



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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1985-86 SURPLUS RISES TO ABOUT \$1.2 BILLION  
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THE SURPLUS ON THE GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR 1985-86 IS NOW EXPECTED TO BE AROUND \$1.2 BILLION INSTEAD OF \$98 MILLION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR JOHN GAVE THE UPDATED FIGURE FOR 1985-86 WHEN CONCLUDING THE DEBATE ON THE 1986-87 BUDGET.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH, HE HAD INDICATED THAT SOME OF THE REVENUE FORECASTS MIGHT PROVE TO BE TOO CONSERVATIVE AND THAT THEY HAD ALSO BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE FALL IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE IN 1985 ON PROFITS TAX AND RELATED AREAS OF REVENUE.

+BOTH THESE OBSERVATIONS HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED OUT TO BE RIGHT AND THE MAJOR AREAS REQUIRING UPDATING ARE INDEED IN RESPECT OF INCREASED LAND REVENUE AND IMPROVED YIELDS FROM PROFITS TAXES,+ HE SAID.

IT HAD RECENTLY BEEN AGREED, AFTER THE BUDGET SPEECH WAS PREPARED, THAT THE REVENUE FROM CERTAIN LAND TRANSACTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN DECIDED UPON PRIOR TO MAY 27, 1985 NEED NOT BE SHARED BETWEEN THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

AS A RESULT, APPROXIMATELY \$250 MILLION THAT RELATED TO THESE TRANSACTIONS HAD NOW BEEN CREDITED TO THE GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT INSTEAD OF TO THE CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND.

SIR JOHN SAID THE AMOUNT OF TAX COLLECTED HAD EXCEEDED THE REVISED ESTIMATE BY APPROXIMATELY \$1 BILLION.

+PROFITS TAX ALONE ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN \$700 MILLION OF THIS SUM, A GOOD PART OF WHICH IS DUE TO A DECREASE IN HOLD-OVER CLAIMS COMPARED TO WHAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ANTICIPATED.

+THIS COUPLED WITH AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE COMPETENT PROCESSING AND ISSUE OF PROFITS TAX ASSESSMENTS HAS THUS BOOSTED OUR TAX YIELD SIGNIFICANTLY,+ HE EXPLAINED.

SIR JOHN SAID ALTHOUGH AN ADDITIONAL \$200 MILLION IN EXPENDITURE, INCURRED IN RESPECT OF THE TREGUNTER CASE, PARTLY OFFSET THE EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES, UNEXPECTEDLY NO PROVISION WAS REQUIRED FOR A CIVIL SERVICE PAY ADJUSTMENT.

+THE SURPLUS ON GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR 1985-86 IS CONSEQUENTLY EXPECTED TO INCREASE FROM THE \$98 MILLION INDICATED IN MY BUDGET SPEECH TO \$1 177 MILLION - SAY \$1.2 BILLION.

/+THIS REPRESENTS .....

+THIS REPRESENTS A FURTHER SWING OF ONLY JUST OVER ONE PER CENT OF GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL TURNOVER OF EXPENDITURE PLUS REVENUE AND MEANS THAT WE GO INTO 1986-87 IN A STRONGER FINANCIAL POSITION,+ HE SAID.

SIR JOHN SAID HE HOPED THAT HIS ESTIMATE OF A BUDGET SURPLUS OF \$348 MILLION FOR 1986-87 MIGHT ALSO PROVE TO BE ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE.

+IT IS, HOWEVER, MUCH TOO SOON TO SAY. CIVIL SERVICE PAY REQUIREMENTS ARE CERTAINLY HIGHER THAN PROJECTED,+ HE SAID.

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EXPORTS RISE 'NO FLASH IN THE PAN'

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DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN MARCH WERE ABOUT 22 PER CENT HIGHER IN MONEY TERMS THAN IN MARCH 1985, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY). HOWEVER, RE-EXPORTS WERE JUST UNDER SIX PER CENT LOWER.

+ALTHOUGH NOT TOO MUCH SHOULD BE READ INTO ONE MONTH'S GOOD PERFORMANCE FOR DOMESTIC EXPORTS, I DO NOT THINK THESE FIGURES ARE A FLASH IN THE PAN IN TERMS OF THE RECOVERY WHICH THEY SUGGEST,+ SIR JOHN SAID IN HIS SPEECH CONCLUDING THE DEBATE ON THE BUDGET.

THE IMPROVED FIGURES COINCIDED WITH SIGNS THAT THERE WOULD BE CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN EXPORT PERFORMANCE IN THE COMING MONTHS, HE SAID. THE DECLINING TREND IN THE ORDER BOOK POSITIONS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR APPEARED TO HAVE BOTTOMED OUT. IN PARTICULAR, THE ORDER BOOK POSITIONS OF THE TEXTILES AND CLOTHING INDUSTRIES HAD REGISTERED SIGNIFICANT INCREASES SINCE THE SECOND HALF OF 1985.

+AS A RESULT OF THE FALL IN OIL PRICES, THE 1986 GROWTH RATES FOR SOME OF OUR MAJOR EXPORT MARKETS, PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES, HAVE RECENTLY BEEN REVISED UPWARDS. HONG KONG'S EXPORT PERFORMANCE SHOULD BENEFIT FROM ENHANCED GROWTH IN THESE COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SIR JOHN SAID, EARLY INDICATIONS OF THE WAY THAT THE MEASURES UNDERSTANDABLY ADOPTED BY CHINA TO RESTRICT IMPORTS AND TO CONTROL THE USE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES WERE WORKING SUGGESTED THAT HIS FORECAST GROWTH RATES FOR DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS TO CHINA MIGHT HAVE UNDER-ESTIMATED THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF SUCH MEASURES ON HONG KONG'S EXPORT PERFORMANCE.

/BUT HE .....

BUT HE ADDED: +IT IS NEVERTHELESS FAR TOO EARLY TO CONTEMPLATE REVISING EITHER OF THESE FORECASTS OR THAT FOR THE GDP. THEY STAND UNCHANGED.+

SIR JOHN SAID THE RATE OF INFLATION AT PRESENT WAS AROUND THREE PER CENT, WHICH MADE HIS FORECAST OF FIVE PER CENT ON AVERAGE FOR 1986 SEEM HIGH. IT ALLOWED, HOWEVER, FOR SOME FURTHER DEPRECIATION OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR AGAINST OTHER MAJOR CURRENCIES DURING THE YEAR, WHICH MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT OCCUR.

+DESPITE THE UNFAVOURABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR INFLATION, THE DEPRECIATION OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR HAS BEEN USEFUL IN RESTORING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR EXPORTS. ALTHOUGH HONG KONG IS NOT A MAJOR IMPORTER OF OIL OR OIL PRODUCTS, THE FALL IN OIL (AND COAL) PRICES HAS BEEN A FAVOURABLE FACTOR AS FAR AS INFLATION IS CONCERNED AND MAY WELL RESULT IN AN OUTCOME LOWER THAN MY FORECAST OF FIVE PER CENT.+

TURNING TO OTHER MATTERS, SIR JOHN REFERRED TO COMMENTS ABOUT TRANSFERS TO AND FROM FUNDS. THOSE TRANSFERRED IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR ARGUABLY REFLECTED ONE-OFF TREATMENT AS CAPITAL OF WINDFALL EXTRAORDINARY LAND REVENUES, WHILE THE \$800 MILLION TRANSFER FROM THE HOME OWNERSHIP FUND IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR REPRESENTED THE OUTCOME OF GOOD MANAGEMENT.

HE SPOKE OF A NEED TO MAINTAIN AND INDEED INCREASE THE REAL VALUE OF BUDGET SURPLUSES -- AND THUS THE FUNDS.

+IN SMOOTHING GOOD WITH BAD YEARS A SURPLUS OF ABOUT \$1 BILLION ANNUALLY SHOULD BE AIMED AT. WE CLEARLY HAVE MADE A GOOD START.+

SIR JOHN DESCRIBED THE EXCHANGE FUND AS +VERY LARGE, VERY SAFE AND VERY LIQUID+. HE SAID THE EQUITY HOLDINGS IN HONG KONG AROSE ONLY FROM TRANSFER AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY INCORPORATED IN 1982-83 AS HE SCRAPED THE BARREL IN AN EFFORT TO FIND DESPERATELY NEEDED GENERAL REVENUE. THERE WAS ALSO THE SIGNIFICANT HOLDING OF 20 PER CENT OF CABLE AND WIRELESS (HK) LIMITED, WHICH WAS WORTH FAR MORE THAN WAS FIRST PAID FOR IT.

+A STUDY HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN UNDERWAY ON THE DISPOSAL OF SOME OR ALL OF THESE HOLDINGS. THEY ARE ARGUABLY NOT APPROPRIATE TO THE EXCHANGE FUND, THOUGH SOME DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF POLICY ARE CLEARLY INVOLVED.+

OVERALL, SIR JOHN SAID, FEW MEMBERS DID NOT ACCEPT THE PARAMOUNT NEED TO CREATE WEALTH BEFORE DIVIDING IT. +ALL SEE THE PURPOSE OF PUTTING HONG KONG'S FINANCES BACK INTO A STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM, BACKED BY APPROPRIATE RESERVES. MOST ACCEPT THE IMPERATIVES OF LOW TAXATION AND ESPECIALLY LOW DIRECT TAXATION.+

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CURRENCY LINK WILL REMAIN AT \$7.80  
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM POLICY TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENCY LINK TO THE US DOLLAR AT \$7.80, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCLUDING THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE, SIR JOHN WARNED THAT AN INEVITABLE OUTCOME OF FLOTATION WOULD BE TO EXPOSE THE HONG KONG DOLLAR AGAIN TO HUGE INTERNATIONAL SPECULATION.

+HONG KONG NEEDS STABILITY,+ HE SAID, +AND WE CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER THE HONG KONG DOLLAR IN THE ABSENCE OF THE LINK WOULD RISE OR FALL. ITS VALUE WOULD PROBABLY SHIFT LIKE A YO-YO,+

+MOREOVER, IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM PROVIDED NO CONTROL OF THE MONEY SUPPLY WHICH WAS ONE FACTOR IN THE PROPERTY COLLAPSE.+

ON SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING MONETARY AGGREGATES, PROMOTING CAPITAL MARKETS AND RELATED MATTERS, SIR JOHN SUGGESTED THAT A STUDY BE CONDUCTED FIRST BY A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

+IF THEY AGREE, THE GOVERNMENT MUST FIND THEIR JOINT VIEWS PERSUASIVE SINCE THEY ARE BOTH IMPORTANT STATUTORY BODIES,+ HE SAID.

SIR JOHN NOTED THAT HE HAD MADE NO PROPOSAL FOR SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN TAXES IN REAL TERMS THIS YEAR AS HIS MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO MAINTAIN THE YIELD.

+TO THIS END, BANKING AND DTC FEES, LIKE VEHICLE AND PETROL TAXATION, HAVE GONE UP ONLY MODERATELY IN MONEY TERMS,+ HE ADDED.

SIR JOHN SAID HE FULLY SHARED THE VIEW EXPRESSED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SECURITIES COMMISSION, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS +AN EXCELLENT, BROADLY BASED BODY WITH A FIRST-CLASS CHAIRMAN.+

+SECURITIES AND BANKING ISSUES ARE CLOSELY ALLIED. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT LATER THIS SUMMER THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES LIKE THE BANKING COMMISSIONER WILL REPORT TO THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, SO THAT THEIR CONCERNS WILL BE FULLY CO-ORDINATED,+ HE SAID.

SIR JOHN ALSO COMPLIMENTED THE ELECTED BANKING MEMBER WHOM HE SAID HAD MADE HELPFUL COMMENTS ON THE USE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND.

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PEOPLE SEEK STABILITY IN TAXATION - FS  
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PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE FED UP WITH NEW OR CHANGED TAXES AND SEEK THE STABILISATION MADE POSSIBLE AGAIN BY BALANCED BUDGETS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCLUDING THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR JOHN REFERRED TO SIGNIFICANT FACTORS THAT AFFECTED TAXATION POLICY, BEARING IN MIND THE PRIORITY OF PROMOTING TRADE AND ENCOURAGING INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID, DIRECT TAXATION HAD TO BE KEPT LOW AND THERE HAD TO BE NO UNNECESSARY FETTERING OF INITIATIVE OR HARD WORK, HOWEVER PROGRESSIVE THE FORM OF TAXATION WAS.

SECONDLY, INDIRECT TAXATION, WHILE REGRESSIVE, USUALLY ALLOWED A DEGREE OF CHOICE, HE SAID.

+THIRDLY, AT THE END OF THE DAY THERE HAS TO BE A SUBJECTIVE BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO BROAD FORMS OF TAXATION. 60:40 ON EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SEEMS TO SUIT HONG KONG. IT OFFERS A BALANCE BETWEEN REGRESSION AND PROGRESSION. MORE IMPORTANT, IT IS REASONABLY PRODUCTIVE OF REVENUE.+

SIR JOHN SAID THE OVERALL PURPOSE OF TAXATION WAS TO RAISE SUFFICIENT REVENUE TO BALANCE THE BUDGET AND WITHIN THE BROAD BAND OF INDIRECT TAXATION TAXES SHOULD BE RAISED MAINLY FOR REVENUE PURPOSES.

+APART FROM CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL, VEHICLE AND PETROL TAXES WHERE PREVENTION OF UNACCEPTABLE CONGESTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE, THERE IS INDEED NO SOCIAL ENGINEERING INVOLVED,+ HE SAID.

SIR JOHN SAID WHILE IN THEORY INDIRECT TAXATION COULD BE ADJUSTED BY MATHEMATICAL CALCULATION PLUS SOCIAL SENSITIVITY, IT WAS NOT SO EASY IN PRACTICE TO MAKE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE MAJOR CHANGES.

+FOR EXAMPLE, IF WE ELIMINATE TAXES ON SOFT DRINKS AND PERFUMES, WHERE DO WE FIND \$278 MILLION PER ANNUM? I AM NOT ALONE IN DISLIKING THE HIGH AIR PASSENGER DEPARTURE TAX, BUT WHAT OTHER SOURCE AFFORDS \$550 MILLION PER ANNUM?+ HE ASKED.

+VALUE ADDED OR SALES TAXES IN THEORY OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH,+ SIR JOHN SAID, BUT HE CAUTIONED AGAINST MAJOR CHANGE WITHOUT GREAT STUDY AND CONSULTATION.

/REGARDING DIRECT .....

REGARDING DIRECT TAXES, SIR JOHN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE FUTURE CASE FOR FURTHER INCREASING PERSONAL ALLOWANCES WHEN THE BUDGETARY SITUATION ALLOWED, FOR LARGER INVESTMENT ALLOWANCES (WHICH CONSORTED ILL WITH LOW DIRECT TAXATION AND CREATED COMPLEXITY), THE CASE FOR SEPARATE TAX FOR MARRIED WOMEN (WHICH WOULD BE EXPENSIVE), AND FOR DEDUCTIONS FOR SELECTIVE ALLOWANCES SUCH AS PRIVATE MEDICAL EXPENSES, MEDICAL INSURANCE AND MORTGAGE INTEREST (WHICH WERE EXPENSIVE IN TERMS OF REVENUE AND ADMINISTRATION).

BUT HE NOTED THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY +A BALANCE HAS TO BE STRUCK+.

+FOR EVERY CONCESSION THERE NEEDS TO BE AN EQUAL ADDITION EITHER IN THE SHAPE OF A NEW TAX OR AN INCREASE ON AN EXISTING TAX.

+ON THE WHOLE,+ SIR JOHN SAID, +I PREFER STABILITY.+

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID HE HOPED THAT IN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE CORPORATE PROFITS TAX TO THE STANDARD RATE OF 17 PER CENT AS THAT MERITED HIGHER PRIORITY THAN CHANGING CONSUMER TAXES OR COMPLICATING WITH DETAIL THE RELATIVELY SIMPLE DIRECT TAXES.

FINALLY, SIR JOHN SAID HE DISLIKED THE CONCEPT OF AN INDEPENDENT TAX COMMISSION AS IT SEEMED THAT RESPONSIBILITY RESTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND COULD NOT BE SHARED.

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GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE A KEY FACTOR  
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE STILL BELIEVED THAT IN GENERAL BUSINESS WAS BEST CONDUCTED BY MOTIVATED BUSINESSMEN IN LOW TAX ECONOMY SUPPORTED BY A WELL EDUCATED WORKFORCE AND A GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE.

SPEAKING ABOUT AID TO INDUSTRY WHEN CONCLUDING THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR JOHN SAID, +WE MUST CONTINUE TO BUILD UP OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, IN PARTICULAR IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD.+

HE SAID THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT INVESTMENT IN A THIRD UNIVERSITY WAS WISE, THOUGH ONLY ONE MEMBER HAD MENTIONED IT.

+FEW WOULD HAVE PREFERRED AS AN ALTERNATIVE A COMPARABLY EXPENSIVE PROGRAMME OF DIRECT INTERVENTION IN WHAT WOULD POSSIBLY BE A SERIES OF EXPENSIVE WHITE ELEPHANTS.

+RESOURCES ARE ANYWAY LIMITED AND ALWAYS WILL BE LIMITED. HONG KONG CANNOT AFFORD RESEARCH INSTITUTES OF SHIPBUILDING AND REPAIR (ONCE OUR BIGGEST INDUSTRY), OF SUGAR REFINING (ONCE THE BIGGEST IN ASIA), OF ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS AND WIG MANUFACTURING,+ SIR JOHN SAID.

HE SAID HE HAD LONG SHARED THE GENERAL VIEW THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES THAT COULD ARGUABLY BE DONE BETTER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

+IN GENERAL, PRIVATISATION IS GOOD. BUT PROBLEMS ABOUND,+ HE ADDED.

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AIMING AT SMOOTH PUBLIC SECTOR GROWTH  
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE FOUND IT HARD TO ACCEPT THE ACCUSATION THAT THE MEDIUM RANGE FORECAST +POSTULATES GROWTH OF 4.5 PER CENT IN GDP+.

+THIS IS NOT TRUE,+ HE SAID WHEN WINDING UP THE BUDGET DEBATE. +WE HAVE MADE THIS AN IMMEDIATE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION.

+IF IT PROVES TO BE MISPLACED IT CAN BE ADJUSTED EACH YEAR AS THE MEDIUM RANGE FORECAST IS ROLLED FORWARD. I AM MYSELF OPTIMISTIC FOR THE FUTURE.+

SIR JOHN ALSO SAID HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THE ADVICE OF ONE MEMBER THAT THE GROWTH RATE OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO 75 PER CENT OF THE GROWTH RATE OF THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP).

+WHILE I AM A CONSERVATIVE I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD MARRY WITH PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS. SMOOTHED PUBLIC SECTOR GROWTH JUST BELOW LONG TERM GDP GROWTH SEEMS A BALANCED OBJECTIVE,+ HE SAID.

SIR JOHN EXPRESSED SYMPATHY WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE CASE FOR BRINGING IN SMALL SERVICE CHARGES AT THE BORDER SO THAT THOSE WHO USED THE MANY AND INCREASING FACILITIES SHOULD PAY THEIR PROPER SHARE OF THE RAPIDLY GROWING ADMINISTRATIVE AND PARTICULARLY, CAPITAL COSTS.

+THIS WOULD OF COURSE BE A CHARGE NOT A TAX. THE PRESENT SITUATION COULD BE ARGUED TO BE ONE WHICH REQUIRES SUBSIDISATION OF TRAVELLERS BY NON-TRAVELLERS.+

HE SAID THIS WAS A SENSITIVE AREA IN WHICH THERE WERE DIVERGENT VIEWS AND A STUDY WAS BEING CONDUCTED BEFORE ANY CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED.

/SIR JOHN .....

SIR JOHN SAID HE SHARED MEMBERS' VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE FOR MONEY STUDIES AND THE NEED TO BUILD UP THE VALUE OF THE FISCAL RESERVES IN REAL TERMS.

ON A SUGGESTION ABOUT DOUBLE TAXATION PROBLEMS, SIR JOHN SAID BECAUSE OF OUR LOW RATE OF TAX, COUPLED WITH THE TERRITORIAL SOURCE CRITERION, IT HAD LONG BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT CONVENTIONAL DOUBLE TAX AGREEMENTS HAD NO PLACE IN OUR SYSTEM.

+THERE WAS ANOTHER SUGGESTION ABOUT TAX REFUNDS. WE WILL LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY.+

SIR JOHN ALSO SAID SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS HAD BEEN MADE THAT REALLY APPLIED TO THE NEW BANKING BILL AND HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO ADDRESS THEM IN THE DEBATE ON THIS.

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A PARTING PLEA FROM SIR JOHN

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+I HAVE DONE WHAT I CAN TO PROMOTE AND SAFEGUARD THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG,+ THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCLUDING A BUDGET DEBATE FOR THE LAST TIME, SIR JOHN SAID: +I HAVE NEVER ALLOWED MYSELF TO FORGET BOTH PRESENT ISSUES AND THE FUTURE INTERESTS OF THE SIX MILLION PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE IN AND AFTER 1997.+

HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD ALSO SAID SEVERAL YEARS AGO THAT HE KNEW THAT THE VIEW FROM A TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA WAS NOT THE SAME AS THAT FROM THE PEAK.

THANKING COUNCIL MEMBERS, SIR JOHN SAID: +I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THE KIND PERSONAL COMMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED BY MANY MEMBERS, MOST OF WHOM ARE ALSO CANDID FRIENDS - THE BEST SORT.+

HE ADDED THAT THESE COMMENTS SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO HIS WIFE WHO HAD CARRIED MANY BURDENS.

SIR JOHN ALSO SAID: +FOR MY FEW REMAINING WEEKS AND FOR MY ABLE SUCCESSOR'S TERM OF OFFICE MY PARTING PLEA IS: 'DON'T SHOOT THE PIANIST: HE IS DOING HIS BEST'.

+WE ARE ALL COLLEAGUES IN A COUNCIL IN WHICH THERE IS NO DIVIDE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION. WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE IN PROMOTING THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG.+

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PAY LEVEL STUDIES TO BE SYNCHRONISED

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PAY LEVEL STUDIES IN RESPECT OF DIRECTORATE OFFICERS AND NON-DIRECTORATE STAFF IN THE CIVIL SERVICE WILL BE SYNCHRONISED IN FUTURE TO AVOID A REPETITION OF THE DISAGREEMENT THE GOVERNMENT HAS EXPERIENCED RECENTLY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO SHORTLY INVITE THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE TO REVIEW THE CIVIL SERVICE CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY.

THIS WOULD INCLUDE AN EXAMINATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF NON-DIRECTORATE STAFF IN THE STAFF COUNCILS, HE SAID, NOTING THAT THE LAST COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE STANDING COMMISSION IN 1980.

+ALL THOSE CONCERNED WILL BE GIVEN AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO FORWARD THEIR VIEWS,+ HE SAID.

SIR DAVID ADDED THAT THE STANDING COMMISSION WOULD CONDUCT A PAY LEVEL SURVEY THIS YEAR TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE PRESENT LEVELS OF REMUNERATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS, INCLUDING SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS, WERE BROADLY IN LINE WITH THOSE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS, TOGETHER WITH THE STANDING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS, WOULD BE AVAILABLE EARLY IN 1987.

+STAFF ASSOCIATIONS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WILL BE INVITED TO ADVISE THE STANDING COMMISSION ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE PAY LEVEL SURVEY AT VARIOUS STAGES THROUGH AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE,+ HE SAID.

ON THE GROWTH OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD, SINCE 1983, PURSUED A STRICT PROGRAMME OF RESTRAINT, LIMITING STAFF INCREASES TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND INCREASING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE THROUGH VALUE FOR MONEY STUDIES.

HE SAID: +AS A RESULT, THE GROWTH HAS BEEN HELD TO A LOW FIGURE IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

+IN 1985-86 ABOUT 1 200 ADDITIONAL POSTS WERE CREATED ON A TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT OF ABOUT 180 000. THIS INCREASE IS LESS THAN ONE PER CENT.

+DURING THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR THE CIVIL SERVICE IS EXPECTED TO GROW BY TWO TO 2.5 PER CENT.+

/SIR DAVID .....

SIR DAVID ASSURED THE HON WONG PO-YAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND INTRODUCE MEASURES TO ENSURE A COST-EFFECTIVE CIVIL SERVICE.

+THIS WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE AT THE EXPENSE OF MORALE AND QUALITY. BALANCED AGAINST THE NEED FOR RESTRAINT MUST BE THE FACT THAT WE ARE BECOMING A MORE COMPLEX AND SOPHISTICATED SOCIETY WHICH REQUIRES A RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE ADEQUATELY STAFFED TO DO THE JOB THE COMMUNITY REQUIRES AND EXPECTS OF IT,+ HE NOTED.

SIR DAVID ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE MIGHT BE OCCASIONAL SHORTCOMINGS AS IN ANY LARGE ORGANISATION, +I BELIEVE HONG KONG IS WELL SERVED BOTH BY ITS PUBLIC SERVANTS AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND THAT THIS IS ONE OF THE VITAL COMPONENTS AND CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WAY OF LIFE WE ENJOY.

+WE MUST KEEP IT THIS WAY, AND ONLY GRADUALLY INTRODUCE NECESSARY CHANGES WITH THE LONGER TERM COMPOSITION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN MIND,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE TRAINING OF CIVIL SERVANTS, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS PART OF THE PROCESS OF ENSURING VALUE FOR MONEY, TO ENSURE THAT THE ABILITY OF STAFF AT ALL LEVELS WAS FULLY DEVELOPED AND USED= AND THAT HONG KONG HAD A CIVIL SERVICE OF HIGH CALIBRE AND QUALITY.

HE NOTED THAT A WIDE VARIETY OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES WAS AVAILABLE TO CIVIL SERVANTS - FROM COURSES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC DUTIES, TO IMPROVE GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AND TO PREPARE FOR INCREASING RESPONSIBILITIES RIGHT TO THE TOP OF THE SERVICE.

SIR DAVID SAID THAT DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR, 14 000 CIVIL SERVANTS WOULD RECEIVE IN-SERVICE TRAINING ORGANISED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING CENTRE AND BY INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS. A FURTHER 11 000 WILL BENEFIT FROM COURSES RUN BY OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONS.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, OVERSEAS TRAINING PROGRAMMES WERE PROVIDED WHERE SUITABLE PROGRAMMES WERE NOT AVAILABLE LOCALLY OR WHEN THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT PLACES TO MEET THE DEMAND.

THIS YEAR, OVER 600 OFFICERS WOULD GO OVERSEAS FOR VARIOUS COURSES, HE SAID.

NOTING THAT IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG MORE USE WAS BEING MADE OF CHINESE ALONGSIDE ENGLISH, SIR DAVID SAID LANGUAGE TRAINING HAD ASSUMED AN INCREASING IMPORTANCE.

+BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE INSTRUCTION IS ARRANGED. THERE ARE COURSES IN PUTONGHUA AND WRITTEN CHINESE FOR LOCAL OFFICERS; AND THERE ARE CANTONESE TRAINING COURSES FOR OVERSEAS OFFICERS, IN PARTICULAR, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS, POLICE INSPECTORS, JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND OTHERS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO SPEAK CANTONESE IN THE COURSE OF THEIR WORK,+ HE SAID.

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ON THE SHORTAGE OF LOCAL OFFICERS IN THE JUDICIAL SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID THE ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS FOR MAGISTRATES HAD BEEN RELAXED AND DIRECT APPROACHES HAD BEEN MADE TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO INVITE THEM TO JOIN THE SERVICE.

HE NOTED THAT SOME HEADWAY HAD BEEN MADE AND THE NUMBER OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS ON LOCAL TERMS OF SERVICE HAD INCREASED FROM 19 TO 35 OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS.

+IN ADDITION, A REVIEW OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT OF JUDICIAL OFFICERS IS NOW BEING PURSUED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICE WITH A VIEW TO ATTRACTING MORE LOCAL OFFICERS TO THE BENCH,+ HE SAID.

AS REGARDS OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE TO BUILD OR BUY MORE OF ITS OWN OFFICE.

+AN OFFICE BUILDING PROGRAMME IS MOVING AHEAD, WITH A TARGET OF 70 PER CENT SELF-SUFFICIENCY BY 1991. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO PURCHASES OFFICE SPACE AS AND WHEN THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO AT A REASONABLE PRICE,+ HE NOTED.

TALKING OF THE BRITISH MILITARY HOSPITAL, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS A NECESSARY PART OF THE GARRISON AND WAS FUNDED UNDER THE DEFENCE COSTS AGREEMENT.

HE ADDED THAT THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WAS NOW EXAMINING THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TERMS ON WHICH CIVILIAN PATIENTS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO IT WITH THE AIM OF PUTTING FORWARD CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR MORE COST-EFFECTIVE USE AND TO ARRIVE AT FIRM CONCLUSIONS.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT LEGAL AID SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY THE LEGAL PROFESSION INDEPENDENTLY OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT WITH THE CONTINUED USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS, SIR DAVID SAID THE PROVISION OF LEGAL AID WAS THE SUBJECT OF A RECENT REPORT BY AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP CHAIRED BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY.

HE ADDED THAT THE REPORT HAD BEEN SENT TO THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE LAW SOCIETY FOR THEIR VIEWS WHICH WOULD BE INCORPORATED AND COMMENTED UPON IN A DRAFT CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT TO BE PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

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73 LOCAL LAWYERS IN CHAMBERS - AG  
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THE FIRST PRIORITY OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT IS TO REMAIN A STRONG, EFFECTIVE, WORKING DEPARTMENT PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF FORENSIC AND ADVISORY SERVICES, AND EXPERIENCED AND EXPERT EXPATRIATE LAWYERS ARE THUS NEEDED TO DO THE MORE SPECIALISED WORK AND TO TRAIN UP AND PASS ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO LOCAL COUNSEL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR THOMAS TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO SEE THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT STAFFED IN SENIOR POSITIONS PREDOMINANTLY BY LOCAL LAWYERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THE QUALITY OF SERVICES MUST NOT BE PREJUDICED BY PUSHING LOCALISATION TOO HARD. HE WAS REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE.

THE DEPARTMENT NOW HAD 73 HONG KONG LAWYERS OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 234 COUNSEL, COMPARED WITH ONLY 22 OUT OF 120 FIVE YEARS AGO, HE SAID.

+BUT WE STILL DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH LOCAL LAWYERS, PARTICULARLY EXPERIENCED LOCAL LAWYERS,+ MR THOMAS SAID, +SO WE SHALL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO TRAIN, ENCOURAGE AND RETAIN THE LOCAL LAWYERS WHO JOIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.+

MR THOMAS DENIED THE ALLEGATION MADE BY MR LEE THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD FAILED TO ATTRACT LOCAL PERSONS BECAUSE TOP POSTS HAD BEEN DENIED TO THEM AND MORE FAVOURABLE TERMS HAD BEEN OFFERED TO EXPATRIATES.

+I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A SINGLE INSTANCE IN MY TIME WHERE AN EXPERIENCED LOCAL LAWYER HAS BEEN DENIED APPOINTMENT OR PROMOTION TO A SENIOR POST WHICH HE WAS QUALIFIED TO FILL ON MERIT,+ MR THOMAS SAID.

+THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SO FEW TOP-POSTS OCCUPIED BY LOCAL LAWYERS IS A CONSEQUENCE BOTH OF OUR FAILURE IN THE PAST TO KEEP MORE ABLE COUNSEL IN CHAMBERS AND TO DEVELOP THEIR EXPERIENCE, AND OF OUR FAILURE TO ATTRACT EXPERIENCED LAWYERS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR INTO VACANT POSTS,+ HE ADDED.

ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, MR THOMAS SAID NEWLY QUALIFIED LOCAL LAWYERS DID NOT HAVE QUARTERS PROVIDED BUT THERE WAS NO COMPARISON OF LIKE AND LIKE AT THIS LEVEL AS THE DEPARTMENT DID NOT RECRUIT NEWLY QUALIFIED EXPATRIATE LAWYERS.

HE SAID FROM THE RANK OF SENIOR CROWN COUNSEL, THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE WERE IDENTICAL FOR BOTH LOCAL AND EXPATRIATE, EXCEPT LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS, AND THESE WERE COMMON TO THE WHOLE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

/+WE MUST .....

+WE MUST ACCEPT THAT IF WE NEED EXPERIENCED EXPATRIATE LAWYERS, WE MUST EXPECT TO PROVIDE THEM, AS TO OTHER EXPATRIATE PUBLIC SERVANTS, WITH SPECIAL LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS,+ MR THOMAS SAID.

QUOTING A RECENT CASE IN WHICH A POST OF DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CROWN COUNSEL WAS ADVERTISED, HE SAID THERE HAD NOT BEEN A SINGLE APPLICATION FROM A HONG KONG LAWYER.

MR THOMAS NOTED THAT AS HONG KONG WAS STILL UNDENIABLY SHORT OF ABLE AND EXPERIENCED LOCAL LAWYERS, THOSE SHORTAGES ONLY AGGRAVATED THE PRESSURES ON THE MOST TALENTED TO GO WHERE THE REWARDS WERE HIGHEST.

+PRIVATE PRACTICE IN HONG KONG IS GENERALLY MORE LUCRATIVE THAN GOVERNMENT SERVICE. THIS MEANS THAT MANY OF OUR YOUNG LOCAL COUNSEL ARE TEMPTED TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT SERVICE SOON AFTER THEIR TRAINING IS COMPLETE. IT ALSO MEANS THAT ONLY RARELY DOES A LOCAL LAWYER WANT TO LEAVE PRIVATE PRACTICE AND JOIN MY CHAMBERS,+ HE SAID.

+AS A COMMUNITY, WE MUST CONSIDER, AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, WAYS AND MEANS OF INCREASING STILL FURTHER THE NUMBERS OF LOCAL LAW GRADUATES AND THE NUMBERS OF LOCAL LAWYERS OBTAINING PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS,+ MR THOMAS SAID.

TURNING TO A DIFFERENT SUBJECT- THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE, MR THOMAS THANKED THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN FOR HIS GENEROUS PRAISE OF THE FORCE AND SAID THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE SITE NOW HOUSING THE FORCE'S TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING CENTRE AT KOWLOON BAY A PERMANENT ALLOCATION WAS BEING LOOKED AT SYMPATHETICALLY BY THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS.

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INTERVENTION COULD PREJUDICE GATT STANDING  
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GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION IN INDUSTRY COULD PREJUDICE HONG KONG'S STANDING IN THE GATT AND MIGHT INVITE RETALIATORY ACTION UNDER THE GATT CODE ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING DUTIES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON E.P. HO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT +SHRUG OFF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES+ TO INDUSTRY.

+ANY FACTORY OPENING IN A ZONED INDUSTRIAL AREA IS ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS BY A FORMED PUBLIC ROAD, WITH ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLIES AVAILABLE, AND TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS NOT ONLY TO SUPPLIERS AND AGENTS WITHIN HONG KONG, BUT WORLDWIDE.

/+THE EXISTENCE .....

+THE EXISTENCE OF THIS INFRASTRUCTURE IN HONG KONG TO MEET INDUSTRY'S NEEDS IS READY PROOF OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THIS REGARD,+ HE SAID.

MR HO ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT INVESTED HEAVILY IN THE WORKFORCE FOR INDUSTRY THROUGH MANPOWER TRAINING.

+WITHIN THE GENERAL POLICY OF NINE YEARS FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION, INCREASING PROVISION HAS BEEN INCLUDED FOR PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOL PLACES WHICH BETTER PREPARE THE SCHOOL-LEAVERS FOR PRACTICAL EMPLOYMENT. THE PROVISION FOR 12 960 SUCH PLACES WILL BE INCREASED TO 28 000 BY 1991.

+LIKEWISE, THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT PLACES AT TECHNICAL INSTITUTES OPERATED BY THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL WILL INCREASE FROM THE CURRENT PROVISION OF ABOUT 18 000 TO ABOUT 25 000 BY 1989.

+APART FROM SUPPORTING FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INDUSTRY, THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL ALSO PROVIDES A NUMBER OF INDUSTRY-WIDE TRAINING SCHEMES FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING AT OPERATIVE, CRAFT, TECHNICIAN AND TECHNOLOGIST LEVELS AND IN ADDITION, FOUR NEW TRAINING CENTRES WILL BE ESTABLISHED THIS YEAR.+

AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL, MR HO SAID GRANTS TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, THROUGH THE UPGC, WOULD COME CLOSE TO \$2 BILLION THIS YEAR AND THERE WOULD BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD UNIVERSITY WITH ITS INITIAL TARGET OF 5 000 PLACES AND ROOM FOR 10 000 PLACES ON FULL DEVELOPMENT.

ASIDE FROM MANPOWER TRAINING MR HO NOTED THAT HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT FACILITIES INCLUDED AN ON-GOING PROGRAMME OF TECHNO-ECONOMIC AND MARKETING STUDIES OF VARIOUS INDUSTRIES.

+STUDIES HAVE BEEN MADE OF THE METALS AND LIGHT ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES, THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY AND THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, AND A STUDY ON THE TEXTILES, GARMENTS AND RELATED INDUSTRIES WILL BEGIN NEXT MONTH.

+PARTLY AS A RESULT OF THESE STUDIES AND OF THE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INTRODUCED OR IS SEEKING TO CREATE A RANGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR MANUFACTURERS.

+THESE INCLUDE THE SERVICES OF THE HONG KONG DESIGN INNOVATION COMPANY LIMITED, A COMPANY INCORPORATED IN OCTOBER 1985 TO PROVIDE MANUFACTURERS WITH CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR PRODUCT DESIGN AND PRODUCT INNOVATION.+

MR HO SAID ON THE ADVICE OF THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD (IDB) THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO CREATED A RANGE OF TECHNICAL BACK-UP SERVICES FOR MANUFACTURERS AND THESE INCLUDED THE CREATION OF THE STANDARDS AND CALIBRATION LABORATORY TO BE THE CUSTODIAN OF HONG KONG'S PRIMARY STANDARDS.

THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT IS ALSO POISED TO IMPLEMENT THE HONG KONG LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SCHEME (HOKLAS) WHICH IS AIMED AT ENABLING SECONDARY TESTING LABORATORIES, IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS, TO BECOME SUFFICIENTLY COMPETENT.

ON RECEIVING ACCREDITATION THE TESTING AND CERTIFICATION SERVICES OF THESE LABORATORIES COULD BE TRACED, IN THE CASE OF STANDARDS, TO THE PRIMARY STANDARDS KEPT BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND TO INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR LABORATORY OPERATIONS, HE SAID.

MR HO FURTHER EMPHASISED THAT HONG KONG SHOULD NOT PRICE ITSELF OUT OF THE MARKET AS A RESULT OF PROCEEDING TOO FAR AND TOO FAST WITH LABOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION LEGISLATION.

COMMENTING ON THE NEED TO REVIEW THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION, AND THE FORMATION OF ANOTHER COMMITTEE FOR THE PURPOSE PROPOSED, MR HO SAID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF REGULAR MONITORING BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

HE ADDED THAT THE ACD REPORT'S IN-BUILT MECHANISM FOR CONTINUING PLANNING, MONITORING AND ADVICE, THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD, WAS FULLY FUNCTIONAL AND THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ANOTHER REVIEW BODY.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MANY IDB MEMBERS CONSIDERED HAVING THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AS THEIR CHAIRMAN WAS A PROMISE, IF NOT A GUARANTEE, OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR HO SAID THE CREATION OF A TRADE AND INDUSTRY COMMISSION, UNLIKE THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, WOULD NOT PROVIDE FOR BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN SUCH BODIES AS THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION, THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, IDB AND SO ON.

+THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR FORMULATING AND COORDINATING THE GOVERNMENT'S TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL POLICIES RESTS WITH THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND THE PRESENT MACHINERY WORKS SMOOTHLY,+ HE SAID.

+THERE ARE ALSO MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRADE AND INDUSTRY BODIES.+

REGARDING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, HE SAID THE ELECTRONICS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD WAS NOT ACTIVELY CONSIDERING WHAT TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY COULD USEFULLY BE INTRODUCED INTO HONG KONG SO AS TO ENABLE MANUFACTURERS OF RELEVANT EQUIPMENT AND COMPONENTS TO UPGRADE THEIR OUTPUT.

TURNING TO INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION, MR HO SAID THE EXISTING NETWORK OF FIVE OVERSEAS OFFICES THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT HAD, OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, ACHIEVED SATISFACTORY GROWTH RATES IN THE QUANTUM OF OVERSEAS INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR AND WAS LIKELY TO MAINTAIN THE SAME MOMENTUM IN 1986.

+THE DEPARTMENT HAS ON ITS BOOKS NO FEWER THAN 531 PROJECTS IN VARYING DEGREES OF INTEREST AND COMMITMENT.+

MR HO SAID THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL WERE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP A STERILISATION PLANT.

EXPLAINING GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT PROTECTIONISM, MR HO SAID: +OUR OFFICES IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK UNCEASINGLY IN SUPPORT OF THE FREE AND FAIR TRADE CAUSE.

+OUR OVERALL OPERATIONAL EFFORTS IN THIS AREA ARE COORDINATED BY A COMMITTEE I HAVE ESTABLISHED WITH MEMBERSHIP DRAWN FROM THE TRADE AND TEXTILES ADVISORY BOARD, WITH THE ADDITION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TDC.

+VIEWS OF OUR TRADE AND INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE ARE AN ESSENTIAL INPUT FOR THIS IMPORTANT WORK,+ HE SAID.

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#### OPENING OF NEW SCHOOLS IN TUEN MUN ADVANCED

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THE OPENING OF 17 NEW SCHOOLS ALREADY PLANNED FOR TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG WILL BE ADVANCED AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE AND EIGHT ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS WILL BE REPROVISIONED TO TUEN MUN FROM AREAS OF SURPLUS PROVISION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE, MR HENDERSON SAID THE PROBLEM WHICH HAD BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN TUEN MUN ILLUSTRATED THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN PLOTTING POPULATION TRENDS, FORECASTING AGE STRUCTURE AND IN FORMULATING PLANS FOR THE SITING AND CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS SUFFICIENTLY FAR IN ADVANCE.

+IN TUEN MUN, THE UNEXPECTED FACTOR WAS NOT THE BUILD-UP OF POPULATION IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS BUT ITS HIGHLY ATYPICAL AGE STRUCTURE WHEN COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE TERRITORY AS A WHOLE,+ HE SAID.

/TO TRY .....

TO TRY TO PREVENT THE RECURRENCE OF SUCH A PROBLEM ELSEWHERE, AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP WAS SET UP WITH THE PRIMARY TASK OF REFINING POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND ADJUSTING THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME ACCORDINGLY, HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IN GENERAL AND ON THE PUBLICATION OF TEXTBOOKS IN CHINESE IN PARTICULAR, MR HENDERSON SAID IT WOULD BE THE TASK OF THE CHINESE TEXTBOOKS COMMITTEE TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF GOOD QUALITY TEXTBOOKS OF APPROPRIATE STANDARD.

HE ADDED THAT THE HON SZETO WAH HAD AGREED TO CHAIR THIS COMMITTEE AND ARRANGEMENTS TO APPOINT THE REMAINING MEMBERS WERE IN HAND AND IT WOULD BEGIN ITS WORK SHORTLY.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE WOULD ALSO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN ACHIEVING ONE OF THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED IN A REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE CHINESE LANGUAGE FOUNDATION, COPIES OF WHICH HE LAID BEFORE MEMBERS.

COPIES OF THIS REPORT ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS IN LEE GARDENS, CAUSEWAY BAY, AND FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE IN CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL. REFERENCE COPIES ARE ALSO KEPT IN DISTRICT BOARD LIBRARIES AND AT MAIN PUBLIC ENQUIRY COUNTERS IN DISTRICT OFFICES.

MR HENDERSON NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED IN THE LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1982 NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHINESE LANGUAGE FOUNDATION AT THE PRESENT TIME.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THIRD UNIVERSITY, HE SAID ACTION WAS IN HAND TO SET UP THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WHICH WOULD OVERSEE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT.

THE CHAIRMAN AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD BE APPOINTED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE AND THE FULL COMMITTEE WOULD BE APPOINTED AND IN OPERATION BY THE AUTUMN.

THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD ACCEPT ITS FIRST INTAKE OF STUDENTS NO LATER THAN THE 1994-97 TRIENNIUM, HE ADDED.

ON A SUGGESTION THAT THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SECTORS COULD BE IMPROVED, MR HENDERSON SAID THE EDUCATION COMMISSION WAS VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE NEED TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES BETWEEN SECTORS AS WELL AS THE OVERALL QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

+THE COMMISSION ALSO HAS IN MIND THE NEED TO MAKE PROVISION FOR SECOND-CHANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND WOULD BE ADDRESSING THIS MATTER IN ITS REPORT NO. 2 WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED AROUND THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR,+ HE SAID.

CONCERNING THE COST OF A PLACE IN A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL AS AGAINST A PLACE IN AN AIDED SCHOOL, MR HENDERSON CONCEDED THAT IT WAS QUITE TRUE THAT THE COST WAS HIGHER, ESSENTIALLY BECAUSE OF HIGHER STAFF OVERHEADS.

+IT WAS LARGELY FOR THIS REASON THAT THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED IN 1965 THAT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ALL NEW PUBLIC-SECTOR SCHOOLS SHOULD HENCEFORTH BE AIDED RATHER THAN GOVERNMENT-RUN.

+AS A RESULT OF THIS POLICY, THERE WILL IN THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR BE A TOTAL OF 857 AIDED SCHOOLS COMPARED WITH 86 GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED THAT IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF AT LEAST SOME SCHOOLS.

+THESE PROVIDE A BENCHMARK OF THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REMAINS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE REALITIES OF RUNNING SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID.

ON A PROPOSAL THAT AN INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM COUNCIL BE FORMED, MR HENDERSON SAID THE EDUCATION COMMISSION UNDERTOOK IN ITS REPORT NO. 1 TO REVIEW THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DURING A LATER PHASE OF ITS WORK AND THESE IDEAS WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN THAT CONTEXT.

REFERRING TO A QUESTION ON THE ADEQUACY OF CO-ORDINATION IN THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN PROVIDING TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING, HE SAID CO-ORDINATION WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE POLICY BRANCH AND THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, AND ALSO THROUGH THE VARIOUS CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION, FORMAL AND INFORMAL, BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED.

TURNING TO LABOUR MATTERS, MR HENDERSON SAID HE HAD TOLD THE COUNCIL IN DECEMBER THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS REASSESSING THE ARGUMENTS BOTH FOR AND AGAINST A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

+THAT REASSESSMENT IS NEARING COMPLETION AND THE RESULTS OF IT WILL, I HOPE, PROVIDE A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THIS COMPLEX ISSUE,+ HE ADDED.

MR HENDERSON ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE. THE RESOURCES WHICH IT WAS PROPOSED BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IN THE CURRENT YEAR SHOULD ENABLE IT TO MAKE SOME INCREASE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE IN LINE WITH A PROGRAMME OF PHASED EXPANSION TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF ITS INCREASED WORKLOAD.

MEANWHILE, RECRUITMENT TO FILL 12 EXISTING VACANCIES WAS IN HAND, HE NOTED.

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FAIRNESS REQUIRED IN IMPOSING LEVIES  
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THE CONSTRUCTION AND QUARRY INDUSTRIES SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE BY WAY OF LEVY SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ALL PNEUMOCONIOSIS VICTIMS RECEIVE THE APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

COMMENTING ON A PROPOSAL BY DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG, MR HENDERSON SAID DIVERSION OF A PROPORTION OF LEVY INCOME OUT OF THE COMPENSATION FUND INTO EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY WORK AGAINST THE DISEASE WOULD, IN EFFECT, BE REQUIRING ONE SECTOR OF INDUSTRY TO FINANCE ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE ELSEWHERE FUNDED OUT OF GENERAL REVENUE, AND MIGHT BE CONSIDERED UNFAIR BY THE INDUSTRIES CONCERNED.

HE SAID THE PRINCIPLES FOR COMPENSATION OF PNEUMOCONIOSIS VICTIMS SHOULD ACCORD WITH THOSE ADOPTED GENERALLY FOR EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION.

UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE, AN EMPLOYER WAS REQUIRED TO PAY ONLY A SPECIFIED SUM OR A DETERMINED PERCENTAGE OF THAT SUM BY WAY OF COMPENSATION.

HOWEVER, MR HENDERSON SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO CONSULT THE CONSTRUCTION AND QUARRY INDUSTRIES ON THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE, SO THAT PREVENTIVE EDUCATION COULD BE FINANCED OUT OF THE LEVY ON THESE INDUSTRIES.

+IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PREVENTION NOW MIGHT RESULT IN FEWER COMPENSATION CASES, AND HENCE A LOWER RATE OF LEVY,+ HE ADDED.

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PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST PNEUMOCONIOSIS STRESSED  
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THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST PNEUMOCONIOSIS WAS UNDERLINED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG WHO SUGGESTED THAT THE INTEREST GENERATED FROM THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS COMPENSATION FUND BE USED FOR EDUCATION ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

HE WAS SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DR CHIU SAID THE PROPOSED PROVISION ENABLING DEPENDANTS OF A PNEUMOCONIOSIS VICTIM WHO DIED FROM A CAUSE OTHER THAN PNEUMOCONIOSIS TO CLAIM COMPENSATION ON HIS BEHALF EVEN WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE MEDICAL BOARD BEFORE HIS DEATH DID SIGNIFY A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF IMPROVEMENT.

/HOWEVER, DR .....

HOWEVER, DR CHIU OBSERVED THAT THE BILL ITSELF WAS QUITE REMEDIAL IN NATURE ALTHOUGH THE AMENDMENT WAS WELL RECEIVED.

+AT PRESENT, SOME GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE TAKING CARE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

+HOWEVER, THE CONSTRUCTION AND QUARRY INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG AND THE WORKERS IN HIGH-RISK AREAS NEED TO BE FURTHER EDUCATED ABOUT KNOWN METHODS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST AND EARLY DETECTION OF HEALTH PROBLEMS,+ HE SAID.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES AND PROGRAMMES FOR SPREADING INFORMATION ABOUT THEM NEEDED TO BE EVALUATED, DR CHIU ADDED.

+ALL THESE POSITIVE ACTIONS WILL NOT ONLY BE BENEFICIAL TO THE HONG KONG WORKFORCE BUT THEY ARE ALSO ESSENTIAL TO THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IN DECIDING ON THE AMOUNT OF LEVY,+ HE SAID.

DR CHIU NOTED THAT THESE ACTIONS WOULD HAVE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, BUT BELIEVED THAT THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, WOULD ACCEPT THEM.

+WHERE THE FUNDS COME FROM IS MERELY A TECHNICAL PROBLEM.

+THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT PNEUMOCONIOSIS MUST BE PREVENTED BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE,+ HE SAID.

+THIS IS WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO AND DO QUICKLY,+ DR CHIU STRESSED.

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#### EARLY ACTION ON MEDICAL RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED

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THE CONSULTANTS' REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN HOSPITALS CONTAINS A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH COULD BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT WAITING FOR AN OVERALL DECISION AND THESE WILL BE EXAMINED URGENTLY, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BUDGET, MR CHAMBERS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD CLEARLY TAKE A CONSIDERABLE TIME TO REACH A DECISION ON THE MAJOR RECOMMENDATION FOR AN INDEPENDENT HOSPITAL AUTHORITY.

+THE CONSULTANTS HAVE RECOMMENDED A NUMBER OF CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE OF HOSPITAL CHARGES AND THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS ON THIS SUBJECT WILL OF COURSE BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION TOGETHER WITH THE COMMENTS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC,+ HE ADDED.

/MR CHAMBERS .....

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT IN DRAWING UP THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW THE AUTHORITIES HAD TO TAKE CARE THAT THE CONSULTANTS' BRIEF WAS MANAGEABLE.

+WITH THIS IN MIND, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE REVIEW SHOULD BE CONFINED TO A STUDY OF THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HOSPITALS, WHERE WEAKNESSES IN THE SYSTEM WERE APPARENT AND WHERE EXPANSION PLANS ARE LIKELY TO IMPOSE EVEN GREATER STRAIN IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

DEALING SEPARATELY WITH OTHER POINTS RAISED BY MEMBERS, HE REFERRED TO THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH'S SUGGESTION THAT UNDER-UTILISED BEDS IN SUBVENTED HOSPITALS BE RE-DESIGNATED FOR USE BY CONVALESCENT PATIENTS, AND SAID VARIOUS STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM OF OVERCROWDING IN ACUTE HOSPITALS.

+THESE INCLUDE THE RE-DESIGNATION OF BEDS BETWEEN SPECIALTIES AND THE PROVISION OF FURTHER STAFF AND FACILITIES IN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS.+

REFERRING TO DR THE HON CONRAD LAM'S PROPOSAL THAT THE PRIVATISATION OF OUT-PATIENT SERVICES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, HE SAID A SIMILAR SUGGESTION WAS MADE LAST YEAR, BUT THERE WERE GOOD REASONS WHY THIS SERVICE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE OPERATED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

+THE OUT-PATIENT CLINICS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF EPIDEMIC AND ENDEMIC DISEASES. THIS IS A PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTION, WHICH IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT.+

ON DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP'S QUERY WHETHER CONTINUANCE OF THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE WAS JUSTIFIED, MR CHAMBERS SAID IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PARTICIPATING HAD RISEN FROM 170 000 TO 349 000.

EACH CHILD MADE AN AVERAGE OF THREE VISITS A YEAR TO THE DOCTOR WHICH IN TURN MEANT OVER A MILLION ATTENDANCES, WHICH WAS 20 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL ATTENDANCES AT GOVERNMENT OUT-PATIENT CLINICS.

+CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE REQUIRED IF THE EXISTING NETWORK OF GOVERNMENT OUT-PATIENT CLINICS HAD TO ABSORB THIS EXTRA WORKLOAD. WHILE I ACCEPT THAT THE EXISTING PARTICIPATION RATE OF 44 PER CENT OF ALL ELIGIBLE SCHOOL CHILDREN COULD BE IMPROVED, I BELIEVE THE SCHEME STILL PLAYS A VERY USEFUL ROLE IN THE HEALTH CARE OF OUR YOUNG POPULATION AND SHOULD BE RETAINED.+

TURNING TO SOCIAL WELFARE, MR CHAMBERS NOTED THAT SEVERAL MEMBERS HAD POINTED TO SHORTFALLS IN THE PROVISION OF VARIOUS WELFARE SERVICES AND QUESTIONED WHETHER THERE WAS A GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO WELFARE IN THE SAME SENSE THAT THERE WAS A COMMITMENT TO THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES AND HOUSING UNITS.

+I WOULD LIKE TO REASSURE MEMBERS THAT THERE IS SUCH A COMMITMENT, TO PROVIDE BOTH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO ARE AT LEAST ABLE TO HELP THEMSELVES, THE POOR, THE ELDERLY AND THE DISABLED, AS WELL AS DIRECT SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO NEED THEM, PARTICULARLY FOR THE ELDERLY, FOR OFFENDERS AND OTHER VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE AND FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE PROBLEMS THEY CANNOT COPE WITH ON THEIR OWN,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS THAT IT WAS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THE DEMAND FOR WELFARE SERVICES THAN IT WAS, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR SCHOOL PLACES. +PLANNING RATIOS ARE ESSENTIAL AS A BASIS FOR THESE PROGRAMMES, BUT INEVITABLY THEY HAVE TO BE BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS ON HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO NEED A PARTICULAR SERVICE.+

PROGRAMMES WERE SET OUT IN THE 'FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR SOCIAL WELFARE DEVELOPMENT' WHICH WAS UPDATED EACH YEAR.

MR CHAMBERS NOTED THAT MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICE AND IN PARTICULAR THE PRESENT RATIO OF ONE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER FOR 4 000 STUDENTS.

HE SAID: +IT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED SINCE 1982 THAT AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK AND A BETTER MANNING RATIO ARE DESIRABLE. BUT IT WAS CONSIDERED AT THAT TIME THAT THE IMPROVED MANNING RATIO OF ONE SOCIAL WORKER TO 2 000 STUDENTS SHOULD ONLY BE APPLIED AFTER ALL SCHOOLS WERE COVERED UNDER THE EXISTING RATIO, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVERALL SHORTFALL OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS.+

SINCE THEN THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONCERN WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF DELIVERY OF THE SERVICE, AND HE BELIEVED IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO CHANGE THE MANNING RATIO UNTIL THAT QUESTION HAD BEEN RESOLVED.

+WE HAVE THEREFORE ESTABLISHED A WORKING GROUP WITH MEMBERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE SCHOOLS AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO REVIEW THE ARRANGEMENTS, AND I HOPE TO RECEIVE ITS RECOMMENDATIONS SHORTLY.+

ON QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCING, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE PACE AT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD PROCEED IN MEETING ITS POLICY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS DEPENDED ON THE FUNDS AVAILABLE AND OTHER FACTORS. THESE FACTORS INCLUDED THE WILLINGNESS OF SUITABLE AGENCIES TO UNDERTAKE SERVICES, AVAILABILITY OF SITES OR PREMISES, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINED MANPOWER.

+ON THE FINANCING OF INDIVIDUAL SERVICES, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT A LARGE SHARE OF THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES MUST GO TOWARDS MAINTAINING EXISTING SERVICES AT CURRENT STANDARDS. THIS MEANS THAT NEW SERVICES AND IMPROVEMENTS TO STANDARDS HAVE TO COMPETE FOR THE REMAINING FUNDS.+

/BUT HE .....

BUT HE AGREED THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHOULD BE MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN DETERMINING BROAD PRIORITIES AND HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE THIS WAS BEING CONSIDERED.

MR CHAMBERS AGREED WITH THE HON HUI YIN-FAT THAT PROBLEMS HAD ARISEN IN THE STANDARD COST SUBVENTION SYSTEM, AND, AFTER THREE YEARS' EXPERIENCE OF IT, THE TIME WAS NOW RIPE TO EXAMINE ITS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER CHANGES WERE REQUIRED.

A REVIEW WOULD SHORTLY BEGIN AND, MEANWHILE, ON THE ADVICE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, MODIFICATIONS WOULD BE INTRODUCED THIS YEAR TO REMEDY SOME OF THE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS TO WHICH THE HON ROSANNA TAM HAD DRAWN ATTENTION.

+I AGREE WITH HER THAT IT IS UNDESIRABLE FOR LARGE SURPLUSES TO BE ACCUMULATED IN AGENCIES' ACCOUNTS,+ HE SAID.

+WE INTEND TO RECOVER THESE SURPLUSES AS SOON AS THEY ARE IDENTIFIED FROM AGENCIES' AUDITED ACCOUNTS AND THIS MONEY WILL THEN BE AVAILABLE FOR REALLOCATION TO OTHER APPROVED SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS.+

ON THE USE OF THE LOTTERIES FUND, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE DEMAND ON THE FUND TO MEET THE CAPITAL COSTS OF NEW SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS WAS LIKELY TO INCREASE, AND HE DID NOT THINK THAT THERE WAS SCOPE FOR DIVERTING PART OF THE FUND TO SUPPORT AGENCIES' RECURRENT EXPENDITURE.

REFERRING TO THE HON CHAN YING-LUN'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE LACK OF GROWTH IN OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK, HE SAID RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES HAD LED TO THE SERVICE BEING UNDERSTAFFED FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND FURTHER EXPANSION WOULD BE DIFFICULT AT PRESENT.

CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CENTRES AND MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY, MR CHAMBERS SAID MEASURES NOW BEING TAKEN SHOULD SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE THE SHORTAGE OF THESE FACILITIES BY 1990. THERE WERE AT PRESENT 100 SOCIAL CENTRES, INCLUDING THOSE WITHIN MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES. SEVEN MORE SOCIAL CENTRES AND TWO MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES WOULD OPEN THIS YEAR AND PLANNING TARGETS WERE 12 SOCIAL CENTRES AND THREE MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES IN EACH SUBSEQUENT YEAR.

HE AGREED WITH THE HON LIU LIT-FOR THAT THERE WERE SHORTFALLS IN THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE PLACES FOR THE ELDERLY, PARTICULARLY CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES, BUT PLANS PROVIDED FOR THE ESTIMATED DEMAND TO BE MET ALMOST IN FULL WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

ON THE SUBJECT OF POLLUTION, MR CHAMBERS REFERRED TO MR TAI'S SUGGESTION THAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE IN THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES RATHER THAN LEGISLATION. HE SAID THE EXISTING LEVEL OF INFRASTRUCTURE WAS ALREADY VERY HIGH AND THE TOTAL COMMITMENT UNDER THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME WAS AROUND \$4 000 MILLION, AND ADDED: +CLEARLY WE NEED BOTH PUBLIC-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION.+

HOUSING OBJECTIVE -- DECENT ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL  
\* \* \* \* \*

THE PUBLIC HOUSING STRATEGY IS UNDER REVIEW TO ACHIEVE THE AIM OF PROVIDING DECENT ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL WHO LIVE IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON JOHN TODD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID: + THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THOSE IN NEED OF REHOUSING, MODERN, MULTI-ROOMED FLATS IN WELL-PLANNED ESTATES OFFERING GOOD FACILITIES IN A SUPERIOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT= AND, THAT RENTS WILL REMAIN REASONABLE AND AFFORDABLE.

+AS TO THE PROVISION OF MORE FLATS FOR THOSE WISHING TO PURCHASE, I CONFIDENTLY EXPECT THAT PRODUCTION OF HOME OWNERSHIP TYPE FLATS AT AFFORDABLE PRICES WILL GRADUALLY INCREASE TO MEET THE PRESENT HIGH DEMAND AND ASPIRATIONS OF POTENTIAL PURCHASERS.

+OUR STRATEGY REVIEW WILL HELP US DETERMINE HOW THIS CAN BEST BE ACHIEVED AND HOW, TOGETHER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WE CAN AIM TO PROVIDE DECENT ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL WHO LIVE IN HONG KONG.+

MR TODD POINTED OUT THAT LAST DECEMBER, AS PART OF THE REVIEW, AN ESTIMATED OUTSTANDING DEMAND FOR SOME 334 000 RENTAL FLATS WAS IDENTIFIED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE ON THE WAITING LIST, FOR THE SQUATTERS COUNTED IN LAST YEAR'S SURVEY AND FOR THOSE LIVING IN OLDER PUBLIC HOUSING BLOCKS SCHEDULED FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

+IT WILL TAKE US INTO THE MID-1990'S BEFORE THE BULK OF THIS RENTAL HOUSING DEMAND CAN BE SUPPLIED,+ HE SAID.

BUT BECAUSE OF THE GROWING STANDARDS OF LIVING AND THE RISING AFFLUENCE OF THE POPULATION, MR TODD SAID HE ENVISAGED THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WILL WANT AND WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO BUY THEIR OWN HOMES.

+THUS, THE WAY FORWARD WILL BE TO INCREASE THE LESS SUBSIDISED HOME OWNERSHIP ELEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME, LEAVING MORE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S LIMITED RESOURCES FOR OTHER SOCIAL PROGRAMME.+

MR TODD SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT INCREASING HOME OWNERSHIP WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A BALANCED, SUCCESSFUL HOUSING PROGRAMME WHICH, AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT, ENCOURAGED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL STABILITY.

IN CONSIDERING HOW TO MEET ANY SUSTAINED DEMAND, HE AGREED WITH SOME MEMBERS THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO REVIEW THE ROLE OF PRIVATE DEVELOPERS IN MEETING THIS REQUIREMENT TO ENSURE THE BEST USE OF THE SOURCES OF BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING PRODUCTION.

/HOWEVER, MR .....

HOWEVER, MR TODD CAUTIONED THAT IN PURSUING HOME OWNERSHIP, REDEVELOPMENT OF OLD ESTATES SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED.

HE ALSO AGREED THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO SPEED UP THIS PROGRAMME AREA, AND THAT IT WAS THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S DECLARED POLICY TO IMPROVE ITS OLDER ESTATES.

+MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF THE AUTHORITY'S ACCELERATED PROGRAMME FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ALL MARK I AND II PUBLIC HOUSING BLOCKS AND ITS PROGRAMME TO REDEVELOP 26 BLOCKS HAVING SUB-STANDARD CONCRETE. DEMOLITION OF ALL THESE BLOCKS IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN ABOUT FOUR YEARS.

+WE SHALL SOON BE PLANNING HOW TO TACKLE THE REMAINING OLDER ESTATE BLOCKS AND AS WE ADVANCE INTO THE 1990'S, I ENVISAGE THAT REDEVELOPMENT OF THESE BLOCKS WILL GRADUALLY TAKE A MORE PROMINENT POSITION IN THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME.+

TURNING TO THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING, MR TODD SAID IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S AIM TO BECOME SELF-FINANCING AND THAT IT WAS PROGRESSIVELY BEING ACHIEVED.

+THE AUTHORITY'S CONTRIBUTION OF ITS ANNUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE WAS 47 PER CENT IN 1985-86, AND IS FORECAST TO REACH 69 PER CENT BY 1989-90. THUS, PROGRESSIVELY, THE AUTHORITY SHOULD BE ABLE TO BORROW LESS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND AND LEAVE MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR OTHER PROGRAMME AREAS.+

ON COSTS OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME, MR TODD SAID IT HAS BEEN RIGHTLY POINTED OUT THE \$3.4 BILLION BUDGETTED EXPENDITURE FOR 1986-87 REPRESENTED ONLY THE ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DID NOT REFLECT THE VALUE OF LAND.

+THE FULL VALUE OF LAND IS SHOWN IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S ACCOUNTS AS A GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION. BY THE END OF THE 1984-85 FINANCIAL YEAR THIS HAD AMOUNTED TO \$18.3 BILLION.+

TO A SUGGESTION THAT THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO GIVE IT THE BENEFIT OF THE SURPLUS, MR TODD SAID THIS SUGGESTION, WHICH WOULD HAVE WIDE FINANCIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS, WOULD NEED TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.

ON A PROPOSAL THAT TENANTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BUY THE RENTAL FLATS WHICH THEY OCCUPIED, THE HOUSING SECRETARY SAID WHILE THIS SUGGESTION HAS ITS ATTRACTIONS, THERE WERE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS AS WELL AS FINANCIAL DRAWBACKS.

HE NOTED THAT THE OLDER RENTAL PROPERTIES HAVE INADEQUATE FACILITIES, SO THEY WERE NOT SUITABLE FOR SALE. ALTHOUGH THE NEWER ESTATES COULD UNDOUBTEDLY ATTRACT INTEREST, THEY WERE PART OF THE ACCOMMODATION STOCK FOR REHOUSING PEOPLE ON THE WAITING LIST, SQUATTERS AND OTHERS.

+IF WE WERE TO SELL THESE WE COULD PROLONG OUR PROGRAMME TO HOUSE THOSE IN NEED OF PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION, AND MAKE THIS MORE COSTLY IN THE LONG RUN.

+THEREFORE, IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE CURRENT POLICY OF PRODUCING NEW AND HIGHER STANDARD HOS FLATS FOR PURCHASE BY BETTER-OFF TENANTS IS RIGHT FOR THE PRESENT.

+IN A FEW YEARS TIME, WHEN THE MAJORITY OF THE INADEQUATELY HOUSED HAVE BEEN ACCOMMODATED, WE CAN REVIEW THIS PROPOSAL.+

ON THE QUESTION OF RENTS, MR TODD SAID ALTHOUGH RENT INCREASES FOR DOMESTIC PREMISES MUST BE GRADUAL, REASONABLE AND ALWAYS AFFORDABLE, THERE WAS A CASE FOR TENANTS TO CONTRIBUTE MORE, WITHIN THEIR MEANS, TOWARDS THE COST OF THEIR SUBSIDISED HOUSING.

+AN AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, CHAIRED BY THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, IS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING DOMESTIC RENT POLICY,+ HE ADDED.

ON THE QUESTION OF REDUCING HOUSING SUBSIDY TO THOSE TENANTS WHO HAVE IMPROVED THEIR FINANCIAL SITUATION, MR TODD SAID IT HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF WIDE CONSULTATION BY WAY OF A GREEN PAPER.

THE AUTHORITY'S AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HOUSING SUBSIDY WAS NOW EXAMINING PUBLIC COMMENTS, AND WILL REPORT TO THE AUTHORITY LATER THIS YEAR, MR TODD POINTED OUT.

TO THE SUGGESTION FOR PRIVATISING THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AS A MEANS TO LOWER COSTS, MR TODD SAID MANY OF THE AUTHORITY'S ESTATE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PRIVATISED, NAMELY CLEANSING, MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY SERVICES.

+THE AUTHORITY IS NOW CONSIDERING THE FEASIBILITY OF PRIVATISING THE MANAGEMENT OF ITS CAR PARKS.+

BUT MR TODD SAID THAT THE AUTHORITY CONSIDERED THAT ITS PRESENT SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT WAS GENERALLY COST-EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT AND FULFILLED A SOCIAL FUNCTION.

HOUSING STAFF HAVE ESTABLISHED A GOOD LANDLORD AND TENANT RELATIONSHIP WHICH ENABLED THEM TO RECEIVE TENANTS' VIEWS AND TO EXPLAIN THE AUTHORITY'S POLICIES. THEY ALSO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH DISTRICT BOARDS, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS.

THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE ENSURED A GENERALLY STABLE AND CONTENTED COMMUNITY, HE SAID.

MR TODD ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THE AUTHORITY WAS AWARE OF THE NEED FOR COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND WILL CONTINUE REGULARLY TO REVIEW ITS ESTATES MANAGEMENT SERVICES.

/+FURTHER .....

+FURTHER PRIVATISATION WILL BE CONSIDERED WHERE IT IS FEASIBLE AND CHEAPER TO INTRODUCE IT WITHOUT LOWERING THE STANDARD OF SERVICE. BUT I DOUBT, IN PRACTICE, WHETHER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR THERE ARE SUFFICIENT PERSONS QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED IN HOUSING MANAGEMENT WHO COULD UNDERTAKE THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE MANY ESTATES.+

MR TODD SAID HE AGREED THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF HOME OWNERSHIP PROPERTIES SHOULD NOT REMAIN A PERMANENT RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AUTHORITY WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE HOME OWNERS' GROUPS TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS DESPITE THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM HOS OWNERS.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WITHIN A FEW MONTHS AFTER THEIR DEMOLITION, MR TODD SAID THE AUTHORITY HAS A PROGRAMME TO REDEVELOP SOME OLD TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS TO REPLACE DILAPIDATED OLD TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WITH NEW ONES BUILT TO CURRENT STANDARDS.

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#### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON CONSULTANTS

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THE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED CONSULTANTS ONLY WHEN DEPARTMENTS DID NOT HAVE THE STAFF OR EXPERTISE TO CARRY OUT THE WORK THEMSELVES, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON NICKY CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, MR CHAN SAID: +WHILE THE RECRUITMENT OF MORE STAFF MIGHT APPEAR TO BE THE MORE ECONOMICAL SOLUTION IN THE SHORT TERM, IT COULD LEAD TO UNDER-UTILISATION OF STAFF RESOURCES WHEN THE WORKLOAD IS REDUCED.

+THIS WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM OF RESTRICTING THE GROWTH OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY.+

MR CHAN SAID THAT CONSULTANTS WERE EMPLOYED FOR MUCH OF THE PLANNING OF NEW TOWNS BECAUSE ADDITIONAL STAFF RESOURCES WERE NEEDED TO LAUNCH THE PROGRAMME, BUT IT WAS UNCERTAIN JUST HOW LONG THESE RESOURCES WOULD BE NEEDED.

HE ADDED, HOWEVER= THAT +WHERE WE ARE SURE THAT THE WORKLOAD IS ONGOING, IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, AN EXPANSION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.+

REFERRING TO THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG'S COMMENTS ON LACK OF BASIC FACILITIES IN THE OLDER PARTS OF HONG KONG, ESPECIALLY WESTERN DISTRICT, MR CHAN EXPLAINED THAT DEVELOPING DENSELY POPULATED OLDER AREAS, WHERE MUCH OF THE LAND WAS PRIVATELY OWNED, WAS DIFFICULT.

NEVERTHELESS, THE URBAN COUNCIL WAS BUILDING A COMPLEX IN WESTERN WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A MARKET, A CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, A YOUTH CENTRE, AN AUDITORIUM, THEATRE, EXHIBITION HALL, REHEARSAL HALLS AND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES.

THE COMPLEX, COSTING \$192 MILLION, SHOULD BE READY IN MID-1988.

MR CHAN ADDED THAT RECLAMATIONS OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE GOOD DEFICIENCIES IN OLDER AREAS. IN THE CASE OF WESTERN THE RECLAMATION NEARING COMPLETION WOULD BE SITE FOR AN INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE, DISTRICT COMMUNITY CENTRE AND A DISTRICT PARK.

ALSO IN HAND WAS THE TEMPORARY REPROVISIONING TO THE RECLAMATION BY DECEMBER THIS YEAR OF THE WHOLESALE POULTRY MARKET IN KENNEDY TOWN. THERE WERE ALSO PLANS TO MOVE THE CATTLE DEPOT TO THE KENNEDY TOWN ABATTOIR IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

MR CHAN ADDED THAT ACCESS TO WESTERN WOULD BE GREATLY IMPROVED WHEN THE UPGRADING OF CONNAUGHT ROAD WAS COMPLETED IN LATE 1989.

REPLYING TO THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH'S SUGGESTION FOR A LONG-TERM POLICY ON LAND USE, MR CHAN SAID THE NEED HAD ALREADY BEEN RECOGNISED WHICH WAS WHY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD ENDORSED A LONG-TERM TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN 1984.

+THESE STUDIES CONSIDERED THE POTENTIAL OF LAND NOT ONLY FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT, BUT ALSO FOR RECREATION, AGRICULTURE AND OTHER USES,+ MR CHAN SAID.

+TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE APPROVED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, LAYOUT PLANS WILL BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE USE OF LAND OUTSIDE NEW TOWNS.+

IN REPLY TO THE HON LAU WONG-FAT'S CALL FOR LONG-TERM PLANS TO IMPROVE FACILITIES FOR VILLAGES AND AREAS OUTSIDE THE NEW TOWNS, MR CHAN SAID HE AGREED THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY. HE ADDED THAT LAYOUT PLANS WERE BEING PREPARED TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS NOT ALREADY COVERED BY DETAILED PLANS.

FOUR PILOT SCHEMES FOR VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT (AT PAK KONG IN SAI KUNG, TIN SUM IN SHA TIN, SHEUNG SHUI IN NORTH DISTRICT AND TONG FONG IN YUEN LONG) HAD BEEN SELECTED. THERE WAS ALSO A PILOT SCHEME AT SAN HING TSUEN IN TUEN MUN TO UPGRADE RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

MR CHAN SAID THE RESULTS OF THESE PILOT SCHEMES SHOULD HELP IN PRODUCING A LONG-TERM PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE RURAL FACILITIES.

DISTRICT BOARDS PROVE THEIR WORTH  
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DISTRICT BOARDS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR VALUE IN BUILDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH VITALITY AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND IDENTITY, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE DISTRICT BOARDS HAD ALSO PROVED THEIR WORTH IN HELPING TO IMPROVE THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS, MR LIAO SAID DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BUDGET.

HE NOTED THAT THE DISTRICT BOARDS HAD BEEN CREATED TO ACHIEVE BETTER CO-ORDINATION AND MORE RESPONSIVE ADMINISTRATION AT DISTRICT LEVEL BY PROVIDING FOR GREATER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS.

IN PURSUIT OF THEIR VITAL OBJECTIVES, DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS HAD BEEN FORTHCOMING AND EFFECTIVE IN REFLECTING THE VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND THIS EFFORT MUST CONTINUE WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

+IT THEREFORE FOLLOWS THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE ALL THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR WORK.+

REFERRING TO SUGGESTIONS THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO BOARD MEMBERS WHO WISH TO SET UP THEIR OWN OFFICES TO MEET LOCAL RESIDENTS, MR LIAO SAID: +WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF EXAMINING IN DETAIL THE JUSTIFICATIONS FOR SUCH AN ALLOWANCE WITH A VIEW TO FORMULATING PROPOSALS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.+

THE HON PAULINE NG HAD PROPOSED THAT THE AMBIT OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO DISTRICT BOARDS SHOULD BE CHANGED TO INCLUDE RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ARISING FROM SUCH PROJECTS AS THE INSTALLATION OF STREET LIGHTING IN SQUATTER AREAS AND THE PROVISION OF STUDY ROOMS.

MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAD AGREED TO MEET RECURRENT EXPENDITURE FOR STREET LIGHTING INSTALLED BY DISTRICT BOARDS IN URBAN SQUATTER AREAS.

+AS REGARDS RECURRENT EXPENDITURE THAT MAY ARISE FROM OTHER MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, THERE IS A LIKELIHOOD THAT SUCH RECURRENT COMMITMENTS WILL SUBSEQUENTLY TAKE UP A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF THE LIMITED FUNDS AVAILABLE AND THUS SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE BOARDS' CAPABILITY TO FINANCE OTHER WORTHY PROJECTS,+ HE SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF PROVIDING EXTRA STAFF TO IMPROVE SECRETARIAT SERVICES TO DISTRICT BOARDS, MR LIAO SAID ADDITIONAL POSTS HAD BEEN CREATED THIS FINANCIAL YEAR TO RELIEVE THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF DISTRICT BOARD SECRETARIATS.

TURNING TO CIVIC EDUCATION, MR LIAO SAID ARRANGEMENTS WERE BEING FINALISED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE ON THE PROMOTION OF CIVIC EDUCATION.

+THE NEW COMMITTEE WILL BE COMPRISED MAINLY OF UNOFFICIALS AND IT IS HOPED THAT APPOINTMENTS WILL BE MADE VERY SHORTLY.

+THE COMMITTEE'S FUNCTION IS TO OFFER ADVICE NOT ONLY TO GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS ON THE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF CIVIC EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE FORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

+THE INTENTION IS TO STIMULATE INITIATIVES FROM THE COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY GUIDELINES AND SUPPORT.+

ON THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW CENTRAL BODY FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES, MR LIAO SAID IT WAS NOW INTENDED THAT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED NEXT MONTH.

THE NEW BODY WOULD BE NON-STATUTORY AND COMPRISE OF MAINLY UNOFFICIALS WHO WOULD ADVISE GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS RELATING TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT.

+THE COMMITTEE WILL PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH ON THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF HONG KONG'S YOUNG PEOPLE.+

MR LIAO SAID HE SHARED THE HON LAU WONG-FAT'S CONCERN ABOUT THE NEED TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS IN SOME PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW TOWNS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT INITIATIVES WERE BEING TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THIS AREA AS OUTLINED BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS.

ON MR LAU'S SUGGESTION THAT THE LOCAL PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME BE EXTENDED TO IMPROVE VILLAGES IN RURAL PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR LIAO SAID THE PRESENT ANNUAL PROVISION OF \$14.7 MILLION WAS NOT SUFFICIENT.

+WE ARE CURRENTLY EXAMINING THE CASE FOR A FUTURE INCREASE,+ HE SAID.

+THIS PROGRAMME PROVIDES FOR SIMPLE ACCESS ROADS AND FOOTPATHS, DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND OTHER BASIC FACILITIES AND FOR MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PROJECTS.

+WE AGREE THAT WORKS OF THIS KIND ARE STILL REQUIRED IN THE RURAL AREAS AND THAT THE SCHEME SHOULD CONTINUE.+

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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CALL TO RETAIN 60-DAY LIMIT FOR HEARING CLAIMS

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SUPPORT THE PROPOSED REMOVAL OF THE STIPULATION THAT A CASE CANNOT BE HEARD BY THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL EARLIER THAN 10 DAYS AFTER THE FILING OF THE CLAIM.

HOWEVER, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE STATUTORY LIMIT THAT IT MUST BE HEARD NOT LATER THAN 60 DAYS AFTER THE FILING OF THE CLAIM SHOULD BE RETAINED.

THIS WAS STATED BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, CONVENER OF THE AD HOC GROUP TO STUDY THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986, TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, DR IP SAID MEMBERS SUPPORTED THE REMOVAL OF THE 10-DAY BAR BECAUSE IT WOULD ENABLE CONSUMERS, PARTICULARLY SHORT STAY TOURISTS, TO OBTAIN SPEEDY REDRESS AGAINST MALPRACTICES BY UNSCRUPULOUS RETAILERS.

MEMBERS HOWEVER WERE NOT CONVINCED OF THE ARGUMENTS TO INCREASE THE 60-DAY LIMIT TO 90 DAYS, SHE SAID.

+THE MAIN CONCERN OF MEMBERS IS THAT THE ESSENCE OF A SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL IS THAT IT SHOULD ALLOW SMALL CLAIMS TO BE PURSUED IN A QUICK AND INEXPENSIVE MANNER AND THESE CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD NOT BE UNNECESSARILY TAMPERED WITH+.

THE PROPOSED 90-DAY LIMIT APPEARED TO BE TOO LONG FOR THE EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF SUCH A TRIBUNAL, SHE SAID.

DR IP NOTED THAT THE AD HOC GROUP HAD HAD LENGTHY AND DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT.

+AS A RESULT, MEMBERS ARE KEENLY AWARE AND DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF THE TRIBUNALS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO MEET THE 60-DAY LIMIT AND A FURTHER INCREASE IN WORKLOAD WHICH IS ANTICIPATED FROM THE INCREASE IN JURISDICTION, WILL WORSEN THE SITUATION,+ SHE SAID.

DR IP SAID THAT THE STATUTORY TIME LIMIT FOR SETTING CASES DOWN FOR HEARING COULD ONLY BE COMPLIED WITH BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY ORGANISATIONS WHICH WISHED TO FILE LARGE BATCHES OF CLAIMS AT ONE TIME WERE REQUESTED TO STAGGER THE FILING.

SHE SAID MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREED WITH THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT THAT THIS SITUATION WAS NOT SATISFACTORY ALTHOUGH IT WAS NEVER APPLIED TO CLAIMS BY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS.

/MEMBERS CONSIDERED .....

MEMBERS CONSIDERED THAT THE BETTER COURSE WAS TO RETAIN THE PRESENT STATUTORY TIME LIMIT AND TO DEPLOY SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET IT, DR IP SAID.

+IF IT PROVES TO BE THE CASE THAT EXISTING STAFFING LEVELS ARE CLEARLY INADEQUATE TO MAKE THE LEGISLATION EFFECTIVE, THEN THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NO DOUBT CONSIDER RECOMMENDING AN INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE IN ORDER TO MAKE THE LEGISLATION WORK, AND IF SO, MEMBERS WILL SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION.

+FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, IT IS THE VIEW OF THE AD HOC GROUP THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF SPEEDY ACCESS TO SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS MUST NOT BE ERODED - AND IT IS ON THIS BASIS THAT I SHALL BE MOVING AN AMENDMENT IN COMMITTEE TO RETAIN THE PRESENT LIMIT OF 60 DAYS,+ SHE SAID.

DR IP ALSO MENTIONED THAT ANOTHER PROVISION OF THE BILL SEEKING TO INCREASE THE MONETARY JURISDICTION OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL FROM \$5 000 TO \$8 000 WAS UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

THANKING DR IP AND MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP FOR THEIR TIME, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID HE RECOGNISED THAT THE PROBLEM OF MEETING THE IRREGULAR FLOW OF WORK IN THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL COULD BE OVERCOME IN MORE WAYS THAN THE ONE PROPOSED BY THE AMENDMENT BILL.

+THE FURTHER ENQUIRIES MADE BY THE AD HOC GROUP OF THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT HAVE SHOWN THAT THE EXISTING TIME LIMIT CAN BE MET IF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE MADE AVAILABLE,+ HE SAID.

MR THOMAS SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT HAD BEGUN TO EXAMINE THE PRESENT STAFFING LEVELS OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL SO AS TO ASSESS THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO BE NEEDED TO ENABLE ALL CLAIM TO BE HEARD WITHIN 60 DAYS.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WOULD SUPPORT THE AMENDMENTS TO BE MOVED BY DR IP +IN THE LIGHT OF HER ASSURANCE THAT MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT ANY INCREASE IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE THAT MAY BE REQUIRED IF PRESENT TIME LIMIT IS TO BE RETAINED.+

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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CONSUMER COUNCIL REPORT TABLED IN LEGCO  
\* \* \* \* \*

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 9 669 COMPLAINTS AND 65 255 ENQUIRIES AT ITS 12 ADVICE CENTRES SPREAD OVER VARIOUS DISTRICTS IN THE YEAR 1984-85.

THIS WAS STATED BY ITS CHAIRMAN, THE HON SELINA CHOW, WHEN SHE TABLED THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS CHOW NOTED THAT THE FIGURES SPOKE FOR THEMSELVES, ADDING THAT THE COUNCIL'S DECISION TO REGIONALISE ITS SERVICES WAS NOT ONLY NEEDED BUT ALSO IN GREAT DEMAND.

HOWEVER, SHE STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT TO SAY THAT EFFECTIVE CONSUMER PROTECTION COULD BE ACHIEVED SIMPLY BY THE ORGANISATION OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS STRUCTURE WITH THE CONSUMERS.

+IT IS FUNDAMENTAL THAT THE CAUSE IS SUPPORTED BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, BY OUR LEGISLATURE TO EXPEDITE LAWS WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED, BY OUR MEDIA TO PASS ON INFORMATION QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY, BE IT NAMES OF FRAUDULENT TRADERS OR DANGEROUS PRODUCTS, OR MATERIALS OF OUR CAMPAIGNS DESIGNED TO BENEFIT THE AVERAGE CONSUMER, BY TRADES AND INDUSTRIES WHICH ARE FAR-SIGHTED ENOUGH TO VALUE SATISFIED CONSUMERS, AND BY THE PROFESSIONS WHICH ARE ALWAYS READY TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR EXPERTISE TO ARRIVE AT A FAIRER DEAL FOR THE CONSUMER,+ SHE SAID.

+THE CONSUMER COUNCIL SEES ITS ROLE CLEARLY IN THE CENTRE OF ALL THESE PARTIES AS AN INITIATOR AND A CO-ORDINATOR, SAFE-GUARDING THE BEST LONG-TERM INTEREST OF THE CONSUMER,+ MRS CHOW ADDED.

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TWO BILLS PASSED  
\* \* \*

TWO BILLS - THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 AND THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 - WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED TO APRIL 30.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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BRITAIN REPLIES TO REQUESTS ON DRAFT ORDER  
\* \* \*

FOLLOWING ARE THE TEXTS OF A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ASKED BY MR COLIN MOYNIHAN, MP (CONS, LEWISHAM EAST) AND OF THE WRITTEN REPLY GIVEN BY THE HOME SECRETARY, THE RT HON DOUGLAS HURD, TODAY (APRIL 23).

QUESTION :

TO ASK THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT WHETHER HE IS YET IN A POSITION TO RESPOND TO THE REQUESTS MADE BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF HONG KONG CONCERNING THE DRAFT HONG KONG (BRITISH NATIONALITY) ORDER IN COUNCIL.

REPLY :

THE GOVERNMENT HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE REQUESTS MADE BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HAVE HELD DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH THE HONG-KONG GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE ALSO TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT IN JANUARY AND IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIONS PUT TO US BY ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN HONG KONG.

THE COUNCIL'S FIRST REQUEST WAS THAT WE SHOULD PROVIDE AN ENDORSEMENT IN THE BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE HOLDER DID NOT REQUIRE A VISA OR ENTRY CERTIFICATE TO VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM. THE GOVERNMENT WILL MEET THIS REQUEST. AS WE HAVE MADE CLEAR ON MANY OCCASIONS, VISITORS FROM HONG KONG ARE WELCOME TO COME TO THE UNITED KINGDOM. BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS DO NOT HAVE TO OBTAIN A VISA IN ADVANCE TO VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM. THIS IS THE POSITION UNDER THE CURRENT IMMIGRATION RULES AND THIS GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF INTRODUCING ANY VISA REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH VISITORS. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLY A MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PEOPLE IN HONG KONG. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR WISHES, THEREFORE, THE GOVERNMENT HAVE AGREED THAT AN ENDORSEMENT REFLECTING THIS POSITION SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE NEW BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS. THE ENDORSEMENT WILL READ:

+IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM IMMIGRATION RULES,  
THE HOLDER OF THIS PASSPORT DOES NOT REQUIRE AN ENTRY  
CERTIFICATE OR VISA TO VISIT THE UNITED KINGDOM.+

A LEAFLET WILL BE ISSUED WITH EACH PASSPORT EXPLAINING THE ENDORSEMENT AND THE POSITION UNDER THE IMMIGRATION RULES.

/THE COUNCIL'S .....

THE COUNCIL'S SECOND REQUEST WAS THAT FORMER SERVICEMEN IN HONG KONG WHO SERVED IN THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR SHOULD BE GRANTED BRITISH CITIZENSHIP. THE NUMBER INVOLVED IS ABOUT 270. IN VIEW OF THEIR PARTICULAR SERVICE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL MEET THE SPIRIT OF THIS REQUEST. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981 TO CONFER BRITISH CITIZENSHIP ON THEM ALL REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OF THEIR SERVICE OR THEIR PRESENT CITIZENSHIP. BUT I WILL CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AS BRITISH CITIZENS UNDER SECTION 4(5) OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981 FROM ANY WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER THIS PROVISION BECAUSE THEY ARE BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS OR OTHER BRITISH NATIONALS AND BECAUSE THEY SERVED UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG, FOR EXAMPLE IN THE HONG KONG VOLUNTEERS. THE NUMBER WHO MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE IS LIKELY TO BE ABOUT 60. I AM ALSO READY FROM TODAY TO ACCEPT AND GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM ANY OF THE 270 OR SO FORMER SERVICEMEN IN HONG KONG TOGETHER WITH THEIR DEPENDANTS WHO WISH TO COME TO THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR SETTLEMENT.

THE COUNCIL'S THIRD REQUEST WAS THAT THOSE BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS WHO WERE NOT ETHNICALLY CHINESE SHOULD BE GRANTED BRITISH CITIZENSHIP RATHER THAN BRITISH OVERSEAS CITIZENSHIP IF AFTER JULY 1, 1997 THEY WOULD OTHERWISE BE STATELESS. THERE ARE AT PRESENT ABOUT 11 500 BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY THIS PROVISION.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED ALL THE ARGUMENTS PUT FORWARD IN SUPPORT OF THIS REQUEST, BUT WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE GRANTING OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP IS NOT JUSTIFIED IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE ARE SATISFIED THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE PROPERLY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE CITIZENS, THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR GRANDCHILDREN FOR AN ACCEPTED CITIZENSHIP STATUS AND FOR A PLACE TO CALL THEIR HOME. THIS WILL BE ENSURED THROUGH THE GUARANTEES OF RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997 PROVIDED IN THE AGREEMENT WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, AND THROUGH THE PROVISION OF BRITISH OVERSEAS CITIZENSHIP STATUS FOR ANY WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE STATELESS, DOWN TO THE SECOND GENERATION BORN AFTER 1997. BRITISH CITIZENSHIP WOULD NOT STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF THESE COMMUNITIES IN HONG KONG. IF HOWEVER ANY BRITISH NATIONAL WERE IN THE FUTURE TO COME UNDER PRESSURE TO LEAVE HONG KONG, WE WOULD EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY TO CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY THE CASE FOR ADMISSION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

WE BELIEVE OUR RESPONSE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS SHOWN THAT WE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE COUNCIL AND THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND THAT, AS A RESULT, THE NATIONALITY PROVISIONS FOR HONG KONG HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED AND IMPROVED. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE RIGHT NOW TO PUT IN PLACE THE NATIONALITY PROVISIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED IN PARLIAMENT AND IN HONG KONG SO THAT DETAILED PLANNING WORK CAN CONTINUE WITHOUT DELAY. I INTEND THEREFORE TO LAY THE DRAFT ORDER IN COUNCIL BEFORE THE HOUSE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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SIR DAVID COMMENTS ON NATIONALITY ISSUE  
\* \* \*

THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE NEWS FROM LONDON ABOUT THE NATIONALITY ISSUE ON THE TWO REQUESTS WITH REGARD TO THE EX-SERVICEMEN AND THE ENDORSEMENT TO BE PLACED IN THE NEW BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER BRIEFING MEMBERS OF LEGCO AD HOC GROUP TO STUDY THE DRAFT HONG KONG (BRITISH NATIONALITY) ORDER ON THE WRITTEN REPLY BY THE HOME SECRETARY, MR DOUGLAS HURD, IN PARLIAMENT, SIR DAVID SAID NATURALLY SOME PEOPLE PERHAPS WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED ON THE PART REGARDING THE ETHNIC MINORITIES.

+BUT NEVERTHELESS THERE IS A VERY POSITIVE ASSURANCE IN THE STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO THE ETHNIC MINORITIES,+ HE ADDED.

ASKED WHY THERE WAS AN URGENT MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP TONIGHT, SIR DAVID SAID A QUESTION WAS ASKED AND AN ANSWER WAS GIVEN IN LONDON THIS AFTERNOON (LONDON TIME), AND THE GOVERNMENT WISHED THE MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP WHO HAD WORKED SO HARD OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS ON THIS QUESTION TO BE INFORMED OF THE ANSWER TO THE WRITTEN QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE ANSWER WAS BEING GIVEN.

+SO HAVING WORKED SO HARD IT WAS ONLY RIGHT THAT THEY SHOULD BE THE FIRST PEOPLE TO BE INFORMED IN HONG KONG,+ SIR DAVID NOTED.

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SALARY ADJUSTMENT FOR CIVIL SERVANTS APPROVED  
\* \* \* \* \*

CIVIL SERVANTS ALONG WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS WHICH ENJOY FULL SUBSIDY BY THE GOVERNMENT WERE GRANTED A PAY RISE OF ABOUT SEVEN PER CENT FROM APRIL 1 THIS YEAR WITH THE APPROVAL OF FUNDS BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE REVISED SALARIES FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE WOULD BE PAID AT THE END OF MAY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ANNUAL PAY AWARD OFFER AT 6.96 PER CENT ACROSS THE BOARD HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE THREE CIVIL SERVICE CENTRAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS EARLIER.

/THE FINANCIAL .....

THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE SALARY ADJUSTMENT IN THE REGION OF \$1 240 MILLION FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR WAS ACCEPTED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE ADJUSTMENT PERCENTAGE WAS ENDORSED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE PAY TREND SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF ALL THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE STAFF SIDES OF THE THREE CENTRAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS.

THE FOLLOWING IS A BREAKDOWN OF THE COST WHICH EXCLUDES THE COST OF THE ADJUSTMENTS IN RESPECT OF STAFF SECONDED TO THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS:

	<u>\$ MILLION</u>
CIVIL SERVICE (EXCLUDING SECONDED STAFF) .....	761
REIMBURSEMENTS TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF THE ADDITIONAL COSTS OF SERVICES CARRIED OUT FOR THE GOVERNMENT .....	15
SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS	
DEFICIENCY GRANTS .....	442*
DISCRETIONARY GRANTS .....	16*
AUXILIARIES AND SPECIAL ALLOWANCES .....	6
TOTAL	<u>1 240</u> =====

\* NOTE: THE \$458 MILLION FOR SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS IS MADE UP AS FOLLOWS:-

	<u>\$ MILLION</u>
EDUCATION .....	269
UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE ...	80
MEDICAL .....	58
SOCIAL WELFARE .....	23
VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL .....	14
MISCELLANEOUS .....	14
TOTAL	<u>458</u> ===

THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT AS IT WAS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO QUANTIFY THE EXACT AMOUNT REQUIRED UNDER EACH HEAD OF EXPENDITURE, SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION FOR PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS SUBHEADS WILL BE APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS ONCE THE REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN CALCULATED.

+SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION FOR SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS AND FOR REIMBURSEMENTS TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL, WHERE POSSIBLE, ALSO BE APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS. WHERE THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, PROPOSALS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE,+ HE SAID.

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PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES FOR MARCH  
\* \* \* \*

THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN MARCH 1986, AT \$10 269 MILLION, WAS 22 PER CENT OR \$1 839 MILLION HIGHER THAN IN THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR, WHILE THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS, AT \$8 566 MILLION, WAS 6 PER CENT OR \$512 MILLION LOWER, ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES PUBLISHED TODAY BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

TAKING DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS TOGETHER, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS, AT \$18 835 MILLION, WAS 8 PER CENT OR \$1 327 MILLION HIGHER THAN A YEAR EARLIER.

MEANWHILE, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS DECREASED marginally, BY 0.2 PER CENT OR \$32 MILLION, TO \$19 883 MILLION. IN CONSEQUENCE, THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP (THAT IS, THE PROPORTION OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS NOT COVERED BY THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS) NARROWED TO 5.3 PER CENT IN MARCH 1986, COMPARED WITH 12.1 PER CENT IN MARCH 1985.

PUTTING THE MONTH'S TRADE FIGURES INTO CONTEXT, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1986 WAS \$233 854 MILLION, MADE UP OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF \$130 052 MILLION AND RE-EXPORTS OF \$103 802 MILLION.

COMPARED WITH THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1985, THE VALUES OF TOTAL EXPORTS AND OF RE-EXPORTS GREW BY 2 PER CENT AND 14 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, WHILE THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FELL BY 6 PER CENT.

/OVER THIS .....

OVER THIS PERIOD, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY 2 PER CENT TO \$233 092 MILLION. A VISIBLE TRADE SURPLUS OF \$762 MILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 0.3 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, WAS RECORDED IN THE 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1986, COMPARED WITH A FIGURE OF 0.6 PER CENT IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS ENDING MARCH 1985.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, A GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT BECAUSE TRADE STATISTICS FOR THE EARLY MONTHS OF A YEAR ARE USUALLY AFFECTED BY SEASONAL FACTORS, IT IS MORE USEFUL TO CONSIDER FIGURES FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS TOGETHER.

ON THIS BASIS, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND OF IMPORTS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1986 WERE 1 PER CENT AND 3 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY HIGHER THAN IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR, WHILE THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS WAS 6 PER CENT LOWER.

HE ADDED THAT THE INCREASE (YEAR-ON-YEAR) IN THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1986 REPRESENTED A REVERSAL OF THE DECLINING TREND SEEN IN THE LAST THREE QUARTERS OF 1985.

THE DECLINE IN RE-EXPORTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, PROBABLY REFLECTED THE EFFECT OF CHINA'S TIGHTENING OF CONTROL OVER ITS FOREIGN EXCHANGE SPENDING.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE PRESENTS THE PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES FOR MARCH 1986 -

MERCHANDISE:	DOMESTIC EXPORTS	: \$10 269 MILLION
	RE-EXPORTS	: \$ 8 566 MILLION
	TOTAL EXPORTS	: \$18 835 MILLION
	IMPORTS	: \$19 883 MILLION
	TRADE BALANCE	: \$ 1 048 MILLION (IN DEFICIT)

#### COMPARATIVE FIGURES

LATEST 3 MONTHS	JAN - MAR	JAN - MAR	INCREASE OR	
	1986	1985	DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	29 146 (54.8%)	28 976 (53.2%)	+ 170	+ 0.6
RE-EXPORTS	24 005	25 473	- 1 468	- 5.8
TOTAL EXPORTS	53 151	54 449	- 1 298	- 2.4
IMPORTS	55 672	54 000	+ 1 672	+ 3.1
TRADE BALANCE	- 2 521	+ 449	- 2 970	

/SAME MONTH .....

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<u>SAME MONTH LAST YEAR</u>	<u>MARCH 1986</u>	<u>MARCH 1985</u>	<u>INCREASE OR DECREASE</u>	
			<u>\$ MN.</u>	<u>%</u>
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	10 269 (54.5%)	8 430 (48.1%)	+ 1 839	+21.8
RE-EXPORTS	8 566	9 078	- 512	- 5.6
TOTAL EXPORTS	18 835	17 508	+ 1 327	+ 7.6
IMPORTS	19 883	19 915	- 32	- 0.2
TRADE BALANCE	- 1 048	- 2 407	+ 1 359	

<u>LAST MONTH</u>	<u>MARCH 1986</u>	<u>FEB 1986</u>	<u>INCREASE OR DECREASE</u>	
			<u>\$ MN.</u>	<u>%</u>
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	10 269 (54.5%)	8 347 (54.8%)	+ 1 922	+23.0
RE-EXPORTS	8 566	6 876	+ 1 690	+24.6
TOTAL EXPORTS	18 835	15 223	+ 3 612	+23.7
IMPORTS	19 883	16 983	+ 2 900	+17.1
TRADE BALANCE	- 1 048	- 1 760	+ 712	

<u>LAST 12 MONTHS</u>	<u>APRIL 1985 TO MARCH 1986</u>	<u>APRIL 1984 TO MARCH 1985</u>	<u>INCREASE OR DECREASE</u>	
			<u>\$ MN.</u>	<u>%</u>
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	130 052	138 797	- 8 745	- 6.3
RE-EXPORTS	103 802	91 256	+12 546	+13.7
TOTAL EXPORTS	233 854	230 053	+ 3 801	+ 1.7
IMPORTS	233 092	228 586	+ 4 506	+ 2.0
TRADE BALANCE	+ 762	+ 1 467	- 705	

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LABOUR FORCE MUST BE ADAPTABLE  
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THE LABOUR FORCE MUST CONTINUE TO BE ADAPTABLE, INNOVATIVE, SKILLED AND MOTIVATED IF HONG KONG IS TO STAY AHEAD OF THE FIELD IN THE PROVISION OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE WORLD MARKET AT ATTRACTIVE PRICES, EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, MR ALLEN LEE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+WE ARE CONSTANTLY ADAPTING, AS THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW HONG KONG CAN BEAR WITNESS. WE HAVE BEEN MOVING UP MARKET AND DIVERSIFYING IN TERMS OF BOTH PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES FOR SOME YEARS NOW.

+THE TRUE IMAGE OF HONG KONG TODAY IS THAT OF HIGH QUALITY TEXTILES, CLOTHING, WATCHES AND TOYS, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FINANCIAL CENTRES IN THE FAR EAST AND ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST EFFICIENT PORTS IN THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE WAS SPEAKING IN BANGKOK AT THE 42ND PLENARY SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. HE IS LEADING THE HONG KONG DELEGATION.

+IT IS TO DEFEND AND DEVELOP OUR POSITION THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OURSELVES. WE HAVE NOT, AND WILL NOT, RESORT TO PROTECTIONIST MEASURES. WE WANT TO COMPETE ON EQUAL TERMS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

+IT IS THIS ATTITUDE THAT DEMANDS WE GIVE OUR FULLEST ATTENTION TO THE UPGRADING OF OUR EDUCATION, AND IN PARTICULAR, OUR TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS,+ HE STRESSED.

SPEAKING ON THIS YEAR'S THEME, +HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT: ITS TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS+, MR LEE SAID THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THAT ITS ROLE WAS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WORKFORCE TO ACQUIRE THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS FUTURE PROSPERITY.

+AND IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF THE NECESSARY EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT THE HUMAN RESOURCES OF HONG KONG CAN BE PROPERLY DEVELOPED,+ HE ADDED.

HE TOLD PARTICIPANTS THAT THESE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, WHICH OFTEN HAD A HIGH TECHNOLOGY CONTENT, INCLUDED TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, COMPUTER EDUCATION, PREVOCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING, TECHNICIAN AND CRAFT TRAINING, TERTIARY EDUCATION, ADULT EDUCATION, EDUCATION FOR THE DISABLED AS WELL AS TRAINING IN THE FIELD OF PERFORMING ARTS.

MR LEE ALSO SAID THAT THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION, WHICH HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BOTH WITHIN HONG KONG AND INTERNATIONALLY, HAD GIVEN A CONSIDERABLE BOOST TO CONFIDENCE.

/+THE FIRST .....

+THE FIRST YEAR SINCE THE RATIFICATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION IN MAY 1985 HAS SHOWN THAT THIS CONFIDENCE WAS NOT MISPLACED,+ HE REMARKED.

HE NOTED THAT THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP AND THE LAND COMMISSION, THE TWO JOINT SINO-BRITISH BODIES SET UP UNDER THE DECLARATION, HAD PROVED THEMSELVES AS USEFUL FORUMS WHERE A SERIES OF DECISIONS ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO HONG KONG PEOPLE HAD BEEN REACHED, INCLUDING THE RECENT AGREEMENT ON SECURING HONG KONG'S POSITION IN THE GATT.

THE PLENARY SESSION IS BEING ATTENDED BY 430 PEOPLE FROM 49 COUNTRIES AND 54 UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATIONS.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG DELEGATION ARE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLER MR STEPHEN CHEONG, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR JOHN YAXLEY, AND THE PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR WILFRED WONG.

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NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES  
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THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS, DR RICHARD BUTLER, WILL PRESENT THE WEIGHTING PATTERNS OF THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 3 PM.

BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE 1984-85 HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE SURVEY, THE DEPARTMENT WILL PUBLISH TWO NEW CPI SERIES.

THE MANAGER OF HANG SENG BANK LTD., MR T.P. CHENG, WILL EXPLAIN SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE WEIGHTING SYSTEM OF THE NEW HANG SENG CONSUMER PRICE INDEX.

ALSO PRESENT WILL BE THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS, DR LUK CHI-MING, AND THE SUB-MANAGER OF THE HANG SENG BANK LTD, MR LUK KOON-HOO.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW IN THE GIS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, FIFTH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, CENTRAL.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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RARE BONSAI ON SHOW IN TUEN MUN  
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VISITORS TO TUEN MUN THIS WEEKEND WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MORE THAN 300 RARE AND EXOTIC BONSAI AND FLOWER PLANTS DURING THE ANNUAL BONSAI SHOW AT THE CHING CHUNG KOON MONASTERY.

THE 10-DAY EXHIBITION WHICH STARTS ON SATURDAY (APRIL 26) IS ORGANISED BY CHING CHUNG KOON, TOGETHER WITH THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, AND IS SPONSORED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD.

ADMISSION IS FREE AND THE EXHIBITION WILL LAST UNTIL MAY 5.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TUEN MUN '86 BONSAI SHOW WORKING COMMITTEE, THE REV HAU PO-WOON, SAID HORTICULTURE IN CHINA HAD A VERY LONG HISTORY DATING BACK TO THE EASTERN HAN DYNASTY.

+BONSAI IS APPROPRIATELY CALLED SOUNDLESS POETRY, PAINTING AND LIVING SCULPTURE,+ HE SAID.

+CHING CHUNG KOON HAS A FAMOUS COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE MOST RARE AND EXOTIC POTTED PLANTS OF A WIDE VARIETY OF SPECIES, SIZES AND STYLES,+ HE ADDED.

+MOST OF THEM ARE ALSO NOTED FOR THEIR HISTORICAL VALUE AND RARITY,+ HE SAID.

THESE INCLUDE MINIATURE TEA TREES, ELMS, PINES AND PLUM TREES. ALSO ON DISPLAY AT THE EXHIBITION WILL BE WINNING AND OUTSTANDING ENTRIES IN A BONSAI AND FLOWER PLANTS COMPETITION HELD RECENTLY IN THE DISTRICT.

FREE TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED TO TAKE VISITORS FROM THE TUEN MUN FERRY PIER TO CHING CHUNG KOON FROM 9 AM TO 6 PM ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, DR H.Y. LEE; DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL SERVICES, MR J.C.A. HAMMOND; CHAIRMAN OF HEUNG YEE KUK, MR LAU WONG-FAT; AND TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR STEPHEN SELBY WILL OFFICIATE AT THE OPENING OF THE SHOW AT 11 AM ON SATURDAY (APRIL 26) AT CHING CHUNG KOON.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BONSAI EXHIBITION AT 11 AM ON SATURDAY AT CHING CHUNG KOON IN TSING CHUNG ROAD, TUEN MUN.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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SHAM SHUI PO PROMOTES CIVIC EDUCATION  
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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD WILL SPONSOR A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES NEXT MONTH TO PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION AMONG SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT.

THE CAMPAIGN IS BEING ORGANISED BY THE SHAM SHUI PO SCHOOL LIAISON COMMITTEE, AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED INCLUDE AN INTERVIEW COMPETITION, A SEMINAR, AND AN EXHIBITION ON CIVIC EDUCATION.

THE INTERVIEW COMPETITION IS A NEW IDEA TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN MORE ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS THROUGH IN-DEPTH REPORTING EXERCISE.

A PRESS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN ARRANGED BY THE LIAISON COMMITTEE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO EXPLAIN DETAILS OF THE COMPETITION.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AT 11 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOL, 298 NAM CHEONG STREET, KOWLOON. YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT.

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MEDICAL SERVICES REPORT TO BE DISCUSSED  
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THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY (APRIL 25).

BOARD MEMBERS WILL DISCUSS THE REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN HOSPITALS AND THE CONTROL OF BILLIARD ESTABLISHMENTS.

MEANWHILE, THE CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD'S COMMITTEES WILL BE ELECTED AT THE MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP OF THESE COMMITTEES WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED.

/OTHER ITEMS .....

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE THE REVISED GUIDELINES ON THE USE AND THE PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS- SPECIAL OR COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMPS FOR 1988- VISITS FOR THE DISTRICT BOARD- AND PROGRESS REPORT OF SAI KUNG DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

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

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SPECIAL SONG TO PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION  
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A SPECIALLY-COMPOSED SONG ABOUT KOWLOON CITY'S CIVIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN WILL BE THE HIGHLIGHT OF A SPECIAL VARIETY SHOW THIS FRIDAY (APRIL 25) TO PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT.

THE SHOW AT THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY HALL IS PRODUCED BY RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG TO LAUNCH THE YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN AND WILL INCLUDE PERFORMANCES AND DRAMAS BY POPULAR SINGERS AND ARTISTES.

ALSO FEATURED WILL BE PERFORMANCES BY THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT CHILDREN'S CHORUS, WINNERS OF A SINGING COMPETITION IN THE DISTRICT AND DANCES BY A LOCAL SCHOOL.

A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES WILL BE ORGANISED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO PROMOTE THE THEMES OF +CONCERN FOR THE COMMUNITY- PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC- COURTESY AND CIVIC MINDEDNESS- AND NEIGHBOURLINESS AND PEACE+.

THE VARIETY SHOW IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT CIVIC EDUCATION ORGANISING COMMITTEE, RTHK, DISTRICT OFFICE AND SPONSORED BY THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITY HALL.

/OFFICIATING AT .....

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE SHOW WILL BE THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR T.H. CHAU, KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT OFFICER, MR GORDON JONES, DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR WONG SIK-KONG, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RTHK, MISS MARIA WAN, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT CIVIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ORGANISING COMMITTEE, MR WU SHING-SHUEN.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT CIVIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN OPENING CEREMONY AT 7.30 PM ON FRIDAY AT THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY HALL IN WATERLOO ROAD, KOWLOON TONG.

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NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL

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FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (APRIL 26), VEHICLES EXCEEDING 5.5 TONNES GROSS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE SECTION OF RUMSEY STREET BETWEEN WING LOK STREET AND DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS. THE MEASURE WILL FACILITATE ROAD WORK.

ALSO FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY, THE EXISTING PEAK HOUR (7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM) DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTION ON THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF WESTBOUND CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH MURRAY ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 50 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH PEDDER STREET WILL BE EXTENDED TO OPERATE BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM DAILY.

THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS IN CENTRAL WILL ALSO BE MADE 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM THE SAME TIME :

- \* PEDDER STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 25 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- \* ICE HOUSE STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- \* JACKSON ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 10 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION;  
AND
- \* CLUB STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 10 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

WITHIN THE URBAN CLEARWAYS, NO VEHICLE OTHER THAN FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1986

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MEET-THE-MEDIA

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THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR K.Y. YEUNG, WILL HOLD A MEET-THE-MEDIA SESSION AT 3.30 PM ON FRIDAY (APRIL 25) AT THE TRADE DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM IN OCEAN CENTRE, 15TH FLOOR, TSIM SHA TSUI.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

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