



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SENIOR MEMBER RESTATES HK'S CASE ON RIGHT OF ABODE

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HONG KONG'S CASE ON A RIGHT OF ABODE IN BRITAIN FOR HONG KONG PEOPLE WAS REITERATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON ALLEN LEE.

IN A STATEMENT TO THE COUNCIL, MR LEE REFERRED TO THE VISIT THAT HE AND THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE HON DAME LYDIA DUNN, HAD MADE TO LONDON TO PRESS HONG KONG'S CASE ON THE ISSUE.

HE SAID THE THEME THEY HAD PUT BEFORE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD BE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

"HONG KONG IS OUR HOME. WE DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE. TO STAY, OUR ANXIETIES MUST BE ALLAYED. OUR ANXIETIES CAN ONLY BE ALLAYED IF THERE IS AN INSURANCE POLICY. BRITAIN HAS THE POWER, THE RESPONSIBILITY, TO PROVIDE US WITH THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN BRITAIN."

MR LEE SAID THAT SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, MANY PEOPLE HAD SOUGHT AN INSURANCE POLICY IN THE FORM OF A SECOND PASSPORT SO THAT IF THE PROMISES IN THE JOINT DECLARATION WERE NOT KEPT, THEY WOULD AT LEAST HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE HOME, A HOME OF LAST RESORT.

HE SAID THE ANXIOUS SEARCH BY INCREASING NUMBERS FOR THIS FORM OF INSURANCE IN THE LAST FEW YEARS HAD BEEN DISRUPTIVE TO THE COMMUNITY AND THREATENED THE TERRITORY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

SOME HAD LEFT FOR GOOD. MANY FAMILIES HAD TO BE SEPARATED WITH ONE SPOUSE LIVING THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN U.S.A., CANADA OR AUSTRALIA TO QUALIFY FOR RESIDENCY.

"IT IS SAD TO SEE FAMILIES TORN APART BECAUSE THEY ARE WORRIED FOR THEIR FUTURE," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG WAS VALUABLE TO CHINA. BUT HONG KONG'S CONTINUED SUCCESS AND ITS VALUE TO CHINA DEPENDED ON ITS PEOPLE. WITHOUT THEM, AND WITHOUT THEIR COMPLETE COMMITMENT, HONG KONG WOULD NOT THRIVE.

AND IF HONG KONG DID NOT REMAIN PROSPEROUS AND USEFUL TO CHINA, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE INCENTIVE FOR CHINA TO KEEP ITS PROMISE OF "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS".

FOR THE SAKE OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE ROLE, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG NEEDED AN INSURANCE NOW IN THE FORM OF A RIGHT OF ABODE IN BRITAIN IF THINGS DID NOT WORK OUT. THEY NEEDED THAT ASSURANCE WITHOUT HAVING TO LEAVE HONG KONG, HE SAID.

"WE HAD A LARGE NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS FOR RADIO, TELEVISION AND PRINT MEDIA. THERE IS NOW A BETTER UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC," HE SAID.

/THE RESPONSE .....

THE RESPONSE FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, WAS FRANKLY DISAPPOINTING.

"THEIR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND LACK OF URGENCY IN DEALING WITH THE CURRENT CONFIDENCE CRISIS IN HONG KONG, IS TO SAY THE LEAST, BEYOND OUR BELIEF," HE SAID.

THEIR MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER, WAS MORE ENCOURAGING.

"SHE SAW THE URGENT NEED TO HELP TO RESTORE SOME CONFIDENCE IN THE HONG KONG PEOPLE," HE SAID.

"ALTHOUGH SHE SAID THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN GIVING THE RIGHT OF ABODE TO ALL BRITISH SUBJECTS, SHE PROMISED THAT A STATEMENT WILL SOON BE MADE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON HOW MORE GENEROUS FLEXIBILITY WOULD BE EXERCISED UNDER THE NATIONALITY ACT AND IMMIGRATION RULES.

"WE TOLD THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT NO MATTER WHAT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES THERE ARE IN BRITAIN, BRITISH SUBJECTS IN HONG KONG ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IT IS UP TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO DISCHARGE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY."

MR LEE SAID THE MISSION TO LONDON WAS ONLY THE FIRST STEP IN PUTTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS. THE IMPRESSION HE HAD GAINED FROM THE PEOPLE HE AND DAME LYDIA HAD TALKED TO WAS THAT NO ONE HAD DENIED THAT THERE WAS A SEVERE CONFIDENCE PROBLEM IN HONG KONG THAT NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED.

"THE PRIME MINISTER QUICKLY ACCEPTED THAT WORDS ARE NO LONGER ENOUGH. PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WANT TO SEE ACTION," HE SAID.

MR LEE SERVED A REMINDER ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT BRITISH SUBJECTS IN HONG KONG WERE BRITISH. "THEY ARE PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO ARE BORN ON BRITISH SOIL OR WHO GAVE UP THEIR NATIONALITY TO SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN," HE SAID.

"HOW CAN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SHIRK ITS RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS IT OWN SUBJECTS? HOW CAN IT HONOURABLY FACE ITS SUBJECTS AND THE REST OF THE WORLD?" HE ASKED.

HE RECALLED THAT IN 1986, THE THEN SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DAME LYDIA, SPOKE IN THE COUNCIL ON THE SUBJECT OF MAKING FULL BRITISH CITIZENS OF THOSE WHO WERE OF NON-CHINESE DESCENT AND OF THOSE WHO HAD FOUGHT FOR THE DEFENCE OF BRITISH TERRITORY.

DAME LYDIA HAD SAID AT THAT TIME THAT: 'WE CAN ONLY ASK IN THIS WAY BECAUSE WE ARE NOT REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT. IF OUR REQUESTS ARE REJECTED, IT WILL ADD TO THE PROFOUND RESENTMENT FELT BY MANY OF BRITAIN'S MOST LOYAL SUBJECTS WHO WILL BELIEVE THEIR INTERESTS HAVE BEEN BETRAYED AND IT WILL BE SEEN BY THE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD AS A MEAN AND UNWORTHY DENIAL OF THE JUST CLAIMS OF BRITAIN'S MOST VULNERABLE AND DESERVING NATIONALS.'

MR LEE ENDED HIS STATEMENT BY ASSURING HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT OMELCO WOULD CONTINUE TO DO ITS UTMOST TO SEEK THE RESTORATION OF HONG KONG PEOPLE'S BIRTHRIGHT.

"IN THE MEANTIME, WE MUST WORK TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY. HONG KONG HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM BEING MERELY A FISHING PORT TO BECOMING A WORLD FAMOUS INTERNATIONAL CITY. THIS IS OUR HOME. A HOME THAT WE HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO IN BUILDING AND IT IS WHERE WE WANT TO STAY," HE SAID.

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IMPORTANCE OF UPHOLDING TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES STRESSED

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON NIGEL SHIPMAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF UPHOLDING THE COMMUNITY'S TRADITIONAL AND RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN.

"IN HONG KONG WE HAVE TRADITIONALLY FELT A GREAT SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR CHILDREN, AND AS PARENTS WE ARE WILLING TO MAKE GREAT SACRIFICES TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A PROMISING FUTURE. WE MUST ENSURE THAT THIS ATTITUDE WILL NOT BE ERODED BY THE PRESSURES OF A MODERN URBAN ENVIRONMENT," HE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG, MR SHIPMAN STRESSED THE RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN WERE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.

"TO RAISE A CHILD IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY WITH WHICH WE ARE ENTRUSTED. MOST PARENTS IN HONG KONG TAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY AND COPE WELL WITH ITS DEMANDS," MR SHIPMAN SAID.

"HONG KONG IS FORTUNATE IN THAT IT COMBINES TRADITIONAL CHINESE ATTACHMENT TO WELL-BROUGHT-UP CHILDREN WITH FINE MODERN FACILITIES IN THE MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND WELFARE FIELDS.

"THERE ARE HOWEVER SHORTFALLS, AND DEFICIENCIES IN SEVERAL AREAS AS MEMBERS HAVE POINTED OUT AND WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR SERVICES KEEP ABREAST WITH EVOLVING NEEDS," HE SAID.

MR SHIPMAN NOTED THE POINTS MADE BY MEMBERS REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON MARCH 8 THIS YEAR THAT A DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD SHOULD BE ADOPTED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

"IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE ASSEMBLY WILL CONSIDER THIS TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR. IF ADOPTED, IT WILL OPEN FOR SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE UN, INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM," HE SAID.

/"AT PRESENT .....

"AT PRESENT, WE ARE STUDYING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE DRAFT CONVENTION'S PROVISIONS MAY BE OBSERVED IN HONG KONG, AS WELL AS ANY CHANGES IN OUR LEGISLATION THAT MAY BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH THE CONVENTION," HE ADDED.

MR SHIPMAN OUTLINED THE WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN THE MEDICAL, HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE FIELDS WHICH UNDERLINED THE HIGH PRIORITY THE GOVERNMENT PLACED ON PROMOTING THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

ON MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, MR SHIPMAN SAID THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROVIDED A NETWORK OF 45 FAMILY HEALTH CENTRES WHICH OFFERED BY A FULL RANGE OF MEDICAL CARE TO PREGNANT MOTHERS AND BABIES UP TO THE AGE OF FIVE.

"THERE ARE PLANS TO OPEN A FURTHER EIGHT CENTRES OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS," HE SAID.

"THE SUCCESS OF THESE SERVICES CAN BE ILLUSTRATED BY HONG KONG'S VERY LOW INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES," MR SHIPMAN SAID.

INFANT MORTALITY DROPPED FROM 37.7 PER THOUSAND LIVE BIRTHS IN 1961 TO 7.6 IN 1988. THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE DROPPED FROM 0.45 PER THOUSAND TOTAL BIRTHS TO 0.04 OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

"THESE FIGURES ARE AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD," HE SAID.

MR SHIPMAN NOTED THAT THE INCIDENCE OF DISEASE AMONG HONG KONG CHILDREN WAS LOW, WITH MOST SERIOUS CHILDHOOD INFECTIOUS DISEASES HAVING BEEN BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL OR VIRTUALLY ERADICATED.

"WHILE THE SERVICES IN OUTPATIENT CLINICS AND PUBLIC HOSPITALS ARE AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AS WELL AS ADULTS, CHILDREN ENJOY THE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE, WHICH ENABLES PARENTS TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO CONSULT A PRIVATE DOCTOR OF THEIR CHOICE IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT," HE SAID.

MR SHIPMAN SAID AS FOR THE LONGER TERM, THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE WOULD BE INCLUDED WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WHICH WOULD GET UNDERWAY NEXT MONTH.

MR SHIPMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH HAD BEEN TO DEVELOP PAEDIATRIC UNITS WITHIN GENERAL HOSPITALS RATHER THAN TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE PAEDIATRIC HOSPITALS. ACCORDINGLY PAEDIATRIC UNITS WERE PROVIDED IN MOST OF THE MAJOR HOSPITALS. THE 1,420 PAEDIATRIC BEDS PROVIDED IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS WERE AT PRESENT ADEQUATE AND THE AVERAGE UTILISATION RATE LAST YEAR WAS ONLY 67 PER CENT.

"NONETHELESS, THERE ARE PLANS TO PROVIDE A FURTHER 647 BEDS BY 1993, SO THAT NEW POPULATION AREAS WILL BE SERVED," HE SAID.

ON DENTAL HEALTH, MR SHIPMAN SAID THE WATER FLUORIDATION PROGRAMME WAS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONALLY AND THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE WHICH WAS AVAILABLE TO ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, HAD LED TO A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN DENTAL HEALTH.

A REVIEW OF DENTAL POLICY WAS PRESENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN BY A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DENTAL SERVICES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN MIGHT EMANATE FROM THIS WIDER REVIEW.

TURNING TO SOCIAL WELFARE, MR SHIPMAN SAID THAT BY AND LARGE, HONG KONG PARENTS HAD BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE A STABLE AND LOVING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEIR CHILDREN COULD DEVELOP TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

"TO FOSTER GOOD FAMILY RELATIONS, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE VARIOUS VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ENERGETICALLY PROMOTE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES."

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF DAY CRECHES AND NURSERIES IN HELPING PARENTS COPE WITH THE DEMANDS OF A BUSY WORKING LIFE AND THE CARE OF THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN.

MR SHIPMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THAT THE CURRENT PROVISION OF 19,000 AIDED NURSERY PLACES WAS INSUFFICIENT TO MEET GROWING DEMAND.

"TO REDUCE THE RISK OF PARENTS LEAVING YOUNG CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME, OR WITH INEXPERIENCED CHILD-MINDERS, IT IS PLANNED THAT 1,600 ADDITIONAL PLACES WILL BE PROVIDED EACH YEAR UNTIL THE DEMAND IS MET," HE SAID.

"THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PLACE THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN IN NURSERIES OR CRECHES FOR SHORT PERIODS OF TIME IS UNDER CONSIDERATION," HE SAID.

TURNING TO FAMILY BREAKDOWN OR DISHARMONY, MR SHIPMAN NOTED THAT CHILDREN OFTEN SUFFERED THE MOST FROM SUCH SITUATIONS, SOMETIMES RESULTING IN CHILDREN HAVING TO BE CARED FOR AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES.

"BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO MAINTAINING THE CHILD WITHIN THE FAMILY WHEREVER POSSIBLE, INSTITUTIONAL CARE IS ALWAYS TREATED AS THE LAST RESORT.

"WHENEVER POSSIBLE, CHILDREN ARE PLACED IN ONE OF 12 SMALL GROUP HOMES' OR WITH FOSTER FAMILIES. IT IS HOPED THAT THESE FACILITIES CAN PROVIDE THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR OWN FAMILIES," HE SAID.

A STEERING GROUP, COMPRISING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, WAS REVIEWING THE DEMAND, PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES AND REGULAR REPORTS WERE BEING SUBMITTED, MR SHIPMAN SAID.

IN ORDER TO HELP CHILDREN FROM BECOMING SUBJECTED TO UNDESIRABLE INFLUENCE, HE SAID THERE WERE 20 OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS WHOSE STAFF TRIED TO ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN PLACES WHICH THEY FREQUENTED, SUCH AS PUBLIC PLAYGROUNDS.

ON CHILD ABUSE, MR SHIPMAN SAID IT WAS SOMETHING WHICH WE ALL VIEWED WITH REPUGNANCE, AND IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE DID ALL WE COULD TO GUARD AGAINST IT.

HE NOTED THAT PROPOSALS ON HOW CASES OF SUSPECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE SHOULD BE HANDLED WOULD SOON BE PUT TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES ORDINANCE.

"INDEPENDENTLY, WE ARE CONSIDERING, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR WHETHER THE DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE CAN BE IMPROVED SO THAT IT REFLECTS MORE CLOSELY THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

ON REHABILITATION, MR SHIPMAN POINTED OUT THAT OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, HONG KONG'S REHABILITATION SERVICES HAD GROWN FROM THE MOST RUDIMENTARY TO THE WIDE-RANGING AND SOPHISTICATED RANGE THAT EXISTED TODAY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE NOW 71 SPECIAL SCHOOLS, THERE WAS A SERIOUS SHORTFALL OF SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

"EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PLACES AND IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT DEMAND WILL BE FULLY MET WITHIN FIVE YEARS. TO AMELIORATE THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS DUE TO THE SHORTFALL, HOME-BASED RESOURCE TEACHING IS ARRANGED FOR THOSE WITHOUT A SCHOOL PLACE," HE SAID.

"FOR OLDER DISABLED CHILDREN, SOCIAL CENTRES ARE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING SOCIAL SKILLS AND PURSUING INTERESTS," HE ADDED.

"IN SCHOOLS, TRAINING CENTRES AND SOCIAL CENTRES, PERSONAL HYGIENE AND SEX EDUCATION ARE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAMME. THIS TRAINING IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED WHO NEED TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE," MR SHIPMAN POINTED OUT.

CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAD ALSO BEEN MADE IN IMPROVING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. MOREOVER ALL RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WERE OPEN TO DISABLED CHILDREN.

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FIRM FOUNDATION LAID FOR WELFARE OF YOUNG: SEM

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEVELOPED A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF REGULATIONS TO PREVENT THE ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE BASIC PROVISIONS IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION AND PROTECTION AGAINST EXPLOITATION LAID A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG, MR BRIDGE SAID THAT WITH A FIRM FOUNDATION THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOW BE ABLE TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, MR BRIDGE SAID THE ISSUE WAS BEING STUDIED AND CONSULTATION BEING CARRIED OUT.

"ONCE THE MAIN OUTLINES OF A POLICY HAVE BEEN APPROVED, OUR INTENTION IS TO INVOLVE THOSE WORKING IN THE PRE-PRIMARY SECTOR IN A JOINT WORKING GROUP, WHICH WILL MONITOR PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY, ADVISE US HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN UNIFYING ALL SERVICES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND CONSIDER ANY NEW PROPOSALS WHICH MAY BE MADE," HE SAID.

ON THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION, MR BRIDGE SAID SCHOOLS WOULD BE CONSULTED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ON MEASURES AIMED AT IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM SECONDARY EDUCATION.

MR BRIDGE POINTED OUT THAT SCHOOLS ALONE COULD NOT BEAR THE WHOLE BURDEN OF DEVELOPING MATURE, RESPONSIBLE ADULTS.

"SOCIETY AS A WHOLE AND PARENTS IN PARTICULAR EXERCISE A STRONG INFLUENCE ON HOW CHILDREN GROW UP.

"OUR SCHOOLS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT SIMPLY KNOWLEDGE FACTORIES. THE CURRICULUM HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED OVER THE YEARS FROM A NARROWLY ACADEMIC ONE TO ONE AIMED AT DEVELOPING CHILDREN NOT ONLY INTELLECTUALLY BUT ALSO MORALLY AND AESTHETICALLY," HE SAID.

MR BRIDGE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT RECENT EVENTS IN CHINA HAD ENSURED THAT CHILDREN IN HONG KONG NOW KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF CHINA AND OF HONG KONG.

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COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE POLICY NEEDED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS URGED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO MAP OUT A COMPREHENSIVE CHILD CARE POLICY AND TO TAKE A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TOWARDS THE PROVISION AND MONITORING OF CHILD CARE SERVICES.

THE HON HUI YIN-FAT CALLED FOR THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHEN MOVING A MOTION ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

THE WORDING OF HIS MOTION WAS: "TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD, THIS COUNCIL URGES THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION ON PROTECTING THE RIGHTS AND IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG."

LEADING OFF THE DEBATE, MR HUI SAID THIS YEAR ALSO WITNESSED THE COMPLETION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD LAUNCHED IN 1979.

"THE CONVENTION, CONTAINING STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS GEARED TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD, IS DESIGNED TO LAY DOWN INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD," HE SAID.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE DEBATE, A CHILD WAS DEFINED AS A PERSON AGED UNDER 18.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, MR HUI SUGGESTED THAT LEGISLATION SHOULD BE STREAMLINED TO GIVE PROTECTION TO CHILDREN AGAINST PARENTAL NEGLECT AND ABUSE.

IN THIS RESPECT, THERE WAS A NEED TO REVIEW THE DEFINITION OF "CHILD ABUSE" IN LAW TO INCLUDE PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE AND TO GIVE CLEARER IDENTIFICATION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT, HE SAID.

MOREOVER, HONG KONG SHOULD BECOME A SIGNATORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PUBLICISE THIS INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE NEEDS FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES BASED ON AN NON-INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH THROUGH THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE SUPPORT SERVICES OF ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS, AS WOULD BE OUTLINED BY THE COUNCILLORS IN THE DEBATE.

"COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IS INDISPENSABLE FOR CREATING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT THAT MEETS THE SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND IS CONDUCIVE TO THEIR PROPER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT," MR HUI NOTED.

HE CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT FOR PAYING ONLY LIP SERVICE BY SIMPLY PROVIDING RESIDUAL CHILD CARE SERVICES MAINLY FOR PROBLEM FAMILIES AND PEOPLE LEAST ABLE TO HELP THEMSELVES.

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WITHOUT A CLEARLY STATED POLICY, SERVICE PROVIDERS, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS WERE IN A QUANDARY OVER THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF CARE AND PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN.

"INDEED, HONG KONG IS AT BEST OFFERING CHILD MINDING SERVICES TO OUR YOUNGER GENERATION, AND A BIG NUMBER OF THEM ARE STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE IN THIS TRAGIC PLIGHT," MR HUI SAID.

"HONG KONG NEEDS A CARING SOCIETY -- RESPONSIBLE PARENTS WHO ARE NOT IGNORANT, CHILD CARE WORKERS AND EDUCATORS WHO CAN GUIDE CHILDREN TO LEARN AND BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE MASS MEDIA WHOSE POSITIVE INFLUENCE CONSUMMATES THE OBJECTIVES OF TRUE EDUCATION.

"ONLY THROUGH AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH CAN THE SPIRIT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION BE FULLY ENHANCED."

CONTENDING THAT CHILDREN WERE THE PEDESTAL OF OUR SOCIETY AND THAT THEIR FUTURE LAY IN OUR HANDS, MR HUI SAID IT WAS OUR INHERENT DUTY TO TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS AND IMPROVE THEIR WELL-BEING.

"LET'S SAVE OUR CHILDREN, NOW," MR HUI URGED.

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GOVT CRITICISED ON KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS CRITICISED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) FOR SHOWING LITTLE DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE STANDARD AND QUALITY OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION AND FOR ALLOWING A GRADUAL DETERIORATION IN THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THIS IMPORTANT, THOUGH ELEMENTARY, SECTOR OF EDUCATION.

THE CRITICISM CAME FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW WHO CONCENTRATED ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

NOTING THAT ONLY 0.024 PER CENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN THE YEAR 1988-89 WAS SPENT ON KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION, MRS CHOW SAID THE AUTHORITIES' FAILURE OR REFUSAL TO DO MORE HAD DENIED THE YOUNG PARENTS OF THESE CHILDREN AN EDUCATION SERVICE WHICH THEY REGARDED AS NOT ONLY DESIRABLE BUT NECESSARY.

MRS CHOW ALSO CRITICISED THE "TOTALLY CLOSED-DOOR NATURE" OF THE WORKING GROUP SET UP TWO YEARS AGO TO LOOK AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES CONTAINED IN THE EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO.2.

"WHAT IS TO BE GAINED BY SHUTTING OUT COMPLETELY THE OPERATORS AND THE PROFESSIONALS FROM THE PROCESS OF DELIBERATION AND PLANNING?"

"IS THE GOVERNMENT NOT AWARE THAT THERE ARE EXTREMELY COMPETENT BODIES SUCH AS THE ALLIANCE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY POLICIES AND NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTEN COUNCIL OF HONG KONG WHO COULD RENDER EXCELLENT AND INVALUABLE ADVICE?"

"WHY IS THERE NO PLACE FOR THEM IN TODAY'S OPEN GOVERNMENT?" SHE ASKED.

MRS CHOW URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SHARE ITS PLANS AND INVITE VIEWS FROM "OUTSIDE THE MANDARIN'S CASTLE" AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, WITH THE CLEAR OBJECTIVES OF TACKLING THE PROBLEMS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS COULD BE UPGRADED BY SETTING AN ACCEPTABLE SALARY LEVEL, AND BY SUBSIDISING THE SALARIES OF TEACHERS IN NON-PROFIT-MAKING, WELL-OPERATED KINDERGARTENS WHICH WERE SUFFERING FINANCIALLY, SHE SUGGESTED.

ON THE TAKE-UP RATE OF FEE ASSISTANCE BY ELIGIBLE PARENTS, WHICH STOOD AT A DISMAL RATE OF 1.94 PER CENT IN 1988-89, SHE CALLED FOR CHANGES TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM IMMEDIATELY SO THAT THE SCHEME BENEFITTED AS MANY OF THOSE WHO WERE ELIGIBLE AS POSSIBLE.

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#### CHILD COMMISSION ADVOCATED

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A CHILD COMMISSION SHOULD BE SET UP IN HONG KONG TO ENSURE THAT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN HERE ARE MET, AND TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR THEM, DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG, DR IP SAID A CHILD COMMISSION SHOULD CARRY ON WITH THE CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION WORK OF THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD COMMISSION.

THIS WAS SET UP 10 YEARS AGO TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION WHETHER SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN HONG KONG WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

THE COMMISSION WAS WOUND DOWN IN 1987.

WHILE AGREEING THAT HONG KONG HAD ACHIEVED MUCH IN MEETING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN OVER THE PAST DECADE, DR IP STRESSED THAT WE STILL HAD A LONG WAY TO GO.

/"A FEW .....

"A FEW HUNDRED HANDICAPPED SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN ARE STILL NOT RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION IN A SCHOOL SETTING.

"AND ALTHOUGH SEX EDUCATION IS NOW TAUGHT EVEN IN THE SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, WE ARE SEEING SEXUAL ABUSE OF SEVERELY MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN TO THE POINT OF PREGNANCY, AND MILDLY MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN ARE LURED INTO SELLING SEX FOR MONEY.

"LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY COURTS TO INCLUDE PRECEDING CONCILIATION MEETINGS IN DIVORCE MATTERS INVOLVING CHILDREN FOR THE CHILDREN'S BENEFIT IS STILL BEING KEENLY AWAITED," DR IP SAID AS SHE CITED AREAS THAT NEEDED IMPROVEMENT.

ON EDUCATION, DR IP REGRETTED THAT THE MAJORITY OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS WERE STILL UNQUALIFIED AND WERE FAILING TO MAXIMISE THE FULL INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN AT THIS MOST IMPORTANT PERIOD OF A CHILD'S LIFE.

BESIDES, KINDGARTEN PREMISES LACKED SPACE FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY SO AS TO MAXIMISE THEIR PHYSICAL GROWTH POTENTIAL. PRIMARY SCHOOLS, THOUGH WITH REASONABLE SPACE, FAILED TO ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION BECAUSE OF THEIR BISESSIONAL STATUS.

IN ADDITION, THE PHYSICAL GROWTH OF OUR CHILDREN WAS RETARDED BY THE NEED TO CARRY BAGS OF SCHOOL BOOKS ON THEIR BACKS WHILE BISESSIONAL SCHOOLS OFTEN SUBJECTED DEVELOPING CHILDREN TO MISSING BREAKFAST OR EATING IT HURRIEDLY WITHOUT REST IN ORDER TO GET TO SCHOOL ON TIME AND NOT TO HAVE LUNCH UNTIL AFTER TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

ALL THESE MATTERS WERE DETRIMENTAL TO THE NORMAL HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN, DR IP POINTED OUT.

ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN HIGHLIGHTED BY DR IP WAS A FAILURE TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS AS THE MAJOR CAUSE OF DEATH IN CHILDREN BETWEEN ONE TO FOUR YEARS OLD.

SHE WAS ALSO ALARMED THAT ROAD ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN UNDER 15 WERE ON THE RISE AND THAT THE ACT OF LEAVING CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME HAD RESULTED IN INJURIES OR DEATH.

PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES A NECESSITY

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PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES IN HONG KONG HAVE BECOME A NECESSITY RATHER THAN A LUXURY, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY IN CHILD CARE AND KINDERGARTEN SERVICES, THE HON RITA FAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN, MRS FAN SAID THE ARTIFICIAL DIVISION BETWEEN CHILD CARE CENTRES AND THE KINDERGARTENS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF TWO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WAS CONFUSING AND UNNECESSARY.

SHE SAID THE CARE, GUIDANCE AND EDUCATION NEEDED BY CHILDREN ATTENDING CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS WERE BASICALLY THE SAME.

IN PLANNING FOR PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES, THE EMPHASIS MUST BE ON THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AT VARIOUS STAGES RATHER THAN ON ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENIENCE.

MRS FAN NOTED THAT THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER HAD INDICATED IN MAY THAT PROPOSALS ON PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES WERE NEARLY READY FOR SUBMISSION TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

"I WOULD URGE THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO GIVE FULL AND DETAILED CONSIDERATION TO THE PROPOSALS AND COMMENTS OF THE ALLIANCE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY POLICIES," SHE SAID.

SHE NOTED THAT THE ALLIANCE WAS LED BY HEADS AND TEACHERS OF KINDERGARTENS WITH YEARS OF FIELD EXPERIENCE, AND THEY DID HAVE FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIFFICULTIES.

MRS FAN ALSO SUPPORTED THE SUGGESTION THAT SECONDARY FIVE LEVEL BE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS AFTER 1991 SO AS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE FRONT-LINE WORKERS.

"THIRDLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE ACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS COMING FORWARD EVEN THOUGH IT MAY TAKE MORE TIME IN CONSULTATION WITH INVOLVED PARTIES IN THE FIELD, RATHER THAN A SET OF PROPOSALS WHICH ARE ATTRACTIVE ON PAPER BUT FAIL TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION," SHE SAID.

TURNING TO SERVICES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN, MRS FAN SAID THESE CHILDREN RAN THE RISK OF BOREDOM, FRUSTRATION AND SUPPRESSION OF THEIR GIFTS IF THEIR ABILITIES WERE NOT RECOGNISED IN TIME TO PREVENT SERIOUS EDUCATIONAL OR OTHER PROBLEMS.

/"IT IS .....

"IT IS RECKONED THAT ABOUT 20,000 GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE AGE OF SIX TO 18 ARE CURRENTLY WITHIN OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM. THE FIRST STEP IS TO IDENTIFY THEM," MRS FAN SAID.

WITHIN THE HONG KONG CONTEXT, IT WAS NECESSARY TO DECIDE WHETHER THESE CHILDREN SHOULD BE PLACED IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS OR SHOULD REMAIN IN AN ORDINARY SCHOOL WHICH WOULD DEVISE SUITABLE PROGRAMMES FOR THEM.

"THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FAVOURED THE LATTER APPROACH BECAUSE SEGREGATION IS NOT BENEFICIAL TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A GIFTED CHILD WHO MAY WELL A BECOME FUTURE LEADER OF THE COMMUNITY," SHE SAID.

HOWEVER, TEACHERS AND PARENTS NEEDED TO APPRECIATE MORE FULLY AND DEEPLY THE NEEDS OF THESE CHILDREN AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT. THERE WAS ALSO A NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCE MATERIAL AND THE SETTING UP OF A RESOURCE CENTRE TO ASSIST TEACHERS.

"THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT A PILOT PROJECT TO BE CARRIED OUT IN SOME 20 PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR THREE YEARS, AND HAVE THAT APPROACH EXTENDED TO 20 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THIRD YEAR," SHE SAID.

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#### FAMILIES IN NEW TOWNS NEED HELP

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LOOK CLOSELY INTO MARITAL PROBLEMS, CHILD ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAT OCCUR IN THE NEW TOWNS, AND SHOULD WORK OUT NECESSARY MEASURES TO ASSIST FAMILIES THAT NEED HELP, THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON CHILD WELFARE, HE SAID THE MEASURES SHOULD INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE DAY-CARE CENTRE PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER SIX, CHILDREN CENTRES OR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS, AND FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR THOSE IN NEED OF IN-DEPTH COUNSELLING.

HE SAID PREFERABLY A TASK-FORCE COMPOSED OF EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS, POLICE OFFICERS, AND OTHER PERSONNEL OR PROFESSIONALS SHOULD BE SET UP TO DEAL WITH CASES WHICH WOULD COME UP PERIODICALLY.

IF A CHILD HAD TO BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIS OR HER NATURAL FAMILY DUE TO MORE SEVERE PROBLEMS, CAREFUL ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY PROFESSIONALS BEFORE ANY ACTION WAS TAKEN, HE SAID.

"IF IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD TO STAY IN ANOTHER ENVIRONMENT, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE PROFESSIONAL OR SOCIAL WORKER SHOULD FIRSTLY CONSIDER PLACING THE CHILD IN THE CLOSEST RELATIVES' FAMILY SO THAT HE OR SHE CAN STILL ENJOY A NORMAL FAMILY LIFE.

/"IF THIS .....

"IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO PLACE THE CHILD IN A NON-INSTITUTIONAL FACILITY SUCH AS A FOSTER HOME OR A SMALL GROUP HOME RUN BY A WELFARE ORGANISATION RATHER THAN TO PLACE THE CHILD IN A LARGE INSTITUTION WHERE THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT WILL BE A PROBLEM."

NOTING THAT THE PROBLEM OF MISSING TEENAGE GIRLS AND PROSTITUTION INVOLVING YOUNG PERSONS IN HONG KONG WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE SERIOUS, MR CHIN STRESSED THAT IT WAS THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO HAVE PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, INCLUDING PROSTITUTION AND INVOLVEMENT IN PORNOGRAPHY.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THIS AND ARRANGE BETTER CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED WITH THIS PROBLEM.

MR TAI ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO MARRIAGE PROBLEMS AND ONE-PARENT FAMILIES AS THE RATE OF DIVORCE WAS RISING RAPIDLY, PARTICULARLY IN THE NEW TOWNS.

HE SUGGESTED THE SETTING UP SPECIAL FAMILY COURTS TO FOSTER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JUDICIARY, SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCIES AND THE POLICE, AND IN RESPECT OF FAMILY MATTERS AND AFFAIRS WHICH WERE IN DISPUTE.

"THIS WOULD ENABLE THE COURT NOT ONLY TO PUT THE LAW INTO PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF MATRIMONIAL MATTERS BUT ALSO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES MORE EFFECTIVELY."

FINALLY, HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD WHEN IT IS FORMALLY ANNOUNCED. HE SAID THAT A WORKING GROUP SHOULD BE FORMED TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION'S PROVISIONS.

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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD SHOULD BE RESPECTED

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OUR HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW MUST BE TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF OUR YOUNG AND TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, THE HON EDWARD HO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG, MR HO SAID THAT ADULTS TENDED TO ONLY CONSIDER MATTERS AT THEIR OWN LEVEL AND TO FORGET THAT CHILDREN HAD RIGHTS TOO.

HE STRESSED THAT CHILDREN HAD THE RIGHT TO BE AFFORDED THE NECESSARY PROTECTION AND ASSURANCE OF THEIR HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

MR HO SAID THAT EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN ADULTS WERE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH UNHAPPY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, AND THAT CHILDREN FROM BROKEN HOMES HAD GREATER TENDENCIES TO DEVELOP ANTI-SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE TEACHERS HAD A LOT TO DO WITH WHETHER THE CHILD COULD SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS, AND TEACHERS NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD.

"THEY NEED TO REALISE THAT THEIR JOBS ARE NOT JUST TO IMPART KNOWLEDGE, AND THAT THEIR ATTITUDES TO THEIR STUDENTS HAVE STRONG AND LASTING IMPACT ON THEIR DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

HE ALSO EMPHASISED A NEED TO TRAIN IN-SERVICE TEACHERS IN CHILD PSYCHOLOGY.

TURNING TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, MR HO SAID THERE WAS A NEED FOR A PROPER PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM, WHICH STIMULATED CHILDREN'S INTEREST AND IMAGINATION, BUT WHICH WOULD NOT GO BEYOND THE LEARNING CAPABILITIES OF THEIR AGE.

"WE SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT ONLY TEACHERS PROPERLY QUALIFIED TO TAKE CARE OF THE YOUNG WOULD BE EMPLOYED," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID THE TWO MAJOR ELEMENTS EXERTING INFLUENCES ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD WERE THE FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL.

HE SAID THAT FOR CHILDREN FROM PROBLEM FAMILIES, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THE FAMILY, AND THE SCHOOL THEREFORE PLAYED AN EVEN MORE VITAL ROLE IN HELPING THE TROUBLED CHILD.

"THE SCHOOL ALSO HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INSTILLING IN THE YOUNG A HEALTHY ATTITUDE TO INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND TO LOVE, COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE," HE ADDED.

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NATIONALITY IS AN INHERENT RIGHT FOR ALL  
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NATIONALITY IS AN INHERENT RIGHT FUNDAMENTAL TO ALL CHILDREN FOR WITHOUT NATIONALITY THEY HAVE NO IDENTITY, AND CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GROW AND DEVELOP AND LIVE AS DIGNIFIED HUMAN BEINGS.

THE HON RONALD ARCULLI SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH THAT WE CARED FOR THE PHYSICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND MORAL NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN, FOR AS THEY WERE BROUGHT UP WITH THE FREEDOM AND VALUES THAT WE ENJOYED, SURELY IT BEHOVED US TO ENSURE THAT THEY TOO WOULD ENJOY SUCH FREEDOM AND VALUES.

/MR ARCULLI .....

MR ARCULLI SAID RECENT EVENTS IN CHINA HAD BROUGHT ADDED CONCERN OVER THE ISSUE OF NATIONALITY, AND THE PARENTS OF HONG KONG, DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR CHILDREN, WERE SEEKING A NEW NATIONALITY FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN.

"IT IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY'S DEBATE BECAUSE A WORKING GROUP SET UP BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO COMMEMORATE THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD HAS BEAUTIFULLY AND SIMPLY DESCRIBED NATIONALITY TO A CHILD AS A 'RIGHT FROM BIRTH'.

"THE EVENTS ALSO SERVE AS A POWERFUL REMINDER TO US AS TO THE RIGHTS OF A CHILD AND, IN THIS CONTEXT, PARTICULARLY THOSE CHILDREN WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE BE STATELESS," HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THE ISSUE OF NATIONALITY FOR HONG KONG BRITISH SUBJECTS HAD BEEN RIGHTLY STATED AS A DIRECT MORAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF BRITAIN'S.

"HONG KONG IS NOT A BORROWED PLACE AND EVEN IF PART OF THE TERRITORY WAS LEASED THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT PEOPLE BORN UNDER THE BRITISH JURISDICTION ARE BRITISH SUBJECTS PROPER, AND THIS INCLUDES AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OUR YOUTH BELOW THE AGE OF 18 AS DEFINED BY THE UNITED NATIONS DRAFT.

"CHILDREN ARE NOT BORROWED PEOPLE NOR FOR THAT MATTER DO THEY EXPIRE WITH THE LEASE AND THUS THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO BRITISH CITIZENSHIP," HE SAID.

MR ARCULLI SAID SOVEREIGN COUNTRIES MUST ACCEPT THIS OBLIGATION AND ENSURE THAT THEIR LEGISLATION WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LETTER, AS WELL AS THE SPIRIT, OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION AND MUST NOT ENACT LAWS TO EXCLUDE THIS RIGHT, LET ALONE CLAIM THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH OBLIGATION.

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#### VIOLENCE IN MASS MEDIA DAMAGING YOUNG MINDS

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MASS MEDIA WHICH PORTRAYED SEX AND VIOLENCE AS A RATHER NORMAL WAY OF LIVING HAD PENETRATING AND DAMAGING EFFECTS ON THE MINDS OF THE YOUNG, THE HON DAVID CHEUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN, MR CHEUNG SAID A RECENT SURVEY BY A WELL-KNOWN SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY HAD FOUND THAT QUITE A NUMBER OF HONG KONG'S YOUNGSTERS WATCHED PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEO TAPES AND READ PORNOGRAPHIC COMIC BOOKS.

THE CONCEPT THAT GAMBLING WAS AN ESSENTIAL "FUN" PART OF LIFE WAS IRREMOVABLE FROM THE VALUE SYSTEM OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

"CAN WE IN THE ADULT WORLD SAY THAT SUCH A SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IS GOOD FOR OUR CHILDREN?" HE ASKED.

/HE NOTED .....

HE NOTED THAT A RECENT ARTICLE IN AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE REPORTED THAT A RISE IN BRUTAL CRIMES BY THE YOUNG IN THE UNITED STATES HAD SHAKEN THE SOUL OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

"IF WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE UNITED STATES IS ANY INDICATION OR REFLECTION, WE MAY SOON FIND OURSELVES IN THE SAME BOAT," HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG SAID THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN HONG KONG WAS RIGID, WITH UNDULY HEAVY EMPHASIS OF EXAMINATION RESULTS IN AN ACADEMIC CURRICULUM IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

HE AGREED THAT ENGLISH WAS IMPORTANT TO A COMMUNITY SUCH AS HONG KONG.

"BUT THE HARD FACT OF LIFE IS THAT ONLY ABOUT 25 PER CENT OF OUR CHILDREN CAN MANAGE AN EDUCATION IN ENGLISH AND NOT EVERYONE IS ACADEMICALLY INCLINED," HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG SAID THAT NOT MUCH PROVISION HAD BEEN MADE FOR THOSE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE LESS ACADEMIC, NOT QUITE ABLE TO MASTER AND BE FLUENT IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND WHO DID NOT AND COULD NOT SCORE WELL IN EXAMINATIONS.

WITH NO PROVISIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT AND RECOGNITION OF SUCCESS IN NON-ACADEMIC AND MORE PRACTICAL SUBJECTS, MANY CHILDREN UNDER PARENTAL PRESSURE WERE "HITTING THEIR HEADS AGAINST THE WALL" BY VOWING TO GO FOR AN ACADEMIC EDUCATION IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEADING TO SUCCESS IN THE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS REGARDLESS OF THE PRICE THEY HAD TO PAY.

"HAVE WE EVER GIVEN SOBER AND SERIOUS THOUGHTS TO THE PLIGHT OF THESE CHILDREN?" HE SAID.

"IN THIS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CHILD, LET US ALERT OURSELVES AND TRY TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROVIDE A CLEANER, HEALTHIER, HAPPIER AND WARMER PLACE FOR OUR CHILDREN. LET US SHOW OUR YOUNGSTERS BY OUR ACTIONS THAT WE DO CARE ABOUT THEM," HE SAID.

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GROWING DEMAND FOR DAY NURSERY CARE  
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WITH MORE AND MORE WOMEN BEING DRAWN INTO THE LABOUR FORCE, THE IMPACT OF MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT UPON CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THEIR CARE AND CONTROL, BECOMES INCREASINGLY MORE IMPORTANT, THE HON MIRIAM LAU SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED TO ASSIST WORKING PARENTS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN BUT THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES WAS NOT BEING MET.

/SPEAKING IN .....

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1989

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SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON WELFARE OF CHILDREN, MRS LAU SAID ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVES FOR FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES WAS TO ENSURE THAT SUFFICIENT DAY NURSERY PLACES WERE PROVIDED FOR ALL CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN TWO AND SIX, SHE SAID.

AND SUBSIDISED DAY CRECHE PLACES WERE TO BE PROVIDED FOR ALL CHILDREN AGED UNDER TWO WHO COULD NOT BE CARED FOR BY THEIR PARENTS DURING THE DAY, SHE ADDED.

MRS LAU NOTED THAT THE WORKING RATIO ADOPTED HAD FOR SOME YEARS BEEN 100 PLACES PER 20,000 GENERAL POPULATION.

UP TO APRIL 1989, THERE WERE 28,558 PLACES IN NURSERIES, 17,756 BEING AIDED PLACES AND 10,802 PLACES BEING PROVIDED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE PLACES IN DAY CRECHES WERE A MEAGRE 917, MRS LAU NOTED.

THE CURRENT PLAN WAS TO PROVIDE 1,600 ADDITIONAL NURSERY PLACES EVERY YEAR.

MRS LAU SAID THERE HAD BEEN INCREASING DEMANDS FOR DAY NURSERIES AND CRECHES IN RECENT YEARS AS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF WORKING WIVES JOINED THE LABOUR FORCE.

"HOWEVER, THE ADMINISTRATION'S STAND HAS BEEN ONE OF RELUCTANCE TO IMPROVE BEYOND CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS," SHE SAID.

MRS LAU POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A DEMAND THAT HAD NOT BEEN MET IN THE PAST YEARS BUT THE GOVERNMENT FAILED TO DO ANYTHING TO INVESTIGATE AND CARRY OUT A REVIEW TO ASSESS THE POSITION TO SEE WHETHER THERE WAS ACTUALLY A SHORTFALL AND TO COME UP WITH PROPOSALS TO CATER FOR THE DEMAND.

WITH VARIOUS TRAGIC ACCIDENTS OCCURRING DURING THE PAST YEARS INVOLVING CHILDREN BEING LEFT UNATTENDED AT HOME, MRS LAU SUGGESTED THAT THESE FORMED EVIDENCE TO SHOW THERE WAS A SHORTFALL IN DAY NURSERIES AND CRECHES.

"IF OUR CURRENT CHILD CARE SERVICES ARE ADEQUATE, WHY ARE ALL THESE ACCIDENTS HAPPENING? HOW MANY MORE CHILDREN WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO CHINA BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONCEDE THAT CHILD CARE CENTRES ARE INSUFFICIENT?"

"HOW MANY MORE CHILD-MINDERS WILL HAVE TO BE BROUGHT TO COURT FOR ABUSING CHILDREN BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO IMPOSE SOME FORM OF CONTROL OVER THOSE WHO MIND CHILDREN ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS?"

"HOW MANY MORE CHILDREN WILL HAVE TO FALL OUT OF BUILDINGS BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONSIDER IT TIMELY TO REVIEW THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF OUR CHILD CARE SERVICES?" SHE ASKED.

MRS LAU SAID IT WAS UNDESIRABLE AND UNREALISTIC TO FIX WORKING RATIOS AND PLANS IN RELATION TO THE PROVISIONS OF SOCIAL SERVICES AS THE DEMANDS OF THE SOCIETY CHANGED CONSTANTLY.

/SHE SAID .....

SHE SAID IF THERE WERE SUFFICIENT CHILD CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE THERE WOULD BE MORE WOMEN JOINING THE LABOUR FORCE TO EASE THE LABOUR SHORTAGE PROBLEM.

SHE ALSO CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS SLOW RESPONSE TO VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS MADE BY LABOUR GROUPS TO HELP WORKING PARENTS AND WORKING WIVES.

MRS LAU SAID SHE WAS SURPRISED TO FOUND THAT EXISTING FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES ATTEMPTED TO COVER MANY ASPECTS OF CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BUT AFTER-SCHOOL CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WAS FOUND TO BE DEFICIENT.

SHE NOTED THAT AFTER-SCHOOL CARE COULD HELP TO SOLVE SOME OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD TO CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF SUCH SERVICE, WHICH HAD BEEN FOUND AN INVALUABLE ONE FOR WORKING PARENTS.

AS FOR OTHER SERVICES, SHE SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO ASSIST PARENTS TO DEAL WITH THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN A BID TO REDUCE FAMILY PROBLEMS.

ALSO, MRS LAU SUGGESTED MORE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES BE PROVIDED FOR PARENTS THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS, SUCH AS THE MASS MEDIA, SO THAT WORKING PARENTS COULD BE EDUCATED ON WAYS AND SKILLS OF CARRYING OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE LIMITED TIME THEY HAD WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

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CHILDREN DESERVE GOOD HEALTH CARE

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HONG KONG, WITH ITS EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES, MUST SHOW DETERMINATION IN LETTING CHILDREN ENJOY THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF HEALTH, DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN, DR LEONG SAID THAT A HEALTHY CHILD WOULD BECOME A FIT ADULT OF THE FUTURE, AND A MUCH LESSER BURDEN ON THE HEALTH CARE BUDGET OF THE COMMUNITY.

HE SAID THE IDEA OF ECONOMICAL HEALTH CARE FOR HONG KONG'S SCHOOL CHILDREN APPEARED SOUND BUT LACKED A WELL-DEFINED POLICY.

"IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE SYSTEM IS INTENDED FOR A HEALTH CHECK-UP FOR DEVELOPING SCHOOL CHILDREN OR A COMPREHENSIVE CURATIVE SCHEME.

/"NOR IS .....

"NOR IS IT CLEAR WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERS THIS A CHARITABLE SERVICE FROM THE PARTICIPATING DOCTORS OR A HEAVILY SUBSIDISED SCHEME FROM THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

DR LEONG SAID THAT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION OPERATED ITS OWN OUT-PATIENT SERVICES AT THE COST OF ABOUT \$81 PER VISIT, GOVERNMENT EXPECTED THAT FOR A LESSER AMOUNT A SERVICE SHOULD BE PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPATING PRACTITIONERS TO COVER A CURATIVE ANNUAL MEDICAL SCHEME OF UNLIMITED VISITS BY SCHOOL CHILDREN.

HE NOTED THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN A CLEAR CONSIDERATION OF WHO NEEDED THIS SCHEME, AS ONLY 48 PER CENT OF ELIGIBLE SCHOOL CHILDREN JOINED IT.

FURTHERMORE THERE WAS NO DATA ON HOW MANY ACTUALLY UTILISED IT, NOT TO SAY DERIVE BENEFITS, TO MAKE MEANINGFUL ANALYSIS.

"AT THE END, THE NEEDY STUDENTS SUFFER FROM THE LACK OF AFFECTION OF DISINTERESTED PRACTITIONERS, AND THE DOCTORS SUFFER FROM ABUSES OF THE SYSTEM BY REPEATED AND UNNECESSARY VISITS," HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO DR LEONG, THERE WERE TWO OTHER FALLACIES. FIRSTLY, THE SCHEME EXTENDED TO SCHOOL CHILDREN UP TO SECONDARY THREE ONLY, LEAVING A GAP FOR THE ADOLESCENT GROUP FROM SECONDARY FOUR ONWARDS.

SECONDLY, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE SCHEME WERE IN NO WAY BARRED FROM ATTENDING THE VERY BUSY AND HEAVILY SUBSIDISED GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS. THUS A SITUATION OF DOUBLE SUBSIDY EXISTED WHEN A CHILD UNDER THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE SCHEME ATTENDED A GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINIC.

NOTING THAT THE RECENT RECOMMENDATION BY THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD TO CHANGE THE OVERALL CHARGING SCALES APPEARED TO BE MORE WORKABLE, DR LEONG WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION COULD ONLY BE AN INTERIM MEASURE, AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MUST COME UP WITH A MORE DEFINED POLICY THROUGH THE UPGRADING OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, DR LEONG ALSO SAID THAT WHILST THE HOSPITAL SERVICES WERE BEING REVIEWED AND HOPEFULLY IMPROVED THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY PRIMARY HEALTH CARE STILL REMAINED IN HIBERNATION.

HE SAID RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN MADE BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE FORMATION OF A WORKING PARTY TO STUDY PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, YET IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHEN POSITIVE STEPS WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

TURNING TO SCHOOL DENTAL CARE, DR LEONG SAID THAT CURRENT SCHOOL DENTAL CARE WHICH PROVIDED REGULAR CHECK-UP, ROUTINE CARE, PREVENTIVE SERVICES AND A LIMITED ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED.

"THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONSIDERATION OF EXTENDING SUCH CARE TO PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN FOR IT IS MOST ESSENTIAL THAT AT THE FORMATIVE STAGE OF DENTAL DEVELOPMENT, PROPER GUIDANCE MUST BE INSTILLED TO GIVE EVERLASTING RESULTS.

"AT THE SAME TIME, THE NEED TO PROVIDE SIMILAR SERVICES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN SHOULD ALSO BE SERIOUSLY ADDRESSED," HE ADDED.

DR LEONG SAID THAT, APART FROM EXTENDING SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICES, THERE SHOULD BE A REVIEW OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICES, WHICH WERE CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY DENTAL THERAPISTS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF AN IMMINENT OVER-SUPPLY OF DENTISTS, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONSIDER A BETTER RATIO BETWEEN SUPERVISING DENTISTS AND DENTAL THERAPISTS.

FINALLY, NOTING THAT THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR THE AGE GROUP BETWEEN ONE AND 15 WAS FROM ACCIDENTS AND POISONING, DR LEONG URGED THAT MORE BE DONE TO PREVENT SUCH UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENTS.

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#### SOCIAL WORKERS CAN ADVISE CHILDREN ON HOME PROBLEMS

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ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BE WITHIN REACH OF A WELL-TRAINED SOCIAL WORKER ABLE TO ADVISE ON HOME PROBLEMS, AND THE COMMUNITY SHOULD REACH OUT TO REHABILITATE THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN INTO BAD WAYS, THE HON ELSIE TU SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG, MRS TU FOCUSED ON ONE CATEGORY OF CHILDREN -- THOSE WHOSE HOMES, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, PUT THEM AT RISK.

SHE URGED THAT THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ORDINANCE BE AMENDED TO FACILITATE THE REHABILITATION OF THOSE WHO HAD FALLEN INTO BAD WAYS.

NOTING THAT THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WHO COMMITTED MINOR CRIMES AS TEENAGERS, MRS TU POINTED OUT THAT TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO BEING GOOD MEMBERS OF SOCIETY THEY NEEDED THE HELP OF A CARING COMMUNITY.

HOWEVER, THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ORDINANCE ENACTED THREE YEARS AGO WAS NOT LIKELY TO REHABILITATE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, BECAUSE WHILE A YOUNG PERSON INFLUENCED BY A GANG SELDOM STOPPED AT ONLY ONE MINOR OFFENCE, THE ORDINANCE ALLOWED HIM FORGIVENESS ONLY ONCE.

"IF HE HAS TO SERVE A SHORT SENTENCE IN PRISON, THAT MAY HELP TO BRING HIM TO HIS SENSES, BUT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE TO REHABILITATE HIM, BECAUSE THE LAW DOES NOT EXPUNGE HIS CRIMINAL RECORD NO MATTER HOW SHORT THE PRISON SENTENCE MAY BE.

/"THE PRESENT .....

"THE PRESENT ORDINANCE FALLS FAR SHORT OF ITS AIM TO REHABILITATE, AND I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE ORDINANCE WILL BE SUITABLY AMENDED TO REMEDY THESE SHORTCOMINGS." SHE SAID.

MRS TU ALSO HOPED THAT THE AMENDMENTS WOULD RESTORE THE POWER OF MAGISTRATES TO ORDER THAT NO CRIMINAL CONVICTION BE RECORDED.

SHE SAID THE PRESENT ORDINANCE WAS INFERIOR TO THE 1974 ACT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THAT IT APPEARED THAT THE LEGAL SYSTEM DETERMINED THAT ONCE A YOUNGSTER HAD COMMITTED AN OFFENCE, HE MUST SUFFER THE STIGMA FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

MRS TU BELIEVED THAT A CHILD WHOSE PARENTS DID NOT LIVE IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER WAS NOT LIKELY TO ENJOY A SENSE OF FAMILY SECURITY, BECAUSE FRICTION BETWEEN PARENTS COULD LEAD TO ONE OR BOTH PARENTS WORKING OUT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS ON THE CHILD WHO HAPPENED TO GET IN THE WAY.

"THE PRESSURE OF LIFE IN HONG KONG ON PARENTS WHO ARE INCOMPATIBLE, OR ON SINGLE PARENTS WHO CANNOT COPE, IS PROBABLY THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF CHILD ABUSE, SOMETIMES RESULTING IN A CHILD'S DEATH.

"I BELIEVE A GREAT DEAL COULD BE DONE TO SAVE A CHILD FROM PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE IF EVERY SCHOOL HAD A FULL-TIME SOCIAL WORKER, TRAINED TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN AT RISK, AND PARENTS IN NEED OF GUIDANCE." SHE SUGGESTED.

SHE SAID IN A MODERN SOCIETY, NEW SOLUTIONS NEEDED TO BE FOUND TO FAMILY PROBLEMS THAT AFFECTED THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN, AND THAT WITH A SOCIAL WORKER IN EVERY SCHOOL, THE HOME PROBLEMS COULD BE EXAMINED IN DEPTH.

"THE SOLUTION COULD BE A SIMPLE ONE," SHE SAID, "SUCH AS RECOMMENDING THAT A SINGLE PARENT BE TRANSFERRED TO PUBLIC HOUSING NEAR TO A SYMPATHETIC RELATIVE OR FRIEND.

"IN SOME CASES, THE PARENTS OF AN ABUSED CHILD MAY NEED TO BE REFERRED TO A MARRIAGE GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR.

"IN AN EXTREME CASE, A CHILD MAY NEED TO BE PLACED UNDER THE CARE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR PROTECTION."

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR RADIO BROADCASTING LICENCES

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THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 AND THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, WHICH PROVIDE A STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE GRANT OF A NEW LICENCE TO THE HONG KONG COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING CO. LTD. AND FOR THE AWARD OF A SECOND COMMERCIAL RADIO LICENCE BY TENDER IN 1990, WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, POINTED OUT THAT NEITHER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE NOR THE PRESENT RADIO LICENCE CONTAINED ANY PROVISIONS ON CROSS-MEDIA OWNERSHIP. HOWEVER, THERE WERE PROVISIONS IN THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE WHICH INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF "DISQUALIFIED PERSONS".

"THE EFFECT OF THESE PROVISIONS IS THAT CERTAIN PERSONS AND COMPANIES WHICH COULD BRING INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON A TELEVISION LICENCE MAY NOT HOLD OFFICE IN A TELEVISION LICENSEE COMPANY OR BENEFICIALLY OWN MORE THAN 15 PER CENT OF THE SHARES OF A TELEVISION LICENSEE.

"RESTRICTIONS OF A SIMILAR KIND ARE FAIRLY COMMON OVERSEAS," MR TSAO SAID.

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION RECOGNISED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES FOR RADIO BROADCASTING AND IT WAS APPROPRIATE THAT THE PROPOSED REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR RADIO SHOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THESE DIFFERENCES.

"IN THE CASE OF CROSS-MEDIA OWNERSHIP, OR 'DISQUALIFIED PERSONS' PROVISIONS, WE ARE PROPOSING THE ADOPTION OF A LESS STRINGENT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE DEFINITIONS RELATING TO THE DISQUALIFIED PERSONS PROVISIONS IN THIS BILL HAD NOT BEEN EASY TO DRAFT.

UNDER THE AMENDMENT BILL, PERSONS OR COMPANIES WITH SPECIFIED INTERESTS RELATED TO BROADCASTING, INCLUDING PERSONS WHO SUPPLIED MATERIAL FOR BROADCASTING BY A LICENSEE, BROADCASTING ORGANISATIONS, ADVERTISING AGENTS OR PERSONS WHO EXERCISED CONTROL OVER COMPANIES OR ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED IN SUCH BUSINESSES, SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO OWN UP TO 35 PER CENT OF THE VOTING SHARES IN A RADIO LICENSEE, EXCEPT THAT ONE RADIO LICENSEE IN HONG KONG WOULD BE LIMITED TO A 15 PER CENT SHARE HOLDING IN ANOTHER RADIO LICENSEE.

"A TELEVISION LICENSEE IN HONG KONG WILL OF COURSE NEED TO ENSURE THAT IT REMAINS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE," MR TSAO SAID.

ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP, MR TSAO SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WAS A STRONG CASE FOR THE CONTROL OF BROADCASTING LICENSEES IN HONG KONG TO BE IN THE HANDS OF PEOPLE WHO WERE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE HONG KONG'S BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.

"ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SHOULD NOT DISCOURAGE UNDULY FOREIGN INVESTMENT," HE SAID.

THE BILL PROPOSED A CEILING OF 49 PER CENT OF THE VOTING SHARES IN A RADIO LICENSEE COMPANY IN WHICH "UNQUALIFIED" PERSONS OR COMPANIES MIGHT HAVE AN INTEREST.

THE SAME RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS AS THOSE STIPULATED IN THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE WERE USED TO DETERMINE WHO WAS "UNQUALIFIED".

"THIS 49 PER CENT LIMIT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON THE RESIDENTIAL STATUS OF DIRECTORS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF A LICENSEE, WHICH IT IS PROPOSED TO INCLUDE IN THE RADIO LICENCES, SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THE INTENT OF THE BILL THAT LICENSEES SHOULD FIRST AND FOREMOST SERVE HONG KONG'S INTERESTS," MR TSAO SAID.

THE BILL ALSO DISALLOWED, WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, THE DISPOSAL OF MORE THAN 15 PER CENT OF THE VOTING SHARES IN A RADIO LICENSEE FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS FOLLOWING THE GRANT OF THE LICENCE.

"THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONS WHO APPLY FOR A RADIO LICENCE WILL ACTUALLY UNDERTAKE BROADCASTING, RATHER THAN DISPOSING OF THE SHARES AFTER A LICENCE IS ISSUED, FOR A QUICK AND POSSIBLY HANDSOME PROFIT," MR TSAO EXPLAINED.

UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE PRESENT RADIO LICENCE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING MAY REQUIRE THE LICENSEE TO REFRAIN FROM BROADCASTING ANY SPECIFIED MATERIAL.

MR TSAO POINTED OUT THAT THE UK GOVERNMENT RETAINED SIMILAR POWERS.

"WE EXAMINED WITH GREAT CARE WHETHER SUCH AN UNFETTERED POWER SHOULD CONTINUE, AND IF SO WHETHER IT SHOULD BE VESTED IN THE COMMISSIONER.

"WE CONCLUDED FIRST THAT SUCH POWER SHOULD CONTINUE BUT IN A QUALIFIED FORM; AND SECONDLY THAT IT SHOULD BE VESTED IN THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL," HE SAID.

SECTION 13M OF THE BILL THEREFORE GAVE POWER TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO PROHIBIT PROGRAMMES WHERE HE CONSIDERED THE PEACE OR GOOD ORDER OF HONG KONG WAS THREATENED.

MR TSAO SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD LIMITED ITS EFFORTS TO MAKING THE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR THE GRANT OF THE TWO NEW LICENCES.

"IT IS THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION, HOWEVER, TO BEGIN WORK EARLY NEXT YEAR ON A CONSOLIDATED BROADCASTING ORDINANCE COVERING OFF-AIR AND CABLE TELEVISION AS WELL AS RADIO BROADCASTING.

"WE INTEND IN THAT CONTEXT TO REVIEW IN DETAIL THE VARIOUS PIECES OF BROADCASTING LEGISLATION WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING UPON AND STREAMLINING THE REGULATION OF BROADCASTING IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

BILL EXTENDS BA'S POWER TO COVER RADIO BROADCASTING

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A BILL INTENDED TO EXTEND THE POWER OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (BA) TO COVER RADIO BROADCASTING WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER IT, THE BA WOULD BE GIVEN SIMILAR REGULATORY POWERS AND FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO RADIO BROADCASTING AS IT ALREADY HAD IN RELATION TO TELEVISION BROADCASTING, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE COUNCIL.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, MR TSAO SAID THAT TO DATE THE BA HAD BEEN CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH WIRELESS TELEVISION, ALTHOUGH ITS ADVICE HAD BEEN SOUGHT ON AN AD HOC BASIS ON A NUMBER OF OTHER BROADCASTING ISSUES.

"WITH THE IMMINENT GRANT OF A NEW LICENCE TO THE HONG KONG COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING CO. LTD. AND THE INTENDED GRANT OF A SECOND COMMERCIAL RADIO LICENCE IN 1990, THIS IS CLEARLY AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO EXTEND FORMALLY THE REGULATORY POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO RADIO BROADCASTING," HE SAID.

MR TSAO SAID THE REGULATORY POWERS AND FUNCTIONS CONCERNING RADIO BROADCASTING WOULD INCLUDE ISSUING OF CODES OF PRACTICE AND DIRECTIONS TO THE LICENSEE ON PROGRAMME, ADVERTISING AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS; AND IMPOSITION OF FINANCIAL PENALTIES FOR CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS, DIRECTIONS, CODES OF PRACTICE OR LICENCE CONDITIONS.

THEY WOULD ALSO INCLUDE CONDUCTING OF INQUIRIES INTO THE REVOCATION OF LICENCES WHEN DIRECTED TO DO SO BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, AND DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT RADIO BROADCASTING.

THE BILL'S PROVISIONS WOULD ALSO INCLUDE A RIGHT OF APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL AGAINST DECISIONS OF THE BA, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO GIVE PRIVILEGES TO ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATION

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CERTAIN PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES WOULD BE GRANTED TO THE REGIONAL DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) UNDER A BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL IS THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS) BILL 1989.

/MOVING THE .....

MOVING THE BILL'S SECOND READING, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, EXPLAINED THAT THE ICRC HAD ESTABLISHED A REGIONAL DELEGATION IN HONG KONG TO CARRY OUT ITS WORK IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE FAR EAST.

"HONG KONG HAS BEEN SELECTED AS THE REGIONAL BASE BECAUSE OF ITS CENTRAL LOCATION, ITS GOOD COMMUNICATIONS AND BECAUSE IT IS A SOCIETY IN WHICH AN ORGANISATION WITH AN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ROLE SUCH AS THE ICRC CAN FUNCTION WITHOUT FEAR OR POLITICAL INTERFERENCE," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ICRC, ESTABLISHED IN SWITZERLAND IN 1863, WERE VARIED.

THEY INCLUDED PROVIDING AND CO-ORDINATING MEDICAL SERVICES IN TIME OF WAR OR INTERNAL STRIFE, AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN SERVICES, SUCH AS MONITORING THE CARE OF PRISONERS OF WAR AND FACILITATING CONTACTS BETWEEN FAMILIES SEPARATED BY WAR OR POLITICAL BARRIERS.

IF ENACTED, THE BILL WOULD GRANT THE FOLLOWING PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES TO THE COMMITTEE:

- \* IMMUNITY FOR THE REGIONAL DELEGATION IN HONG KONG FROM LEGAL PROCESS. THIS IS LIMITED TO CASES ARISING FROM THE REGIONAL DELEGATION'S OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS;
- \* INVIOABILITY OF ARCHIVES AND PREMISES OCCUPIED AS OFFICES;
- \* EXEMPTION FROM TAXES AND RATES ON OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL PREMISES;
- \* EXEMPTION FROM DUTIES AND TAXES ON GOODS AND PUBLICATIONS DIRECTLY IMPORTED OR EXPORTED BY THE ICRC FOR USE IN ITS OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS WHICH MAY BE LAID DOWN BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR CUSTOMS AND EXCISE;
- \* EXEMPTION FROM RESTRICTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS ON THE IMPORT AND EXPORT OF GOODS AND PUBLICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES;
- \* IMMUNITY FROM LEGAL PROCESS FOR THE DELEGATES. THIS IS LIMITED TO CASES ARISING FROM THE ICRC'S OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS AND APPLIES ONLY TO FULL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION AND NOT TO LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF;
- \* EXEMPTION FROM SALARIES TAX ON EMOLUMENTS RECEIVED AS A DELEGATE OF THE COMMITTEE. THIS EXEMPTION ALSO APPLIES ONLY TO FULL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION AND NOT TO LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF;
- \* EXEMPTION FROM STAMP DUTY FOR ICRC DELEGATES OR PREMISES AS THE CHIEF SECRETARY MAY CERTIFY UNDER SECTION 43(3) OF THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

IMPROVEMENTS TO LEGAL AID SCHEME SOUGHT  
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AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL AID ORDINANCE ARE BEING SOUGHT TO IMPROVE THE WORKING OF THE LEGAL AID SCHEME, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE LEGAL AID (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, SIR DAVID SAID TWO OF THE AMENDMENTS SOUGHT TO UPDATE CERTAIN FINANCIAL LIMITS.

"THE ORDINANCE EMPOWERS THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID TO IMPOSE A FIRST CHARGE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECOVERING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AN AIDED PERSON, ON ANY PROPERTY RECOVERED OR PRESERVED FOR HIM, EXCLUDING MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS EXCEEDING \$1,500 PER MONTH.

"ONE AMENDMENT INCREASES THIS LIMIT TO \$2,500 PER MONTH. ANOTHER AMENDMENT INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF THE FIRST CHARGE THAT THE DIRECTOR MAY WAIVE IN CASES OF SERIOUS HARDSHIP FROM \$10,000 TO \$30,000," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO EXTEND THE SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID SCHEME TO THE DISTRICT COURTS.

"THE LEGAL AID ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR THE AWARD OF SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID IN CASE OF CIVIL PROCEEDINGS IN THE HIGH COURT OR COURT OF APPEAL ONLY, WHICH ARE BROUGHT BY THE AIDED PERSON IN A CLAIM ARISING FROM PERSONAL INJURIES TO, OR THE DEATH OF, ANY PERSON.

"UNTIL RECENTLY CLAIMS IN EXCESS OF \$60,000 WERE LITIGATED IN THE HIGH COURT.

"THE RECENT INCREASE OF THE DISTRICT COURT CIVIL JURISDICTION FROM \$60,000 TO \$120,000 HAS MEANT THAT THOSE PERSONS WITH A CLAIM BETWEEN \$60,000 AND \$120,000 ARE NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY LEGAL AID SINCE THEIR CLAIMS MUST NOW BE LITIGATED IN THE DISTRICT COURT, AND NOT THE HIGH COURT," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

"THE BILL RESTORES THEIR ELIGIBILITY," HE ADDED.

"THE BILL MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE DIRECTOR IS LIABLE TO PAY A NON-AIDED PARTY'S COSTS INCURRED IN SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSING A COUNTER-CLAIM, CROSS-PETITION OR CROSS-APPEAL BROUGHT BY A LEGALLY AIDED DEFENDANT OR RESPONDENT," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE SAID THE REMAINING AMENDMENTS MADE BY THE BILL WERE OF A MINOR NATURE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1989

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BILL CLARIFIES POSITION ON ARBITRATION REPRESENTATION

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THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT PARTIES TO AN ARBITRATION AGREEMENT MAY BE REPRESENTED BY ANY PERSON OF THEIR CHOICE.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID THIS POSITION WAS IN LINE WITH THE PRACTICE IN OTHER MAJOR CENTRES OF ARBITRATION.

MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED THAT AN ARBITRATION WAS ESSENTIALLY A PRIVATE CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE RESOLUTION OF A DISPUTE OTHERWISE THAN BY LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN THE COURTS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT AT COMMON LAW THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF AUDIENCE WHICH BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS ENJOYED IN THE COURTS DID NOT EXTEND TO ARBITRATIONS. A PARTY IN AN ARBITRATION MIGHT BE REPRESENTED BY ANY PERSON OF HIS CHOOSING WHATEVER HIS PROFESSION AND FROM WHATEVER LEGAL JURISDICTION THAT PERSON MIGHT COME.

"HOWEVER, DOUBT HAS BEEN CAST ON THE COMMON LAW POSITION IN HONG KONG AS A RESULT OF SECTIONS 44, 45 AND 47 OF THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE," MR MATHEWS SAID.

SECTION 44 PROVIDED THAT ANY UNQUALIFIED PERSON ACTING AS A BARRISTER SHOULD BE GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE. SECTION 45 PROVIDED THAT NO UNQUALIFIED PERSON SHOULD ACT AS A SOLICITOR, WHILE SECTION 47 PROVIDED THAT NO UNQUALIFIED PERSON SHOULD PREPARE CERTAIN LEGAL DOCUMENTS.

HE NOTED THAT THE QUESTION OF WHAT EFFECT THESE PROVISIONS MIGHT HAVE IN RELATION TO ARBITRATION PROCEEDINGS HAD LED TO A NUMBER OF WIDELY DIFFERING OPINIONS FROM LAWYERS.

"SOME ARGUE THAT ONLY SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS ADMITTED IN HONG KONG HAVE A RIGHT OF AUDIENCE. OTHERS CONSIDER THAT THE PROVISIONS DO NOT PREVENT ANY PERSON FROM APPEARING IN ARBITRATION PROCEEDINGS," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT CONFUSION EXISTED AND THE SITUATION WAS CLEARLY UNSATISFACTORY.

"THERE ARE NOW STRONG INDICATIONS THAT THE UNCERTAINTY IS CONSTITUTING A SUBSTANTIAL IMPEDIMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG AS AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARBITRATIONS BECAUSE CONTRACTING PARTIES ARE UNWILLING TO NOMINATE HONG KONG AS A VENUE FOR ARBITRATIONS IF THEY CANNOT BE SURE THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE ADVOCATE OF THEIR CHOICE," HE SAID.

/"THE BILL .....

"THE BILL, IF ENACTED, WILL REMOVE THAT UNCERTAINTY BY MAKING CLEAR THAT SECTIONS 44, 45 AND 47 OF THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE DO NOT APPLY TO ARBITRATION PROCEEDINGS AND THAT PARTIES TO SUCH PROCEEDINGS ARE NOT RESTRICTED AS TO WHO MAY REPRESENT THEM."

MR MATHEWS SAID THE PROPOSAL IN THE BILL WAS SUPPORTED BY THE HONG KONG ARBITRATION CENTRE, THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE LAW SOCIETY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO ALLOW BETTING ON PRESTIGIOUS RACES OUTSIDE HK

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A BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IS INTENDED TO ALLOW THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TO CONDUCT BETTING ON RACES ORGANISED OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

"THIS WILL PERMIT THE JOCKEY CLUB TO RECEIVE SIMULTANEOUS TRANSMISSIONS FEATURING PRESTIGIOUS RACES HELD OVERSEAS AND SHOW THEM AT THE RACE COURSES IN HAPPY VALLEY AND SHA TIN," THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE COUNCIL.

"AT THE SAME TIME PUNTERS WILL BE ABLE TO PLACE BETS ON THE RACES IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BETTING DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

MR TSAO SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON GAMBLING WAS TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT OUTLETS WITHIN REGULATED CHANNELS, AND THE AIM WAS TO DISCOURAGE ILLEGAL GAMBLING.

"IF THE BILL BECOMES LAW, WE WILL ENSURE THAT THE BETS WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY ON RACES WHICH TAKE PLACE AT THE TIME WHEN NORMAL RACING MEETINGS ARE BEING HELD AT EITHER SHA TIN OR HAPPY VALLEY.

"THE SIMULTANEOUS SHOWING OF OVERSEAS RACES WILL SLOT INTO THE NORMAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY, AND THEREFORE, OVERALL, OPPORTUNITIES FOR GAMBLING IN HONG KONG WILL NOT BE INCREASED," HE SAID.

MR TSAO SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO REMOVE THE EXISTING RESTRICTION IN THE BETTING DUTY ORDINANCE TO THE EFFECT THAT BETTING COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE IN RACES ORGANISED BY THE JOCKEY CLUB IN HONG KONG.

"AS IS NORMAL, WE ALSO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUBSTITUTE THE WORDS 'HONG KONG' FOR THE WORDS 'THE COLONY' THROUGHOUT THE ORDINANCE," HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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FLEXIBILITY ON APPOINTMENT OF BOARD CHAIRMAN SOUGHT

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A BILL GIVING THE GOVERNOR THE FLEXIBILITY TO APPOINT A NON-OFFICIAL MEMBER TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECOND READING OF THE COUNTRY PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 WAS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO.

MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE, AS CURRENTLY WORDED, STATES THAT THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD COMPRISED THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY, THAT IS THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES "WHO SHALL BE CHAIRMAN", AND OTHER MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

"AS THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD IS SET UP TO ADVISE THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY, IT IS CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE FOR THAT SAME AUTHORITY TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT AS CONTAINED IN THE BILL WILL RECTIFY THIS SITUATION," HE SAID.

MR LIAO ADDED THAT HE HOPED THAT THE BILL WOULD BE ENACTED IN TIME FOR THE FORTHCOMING ROUND OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD IN AUGUST, SO THAT A NON-OFFICIAL MEMBER WOULD BE APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN AT THAT TIME.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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PHARMACY AND POISONS AMENDMENT REGULATIONS APPROVED

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THE PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) REGULATIONS 1989, WHICH AMEND FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF REGISTRATION, LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE, WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING A MOTION, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON NIGEL SHIPMAN, EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 29 OF THE ORDINANCE EMPOWERED THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD, SUBJECT TO LEGCO APPROVAL, TO MAKE REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF ANY REGISTRATION MADE AND ANY LICENCE AND CERTIFICATE ISSUED UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

HE SAID THE BOARD HAD RESOLVED TO AMEND THE VARIOUS FEES SET OUT IN THE NINTH SCHEDULE TO THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS.

"AS IT IS THE POLICY FOR SUCH FEES TO BE SET AT A LEVEL THAT ENSURES FULL COST-RECOVERY, THE COSTS INVOLVED IN EFFECTING THE REGISTRATIONS AND ISSUING THE LICENCES AND CERTIFICATES SPECIFIED IN THIS SCHEDULE HAVE BEEN EXAMINED.

/"IT IS .....

"IT IS PROPOSED TO INCREASE THESE FEES BY STAGES UNTIL FULL COST-RECOVERY IS OBTAINED," HE SAID.

MR SHIPMAN SAID THE ESTIMATED COSTS WERE \$5.7 MILLION IN 1988-89. APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT REGULATIONS WOULD PRODUCE AN ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE OF \$2.7 MILLION, REPRESENTING 47 PER CENT OF ESTIMATED COSTS.

"THESE FEES WILL BE REVIEWED AGAIN IN 1991, WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING FULL COST-RECOVERY IN THAT YEAR," HE ADDED.

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FEES UNDER RADIATION ORDINANCE AMENDED  
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TWO SETS OF AMENDMENT REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE RADIATION ORDINANCE, WHICH AMEND FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF IRRADIATING EQUIPMENT AND RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES, WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE RADIATION (CONTROL OF IRRADIATING APPARATUS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1989, AND THE RADIATION (CONTROL OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1989.

A MOTION THAT THE COUNCIL APPROVE THE REGULATIONS WAS MOVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON NIGEL SHIPMAN.

HE SAID THAT SECTION 13 OF THE ORDINANCE EMPOWERED THE RADIATION BOARD, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY LEGCO, TO MAKE REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF ANY LICENCE ISSUED UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

THE BOARD HAD RESOLVED TO AMEND THE VARIOUS SETS OF FEES SET OUT IN REGULATION 11(2) AND THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE RADIATION (CONTROL OF IRRADIATING APPARATUS) REGULATIONS; AND REGULATION 4(1) AND REGULATION 16(2) OF THE RADIATION (CONTROL OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES) REGULATIONS.

THE POLICY WAS FOR SUCH FEES TO BE SET AT A LEVEL THAT ENSURED FULL COST-RECOVERY, AND THE COSTS INVOLVED IN ISSUING THE LICENCES HAD BEEN EXAMINED.

"IT IS PROPOSED AGAIN TO INCREASE THESE FEES BY STAGES UNTIL FULL COST-RECOVERY IS OBTAINED," MR SHIPMAN SAID.

"THE ESTIMATED COSTS ARE \$2.6 MILLION IN 1988-89. IF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS ARE APPROVED, THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE WILL BE \$1.8 MILLION, REPRESENTING 70 PER CENT OF ESTIMATED COSTS.

"THESE FEES WILL BE REVIEWED AGAIN IN 1991, WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING FULL COST-RECOVERY IN THAT YEAR."

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1989

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GOVERNOR, SENIOR MEMBER PAY TRIBUTE TO RETIRING SEM  
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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, WHO IS RETIRING FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE AFTER 32 YEARS, FOR HIS VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION NOT ONLY TO THE WORK OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUT ALSO TO HONG KONG.

IN A VALEDICTORY SPEECH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNOR SAID MR BRIDGE WAS FIRST APPOINTED TO THE COUNCIL IN AUGUST 1977 AND, IN TOTAL, HE HAD BEEN A MEMBER FOR OVER FIVE AND A HALF YEARS.

"AS COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR AND ALSO IN HIS PRESENT APPOINTMENT, MR BRIDGE HAS WORKED EXTREMELY HARD TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK.

"HE HAS PILOTED IMPORTANT LABOUR LEGISLATION THROUGH THIS COUNCIL TO PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION FOR THE WORKFORCE AND HIS INTEREST AND DETERMINATION HAVE LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL WHICH CAME INTO BEING LAST YEAR," SIR DAVID SAID.

"EXTENSION OF THE SCOPE OF BOTH THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME AND THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND IN THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN DUE IN NO SMALL MEASURE TO HIS CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORKFORCE IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

THE GOVERNOR SAID MR BRIDGE'S CONTRIBUTION IN THE EDUCATION FIELD WAS EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE, HAVING STEERED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE SETTING UP OF THE OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE.

"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE TWO INSTITUTIONS WILL PROVIDE THE KIND OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS THAT HONG KONG SO BADLY NEEDS FOR ITS LONG-TERM STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

"HE HAS ALSO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ASSISTING IN THE WORK OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, WHICH WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS ON HONG KONG'S EDUCATION SYSTEM," SIR DAVID SAID.

"ALTHOUGH MR BRIDGE IS LEAVING HONG KONG, THE FRUITS OF ALL HIS HARD WORK WILL REMIND US OF HIS DEDICATION, IMPARTIALITY, WISDOM AND SOUND JUDGEMENT," HE ADDED.

IN A VALEDICTORY SPEECH ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS, THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON ALLEN LEE, SAID FEW CIVIL SERVANTS COULD MATCH MR BRIDGE'S RICH AND VARIED EXPERIENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE LABOUR FIELD.

/"DEEP IN .....

"DEEP IN THE MINDS OF ALL OF US HERE TODAY IS MR BRIDGE'S PATIENCE, GRACIOUSNESS AND ABOVE ALL HIS SINCERITY AND READINESS WITH WHICH HE DISPOSES HIMSELF TO LISTENING TO OTHERS' VIEWS," MR LEE SAID.

"HE HAS ALWAYS RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS MADE BY MEMBERS. IT IS NO EXAGGERATION FOR ME TO SAY THAT HE HAS EFFECTIVELY PERFORMED THE ROLE OF BEING A 'BRIDGE' BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND MY COLLEAGUES.

"I AM SURE THAT THESE QUALITIES HAVE PLAYED NO SMALL PART IN HELPING HIM DEAL WITH A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ISSUES, SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OPENING LEARNING INSTITUTE AND THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL."

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CONSULTATION ON LAND RESUMPTION BY LDC

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THE GOVERNMENT REQUIRES THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) TO CONSULT RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICTS AFFECTED, THROUGH THE DISTRICT OFFICES AND DISTRICT BOARDS, WHERE A LDC DEVELOPMENT SCHEME OR PROPOSAL REQUIRES LAND TO BE RESUMED.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON KINGSLEY SIT.

"FURTHERMORE, THE LARGER LDC SCHEMES INVARIABLY REQUIRE AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTORY OUTLINE ZONING PLANS AND THESE MUST HAVE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S APPROVAL AND BE GAZETTED.

"THE DISTRICT BOARDS WILL BE CONSULTED ON DRAFT OUTLINE ZONING PLANS WHICH WILL INCORPORATE DETAILS OF LDC'S DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES, INCLUDING THE TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED IN THE SCHEME," MR BARNES SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1989

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IMPACT OF AIRPORT NOISE TO BE MINIMISED

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THE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED NOT ONLY TO PROVIDING IMPROVEMENTS TO AIRPORT FACILITIES BUT ALSO TO MINIMISING THE NOISE IMPACT ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCREASINGLY BUSY HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG.

MR BARNES HAD BEEN ASKED WHAT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM OF NOISE POLLUTION, GIVEN THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT PACKAGE, BASED ON A CONSULTANCY STUDY REPORT, TO EXPAND THE FACILITIES OF THE AIRPORT.

"THE CONSULTANCY ALSO RECOMMENDED MEASURES WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE NOISE IMPACT," MR BARNES SAID.

THESE MEASURES INCLUDED PROVISION OF ACOUSTIC INSULATION TO AFFECTED SCHOOLS AND MAINTAINING THE PRESENT CURFEW FOR AIRCRAFT LANDING AND TAKEOFF AT NIGHT.

THEY ALSO INCLUDED INSTALLING A FIXED GROUND POWER SOURCE IN EXISTING AND EXPANDED APRON AREAS TO WOULD PROVIDE ELECTRICITY TO AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS WHICH OTHERWISE RELY ON THE AIRCRAFT AUXILIARY POWER UNITS.

THE OPERATION OF THESE UNITS HAD BEEN ONE OF THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF NOISE NUISANCE TO THE NEIGHBOURING HOUSING ESTATES.

MR BARNES SAID ALL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND WERE BEING IMPLEMENTED.

"IN ADDITION, THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS BEEN REQUIRING AIRLINE OPERATORS TO RELOCATE NOISY AIRCRAFT ENGINE RUNS AT NIGHT TO THE WEST OF THE NULLAH TO MINIMISE DISTURBANCE TO ADJACENT DWELLINGS.

"SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION UNDER THE CIVIL AVIATION (AIRCRAFT NOISE) ORDINANCE IS ALSO BEING DRAFTED WITH A VIEW TO INCORPORATING THESE AND OTHER FORMS OF CONTROL IN A STATUTORY FRAMEWORK," HE ADDED.

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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO ID CARDS EXPLAINED

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO TYPES OF IDENTITY CARD IS THAT A "PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD" STATES THE HOLDER HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG WHILE AN "IDENTITY CARD" DOES NOT, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR ASPREY EXPLAINED THAT ANY PERSON WHO WAS A BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN BY VIRTUE OF A CONNECTION WITH HONG KONG, AND ANY PERSON WHOLLY OR PARTLY OF CHINESE RACE, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY, WHO HAD BEEN RESIDED IN HONG KONG CONTINUOUSLY FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS, WOULD ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

"A PERSON WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG IS ISSUED WITH A PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD. A PERSON WHO DOES NOT HAVE THAT RIGHT IS ISSUED WITH AN IDENTITY CARD," HE SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON NELLIE FONG.

MR ASPREY SAID A FOREIGN NATIONAL WHO WAS NOT WHOLLY OR PARTLY OF CHINESE RACE WOULD NOT ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT BEFORE THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981 CAME INTO FORCE ON JANUARY 1, 1983, ANY CHILD BORN IN HONG KONG WOULD BECOME A BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN BY BIRTH, WITH THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG, REGARDLESS OF THE NATIONALITY OF THE PARENTS.

AFTER JANUARY 1, 1983, A CHILD BORN IN HONG KONG TO PARENTS, NEITHER OF WHOM HAD THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG, WOULD BE A BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZEN ONLY IF AT LEAST ONE OF THE PARENTS HAD THE RIGHT TO LAND IN HONG KONG OR HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG UNCONDITIONALLY, HE ADDED.

IN PRACTICE, MR ASPREY SAID, THIS WOULD APPLY TO CHILDREN OF THE FOLLOWING:

- \* A BRITISH CITIZEN IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WHO, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, WOULD BE GRANTED UNCONDITIONAL STAY IN HONG KONG;
- \* A BRITISH CITIZEN WHO HAS BEEN ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG CONTINUOUSLY FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS, WHO WILL THEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO LAND IN HONG KONG; OR
- \* ANY OTHER NATIONAL WHO HAS BEEN ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG CONTINUOUSLY FOR AT LEAST NINE YEARS, AND WHO HAS APPLIED FOR AND BEEN GRANTED UNCONDITIONAL STAY IN HONG KONG.

MEASURES TO ABATE SMELL NUISANCE AT NULLAHS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS ADOPTING A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH IN ABATING THE SMELL NUISANCE CAUSED BY NULLAHS IN THE TERRITORY BY MEANS OF DESILTING, SEWAGE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL ON EFFLUENTS DISCHARGE.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

MR BARNES SAID THERE WERE 24 MAJOR NULLAHS IN HONG KONG, AND EIGHT OF THEM -- FOUR IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND FOUR IN KOWLOON -- WERE CAUSING A SMELL NUISANCE TO THE PUBLIC.

THE NEW TERRITORIES NULLAHS ARE THE YUEN LONG NULLAHS, THE TUEN MUN NULLAH, THE FO TAN NULLAH AND THE SHAM TSENG WESTERN NULLAH.

THE KOWLOON NULLAHS ARE THE MONG KOK ROAD NULLAH, THE TAI HANG TUNG NULLAH, THE JORDAN VALLEY NULLAH AND THE KAI TAK NULLAH.

MR BARNES SAID MEASURES TAKEN TO ABATE THE SMELL NUISANCE AT MOST MAJOR NULLAHS, INCLUDING THE TWO AT JORDAN VALLEY AND TSUI PING ROAD IN KWUN TONG, INCLUDED DESILTING CARRIED OUT ANNUALLY BY THE CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

"THIS IS A RECURRENT EXERCISE BECAUSE ORGANIC SEDIMENTS WILL ACCUMULATE AGAIN ONCE THE DREDGING HAS STOPPED," HE EXPLAINED.

THIS WORK WAS ALSO CARRIED OUT TO MITIGATE FLOODING AS NULLAHS WERE PART OF THE LAND DRAINAGE SYSTEM BUILT TO TAKE AWAY STORMWATER RUN-OFF, HE ADDED.

MR BARNES SAID THAT IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR THE DEPARTMENT HAD OBTAINED \$4.5 MILLION TO CARRY OUT DESILTING ESPECIALLY FOR SMELL ABATEMENT.

OF THIS SUM, \$0.35 MILLION WOULD BE SPENT IN THE JORDAN VALLEY AND TSUI PING ROAD NULLAHS.

THE OPEN SECTION OF THE JORDAN VALLEY NULLAH HAD JUST BEEN CLEANED AS PART OF THESE WORKS AND DESILTING OF THE DECKED SECTION DOWNSTREAM WOULD BEGIN SHORTLY, HE SAID.

ON SEWAGE MANAGEMENT, HE NOTED THAT SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS WERE BEING PLANNED TO THE PUBLIC SEWERAGE IN EAST KOWLOON TO PREVENT UNCONTROLLED DISCHARGES OF FOUL WATERS, INCLUDING DISCHARGES INTO THE TWO NULLAHS IN KWUN TONG.

"A SEWAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THIS PURPOSE IS NOW BEING DEVISED BY CONSULTANTS WHOSE FINAL REPORT ON THE WORKS PROPOSED WILL BE SUBMITTED AT THE END OF THIS MONTH.

/"THESE WORKS .....

"THESE WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO COST NEARLY \$1 BILLION AND WORK COULD BEGIN ON THEM IN 1990 IF FUNDS CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE.

"CONTROLS ON BOTH DOMESTIC AND INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENTS TO PREVENT THEIR DISCHARGE THROUGH EXPEDIENT CONNECTIONS INTO THE NULLAHS WILL ALSO BE IMPOSED WHEN, IN 1991, THE VICTORIA HARBOUR WATER CONTROL ZONE IS DECLARED UNDER THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE."

ON WHETHER THERE WAS ANY PLAN TO DECK ALL NULLAHS, MR BARNES' REPLY WAS NO, AS TO DO SO WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE AND WOULD, MOREOVER, MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE TO CLEANSE AND MAINTAIN THEM FOR THE PURPOSE OF FLOOD CONTROL, WHICH WAS WHY THE NULLAHS WERE BUILT.

IN ADDITION, DECKING WAS NOT ALWAYS THE MOST APPROPRIATE SOLUTION TO THE SMELL PROBLEM.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN YUEN LONG FOR EXAMPLE, A \$70 MILLION SCHEME TO REDUCE THE SMELL AND VISUAL IMPACT OF THE YUEN LONG NULLAHS HAS RECENTLY BEEN INCLUDED INTO THE PWP.

THIS SCHEME INCLUDED DESILTING, INFLATABLE DAMS TO EXCLUDE POLLUTED TIDAL WATER FROM THE NULLAH, STREAM COURSE LINING, AND PUMPING WORKS. THESE MEASURES WERE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN DECKING WHICH WOULD COST \$200 MILLION - \$300 MILLION.

HOWEVER, HE SAID SOME NULLAHS IN THE URBAN AREA HAVE BEEN DECKED FOR ROAD WIDENING OR TO PROVIDE AMENITY SPACE.

"THAT PART OF THE TSUI PING ROAD NULLAH NORTH OF KWUN TONG ROAD WAS DECKED IN 1988 AS PART OF THE TSUI PING ROAD ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

"A SECTION OF THE JORDAN VALLEY NULLAH WILL BE DECKED AS PART OF THE URBAN COUNCIL PROJECT, JORDAN VALLEY RECREATION GROUND PHASE II, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO START IN 1991 FOR COMPLETION IN 1993," HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID THE SMELL NUISANCE IN NULLAHS WAS MAINLY CAUSED BY ORGANIC POLLUTANTS WHICH WERE DISCHARGED INTO THEM FROM VARIOUS SOURCES - DOMESTIC, AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL.

"IT WILL NOT BE FULLY ABATED UNTIL THESE DISCHARGES ARE PROPERLY CONTROLLED.

"THE GENERAL SILTING OF NULLAHS ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THE SMELL PROBLEM, ALBEIT TO A LESSER EXTENT."

HE SAID INTERIM MEASURES IN THE SUMMER TO MINIMISE THE SMELL NUISANCE CAUSED TO THE PUBLIC WERE NOT CARRIED OUT AS SUCH, ALTHOUGH MAINTENANCE AND CLEANSING WAS A YEAR ROUND PROGRAMME.

"IN SUMMER, HEAVY RAIN ACTS AS A NATURAL CLEANSING AGENT BY FLUSHING," HE NOTED.

ADEQUATE CONTROL ON VEHICLE LAMPS

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WHILST THERE IS NO LAW PROHIBITING THE INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL HEAD LAMPS, REAR LAMPS OR STOP LAMPS ON VEHICLES, THERE ARE REGULATIONS SPELLING OUT SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SUCH LAMPS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI, MR LEUNG SAID THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) REGULATIONS REQUIRED THAT LAMPS LIGHTED AT THE FRONT OF A VEHICLE SHOULD BE DIPPED WHEN BEING USED ON A ROAD WITH STREET LIGHTS OR IN THE FACE OF APPROACHING TRAFFIC.

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLES) REGULATIONS REQUIRED VEHICLES TO CARRY FRONT LAMPS SO CONSTRUCTED THAT THE BEAM OF LIGHT EMITTED WAS AT ALL TIMES A DIPPED BEAM.

AS REGARDS HEAD LAMPS, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING MAKING AN AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS TO SPECIFY THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PARTS OF THE ILLUMINATED AREA OF A HEAD LAMP.

"THIS WOULD PREVENT THE FITMENT OF HEAD LAMPS WHICH ARE TOO HIGH AND MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT OTHER ROAD USERS," HE SAID.

AS FOR REAR LAMPS, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) REGULATIONS MADE IT AN OFFENCE TO SHOW TO THE REAR ANY ILLUMINATED DEVICE WHICH WOULD TEND TO DISTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE DRIVER OF A FOLLOWING VEHICLE.

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF VEHICLES) REGULATIONS FURTHER REQUIRED THAT THE POWER OF STOP LAMPS MUST NOT BE MORE THAN 36 WATTS.

MR LEUNG ADDED THAT ANY PERSON WHO INSTALLED ADDITIONAL VEHICLE LIGHTS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THESE REGULATIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO RECTIFY THE INFRINGEMENTS OR, IN SERIOUS CASES, BE PROSECUTED.

HE CONSIDERED THE PRESENT ENFORCEMENT MEASURES AND REGULAR VEHICLE EXAMINATIONS ADEQUATE.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND INTRODUCE FURTHER CONTROL MEASURES IF THESE WERE WARRANTED, HE SAID.

THREE BILLS PASSED

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

THEY WERE THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE PEAK TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

SEVEN BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

THEY WERE THE LEGAL AID (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE COUNTRY PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS) BILL 1989; THE BETTING DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; AND THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

IN ADDITION, A PRIVATE BILL WAS INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THIS WAS THE SAILORS HOME AND MISSIONS TO SEAMEN INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

DEBATES ON THIS AND THE OTHER SEVEN BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

TWO MOTIONS MOVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE AND THE RADIATION ORDINANCE RESPECTIVELY, WERE ALSO PASSED.

THE COUNCIL DEBATED A MEMBER'S MOTION CONCERNING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG.

THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, READ: "THAT, TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD, THIS COUNCIL URGES THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION ON PROTECTING THE RIGHTS AND IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG".

THIRTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION. THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER AND THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THE MOTION WAS PASSED.

IN ADDITION, THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON ALLEN LEE, MADE A STATEMENT ON HONG KONG'S CASE ON THE ISSUE OF RIGHT OF ABODE IN BRITAIN FOR HONG KONG PEOPLE.

THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, AND MR LEE ALSO MADE VALEDICTORY SPEECHES TO THE COUNCIL TO MARK THE LAST ATTENDANCE IN THE COUNCIL OF THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, WHO WILL BE RETIRING FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1989

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JOINT EFFORTS REQUIRED TO PREVENT AND CONTROL AIDS

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HONG KONG IS AT THE CROSSROAD OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND THE THREAT OF AIDS IN THE TERRITORY IS EVER INCREASING, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MR NIGEL SHIPMAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS ADDRESSING THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR ON AIDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION ORGANISED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY.

"THE SUCCESS OF OUR EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND CONTROL AIDS BEFORE IT FULLY STRIKES THIS REGION DEPENDS ON OUR PRESENT EFFORTS IN FORMULATING NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES," HE SAID.

"SUCH EFFORTS WILL REQUIRE THE CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT OF ALL COUNTRIES."

MR SHIPMAN NOTED THAT GLOBALLY, FIVE TO 10 MILLION INDIVIDUALS HAD BEEN INFECTED WITH HIV AND AT LEAST ONE HALF OF THESE INFECTED PERSONS WERE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP THE CLINICAL DISEASE AIDS IN THE NEXT DECADE.

"MODERN MEDICINE HAS NOT FOUND AN ANSWER TO HALT THE SPREAD OF THIS DEADLY DISEASE," HE SAID.

"AIDS POSES A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE HEALTH OF ALL NATIONS AND HAS ALREADY SEVERELY DRAINED RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROMOTION IN MANY COUNTRIES."

MR SHIPMAN POINTED OUT THAT IN ASIA, 369 CASES OF AIDS HAD SO FAR BEEN REPORTED FROM 24 COUNTRIES, WHICH WAS LESS THAN A QUARTER OF ONE PER CENT OF THE GLOBAL FIGURE OF 151,790 CASES REPORTED TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AS AT APRIL 30, 1989.

"ALTHOUGH THE DISEASE IS STILL IN ITS INFANCY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, THE POTENTIAL FOR RAPID DISSEMINATION EXISTS, AS HAS BEEN EVIDENCED BY THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INFECTED CARRIERS DETECTED IN SOME COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION," HE SAID.

MR SHIPMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ALERT TO THE POSSIBLE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE AND INITIATED PREVENTIVE MEASURES BEFORE THE FIRST CASE OF AIDS WAS REPORTED IN HONG KONG IN 1985.

"AN EXPERT COMMITTEE ON AIDS WAS ESTABLISHED IN NOVEMBER 1984 TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND TO PREPARE GUIDELINES AND CONTINGENCY PLANS.

"A MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE NETWORK WAS SET UP IN 1984 WHILE A SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP WAS FORMED IN APRIL 1985 TO PLAN, IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE THE SCREENING PROGRAMMES FOR AIDS.

/"TO SAFEGUARD .....

"TO SAFEGUARD BLOOD TRANSFUSION AND BLOOD PRODUCTS, MASS SCREENING OF ALL BLOOD DONORS WAS STARTED BY THE HONG KONG RED CROSS BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE IN AUGUST 1985 AND A SAFER HEAT-TREATED BLOOD PRODUCT FOR USE BY HAEMOPHILIACS WAS INTRODUCED IN THE SAME YEAR.

"IN NOVEMBER 1985, AN AIDS COUNSELLING SERVICE WAS SET UP TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND MEDICAL CONSULTATION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE AT RISK OF CONTRACTING AIDS.

"MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY USE A TELEPHONE HOTLINE TO OBTAIN ADVICE IN CONFIDENCE. BLOOD TESTS MAY BE ARRANGED AND COMPLETE ANONYMITY IS ASSURED."

MR SHIPMAN STRESSED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE VACCINES AND OTHER REMEDIES, HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION WAS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE.

"A COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY ON AIDS WAS ESTABLISHED IN JANUARY 1987 TO CO-ORDINATE ALL RELATED EFFORTS IN EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY," HE SAID.

"THE ACTIVITIES ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS THREE MAIN GROUPS: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THE HIGH RISK GROUPS AND THE PROFESSIONALS.

"IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR, A 'COMMUNITY AIDS CONCERN WEEK' WAS ORGANISED IN HONG KONG IN SUPPORT OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S WORLD AIDS DAY TO PROMOTE GREATER AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING IN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT AIDS."

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REVIEW OF SYSTEM FOR CERTIFYING ORIGIN OF PRODUCTS COMPLETED  
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THE TRADE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT HAS COMPLETED A REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM FOR CERTIFYING THE ORIGIN OF PRODUCTS.

THE RESULTS OF THE REVIEW ARE CONTAINED IN A REPORT WHICH WAS ENDORSED YESTERDAY BY THE TRADE ADVISORY BOARD.

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TRADE, MR STUART HARBINSON, EXPLAINED THAT THE REPORT REACHES THREE CONCLUSIONS:

- (1) THAT THE TRADE DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE A CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN ISSUING BODY;
- (2) THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD WORK TOWARDS STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF A CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WHICH OVERSEES CERTIFICATION WORK AND DEVELOPING A CODE OF PRACTICE ON CERTIFICATION;

/(3) THAT .....

- (3) THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT APPROVED CERTIFICATION ORGANISATIONS (GACO'S) FOR THE TIME BEING.

COMMENTING ON THE REPORT, MR HARBINSON SAID: "ESSENTIALLY WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT OUR EXISTING CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IS IN REASONABLE SHAPE.

"HOWEVER HONG KONG'S GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION AND OUR PATTERN OF TRADE MEAN THAT WE HAVE TO BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN AS HIGH A STANDARD OF CERTIFICATION AS POSSIBLE."

MR HARBINSON STRESSED THAT THE SECOND CONCLUSION REACHED WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM.

HE NOTED THAT ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE CERTIFICATION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPERVISORY ROLE, WHILE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CODE OF PRACTICE WOULD ENSURE GREATER UNIFORMITY IN STANDARDS OF CERTIFICATION.

"THIS WILL HELP US TO CONTINUE TO GUARANTEE THE INTEGRITY OF OUR CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHALLENGES AHEAD," HE SAID.

THE CERTIFICATION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE IS CHAIRED BY THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE'S REPRESENTATIVE AND HAS OTHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT, THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT, AND THE GACO'S.

MR HARBINSON ADDED THAT THE DECISION NOT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF GACO'S WAS BASED ON A VIEW THAT OVER-DELEGATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY IN CERTIFICATION MATTERS WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM.

"THE MORE GACO'S THERE ARE, THE HARDER IT WILL BE TO SUPERVISE AND UPGRADE THE SYSTEM.

"BESIDES, THE REVIEW SHOWED THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY SEEMS TO BE HAPPY WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE EXISTING GACO'S. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO NEED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF GACO'S," HE SAID.

"I APPRECIATE THIS DECISION WILL NOT BE WELCOME TO BODIES WHICH HOPED TO BECOME GACO'S," MR HARBINSON CONTINUED.

"LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE NOT PASSING JUDGEMENT ON THE CAPABILITIES AND SUITABILITY OF THESE BODIES. IT IS SIMPLY THAT WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO EXPAND THE GACO SYSTEM."

THE REPORT MARKED THE CULMINATION OF A LENGTHY REVIEW PROCESS BY THE TRADE DEPARTMENT WHICH INVOLVED BOTH AN EXAMINATION OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE EXISTING GACO'S AND THE PUBLICATION OF A DETAILED CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT.

STI PRAISES SUPPLIERS OF PLASTIC MATERIALS  
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THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR JOHN CHAN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PRAISED THE HONG KONG PLASTICS SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPRESSIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL PLASTICS INDUSTRY.

ADDRESSING MEMBERS AT THE ASSOCIATION'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, MR CHAN SAID IN THE PAST 15 YEARS, THE ASSOCIATION HAD SHOWN ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY BY ENSURING A SMOOTH, RELIABLE SUPPLY OF PLASTIC MATERIALS -- PARTICULARLY IN 1987 WHEN THERE WAS A WORLDWIDE SHORTAGE OF PLASTIC RESINS.

"AS WE ALL KNOW, HONG KONG HAS VIRTUALLY NO INDIGENOUS RAW MATERIALS AND THE CONTINUING SUPPLY OF GOOD QUALITY PLASTIC RAW MATERIALS IS VITAL TO THE CONTINUED HEALTH OF OUR MANUFACTURING SECTOR," MR CHAN SAID.

"YOUR MEMBERS HAVE ALSO MAINTAINED VALUABLE TECHNICAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY ON THE SUPPLY OF NEW MATERIALS, SELECTION OF MATERIAL GRADES, IMPROVEMENTS IN PROCESSING AND THE MANAGEMENT AND SAFE STORAGE OF PLASTIC RAW MATERIALS," HE SAID.

MR CHAN ALSO THANKED THE ASSOCIATION FOR ITS SUPPORT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLASTIC TECHNOLOGY CENTRE COMPANY LIMITED.

HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ASSOCIATION WOULD CONTRIBUTE ENERGETICALLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLASTIC TECHNOLOGY CENTRE IN THE CHALLENGING YEARS AHEAD, PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND CAPABILITIES OF THE LOCAL PLASTICS INDUSTRY.

THE PLASTIC TECHNOLOGY CENTRE COMPANY LIMITED WAS SET UP LAST YEAR WITH A GOVERNMENT GRANT OF \$12.8 MILLION AND A PRIVATE DONATION OF \$10 MILLION. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ASSOCIATION IS A DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY.

COMMENTING ON THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, MR CHAN SAID PRACTICALLY ALL CONSUMER AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS NOW CONTAINED SOME ELEMENTS OF PLASTICS OR THEIR DERIVATIVES.

"THE SUCCESS OF OUR PLASTICS INDUSTRY IS NOW CLOSELY TIED TO THE FORTUNES OF OUR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN GENERAL," HE SAID.

AT PRESENT THERE ARE ABOUT 5,600 ESTABLISHMENTS IN HONG KONG'S PLASTICS INDUSTRY AND THEY EMPLOY SOME 72,000 WORKERS, REPRESENTING 11 PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S TOTAL MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE.

WITH A DOMESTIC EXPORT VALUE OF \$11,847 MILLION IN 1988, THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY IS NOW HONG KONG'S SIXTH LARGEST EXPORT-EARNER.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF BRANCH RE-ENTRY PERMIT SECTION

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SERVICES AT THE RE-ENTRY PERMIT SECTION AT THE SHA TIN OFFICE OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT WILL BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AS A MEASURE TO FACILITATE THE PROCESSING OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HEAVY DEMANDS FOR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AT THE SHA TIN OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, KCR HOUSE, HAD BEEN RECORDED RECENTLY.

"RESIDENTS OF SHA TIN WHO WISH TO APPLY FOR RE-ENTRY PERMITS MAY APPROACH THE TAI PO IMMIGRATION OFFICE, 5TH FLOOR, TAI PO GOVERNMENT OFFICES, OR THE WEST KOWLOON RE-ENTRY PERMIT OFFICE, NO.789 NATHAN ROAD, 1ST FLOOR," HE SAID.

IT NOW TAKES 20 WORKING DAYS (ABOUT FOUR WEEKS) TO ISSUE A BRITISH HONG KONG PASSPORT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE REMINDED THAT IF THEY HAVE NO PLANS TO TRAVEL IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, THERE IS NO NEED TO SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO QUEUEING UP ALL MORNING FOR A TAG.

"THIS WOULD CAUSE A GREAT DEAL OF INCONVENIENCE TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE A GENUINE NEED TO TRAVEL OVERSEAS," HE SAID.

ANY PERSON WHO REQUIRES A TRAVEL DOCUMENT FOR URGENT TRAVEL CAN ALWAYS APPROACH THE TRAVEL DOCUMENT SECTION OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, 1ST FLOOR, AT 61 MODY ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI.

"THEY MUST BRING WITH THEM THE APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTS SO THAT WE CAN RENDER ASSISTANCE TO THEIR APPLICATIONS THE BEST WE CAN," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN INCIDENTS WHERE UNSCRUPULOUS PEOPLE HAD BEEN SELLING QUEUE PLACES IN SOME OF THE IMMIGRATION BRANCH OFFICES.

"THERE IS NO NEED TO BE MADE USE OF IN THIS WAY. ANY PERSON WHO REQUIRES A TRAVEL DOCUMENT FOR URGENT TRAVEL CAN ALWAYS APPROACH OUR HEADQUARTERS AND MAKE KNOWN THEIR CASE TO US FOR ASSISTANCE," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN UNFOUNDED RUMOURS AND MISLEADING PRESS REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT PEOPLE WHO HAD NOT ACQUIRED A PASSPORT THIS YEAR WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTIES BECOMING BRITISH NATIONALS (OVERSEAS).

"ANY PERSON BORN IN HONG KONG BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1983, AND ANY PERSON BORN IN HONG KONG AFTER JANUARY 1, 1983 WHOSE FATHER OR MOTHER IS EITHER A HKBDC OR SETTLED IN HONG KONG, IS ELIGIBLE TO ACQUIRE A HKBDC PASSPORT UPON APPLICATION BEFORE JULY 1, 1997," THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

"PEOPLE WHO HAVE HKBDC STATUS INCLUDING ELIGIBLE PERSONS WHO DO NOT HOLD BDC PASSPORTS, WILL BE ENTITLED TO ACQUIRE THE STATUS OF BN(O), TOGETHER WITH BN(O) PASSPORTS, AT ANY TIME BEFORE JULY 1, 1997," HE ADDED.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 30), THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL BETWEEN GILMAN STREET AND WING WO STREET WILL BE DESIGNATED GOODS VEHICLE URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND FROM 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY.

GOODS VEHICLES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS THERE.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE EXISTING 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY ON THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF ICE HOUSE STREET IN CENTRAL FROM A POINT ABOUT 165 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 230 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE IN FORCE FOR ANOTHER SEVEN WEEKS TO FACILITATE ROAD WORKS.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREA.

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN NORTH POINT

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 30), TWO ROAD SECTIONS IN NORTH POINT WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS.

THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF PAK FUK ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 150 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HEALTHY STREET CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 80 METRES TO THE EAST WILL BE DESIGNATED AN URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSING FUNG STREET BETWEEN HING FAT STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES TO THE EAST WILL ALSO BECOME A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS TO FACILITATE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORKS.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

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