTION WAS "NEITHER REALISTIC NOR PRACTICAL".

"NOT REALISTIC BECAUSE UNDER EXISTING REGULATIONS, SMALL HOUSES ARE EXEMPTED FROM BUILDINGS ORDINANCE PROCEDURES WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE BUILT OR OWNED BY INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS.

"THE PROPOSAL IN THE BILL TO RESTRICT THE EXEMPTION TO INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS ONLY WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE MARKET VALUE, SALE AND MORTGAGE OF SMALL HOUSES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES," MR CHENG SAID.

EXPLAINING WHY THE RESTRICTION WAS NOT PRACTICAL, HE SAID OWNERS OF MANY SMALL HOUSES WHO WERE NON-INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO REBUILD THEIR HOUSES ON SITE BECAUSE OF MANY REQUIRMENTS WHICH HAD TO BE COMPLIED WITH IF THE EXEMPTION CEASED TO BE APPLICABLE.

MR CHENG SAID THE AD HOC GROUP WAS PLEASED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, ON RECONSIDERATION, AGREED THAT AMENDMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO CLAUSE 5(A) TO REMOVE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS.

WITH THE AMENDMENTS TO BE MOVED AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE, HE SAID THE BILL WOULD EMERGE AS "A VERY MUCH IMPROVED AND MUCH MORE PRACTICAL PIECE OF LEGISLATION".

MOREOVER, MR CHENG FELT THERE MIGHT BE GOOD REASONS TO ALLOW CERTAIN EXEMPTIONS FROM THE BUILDING ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS FOR SMALL BUILDING WORKS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE SMALL HOUSES OUTSIDE THE NEW TERRITORIES.

HE THEREFORE HOPED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD IN DUE COURSE REVIEW THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE AND CONSIDER EXTENDING THE EXEMPTION APPROPRIATELY.

MR CHENG EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL, WHICH WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE EXISTING BUILDINGS ORDINANCE NOW BEING REPEALED, RAISED THE HEIGHT OF SMALL HOUSES FROM 7.62 METRES TO 8.23 METRES TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THREE-STOREY HOUSES WITH REASONABLE CEILING HEIGHT AND VENTILATION.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED CERTAINTY OF EXEMPTION TO VARIOUS CLASSES OF BUILDINGS AND BUILDING WORKS BY INTRODUCING THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION FREE OF CHARGE.

AT THE SAME TIME, CONDITIONS RELATING TO SAFETY AND HEALTH MIGHT BE IMPOSED ON THE CERTIFICATES, THUS ENSURING THE SAFETY AND HYGIENE OF SMALL HOUSES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

EXEMPTION FOR SITE FORMATION AND DRAINAGE WORK MIGHT ALSO BE GIVEN, BUT BY SEPARATE CERTIFICATES, HE ADDED.

DEFINITION OF "QUALIFIED ENGINEER" NEEDS FURTHER CONSIDERATION  
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THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN MOVED A RESOLUTION AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO EXTEND THE PERIOD DURING WHICH THE COUNCIL MIGHT MAKE AMENDMENTS TO THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (SPECIFIED PROCESSES) REGULATIONS 1987 UNTIL NOVEMBER 4, 1987.

THE RESOLUTION WAS MOVED UNDER SECTION 34 OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE.

MR CHENG SAID IN THE COURSE OF SCRUTINISING THE REGULATIONS, IT HAD EMERGED THAT THE DEFINITIONS OF "AUTHORISED PERSON" AND "QUALIFIED ENGINEER" NEEDED FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

THE THREE-WEEK EXTENSION WOULD ALLOW TIME FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO MAKE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS TO THE REGULATIONS ON OR BEFORE THE LEGCO SITTING ON NOVEMBER 4, 1987, HE EXPLAINED.

MR CHENG SAID HE HAD ALREADY MET WITH THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HEALTH AND WELFARE AND LANDS AND WORKS BRANCHES IN ORDER TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE DIFFICULTIES.

"I BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE WILL BE POSITIVE, THUS ENABLING IMPROVEMENTS TO BE MADE TO THE DEFINITIONS WITHIN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS," HE SAID.

"IN THE MEANTIME IT IS RIGHT IN PRINCIPLE THAT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S POWER TO MAKE THE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS SHOULD BE PRESERVED," HE ADDED.

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'UNOFFICIAL' TITLE TO BE DELETED  
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THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS (MEMBERS) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO DELETE THE TITLE "UNOFFICIAL" FROM HONG KONG ORDINANCES WHEREVER IT APPEARS AND TO REPLACE IT BY REFERENCES TO MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR FORD SAID CORRESPONDING AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS WERE AGREED BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AT THE MEETING ON JULY 14 THIS YEAR.

MR FORD RECALLED THAT WHEN THE LATE GOVERNOR, SIR EDWARD YOUBE, ADDRESSED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1986/87 SESSION, HE ANNOUNCED THE DECISION TO DISCONTINUE THE TITLE "UNOFFICIAL" AND ALSO TO RENAME UMELO (THE OFFICE OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS) TO OMELO (THE OFFICE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS).

THE BILL WOULD THEREFORE COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF MOVING THE TITLE OF "UNOFFICIAL" TO THE HISTORY BOOKS.

"THIS IS A STEP WHICH I KNOW MEMBERS WILL WELCOME SINCE THE NEW FORM EMPHASISES THAT WE ARE ALL, WHETHER OFFICIALS OR OTHERWISE, MEMBERS TOGETHER OF THE SAME COUNCIL," MR FORD ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TAX RELIEF MEASURES PROPOSED

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THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO EXCLUDE FROM LIABILITY TO HONG KONG SALARIES TAX ANY INCOME THAT A PERSON DERIVES FROM SERVICES RENDERED OUTSIDE HONG KONG, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR JACOBS SAID THE BILL WAS APPLICABLE "ONLY IF THE INCOME IS LIABLE TO A TAX SIMILAR TO HONG KONG SALARIES TAX IN THE TERRITORY WHERE HE RENDERED THE SERVICES AND IT CAN BE ESTABLISHED THAT TAX HAS BEEN PAID THERE IN RESPECT OF THAT INCOME."

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL DID NOT GO AS FAR AS HIS 1987-88 BUDGET SPEECH, IN WHICH HE PROPOSED THAT THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR THE AUTOMATIC GRANTING OF TIME APPORTIONMENT WHERE, IN A YEAR OF ASSESSMENT, AN EMPLOYEE RENDERED SERVICES OUTSIDE HONG KONG FOR PERIOD MORE THAN 60 DAYS IN TOTAL.

MR JACOBS SAID HE HAD THREE REASONS FOR INTRODUCING THE TIME APPORTIONMENT AMENDMENT. FIRSTLY, HE SAID ASSESSMENT TO SALARIES TAX OF EMPLOYEES WHO RENDERED SERVICES BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE HONG KONG HAD BECOME A GROWING AREA OF DISPUTE BETWEEN THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT AND TAXPAYERS. THIS UNCERTAINTY IN THE LAW NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED, HE ADDED.

"SECONDLY, I WANTED TO PROVIDE A MEASURE OF RELIEF IN DOUBLE TAXATION CASES, GIVEN THAT AN OVERALL REVIEW OF DOUBLE TAXATION BY THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE, WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO COMPLETE," MR JACOBS SAID.

AND LASTLY, HE SAID HE WANTED TO LIMIT THE COST TO THE REVENUE OF HIS PROPOSAL TO BETWEEN 25 AND 35 MILLION DOLLARS.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID IT BECAME CLEAR THAT A DISTINCTION SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN HONG KONG AND NON-HONG KONG EMPLOYMENTS, AS THOSE TERMS WERE PRESENTLY UNDERSTOOD, AND THAT WITHOUT THIS DISTINCTION THE AMBIT OF THE PROPOSAL MIGHT BE TOO BROAD, COULD BE EXPLOITED AND WOULD COST THE REVENUE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN ANTICIPATED.

HE SAID ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS THAT AFTER HE HAD DELIVERED HIS BUDGET SPEECH, THE HIGH COURT HANDED DOWN JUDGMENT IN A TAX CASE CONCERNING A CLAIM FOR TIME APPORTIONMENT. "THIS WAS THE NOW WELL-KNOWN GOEPFERT DECISION," HE ADDED.

"IN REACHING ITS DECISION, THE COURT GAVE VALUABLE GUIDANCE AS TO WHAT DETERMINED IN A PARTICULAR CASE WHETHER TIME APPORTIONMENT WOULD BE ALLOWED UNDER THE EXISTING LAW."

"SIGNIFICANTLY, AFTER REFERRING TO MATTERS WHICH WERE RELEVANT, THE COURT CONCLUDED THAT THE PLACE WHERE SERVICES WERE RENDERED WAS NOT ONE TO BE CONSIDERED AND SHOULD BE IGNORED," HE SAID.

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, MR JACOBS SAID HE WITHDREW HIS ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND CONSULTATION.

HE SAID ARISING OUT OF THE GOEPFERT DECISION, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE HAD BEEN ABLE TO DRAW UP SIMPLE GUIDELINES IN THE PRACTICE NOTES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER TIME APPORTIONMENT SHOULD BE GRANTED.

THE COMMISSIONER COULD NOW GIVE SECTION 8 OF THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE AN INTERPRETATION WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT, IN PRACTICALLY ALL CASES, A TAXPAYER WOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM LIABILITY TO PAY HONG KONG SALARIES TAX ON THAT PART OF HIS INCOME DERIVED FROM SERVICES PERFORMED OUTSIDE HONG KONG WHERE -

- \* THE CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT WAS NEGOTIATED, AND ENTERED INTO, AND IS ENFORCEABLE OUTSIDE HONG KONG; AND
- \* THE EMPLOYER IS RESIDENT OUTSIDE HONG KONG; AND
- \* THE EMPLOYEE'S REMUNERATION IS PAID TO HIM OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

FOLLOWING THE JUDGEMENT AND THE INTERPRETATION NOW PLACED UPON SECTION 8 BY THE COMMISSIONER, MR JACOBS SAID SALARIES TAXPAYERS WOULD BE DIVIDED INTO TWO DISTINCT CATEGORIES.

"FIRST, TAXPAYERS WHO HAVE A HONG KONG SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT, AND WHO ARE TAXABLE ON ALL INCOME FROM THAT EMPLOYMENT WHETHER THEY RENDER SERVICES IN OR OUTSIDE HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"SECOND, TAXPAYERS WHO HAVE A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE HONG KONG AND WHO ARE ONLY TAXABLE ON INCOME DERIVED FROM SERVICES RENDERED IN HONG KONG."

MR JACOBS ADDED THAT BOTH CATEGORIES WERE EXEMPTED FROM CHARGE UNDER SECTION 8(1A)(B) AND (1B) IF THEY VISITED HONG KONG FOR LESS THAN 60 DAYS IN A YEAR OF ASSESSMENT.

HE SAID THE GOEPFERT CASE HAD HELPED CLARIFY THE POSITION OF THE SECOND CATEGORY OF TAXPAYERS, WHO OFTEN WOULD BE EMPLOYEES OF MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES WORKING IN HONG KONG.

HOWEVER, MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT TAXPAYERS WHO HAD A HONG KONG SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT AND WHO WERE LIABLE TO DOUBLE TAXATION AS A RESULT OF THEIR RENDERING SERVICES OUTSIDE HONG KONG WOULD NOT BENEFIT FROM THE GUIDELINES ARISING OUT OF THE GOEPFERT CASE.

"THUS IN THE ABSENCE OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAW, RELIEF FROM DOUBLE TAXATION WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL WOULD APPLY IN RELATION TO THE YEAR OF ASSESSMENT COMMENCING APRIL 1, 1987 AND ALL SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF ASSESSMENT.

WHILE NOTING THAT THE RATIONALE INHERENT IN HIS ORIGINAL PROPOSAL REMAINED UNALTERED, MR JACOBS SAID THE PRESENT BILL REPRESENTED A WISER SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

HE THANKED MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS WHO TOGETHER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ACCOUNTANTS PROFESSION, TAX CONSULTANTS, LAWYERS AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE HAD GIVEN THE ADMINISTRATION WELL-CONSIDERED AND PATIENT ADVICE DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD.

"WHERE TAX IS IN DISPUTE WE CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE ALL OF THE TIME. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THIS BILL PRESENTS THE MOST SATISFACTORY, EQUITABLE AND CERTAIN WAY FORWARD," HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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SUPPLEMENTARY FUND SOUGHT

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EXPENDITURE CHARGED TO 57 HEADS WAS IN EXCESS BY \$2,413.8 MILLION OF THE SUM APPROPRIATED FOR THOSE HEADS IN 1986-87, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1986-87) BILL 1987, MR JACOBS SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE SUFFICIENT OFFSETTING ITEMS COULD NOT BE FOUND WITHIN THE HEADS CONCERNED.

/THE EXCESS .....

THE EXCESS WAS LARGELY ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE TWO SALARY REVISIONS IN 1986 FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND GOVERNMENT SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS, AND FOR THE PAYMENT OF PERSONNEL RELATED ALLOWANCES.

OTHER MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTORS INCLUDED THE PAYMENT TO THE MASS TRANSIT FUND TO ENABLE THE PROCEEDS OF A DEBT REPAYMENT BY THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION TO BE SET ASIDE TOWARDS AN EQUITY INJECTION FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION IN 1987-88; AND THE REORGANISATION OF THE LANDS AND WORKS GROUP OF DEPARTMENTS.

THE BILL SOUGHT TO GIVE FINAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR THIS AMOUNT OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION ALREADY APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OR UNDER POWERS DELEGATED BY IT, MR JACOBS SAID.

MR JACOBS ALSO SAID THAT ACTUAL REVENUE IN 1986-87 AMOUNTED TO \$43,869.6 MILLION AND TOTAL EXPENDITURE \$39,927.7 MILLION, MAKING A FINAL SURPLUS OF \$3,941.9 MILLION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL WIDENS LIABILITY

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A BILL AIMED AT WIDENING THE LIABILITY FOR THE OFFENCE FROM THE REGISTERED OWNER TO ANYONE WHO PERMITS AN UNLICENSED PERSON TO DRIVE A VEHICLE WAS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1987, MR LEUNG SAID THAT UNDER THE EXISTING ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE THE OFFENCE OF ALLOWING A PERSON WITHOUT A REQUISITE LICENCE TO DRIVE A VEHICLE WAS LIMITED TO THE REGISTERED OWNER OF THE VEHICLE.

IT DID NOT COVER THE SITUATION WHERE SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE REGISTERED OWNER ALLOWED AN UNLICENSED THIRD PARTY TO DRIVE THE VEHICLE.

"IN SUCH CASES, NO ONE CAN BE CHARGED WITH THE OFFENCE AND THIS IS CLEARLY UNSATISFACTORY ON TRAFFIC SAFETY GROUNDS," MR LEUNG SAID.

THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES BY THE POLICE GIVING RECORDS OF CONVICTIONS OF OFFENCES UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

SECTION 75(5) OF THE ORDINANCE EMPOWERS THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, UPON PAYMENT OF A FEE, TO ISSUE TO THE HOLDER OF A DRIVING LICENCE A RECORD OF ALL CONVICTIONS IN RESPECT OF THAT PERSON.

MR LEUNG SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PROVISION DID NOT COVER THE ISSUE OF A CERTIFICATE IF THE APPLICANT HAD NOT COMMITTED ANY OFFENCE UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION, THE BILL AMENDED THIS SECTION TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ALSO TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES SHOWING THAT A PERSON HAD A RECORD OF NO CONVICTION OF OFFENCES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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REMOVAL OF DENTISTS' REGISTRATION ANOMALY  
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THE DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 SEEKS TO AMEND THREE PROVISIONS ON REGISTRATION IN THE DENTAL SERVICES.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID THE BILL WOULD PROVIDE FOR DENTISTS HOLDING COMMONWEALTH QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNISED BY THE DENTAL COUNCIL OF HONG KONG TO BE REGISTERED ON THE SAME BASIS AS THOSE WHOSE QUALIFICATIONS ARE RECOGNISED BY THE GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

"AT PRESENT, DENTISTS HOLDING COMMONWEALTH QUALIFICATIONS WHICH ARE NOT RECOGNISED BY THE GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM CANNOT BE REGISTERED FOR PRACTICE IN HONG KONG WITHOUT FIRST SATISFYING THE DENTAL COUNCIL OF HONG KONG AS TO THEIR FITNESS IN TERMS OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS, AND THIS NORMALLY INVOLVES THEIR HAVING TO PASS A QUALIFYING EXAMINATION," HE SAID.

/"THE DENTAL .....

"THE DENTAL COUNCIL TAKES THE VIEW THAT PERSONS HOLDING SUCH QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO GO THROUGH SUCH CUMBERSOME PROCEDURES," HE ADDED.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED THAT PERSONS IN THE FULL-TIME SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG FOR THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING OR PERFORMING HOSPITAL WORK IN THE FACULTY OF DENTISTRY OF THE UNIVERSITY WOULD BE DEEMED TO BE REGISTERED AND WOULD HENCE BE EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION.

"THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO PERFORM DENTAL TREATMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING IN THE FACULTY," MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

HE SAID THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED THAT DENTISTS REGISTERED BY PASSING THE DENTAL COUNCIL'S EXAMINATION SHOULD ALSO BE ELIGIBLE FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE DENTAL COUNCIL AND THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CHAIRMAN DURING COUNCIL MEETINGS, ANY MEMBER PRESENT AT THE MEETING SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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THREE BILLS PASSED  
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THREE BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE: WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987; PRISONERS (RELEASE UNDER SUPERVISION) BILL 1987; AND BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NEW TERRITORIES) BILL 1986.

MEANWHILE, FIVE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THEY ARE: EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS (MEMBERS) BILL 1987; INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1987; SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1986-87) BILL 1987; DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987; AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1987. DEBATE ON THE FIVE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

A MOTION SEEKING TO EXTEND UNTIL NOVEMBER 4, 1987, THE PERIOD FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO AMEND REGULATION ON AIR POLLUTION CONTROL WAS APPROVED.

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PRIVATE INVESTMENT EQUALLY IMPORTANT, GOVERNOR  
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GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE MUST BE MATCHED BY PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN OTHER AREAS, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG AND CHINA GAS COMPANY'S PRODUCTION PLANT AT TAI PO, SIR DAVID SAID, "THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS PLANT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE NECESSARY PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVE."

"AS HONG KONG CONTINUES TO PROSPER, THE DEMAND FOR PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES INCREASES. IN PARTICULAR, THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAS LED TO A MASSIVE EXPANSION THERE IN THE OPERATION OF ALL UTILITY COMPANIES," SIR DAVID ADDED.

HE NOTED THAT THE DECISION TO BUILD THE PLANT WAS TAKEN BY THE COMPANY IN 1984 DURING A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY OVER HONG KONG'S FUTURE.

HE SAID: "THE INVESTMENT OF HK\$860 MILLION WAS A SIGN OF THE COMPANY'S CONFIDENCE IN, AND COMMITMENT TO, THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG."

"THIS CONFIDENCE AND COMMITMENT HAVE PROVED TO BE WELL JUSTIFIED."

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT THE DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL SECTORS OF THE NEW TOWNS IN THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY SUPPLY OF TOWNGAS, WITH THE COMMISSIONING OF THE PLANT AND ITS LINK BY PIPELINE TO FANLING AND SHEUNG SHUI.

HE ADDED THAT THE SERVICE WOULD SOON BE EXTENDED TO YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN.

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FURTHER STEP AHEAD FOR CULTURAL CENTRE  
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THE COMPLETION OF PHASE 2 OF THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE WILL TAKE HONG KONG A STEP FURTHER IN ESTABLISHING ITS POSITION AS AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, SAID THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING.

"THE COMPLETION OF THIS PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE HONG KONG WITH A WORLD-CLASS FACILITY CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING THE TOP LEVEL PRODUCTIONS AND PERFORMANCES," SAID MR FORD AT THE TOPPING-OUT CEREMONY OF PHASE 2 OF THE PROJECT.

/NOTING THAT .....

NOTING THAT THE LAST DECADE HAD SEEN A GROWING INTEREST IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, HE SAID: " IN PARALELL WITH THIS GROWTH HAS BEEN THE COMPLETION OF OTHER MAJOR VENUES SUCH AS THE HONG KONG COLISEUM, THE ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS AND THE TOWN HALLS IN SHA TIN AND TUEN MUN."

HE ALSO PRAISED THE URBAN COUNCIL FOR THE CONTRIBUTION IT HAD MADE TO HONG KONG'S PROGRESS IN THE CULTURAL FIELD.

"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE, INCLUDING THE SPACE MUSEUM AND MUSEUM OF ART, WILL BE A LOCAL LANDMARK OF DISTINCTION, A SIGNIFICANT AND EXCITING AMENITY AND A MEETING PLACE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND OVERSEAS VISITORS," SAID MR FORD.

WHILE NOTING THE SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT SIGNIFIED BY TODAY'S CEREMONY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR GERRY FORSGATE, SAID HE WAS EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE GRAND OPENING IN LATE 1989.

HE SAID THE SPACE MUSEUM WAS THE FIRST PHASE OF THE COMPLEX; THE AUDITORIA, RESTAURANTS AND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FORMED PHASE II.

WHEN COMPLETED THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE WOULD ALSO HOUSE THE NEW MUSEUM OF ART WHICH WOULD COME TO FRUITION IN 1990, THUS PROVIDING A HOME FOR THE ARTS ON "THIS PROMINENT HARBOUR FRONT SITE".

"THE AUDITORIA BUILDING WILL BE A FOCAL POINT FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS: BOTH FROM THE WORLD OVER AND BY LOCAL TALENTS," MR FORSGATE SAID. "THE CONCERT HALL, GRAND THEATRE AND STUDIO THEATRE WILL ADD NEW HORIZONS TO THE ARTS SCENE IN HONG KONG, AND INDEED TO THE WHOLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA."

THE SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR OF KUMAGAI GUMI COMPANY LIMITED, MR MOTOO OTSUKA, WHOSE COMPANY IS THE CONTRACTOR OF THE PROJECT, SAID IT WAS PLEASING TO NOTE THAT THE PROJECT, UNLIKE SO MANY OTHER NOTABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS AROUND THE WORLD, WAS RUNNING ON SCHEDULE AND WOULD BE COMPLETED NEXT YEAR.

"WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE, A COMPLEX WHICH IS BOUND TO HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON HONG KONG'S CULTURAL STATUS," MR OTSUKA SAID.

THE AUDITORIA BUILDING WILL INCLUDE A 2,200-SEAT CONCERT HALL, A 1,800-SEAT GRAND THEATRE AND A STUDIO THEATRE WITH VARIABLE SEATING CONFIGURATIONS FOR 300 TO 500 PEOPLE AND FOUR DIFFERENT STAGE FORMATS.

THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING WILL CONTAIN AN ARTS LIBRARY, A MARRIAGE REGISTRY AND OFFICES.

THE SECOND PHASE INCLUDES A RESTAURANT BLOCK WITH TWO RESTAURANTS.

THE MUSEUM OF ART WILL BE DEVELOPED AS PHASE 3 AND A GARDEN AS PHASE 4.

THE TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTING PHASES 1 - 3 IS \$679.4 MILLION.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE CEREMONY, MR FORD SAID THE CENTRE WOULD "HERALD A NEW ERA OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN HONG KONG". "I THINK WE CAN ALL BE VERY JUSTLY PROUD OF THIS BUILDING WHICH WE TOPPED OUT THIS MORNING," MR FORD SAID.

HE SAID INTEREST IN THE CULTURAL FIELD AND THE PERFORMING ARTS WAS INCREASING ALL THE TIME.

"THE SUCCESS OF THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE URBAN COUNCIL IS THERE FOR EVERYBODY TO SEE.

"I SEE NO REASON WHY THIS SHOULD NOT CONTINUE TO INCREASE. IT WILL NEED VERY GOOD ORGANISATION. IT WILL NEED VERY GOOD PROMOTION, BUT I KNOW THAT THE URBAN COUNCIL ARE FOCUSING ON THIS SUBJECT AND I HAVE NO DOUBT AT ALL THAT IT WILL BE A SUCCESSFUL VENUE," MR FORD SAID.

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HONG KONG'S ENTREPOT STATUS ASSURED  
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THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, MR PETER TSAO, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THAT HONG KONG'S ENTREPOT STATUS APPEARED ASSURED AND ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT GUARANTEED.

ADDRESSING A SYMPOSIUM ON DOING BUSINESS WITH CHINA HELD AT ERASMUS UNIVERSITY OF ROTTERDAM, MR TSAO SAID THAT IN RECENT YEARS HONG KONG'S ROLE AS AN ENTREPOT, PARTICULARLY OF CHINA TRADE HAD EXPANDED DRAMATICALLY.

"INDEED, THE GROWTH RATE IN VALUE TERMS OF RE-EXPORTS HAS OUTPACED THE GROWTH RATE FOR DOMESTIC EXPORTS, WITH RE-EXPORTS ACCOUNTING FOR ALMOST HALF OF OUR TOTAL EXPORTS IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1987.

/"THE TOTAL .....

"THE TOTAL VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS IN 1986 WAS US\$15.7 BILLION. IN THIS CONTEXT, CHINA IS INVOLVED IN NEARLY 80 PER CENT OF OUR RE-EXPORTS, EITHER AS A MARKET OR AS A SOURCE OF SUPPLY," MR TSAO SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ENTREPOT TRADE TOGETHER WITH THE FACT THAT CHINA, AFTER THE UNITED STATES, WAS THE SECOND LARGEST MARKET FOR HONG KONG'S DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND THE LARGEST SUPPLIER OF HONG KONG'S IMPORTS, HAD RESULTED IN CHINA BECOMING HONG KONG'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER.

ON THE INDUSTRIAL SCENE, MR TSAO TOLD THE SYMPOSIUM THAT HONG KONG HAD BEEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN RECENT YEARS THROUGH JOINT VENTURES, CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING AND ASSEMBLING AGREEMENTS.

"SINCE CHINA ADOPTED ITS OPEN DOOR POLICY IN 1979, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT DIRECT INVESTMENT IN CHINA BY HONG KONG COMPANIES HAS AMOUNTED TO US\$6 BILLION, REPRESENTING 60 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN CHINA. A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF THIS INVESTMENT HAS BEEN CHANNELLED INTO CHINA'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

"HONG KONG INDUSTRIALISTS, CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING MANUFACTURING PROCESSES IN CHINA, ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT FOR UP TO ONE MILLION CHINESE WORKERS," MR TSAO NOTED.

OUTLINING VARIOUS FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO HONG KONG'S CONTINUED PROSPERITY AND STABILITY UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION, MR TSAO SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE CURRENT BURGEONING FOREIGN CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG, PARTICULARLY FROM CHINA, WHICH WAS ESTIMATED TO HAVE INVESTED ON HONG KONG OVER US\$5 BILLION DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS.

"JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND HAVE ALSO JOINED BRITAIN, THE NETHERLANDS AND AMERICA AND OTHER INVESTORS OF LONG-STANDING, AS SHAREHOLDERS IN OUR EXPANDING ECONOMY.

"I BELIEVE THAT ALL THE INGREDIENTS EXIST FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG'S ENTREPOT STATUS IN THE CONTEXT OF DOING BUSINESS WITH CHINA," MR TSAO SAID.

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BOAT PEOPLE: HK'S PLIGHT EXPLAINED

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS BEEN URGED TO LOOK URGENTLY FOR AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF TACKLING THE CONTINUING ARRIVALS IN HONG KONG OF ECONOMIC MIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM, MANY OF WHOM ARE NOT CONSIDERED BY RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AS GENUINE REFUGEES.

THE APPEAL WAS MADE BY THE PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR NIGEL FRENCH, DURING THE 38TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES HELD IN GENEVA BETWEEN OCTOBER 5 AND 12.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AT THE AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING, MR FRENCH SAID HONG KONG'S PLIGHT CONCERNING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WAS SPELLED OUT AT THE SESSION, AND THE RESPONSE WAS ENCOURAGING.

"IN MY STATEMENT AND IN VARIOUS OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS I DREW ATTENTION TO THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE THIS YEAR AND LAST IN ARRIVALS IN HONG KONG FROM VIETNAM AS WELL AS THE DRAMATIC DECLINE IN RESETTLEMENT OFF-TAKE IN 1987," MR FRENCH SAID.

"I SAID THE RESULTANT INCREASE IN THE REFUGEE POPULATION WAS GIVING RISE TO CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC DISQUIET AND A GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION IN HONG KONG.

"I URGED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO LOOK URGENTLY FOR AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF TACKLING THE CONTINUING ARRIVALS IN HONG KONG OF ECONOMIC MIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM, MANY OF WHOM ARE NOT CONSIDERED BY RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AS GENUINE REFUGEES.

"THE RESPONSE TO MY STATEMENT WAS ENCOURAGING. THE UNHCR AND DELEGATES FROM THE MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WERE AWARE OF OUR SITUATION, BUT IN SOME CASES NOT FULLY AWARE OF THE STRENGTH OF FEELING IN HONG KONG ABOUT IT. THEY HOPED HOWEVER THAT HONG KONG WOULD NOT TAKE ANY PRECIPITATE ACTION."

MR FRENCH SAID DELEGATES FROM OTHER PLACES OF FIRST ASYLUM IN THE SOUTH-EAST ASIAN REGION INFORMALLY EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR HIS STATEMENT. HE ADDED THAT THEY AGREED IN PARTICULAR THAT METHODS SHOULD URGENTLY BE SOUGHT FOR TACKLING THE OUTFLOW OF ECONOMIC MIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM, WHICH WAS A PROBLEM FACING ALL PLACES OF FIRST ASYLUM, NOT JUST HONG KONG.

"OBVIOUSLY IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO EMERGE FROM AN INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF THIS SORT. HOWEVER THE PROBLEMS STILL BEING POSED BY VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, AND SOUTH-EAST ASIAN REGION GENERALLY, ARE THE SUBJECT OF MUCH THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION AT AN INCREASINGLY INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT SOLUTIONS WILL IN DUE COURSE EMERGE," MR FRENCH SAID.

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SCHEME'S FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS ACCEPTED

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ACCEPTED THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SCHEME PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO COMPENSATE PENSIONABLE OFFICERS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO RETIRE OR WHO ARE SUPERSEDED FOR PROMOTION TO FACILITATE LOCALISATION BETWEEN NOW AND 1997.

THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, PHASED OVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1987-88 TO 1996-97, ARE ESTIMATED AT \$100 MILLION AT CURRENT PRICES.

THE COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR IS ESTIMATED AT \$3.7 MILLION.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE SCHEME WOULD APPLY TO PENSIONABLE OFFICERS APPOINTED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1985, THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH FOLLOWING THE INITIALLING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"ANY PERSON JOINING THE SERVICE AFTER THIS DATE SHOULD BE FULLY AWARE OF ANY CONSTRAINTS ON HIS FUTURE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT ABOUT 100 OFFICERS, MAINLY IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE AND THE POLICE, WOULD BE AFFECTED AND BE ELIGIBLE UNDER THE SCHEME.

THE PRINCIPAL COMPENSATION PROVIDED FOR ELIGIBLE OFFICERS UNDER THIS SCHEME IS A LUMP SUM CALCULATED BY MULTIPLYING THE OFFICER'S ANNUAL SALARY BY A FACTOR ACTUARIALLY APPROPRIATE TO HIS AGE AND SERVICE. IN ADDITION, IN THE CASE OF OFFICERS BELOW THE AGE OF 55, THERE IS SOME ADDITION TO THE VALUE OF THEIR PENSION BENEFITS.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT A CEILING WAS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE SCHEME AS IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT WITHOUT A CEILING THE COMPENSATION PAYABLE COULD BE EXCESSIVE.

A LIMIT HAS THEREFORE BEEN IMPOSED OF THE ANNUAL VALUE OF SALARY AT MASTER PAY SCALE POINT 48 MULTIPLIED BY THE MAXIMUM COMPENSATION FACTOR OF 4.76. AT CURRENT LEVELS THIS PROVIDES FOR MAXIMUM COMPENSATION OF ABOUT \$1.5 MILLION. HOWEVER, MOST PAYMENTS WOULD BE BELOW THIS LEVEL.

"THE COMPENSATION CEILING WILL BE ADJUSTED AUTOMATICALLY IN LINE WITH FUTURE SALARY INCREASES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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SURVEY ON LIVESTOCK FARMS TOMORROW

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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT A SURVEY WILL START TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO TAKE STOCK OF EXISTING LIVESTOCK FARMS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING PRELIMINARY ELIGIBILITY FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES UNDER THE LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL SCHEME.

"WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTROLS, FARMERS IN PROHIBITION AREAS AND THOSE IN CONTROL AREAS WHO ARE UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES," HE SAID.

"FARMS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS. IN OTHER WORDS, FARMS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE SURVEY WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE," HE ADDED.

ALL LIVESTOCK FARMS IN HONG KONG WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY, EXCEPT STRUCTURES WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN SCREENED FOR CLEARANCE BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

THE SURVEY WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION.

THE SURVEY IS PART OF THE LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL PROGRAMME, WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN LEGISLATIVE EFFECT BY THE PASSAGE OF THE WASTE DISPOSAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

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UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR JUNE - AUGUST

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IN THE THREE MONTHS JUNE - AUGUST 1987, BOTH THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES REMAINED STABLE AT A LOW LEVEL, COMPARED WITH THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1987, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THESE FIGURES INDICATE THAT THE LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS HAVE REMAINED TIGHT, WITH THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FULLY EMPLOYED.

THE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR JUNE - AUGUST 1987 WAS 1.8 PER CENT COMPARED WITH 1.9 PER CENT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1987 AND THREE PER CENT FOR THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER.

/THE DECREASE .....

THE DECREASE OF 0.1 PERCENTAGE POINT BELOW THE PREVIOUS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS STATISTICALLY NOT SIGNIFICANT. WHILE THE DECREASE OF 1.2 PERCENTAGE POINTS BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IN JUNE - AUGUST 1987 WAS ESTIMATED AT 50,500, WHICH WAS THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1987; AND THAT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1986 WAS 81,700.

THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE FOR JUNE - AUGUST 1987 WAS ONE PER CENT WHICH COMPARES WITH 1.1 PER CENT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1987. THE RATE FOR JUNE - AUGUST 1986 WAS 1.5 PER CENT .

THE DECREASE OF 0.1 PERCENTAGE POINT BELOW THE PREVIOUS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS STATISTICALLY NOT SIGNIFICANT, WHILE THE DECREASE OF 0.5 PERCENTAGE POINT BELOW THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS FOR JUNE - AUGUST 1987 WAS 27,400, COMPARED WITH 29,600 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING MAY 1987 AND 39,900 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1986.

CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO), PERSONS WHO WORKED LESS THAN 35 HOURS A WEEK DUE TO ECONOMIC REASONS (SUCH AS SLACK WORK, MATERIAL SHORTAGE, MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN AND INABILITY TO FIND FULL-TIME WORK) WERE REGARDED AS UNDEREMPLOYED ONLY IF THEY WERE EITHER SEEKING OR AVAILABLE FOR MORE WORK.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS SAID THAT BECAUSE THE PROPORTION OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS (E.G. PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST LEFT SCHOOL) VARIES FROM MONTH TO MONTH, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES THAT HAD BEEN SEASONALLY ADJUSTED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE VARIATIONS IN THE NUMBER OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS SHOULD BE USED IN MAKING COMPARISONS OVER TIME.

THE COMMISSIONER ADDED THAT, BASED ON A SYSTEM OF MANUAL EXTRACTION OF INFORMATION FROM SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE LATEST MONTH, PROVISIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES COVERING THE LATEST THREE-MONTH PERIOD COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE SURVEY. THESE PROVIDE AN EARLY INDICATION OF THE LATEST TREND IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT SITUATION.

THE PROVISIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED, FOR JULY - SEPTEMBER 1987 WAS 1.8 PER CENT AND THE PROVISIONAL UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE WAS ONE PER CENT.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS WERE OBTAINED FROM A CONTINUOUS GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT. THIS SURVEY COVERS A QUARTERLY SAMPLE OF SOME 14,000 HOUSEHOLDS OR 50,000 PERSONS, SELECTED SCIENTIFICALLY TO REPRESENT THE LAND-BASED CIVILIAN NON-INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN HONG KONG.

PERSONAL AND LABOUR FORCE DATA WERE OBTAINED IN THE SURVEY BY INTERVIEWING EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AGED 15 AND ABOVE IN THE HOUSEHOLDS SAMPLED. IN THE SURVEY, THE DEFINITIONS USED IN MEASURING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT FOLLOW CLOSELY THOSE RECOMMENDED BY THE ILO.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS IS GIVEN IN THE REPORT ON THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WHICH IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR. THE NEXT REPORT COVERING THE QUARTER ENDING SEPTEMBER 1987 SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE AROUND DECEMBER 20, 1987 AT \$9.50 PER COPY.

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PROMOTION OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES RECOGNISED

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING THE WIDER USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY HAS ALREADY BEEN RECOGNISED IN HONG KONG BY THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR A.G. EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE 7TH HONG KONG ELECTRONICS FAIR, MR EASON SAID THE BOARD HAD RECENTLY ENDORSED PROPOSALS AIMED AT PROVIDING FURTHER SUPPORT FOR THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY.

"THESE PROPOSALS WERE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SURFACE MOUNT TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY, AND A RADIO FREQUENCY AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS LABORATORY, AND FORM PART OF A PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO EXPAND THE SERVICES OF THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL," HE ADDED.

"IN ADDITION TO A SCHEME TO TRAIN ELECTRONIC ENGINEERS IN APPLICATION SPECIFIC INTEGRATED CIRCUIT DESIGN, THE SUPPLY OF ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS FROM THE POLYTECHNICS WILL ALSO BE INCREASED IN THE 1988-1991 TRIENNIUM."

HE POINTED OUT THAT RECENT OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM NEW APPLICATIONS OF ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING A SYSTEM FOR THE AUTOMATED MANUFACTURE OF INTEGRATED CIRCUITS.

"A TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDY ON THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY WILL BE UNDERTAKEN NEXT YEAR, WHICH SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IS NECESSARY AND, IF SO, WHAT KIND."

MR EASON SAID THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY WAS A SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY AT PRESENT PRECISELY BECAUSE OF ITS READINESS IN THE PAST TO ADAPT TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND TO INVEST IN NEW MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT.

"THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE INDUSTRY FROM ITS EARLY DAYS, IN TERMS OF GROWTH, DIVERSIFICATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS, HAS BEEN MORE SPECTACULAR THAN IN ANY OF HONG KONG'S OTHER MAJOR INDUSTRIES.

"IT IS, AFTER TEXTILES AND CLOTHING, HONG KONG'S SECOND LARGEST EXPORT EARNER, ACCOUNTING FOR ALMOST 22 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE TERRITORY'S DOMESTIC EXPORTS, AND PROVIDING JOBS FOR NEARLY 90,000 WORKERS."

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IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN ENGLISH LANGUAGE, CHAU  
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THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR T.H. CHAU, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE FOR HONG KONG TO MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM WAS THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE WHICH WAS THE LIFE-BLOOD OF THE TERRITORY'S PROSPERITY.

"ENGLISH IS ALSO THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE IN THE FIELDS OF BANKING, FINANCE, INDUSTRY, TECHNOLOGY AND TOURISM; AND ONE OF THE REASONS WHY, IN SPITE OF OUR LACK OF NATURAL RESOURCES, HONG KONG HAS BECOME SUCH A SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL CENTRE HAS BEEN OUR ABILITY TO PRODUCE A POOL OF EDUCATED PEOPLE POSSESSING A RELATIVELY HIGH STANDARD OF ENGLISH," MR CHAU SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE PRESIDENTIAL INSTALLATION DINNER OF THE SOROPTIMIST CLUB OF HONG KONG, MR CHAU SAID: "I USE THE WORD 'RELATIVELY' BECAUSE THE RELATIVE EASE WITH WHICH FOREIGNERS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH HONG KONG COMPANIES AND PEOPLE IS SURELY A FACTOR WHICH HAS GIVEN US AN EDGE OVER SOME OF OUR CLOSEST COMPETITORS IN THE REGION."

MR CHAU SAID AN ASSET WHICH GAVE HONG KONG TRADE NEGOTIATORS A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE OVER MANY OTHER THIRD WORLD EXPORTERS WAS PRECISELY THE FACILITY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS EMPHASISING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH, HE WAS NOT DOWNGRADING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHINESE OR TO PROMOTE THE USE OF ENGLISH AT THE EXPENSE OF CHINESE.

"IN A COMMUNITY WHERE 99 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION ARE CHINESE AND WHERE OUR ALREADY IMPORTANT LINKS WITH CHINA ARE BECOMING MORE SIGNIFICANT EVERY DAY AS WE APPROACH 1997, THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A HIGH STANDARD OF CHINESE IS SELF-EVIDENT AND FULLY RECOGNISED.

"IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT, WITH THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF CHINESE AS A LANGUAGE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE COURTS AND WITH THE INCREASING USE OF THE MOTHER-TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF TEACHING IN OUR SCHOOLS, THE STANDARD OF CHINESE IS BOUND TO KEEP ON IMPROVING," SAID MR CHAU.

BEYOND THE CHINESE-SPEAKING WORLD OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE AREA COMMITTEES, THE MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND THE GRASSROOTS GENERALLY, TO WHICH I HAVE BECOME SO ACCUSTOMED, ENGLISH IS STILL THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE," HE ADDED.

"THE DANGER FOR HONG KONG IS THAT AS WE MOVE TOWARDS BECOMING A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION UNDER CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY AND AS MORE SCHOOLS, WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S ENCOURAGEMENT, SWITCH OVER TO USING THE MOTHER-TONGUE IN TEACHING, THERE MIGHT DEVELOP A TENDANCY FOR IT TO BECOME LESS AND LESS FASHIONABLE TO USE ENGLISH OR EVEN TO LEARN IT," MR CHAU SAID.

"THAT WOULD BE A MISTAKE," HE SAID.

MR CHAU STRESSED THAT HONG KONG'S CONTINUING PROSPERITY DEPENDS ON ITS REMAINING AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE AND THAT MEANS HAVING A HIGH STANDARD OF ENGLISH.

MR CHAU PRAISED THE SOROPTIMIST CLUB OF HONG KONG FOR FULFILLING ITS OBJECTIVES IN INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND FOR CONTRIBUTING TO CHARITABLE ORGNISATIONS.

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STREET SLEEPERS IN WAN CHAI CLEARED

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ABOUT 20 TO 30 STREET SLEEPERS IN THE O'BRIEN ROAD PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT IN WAN CHAI WERE CLEARED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) FOLLOWING A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION CO-ORDINATED BY THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT OFFICE.

"THE STREET SLEEPERS HAVE BEEN CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE IN THE AREA FOR A LONG TIME AS THEY ACCUMULATED PILES OF JUNKS, CAMP BEDS AND UTENSILS UNDER A COVERED WALKWAY ADJACENT TO A CONSTRUCTION SITE," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DISTRICT OFFICE SAID.

"DESPITE WEEKLY TIDY-UP EXERCISE CONDUCTED BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE STREET SLEEPERS CONTINUED TO SQUAT THERE AND IMPEDED PEDESTRIAN FLOW AROUND THE MTR STATION ENTRANCE AT RUSH HOURS.

"THE SITUATION HAS BECOME SO MUCH OF AN EYESORE THAT THE DISTRICT OFFICE RECEIVED A NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS FROM RESIDENTS AND THE DEVELOPERS," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

TODAY'S OPERATION WAS CO-ORDINATED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND CARRIED OUT BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE POLICE.

DURING THE OPERATION, THE STREET SLEEPERS WERE ADVISED TO LEAVE THE AREA AND THE PILES OF JUNKS LEFT BEHIND WERE REMOVED BY URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF.

AFTER THE CLEARANCE, THE COVERED WALKWAY WAS FENCED OFF SO THAT IT COULD NOT BE USED AS TEMPORARY SHELTER BY STREET SLEEPERS IN THE FUTURE.

THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO MONITOR THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND INITIATE CLEAN-UP ACTION, IF NECESSARY, TO ENSURE THAT THE PRECINCT WILL NOT BE RE-OCCUPIED BY STREET SLEEPERS.

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DTC LICENCE REVOKED

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THE ACTING COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF LIPKLAND FINANCE (HK) LTD AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1987

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MONG KOK CLEANS UP REAR LANES  
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A CLEARANCE OPERATION WAS LAUNCHED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT THE REAR LANES OF 159-185 AND 296-328 SAI YEUNG CHOI STREET IN MONG KOK.

FIVE STRUCTURES USED FOR DOMESTIC AND STORAGE PURPOSES AS WELL AS FIVE CANOPIES WERE PULLED DOWN. THREE PERSONS WERE AFFECTED.

THIS WAS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES BEING LAUNCHED IN THE DISTRICT.

FIVE MORE OPERATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN THE FOLLOWING MONTHS TO RID REAR LANES OF ILLEGAL EXTENSIONS AND STRUCTURES.

TODAY'S CLEARANCE WAS CO-ORDINATED BY THE MONG KOK DISTRICT OFFICE, AND JOINTLY CARRIED OUT BY THE HOUSING, LANDS, POLICE AND URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

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YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD TO MEET  
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THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS A PROPOSED PLAN OF INSTALLING OVERHEAD POWER LINES FROM YUEN LONG TO LAI CHI KOK.

THE CHINA LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY LIMITED PROJECT IS TO MEET THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE OF ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION IN THE 1990'S.

ELECTED MEMBER, MR TAI CHIN-WAH, WILL ASK ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY TOWARDS VILLAGE SCHOOLS; HOW THE RECENT DISCOVERY OF GEOLOGICAL DEFECTS HAS AFFECTED THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF YUEN LONG AND WHETHER THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN LONG PING ESTATE WILL BE JEOPARDISED OR DELAYED BECAUSE OF THE SHORTFALL IN POPULATION.

THE BOARD WILL ALSO STUDY PROGRESS REPORTS FROM THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE NINE COMMITTEES UNDER THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING AT 9.30 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD, 13TH FLOOR, TAI KIU GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG.

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SAI KUNG DISTRICT YOUTH RALLY

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT YOUTH RALLY IN SUPPORT OF THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN.

THE AIMS OF THE RALLY ARE TO PROMOTE THE MESSAGE OF "KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN" AND TO AROUSE THE INTEREST OF LOCAL YOUTHS IN ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE CAMPAIGN'S ACTIVITIES.

THE RALLY IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 14 AT THE SAI KUNG TANG SHIU KIN SPORTS GROUND.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 10 AM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD, SECOND FLOOR, SAI KUNG GOVERNMENT OFFICES, MAN NIN STREET, SAI KUNG TOWN.

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DB TO REVIEW BUILDING TEAM PROGRESS

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THE PROGRESS OF WORK OF THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BUILDING MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATING TEAM WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD AT A MEETING TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE TEAM HAS CONDUCTED DETAILED SURVEYS ON 27 BUILDINGS IDENTIFIED WITH MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS, AND PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO MANAGEMENT BODIES TO HELP UPGRADE LIVING CONDITIONS OF RESIDENTS.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO REVIEW THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE BOARD AS WELL AS PROGRESS OF THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND VARIOUS COMMITTEES FORMED UNDER THE BOARD.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 2.30 PM AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM, MONG KOK DISTRICT OFFICE, 157 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

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COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDS  
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THE COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS 20 APPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS TO ORGANISE ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT.

THESE INCLUDE THE ANNUAL NEW YEAR HARRIER ROAD RACE 1988, VISIT TO THE ELDERLY BY VOLUNTEERS, DISTRICT ATHELETIC MEET AND THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT OUTSTANDING GUIDES AND GUIDE UNITS AWARD SCHEME.

AT THE MEETING, DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE ASKED TO ENDORSE THE APPLICATIONS WHICH AMOUNT TO ABOUT \$170,000.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING TO BE HELD AT 2.15 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN.

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CAR PARKING AREA TO LET  
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A CAR PARKING AREA AT TUEN MUN ROAD, SHAM TSENG, IS TO BE LET ON SHORT TERM TENANCY BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

UNDER THE TENANCY TERM, THE 510-SQUARE-METRE SITE IS FOR PARKING MOTOR VEHICLES, BUT EXCLUDING CONTAINER TRACTORS AND TRAILERS.

THE TENANCY IS INITIALLY FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE MONTHLY AFTERWARDS.

TENDERS FOR THE FEE-PAYING CAR PARKING SITE MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON OCTOBER '23.

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