



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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BRITISH TEAM WILL NEVER WALK AWAY FROM NEGOTIATION

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THE BRITISH SIDE WITH ITS HONG KONG MEMBERS WILL NEVER WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE ISLANDS DISTRICT, THE GOVERNOR SAID : "WE'RE ALWAYS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AND I HOPE THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS ARE AS WELL BECAUSE WE NEED TO CO-OPERATE IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

"WE NEED TO CO-OPERATE IN A WAY WHICH GUARANTEES THE FUTURE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF COMMUNITIES LIKE THIS, BY UNDERPINNING THE RULE OF LAW RATHER THAN ERODING IT."

ASKED IF THE BRITISH SIDE WOULD BE PREPARED TO REVEAL THE CONTENTS OF THE TALKS IN VIEW OF COMMENTS FROM THE CHINESE SIDE, THE GOVERNOR SAID : "OF COURSE, IF THE CHINESE SIDE WOULD LIKE US TO REVEAL WHAT'S HAPPENED IN 17 ROUNDS OF TALKS, WE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO OBLIGE.

"THE REASON WHY WE DON'T, WHY WE'VE KEPT THINGS CONFIDENTIAL IS THE CHINESE SIDE ARE ALWAYS SAYING THAT IS HOW THEY LIKE US TO CONDUCT THE DISCUSSIONS.

"IF ANYONE'S TALKING ABOUT HONESTY AND TRUTH, I WOULD BE VERY VERY HAPPY, IN DUE COURSE, TO SET OUT EXACTLY WHAT'S HAPPENED DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS, NOT JUST IN THE 15TH, 16TH AND 17TH ROUNDS BUT IN THE PREVIOUS 14 ROUNDS AS WELL."

HE ADDED THAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WERE LOOKING TO CHINESE OFFICIALS WHO WERE MEETING IN PEKING TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG IN "STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY AND IN IMPROVING OUR LIVELIHOOD".

"I THINK PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WOULD WELCOME SOME CONCRETE ASSURANCES OF THAT," HE SAID.

"SECONDLY, WHAT I THINK PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE LOOKING TO SEE, LOOKING TO HEAR, IS SOME PROPOSALS, SOME IDEAS FROM THE CHINESE SIDE ABOUT THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH ARE STILL OUTSTANDING IN THESE TALKS ABOUT THE THROUGH TRAIN, ABOUT THE ELECTION COMMITTEE AND ABOUT THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES."

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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GOVERNOR SPEAKS TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING ISLANDS DISTRICT

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GOVERNOR: THIS IS THE SECOND VISIT THAT I'VE PAID TO THE ISLANDS DISTRICT. I'VE ENJOYED THIS ONE AS MUCH AS I ENJOYED THE LAST. I THINK COMING TO THIS PART OF HONG KONG ONE'S REMINDED OF TWO THINGS. FIRST OF ALL IS THE EXTRAORDINARY VARIETY AND BEAUTY OF OUR ENVIRONMENT HERE IN HONG KONG. SECONDLY, I THINK ONE IS INEVITABLY REMINDED OF ONE OF THE BIG DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES THAT WE'RE ALL GOING TO FACE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THAT IS HOW WE CAN RECONCILE THE NEEDS OF OUR ECONOMY AND THE NEED TO GO ON DEVELOPING OUR ECONOMY WITH PEOPLE'S VERY STRONG FEELING THAT WE SHOULD PRESERVE AS MUCH OF THIS BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT AS WE POSSIBLY CAN. I THINK THAT IS BROUGHT HOME IN VERY SHARP BELIEF HERE IN DISCOVERY BAY WHICH IS A WONDERFUL NEW COMMUNITY FULL OF YOUNG FAMILIES ENJOYING THIS SPECTACULAR ENVIRONMENT OF LANTAO BUT OBVIOUSLY WORRY ABOUT THE IMPACT ON THEM OF FUTURE PORT DEVELOPMENT. THESE ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES WHICH A SOPHISTICATED GROWING COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY HAVE TO FACE AND WILL HAVE TO FACE THEM IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS BY ENSURING A PROPER DIALOGUE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT WHAT SORT OF PLACE WE WANT TO BE. SO, I'VE BEEN PLEASED TO BE HERE AGAIN AND I KNOW THAT NONE OF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTION YOU WANT TO ASK. SO

QUESTION: GOVERNOR, IN RECENT DAYS, THE CHINESE SIDE HAS REPEATEDLY ACCUSED YOU OF BEING VERY DISHONEST AND WHAT THEY SAY IS LAUGHABLE AND ZHANG JUNSHENG SAID THAT IF THE CONTENTS OF THE 17TH ROUND OF TALKS WERE REVEALED, IT WOULD SHOW YOU AS A VERY DISHONEST MAN. IS THE BRITISH SIDE PREPARED TO REVEAL THE CONTENTS OF THE PAST 17 ROUNDS AND SECONDLY, GIVEN THAT NOTHING WILL COME OUT OF THE JLG AND WITH RELATIONSHIP AS IT IS NOW, CAN SINO-BRITISH TRUST AND CO-OPERATION REALLY BE SALVAGED?

/OF COURSE

GOVERNOR: OF COURSE, IF THE CHINESE SIDE WOULD LIKE US TO REVEAL WHAT'S HAPPENED IN 17 ROUNDS OF TALKS, WE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO OBLIGE. THE REASON WHY WE DON'T, WHY WE'VE KEPT THINGS CONFIDENTIAL IS THE CHINESE SIDE ARE ALWAYS SAYING THAT IS HOW THEY LIKE US TO CONDUCT THE DISCUSSIONS. I VERY MUCH HOPE THE DISCUSSIONS WILL CONTINUE. THAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE, AS YOU KNOW, IN TABLING A PARTIAL BILL DEALING WITH WHAT SHOULD BE THE NON-CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES AND I THINK IT IS MORE SENSIBLE TO GET ON WITH THOSE TALKS RATHER THAN TO INDULGE IN ABUSE. WE NEVER ABUSE PEOPLE BUT IF ANYONE'S TALKING ABOUT HONESTY AND TRUTH, I WOULD BE VERY VERY HAPPY, IN DUE COURSE, TO SET OUT EXACTLY WHAT'S HAPPENED DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS, NOT JUST IN THE 15TH, 16TH AND 17TH ROUNDS BUT IN THE PREVIOUS 14 ROUNDS AS WELL. IF THE CHINESE SIDE THINK THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HONG KONG AND HELPFUL TO OUR RELATIONSHIP, THEN I AM SURE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND WE IN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WOULD BE VERY VERY HAPPY TO OBLIGE WITH THAT AND SET OUT AN HONEST ACCOUNT OF WHAT'S HAPPENED. IF I CAN JUST ADD TO THAT WHILE UNDERLINING THE FACT THAT WE WANT TALKS NOT AN ABUSIVE EXCHANGE, I THINK THAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE LOOKING TO CHINESE OFFICIALS THIS WEEK WHO ARE MEETING IN PEKING, ARE LOOKING TO THEM TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG IN STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY AND IN IMPROVING OUR LIVELIHOOD. I THINK PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WOULD WELCOME SOME CONCRETE ASSURANCES OF THAT. SECONDLY, WHAT I THINK PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE LOOKING TO SEE, LOOKING TO HEAR, IS SOME PROPOSALS, SOME IDEAS FROM THE CHINESE SIDE ABOUT THE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES WHICH ARE STILL OUTSTANDING IN THESE TALKS ABOUT THE THROUGH TRAIN, ABOUT THE ELECTION COMMITTEE AND ABOUT THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES. THOSE ARE THE REALLY DIFFICULT ISSUES. THOSE ARE ISSUES ON WHICH THE BRITISH/HONG KONG SIDE HAVE PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS. SO, I STILL VERY MUCH HOPE THAT WE WILL HEAR PROPOSALS FROM THE CHINESE SIDE AS WELL WHICH THE COMMUNITY CAN CONSIDER AND WHICH THE COMMUNITY CAN JUDGE. SO, NO ABUSE FROM US BUT A QUIET DETERMINATION TO GO ON TALKING AND GO ON WORKING IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

QUESTION : GOVERNOR, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU ARE IN A POSITION TO QUESTION THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PWC WHILE YOU YOURSELF ARE NOT HERE AS A RESULT OF FAIR ELECTIONS IN HONG KONG?

GOVERNOR: WHAT I'VE SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IS THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CLEARLY HAS CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY, THAT MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ARE OVERWHELMINGLY ELECTED, AND I THINK IT'S VERY STRANGE FOR ONE OR TWO CHINESE OFFICIALS TO ABUSE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND SAY THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY NOTICE OF THEM DESPITE THE CLEAR CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHICH IS SET OUT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW AS WELL AS IN THE PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HONG KONG. I THINK IT'S ODD TO SAY THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY NOTICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHICH IS LARGELY ELECTED BUT ARE GOING TO TAKE NOTICE OF THE VIEWS OF ONE OR TWO PEOPLE THAT THEY HAVE CHOSEN THEMSELVES, PRESUMABLY CHOSEN BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY AGREED WITH THEM. ONE MORE.

QUESTION: THE CHINESE OFFICIAL OF THE XINHUA SAID, THAT THEY HAVE NO MORE INTEREST ON BRITISH SIDE AND THEY WILL NOT HOLD, LIKELY TO HOLD, ANY MORE TALKS WITH BRITAIN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONSIDER TO TABLE THE REST OF THE PROPOSALS TO LEGCO IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

GOVERNOR: WE'VE TABLED, OR WE'VE PROPOSED GAZETTING AND INTRODUCING A PARTIAL BILL IN ORDER TO GIVE US MORE TIME TO CONSIDER THE OTHER ISSUES. I THINK IT'LL BE INTERESTING IF CHINESE OFFICIALS SAID WHAT THEIR OBJECTION IS TO OUR PROPOSALS ON SINGLE SEAT SINGLE VOTE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. SINCE 17 ROUNDS, THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO AGREE TO THAT, PERHAPS THEY CAN SAY WHY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT? EVERYBODY IN HONG KONG PRETTY WELL SUPPORTS IT. SO WHY DON'T CHINESE OFFICIALS SUPPORT IT. BUT I WANT TO REPEAT THAT THE BRITISH SIDE WITH ITS HONG KONG MEMBERS WILL NEVER WALK AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. WE'RE ALWAYS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AND I HOPE THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS ARE AS WELL BECAUSE WE NEED TO COOPERATE IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. WE NEED TO COOPERATE IN A WAY WHICH GUARANTEES THE FUTURE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF COMMUNITIES LIKE THIS, BY UNDERPINNING THE RULE OF LAW RATHER THAN ERODING IT.

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GOVERNOR VISITS ISLANDS DISTRICT

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED CHEUNG CHAU AND DISCOVERY BAY FOR AN UPDATE ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE ISLANDS DISTRICT.

ON CHEUNG CHAU, HE SAW SOME RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND LOCAL PROJECTS, INCLUDING DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS, PAVED FOOTPATHS, SITTING-OUT AREAS AND REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS.

IN THE TWO YEARS FROM 1991, \$20.1 MILLION WAS SPENT ON LOCAL PROJECTS IN THE ISLANDS DISTRICT. AN ESTIMATED \$18.6 MILLION HAS ALSO BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

MR PATTEN ALSO VISITED A HOLIDAY FLAT IN PAK SHE AND VIEWED THE TYPHOON SHELTER AND SEAFOOD RESTAURANTS ALONG THE PROMENADE OF THE ISLAND BEFORE LEAVING FOR DISCOVERY BAY.

DURING THIS JOURNEY, HE MET A GROUP OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AND DISCUSSED LOCAL ISSUES WITH THEM.

AT DISCOVERY BAY, MR PATTEN WAS BRIEFED ON THE LANTAU PORT AND HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY HAS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BULK OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE PORT FACILITIES BE LOCATED AT NORTHEAST LANTAU.

THE PROPOSED LANTAU PORT, WHICH WILL PROVIDE 17 CONTAINER BERTHS WITH A RESERVE CAPACITY FOR SEVEN MORE, IS DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEED FOR PORT FACILITIES UP TO THE YEAR 2011 AND BEYOND. IT IS PLANNED THAT THE FIRST BERTH WOULD BE OPERATIONAL IN MID-1997.

/MR PATTEN

MR PATTEN CONCLUDED HIS VISIT WITH A WALKABOUT AT THE DISCOVERY BAY PLAZA.

HE WAS ACCOMPANIED ON HIS TOUR BY THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MISS CHRISTINE CHOW KWAN-TAI, THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRISTOPHER WONG KWOK-BUN AND THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR LAM WAI-KEUNG.

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SPEL ATTENDS ENVIRONMENT TALKS IN GUANGZHOU

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THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) LED A 13-MEMBER DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE HONG KONG-GUANGDONG ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LIAISON GROUP MEETING IN GUANGZHOU.

DURING THE THREE-DAY MEETING, MEMBERS OF THE LIAISON GROUP WILL CONSIDER THE PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TECHNICAL REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF DEEP BAY AND ITS CATCHMENTS, THE HONG KONG TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW AND THE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL STRATEGY FOR THE PEARL RIVER DELTA.

THE LIAISON GROUP WILL ALSO DISCUSS ITS WORK PLAN FOR 1994.

MEMBERS FROM BOTH SIDES WILL ALSO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON OTHER PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN.

THE DELEGATION WILL RETURN TO HONG KONG ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 10).

MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG DELEGATION INCLUDE THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DR STUART REED; THE DIRECTOR OF DRAINAGE SERVICES, MR SIU CHUEN; THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, DR PETER PUN, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH AND THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

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ICAC'S CASE EXPLAINED

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REFERRING TO A REMARK MADE BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, MR MAN SAI-CHEONG DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON GREEN PAPER ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING CONCERNING AN ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE IN THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT SAID BY WAY OF CLARIFICATION THAT THE ICAC REFERRED THE CASE TO THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AFTER THEY HAD CONCLUDED THEIR INVESTIGATION IN MAY THIS YEAR.

THE EVIDENCE WAS THEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY A SENIOR DIRECTORATE OFFICER OF THE ATTONEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS, WHO ADVISED THAT THERE WAS NO CASE TO PROSECUTE.

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BILL TO BOOST SECURITY SERVICE STANDARDS EXPLAINED
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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES BILL INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST MONTH, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE SECURITY BRANCH TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THE AIM OF THE BILL WAS TO PROMOTE HIGHER STANDARDS OF SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES.

UNDER THE BILL, COMPANIES PROVIDING SECURITY SERVICES WILL BE REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE AND INDIVIDUAL SECURITY PERSONNEL WILL BE REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE APPLICATION AND RENEWAL OF LICENCES FOR SECURITY COMPANIES SHOULD BE MADE TO THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES INDUSTRY AUTHORITY, WHICH IS TO BE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE BILL.

THE AUTHORITY, THE SPOKESMAN NOTED, WILL ALSO SPECIFY THE CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS FOR ISSUING PERMITS TO SECURITY PERSONNEL.

IT WILL COMPRISE A CHAIRMAN APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY AND THREE OTHER PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

CURRENTLY, THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE REQUIRES SECURITY COMPANIES TO OBTAIN WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE BEFORE THEY CAN OPERATE.

THE BILL PROPOSES THAT A 12-MONTH GRACE PERIOD BE GIVEN TO EXISTING SECURITY COMPANIES TO APPLY FOR LICENCE UNDER THE NEW LEGISLATION.

THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT THE EXISTING WATCHMEN'S PERMITS ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WATCHMEN ORDINANCE SHOULD INITIALLY BE REGARDED AS VALID PERMITS FOLLOWING THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL.

THE SECURITY AND GUARDING SERVICES INDUSTRY AUTHORITY WILL THEN INFORM THE PERMIT HOLDERS TO APPLY FOR A NEW PERMIT.

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TWO GOVT LOTS TO LET BY TENDER
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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCIES OF TWO LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED IN SURVEY DISTRICT NO.3, TSEUNG KWAN O, SAI KUNG, HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 8,900 SQUARE METRES FOR OPEN STORAGE OF TENANT'S GOODS OR CONTAINERS UNLOADED FROM SHIPS.

THE TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

THE SECOND LOT AT THE JUNCTION OF CHIU SHUN ROAD AND WAN PO ROAD, TSEUNG KWAN O, SAI KUNG, HAVING AN AREA OF ABOUT 6,000 SQUARE METRES, IS EARMARKED FOR FILM SHOOTING OR PLANT NURSERY OR OPEN STORAGE OF THE TENANT'S GOODS (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS).

IT CARRIES A TENANCY OF THREE YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON DECEMBER 24.

FORMS OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, SAI KUNG; THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

TENDER PLANS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICES.

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POSTAL SOUVENIR COVER SALE BENEFITS CHARITY

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TWO CHARITY GROUPS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RECEIVED DONATIONS OF A SUM OF \$200,000 EACH, THANKS TO A ISSUE OF TWO SPECIAL POSTAL SOUVENIR COVERS.

THE LUI KEUNG AQUARIUM SOUVENIR COVERS, ISSUED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE "HONG KONG GOLD FISH" SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS, HAD BEEN SOLD OUT BETWEEN NOVEMBER 11 AND 17.

THE COVERS COMPRISE 3,388 GOLD-BLOCKED AND 30,000 ORDINARY SOUVENIR COVERS.

AT A CEREMONY HELD AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, MR DAVID LUI OF LUI KEUNG AQUARIUM PRESENTED THE CHEQUES TO THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND THE COMMUNITY CHEST OF HONG KONG.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR M PAGLIARI, DESCRIBED THE POST OFFICE'S SUPPORT FOR THE ISSUE AS VERY SUCCESSFUL.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY WERE CHAIRMAN OF LUI KEUNG AQUARIUM, MR CHARLES LUI CHI-KEUNG; CHAIRMAN OF THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS, MR WONG SEE-SUM; AND CHAIRMAN OF CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST OF HONG KONG, MRS DELIA PEI.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	4
REVERSAL OF LAF	+3,996
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	4,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-20
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	3,980

LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 113.5 *+0.0* 8.12.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.73 PCT	14 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.37	3.59
1 MONTH	2.97 PCT	17 MONTHS	2505	3.75	99.89	3.86
3 MONTHS	2.98 PCT	20 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.01	4.04
6 MONTHS	3.16 PCT	23 MONTHS	2511	4.15	99.97	4.21
12 MONTHS	3.47 PCT	35 MONTHS	3610	4.20	98.94	4.65

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 10,808 MN

CLOSED 8 DECEMBER 1993

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

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WELL-BEING OF WOMEN A MATTER FOR COMMUNITY CONCERN: SHA

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THE WELL-BEING OF WOMEN IN HONG KONG IS NOW A MATTER FOR COMMUNITY CONCERN AND THE FOCUS OF PUBLIC ATTENTION, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING.

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT DURING A MOTION DEBATE ON SEXUAL EQUALITY, MR SUEN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE.

AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS A SOUND TRACK RECORD TO GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNT OF ITS WORK, HE ADDED.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN THE LEAD TO INTRODUCE EQUAL PAY AND EQUAL TREATMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"WE HAVE INSTITUTED SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED WOMEN AND MEN.

"WE HAVE BEEN REVIEWING LEGISLATION TO REMOVE IMPROPER DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENTS BETWEEN THE SEXES AND INDEED WORK IS NOW PROCEEDING ON A NUMBER OF ORDINANCES.

"THESE INCLUDE THE AFFILIATION PROCEEDINGS ORDINANCE, THE SEPARATION AND MAINTENANCE ORDERS ORDINANCE AND OTHER MARRIAGE-RELATED ORDINANCES."

NEVERTHELESS, MR SUEN SAID HE ENTIRELY ACCEPTED MEMBERS' CONTENTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING MORE.

"IN A WAY, THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS OF PUBLISHING THE GREEN PAPER ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN THIS AUGUST," HE SAID.

ANOTHER REASON FOR CHOOSING TO DO IT THIS WAY, MR SUEN SAID, WAS TO USE IT AS AN EDUCATION TOOL TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND GENERATES DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

NOTING THAT THE GREEN PAPER EXERCISE HAD ACHIEVED THIS IMPORTANT GOAL OF EDUCATING THE PUBLIC, MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT PEOPLE WERE NOW MUCH MORE AWARE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED AND HAD BECOME MORE ARTICULATE ON THIS SUBJECT.

SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER, MR SUEN SAID, MANY LIVELY DEBATES HAD TAKEN PLACE WITHIN THE COUNCIL, AT DISTRICT BOARDS AND GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES, AMONG VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, WOMEN GROUPS, EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS AS WELL AS AMONG INDIVIDUALS.

THE EXTENSION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) TO HONG KONG AND THE SETTING UP OF A WOMEN'S COMMISSION ARE CLEARLY THE TWO MOST MENTIONED TOPICS WHILE THE WELL-BEING OF WOMEN IS ANOTHER ONE WHICH HAS COME UP DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.

/AS TO

AS TO VIEWS EXPRESSED ON THE SERVICES PRESENTLY PROVIDED FOR WOMEN, MR SUEN SAID HE HAD HEARD MANY AND THESE INCLUDED THE PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED CHILD-CARE FACILITIES AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE EMPLOYEE RETRAINING PROGRAMME.

AND HE HAD ALREADY TAKEN THESE MATTERS UP WITH HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE RELEVANT POLICY BRANCHES FOR THEM TO CONSIDER WHAT TIMELY ACTION THAT WAS REQUIRED TO BE TAKEN AS APPROPRIATE.

ON THE EXTENSION OF CEDAW TO HONG KONG, MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION IMPOSED WIDE-RANGING OBLIGATIONS UPON STATES PARTIES TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND THAT THESE OBLIGATIONS FELL UPON BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC.

"AS EVIDENCED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER STATES PARTIES TO CEDAW, WE WILL NEED TO INSTITUTE MEASURES WHICH MAY BE LEGISLATIVE OR NON-LEGISLATIVE IN NATURE IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION."

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO, MR SUEN EXPLAINED THAT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WOULD SET OUT IN SOME DETAIL ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR WHILE NON-LEGISLATIVE MEASURES WOULD SEEK TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND NORMS.

RECOGNISING MEMBERS' STANCE ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER, MR SUEN EMPHASISED THAT THEIR PRESENTATION WOULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING ON HIS RECOMMENDATION TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THE WAY FORWARD.

TURNING TO THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION, MR SUEN SAID HE WAS NOT SURPRISED TO FIND THAT BOTH WITHIN THE COUNCIL AND ELSEWHERE, VIEWS ON THIS WERE NOW MORE DIVERSE AS THERE WERE MORE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER.

"THESE COVER THE FULL RANGE OF OPTIONS FORESHADOWED IN THE GREEN PAPER, NAMELY AN ADVISORY BODY, A RESEARCH ORIENTED ORGANISATION, A COMPLAINTS RECEIVING AGENCY AND A CEDAW-LINKED COMMISSION," MR SUEN SAID.

HE ASSURED MEMBERS THAT ALL THE SUGGESTIONS THAT HAD BEEN PUT FORWARD WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

IN CONCLUSION, MR SUEN ONCE AGAIN CALLED ON THE PUBLIC AT LARGE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANT EQUALITY ISSUE BEFORE THE CONSULTATION PERIOD EXPIRES AT THE END OF THIS MONTH.

SPEECH BY ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE DR S H LEE
IN MOTION DEBATE ON CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES
IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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MR PRESIDENT,

PRESENT POLICY

OUR POLICY ON ELDERLY SERVICES IS TO ENCOURAGE THE CARE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE BY FAMILY MEMBERS WITHIN A FAMILY CONTEXT AND TO STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS. THE BROAD AIM IS TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF ELDERLY PEOPLE THROUGH CARE IN THE COMMUNITY AND BY THE COMMUNITY. TO THIS END, A RANGE OF SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO ENABLE ELDERLY PEOPLE TO REMAIN AT HOME FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO CAREGIVERS. THESE SERVICES INCLUDE, FOR EXAMPLE, HOME HELP SERVICE, SOCIAL CENTRES, MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES, DAY CARE CENTRES AND FACILITIES, COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE AND COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIC NURSING SERVICE.

IT IS, HOWEVER, RECOGNISED THAT THE NEEDS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE VARY AND THAT RESIDENTIAL CARE MAY BE REQUIRED FOR SOME ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO CANNOT BE TAKEN CARE OF AT HOME. OUR APPROACH TO LONG-TERM RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE IS THAT IT SHOULD ONLY BE PROVIDED TO THOSE WHO HAVE A GENUINE NEED FOR SUCH CARE. ELDERLY PERSONS LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS OFTEN FEEL ABANDONED BY THEIR FAMILIES AND ISOLATED FROM SOCIETY. ELDERLY PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENABLED TO LEAD AN INDEPENDENT AND DIGNIFIED LIFE AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY AND NOT IN ISOLATION IN AN INSTITUTION.

RESIDENTIAL CARE

FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT BE CARED FOR AT HOME, A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED INCLUDING, SELF-CARE HOSTELS, HOMES FOR THE AGED, CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES AND INFIRMARIES.

WITH THE GROWTH OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION IN HONG KONG IN RECENT DECADES, THE DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE IS INCREASING. AS A RESULT, THE CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES IN RECENT YEARS HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET DEMAND. THE SOLUTION IN THE LONG RUN IS TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF INTEGRATED CARE BASED PRIMARILY IN THE COMMUNITY TO ENABLE ELDERLY PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO LIVE AT HOME WITH THEIR FAMILIES. AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, MORE RESIDENTIAL CARE PLACES WILL BE PROVIDED AND NEW INITIATIVES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

/NEW INITIATIVES

NEW INITIATIVES

AS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THIS COUNCIL ON 6 OCTOBER 1993, AN ADDITIONAL 800 CARE-AND-ATTENTION PLACES WILL BE PROVIDED DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN ADDITION TO THE 5,000 CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOME AND HOME FOR THE AGED PLACES PLEDGED IN HIS 1992 ANNUAL ADDRESS. THE TARGET SET IN THE 1991 WHITE PAPER "SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND" WILL BE FULLY MET BY 1997.

FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO NEED RESIDENTIAL MEDICAL AND NURSING CARE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN A HOSPITAL, INFIRMARY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED. A TOTAL OF 1,400 INFIRMARY PLACES ARE CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY. OUR PRESENT PLANS ARE TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL 1,200 PLACES BY 1997. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, 5,400 PEOPLE ALREADY ON THE WAITING LIST. TO BETTER MEET DEMAND, THE GOVERNOR HAS ANNOUNCED THAT A NETWORK OF ELDERLY NURSING HOMES WITH MEDICAL AND NURSING FACILITIES WILL BE DEVELOPED. THESE NURSING HOMES WILL CARE FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE TO REMAIN IN HOSPITAL OR IN AN INFIRMARY. WE ARE PLANNING FOR AN INITIAL SEVEN NURSING HOMES TO PROVIDE 1,400 PLACES FOR SUCH ELDERLY CLIENTS. THE HOMES ARE PLANNED TO BE IN OPERATION BY 1997. THE NEW NURSING HOMES ARE INTENDED TO BRIDGE A GAP BETWEEN INFIRMARIES AND CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES. AS THE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR REGISTERING AND SUPERVISING NURSING HOMES UNDER THE LAW, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS BEST PLACED TO OVERSEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE HOMES. WITH REFERENCE TO DR LEONG'S COMMENT ON HEALTH CARE, HEALTH CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS ACTIVELY WORKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SERVICE, AND THE FIRST HEALTH CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY WILL BE OPENED IN 1994.

OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICES

IN LINE WITH OUR EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY, WE HAVE PLANS TO SET UP INITIALLY FOUR COMMUNITY GERIATRIC TEAMS IN 1994 TO PROVIDE OUTREACH MEDICAL SERVICES TO ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING MEDICAL, NURSING AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT. THESE TEAMS WILL PROVIDE PRE-ADMISSION ASSESSMENT FOR PEOPLE ON THE WAITING LISTS FOR CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES AND INFIRMARIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH THE APPROPRIATE TYPE OF CARE. MEDICAL SUPPORT SERVICES ARE ALSO PROVIDED TO PREVENT DETERIORATION IN THEIR HEALTH CONDITIONS AND TO REDUCE THEIR NEED FOR HOSPITALISATION.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

WITH INCREASING DEMAND, THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION IN RECENT YEARS IN THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL HOMES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE. WHILE PRIVATE HOMES ALSO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO CARING FOR THE ELDERLY, THEIR QUALITY OF SERVICE IS NOT ALWAYS SATISFACTORY. THERE IS A NEED TO CONTROL THE STANDARDS OF RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES IN HONG KONG.

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TO PROVIDE A UNIFORM REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON THESE HOMES, THE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES (ELDERLY PERSONS) BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL ON 3 NOVEMBER 1993. THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION PROVIDES FOR THE CONTROL OF HOMES THROUGH A LICENSING SYSTEM. A SET OF MINIMUM STANDARDS IN RESPECT OF LOCATION AND DESIGN, STAFFING AND SPACE, SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS WILL BE APPLIED TO ALL RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE. THE LEGISLATION WILL PROHIBIT NEW HOMES WHICH CANNOT MEET THE LICENSING STANDARDS FROM ENTERING THE MARKET. AS REGARDS THE EXISTING HOMES, WE EXPECT THAT MOST OF THEM WOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE LICENSING CONDITIONS OR TO IMPROVE THEIR SERVICES ACCORDING TO THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UNDER THEIR CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION. WE WILL ARRANGE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY CLOSURE OF SUBSTANDARD HOMES. THE BOUGHT PLACE SCHEME WILL BE EXPANDED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

WORKING GROUP

IN ORDER TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, A WORKING GROUP ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY HAS BEEN APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO CONDUCT A GENERAL REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE AND TO ADVISE ON THE FORMULATION OF A STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE POLICIES AND SERVICES. THE WORKING GROUP IS RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNOR AND WILL REPORT BY AUGUST 1994. THE WORKING GROUP WILL EVALUATE THE DEMAND FOR AND THE SUPPLY OF EACH SERVICE FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE, INCLUDING CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES AND INFIRMARIES. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES, NURSING HOMES AND INFIRMARIES WILL BE LOOKED AT. IT WILL ALSO EXAMINE NEW AND COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR THESE SERVICES. THAT MEANS OF IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES BETWEEN CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES, NURSING HOMES AND INFIRMARIES. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SUBMIT THEIR VIEWS TO THE WORKING GROUP BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

COMMITMENT

IN CONCLUDING, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS FULLY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR ELDERLY PEOPLE. THE APPOINTMENT OF THE WORKING GROUP IS PROOF OF THIS COMMITMENT. THE GOVERNMENT WILL SPEND ABOUT \$6 BILLION ON SERVICES FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE THIS YEAR. A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON A DISTRICT BASIS. OUR ELDERLY PEOPLE WILL BE ASSISTED TO LEAD A FULFILLING AND DIGNIFIED LIFE AND TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND INDEPENDENT FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. OUR AIM IS "TO ADD YEARS TO LIFE AND LIFE TO YEARS".

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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PUBLIC TO ENJOY MORE PROTECTION FROM UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TO STRENGTHEN ITS LEGAL MUSCLE TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC SAFETY CONTROL SCHEMES SPECIALLY TAILORED FOR INDIVIDUAL CLASSES OF CONSUMER GOODS SUCH AS FOOD STUFF, GAS APPLIANCES AND PHARMACEUTICALS.

HOWEVER, THE SUPPLY OF MOST CONSUMER GOODS IN HONG KONG IS NOT SUBJECT TO ANY STATUTORY SAFETY CONTROL.

UNDER CONSUMER GOODS SAFETY BILL, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A STATUTORY DUTY WILL BE IMPOSED ON MANUFACTURERS, IMPORTERS AND SUPPLIERS OF CONSUMER GOODS TO ENSURE THAT THE GOODS THEY SUPPLY FOR CONSUMPTION IN HONG KONG ARE REASONABLY SAFE.

THE BILL WILL BE ENFORCED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, WHO WILL ACT ON COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT SPOT CHECKS.

IT IS BASED LARGELY ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A WORKING GROUP ON CONSUMER PRODUCTS SAFETY, WHICH COMPRISED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AS WELL AS RELEVANT TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS.

UNDER THE BILL, CLAUSE 4 PROVIDES GUIDELINES TO THE COURT AND THE SUPPLIERS OF CONSUMER GOODS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENT.

IN ADDITION TO GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENT, CLAUSE 30 OF THE BILL WILL EMPOWER THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO PRESCRIBE STATUTORY SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC CONSUMER GOODS AND, IN EXTREME CASES, TO PROHIBIT THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN CONSUMER GOODS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, SAID TO FACILITATE COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENT OR ANY PRESCRIBED SAFETY STANDARDS, SUPPLIERS OF CONSUMER GOODS MAY, ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, HAVE THEIR PRODUCTS TESTED BY A LABORATORY APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR A SAFETY CONTROL NOTICE SYSTEM. THIS WILL SERVE AS A REMEDIAL MEASURE TO COVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE DISCOVERY OF UNSAFE CONSUMER GOODS AND ANY SUBSEQUENT CONVICTION IN COURT.

AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST ANY ABUSE OF ENFORCEMENT POWERS, THE BILL ESTABLISHES AN APPEAL BOARD PANEL TO HEAR APPEALS AGAINST NOTICES ISSUED OR CERTAIN DECISIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.

AN APPEAL BOARD WILL BE CHAIRED BY A LEGAL PRACTITIONER AND WILL COMPRISE, AS MEMBERS, A GENERAL CONSUMER, A SCIENTIST WITH RELEVANT EXPERTISE IN CONSUMER GOODS TESTING AND A PERSON FROM THE CONSUMER GOODS INDUSTRY.

/THE BILL

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THE BILL PROVIDES EXEMPTION FOR GOODS UNDER TRANSHIPMENT OR IN TRANSIT THROUGH HONG KONG AND GOODS MANUFACTURED FOR EXPORT.

THOSE GOODS APPEARING IN THE SCHEDULE WILL ALSO BE EXEMPTED EITHER BECAUSE THEY ARE GOVERNED BY SPECIFIC STATUTORY CONTROL SCHEMES OR BECAUSE SPECIFIC LEGISLATION GOVERNING THEIR SAFETY IS BEING PREPARED.

UPON ENACTMENT OF THE BILL, A GRACE PERIOD OF ONE YEAR WILL BE ALLOWED FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS BEFORE THE LEGISLATION COMES INTO OPERATION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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EARLY RETURN OF RECOVERED BOATS BEING ARRANGED

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THE POLICE ARE SEEKING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EARLY RETURN TO HONG KONG OF FIVE STOLEN PLEASURE BOATS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECOVERED BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SIMON IP SIK-ON, MR ASPREY SAID THE POLICE HAD RECEIVED NINE REPORTS OF PLEASURE BOATS, WITH A TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE OF \$24.7 MILLION, BEING STOLEN IN HONG KONG SO FAR THIS YEAR.

SIX BOATS, RESEMBLING THE STOLEN BOATS, WERE REPORTEDLY SEEN IN CHINESE WATERS.

MR ASPREY SAID THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN NOTIFIED OF THE THEFT AND THE REPORTED SIGHTINGS. THEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO INVESTIGATE THE SIGHTINGS AND TO HELP LOCATE THE STOLEN BOATS.

THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD CONFIRMED THAT THEY HAD RECOVERED FIVE BOATS.

HE SAID THE POLICE CRIME PREVENTION BUREAU HAD GIVEN ADVICE TO BOAT OWNERS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY OF LUXURY BOATS, SUCH AS THE USE OF IMMOBILISATION DEVICES AND LOCKS AND ALARMS WHEN THE BOATS WERE NOT IN USE.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1993

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BILL SEEKS TO PREVENT DOUBLE PAYMENTS IN INSOLVENCY CASES

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO EMPOWER THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND BOARD TO RECOVER FROM A RETIREMENT SCHEME ANY EX-GRATIA PAYMENT IN RESPECT OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT MADE TO AN EMPLOYEE WHO HAS RECEIVED DOUBLE PAYMENTS IN THE INSOLVENCY PROCESS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1993 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID AT PRESENT PART VA OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE PROVIDED THAT SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND RETIREMENT SCHEME PAYMENT COULD BE SET OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER.

"WHEN AN EMPLOYER BECOMES INSOLVENT, HIS EMPLOYEE WOULD NORMALLY APPLY TO THE FUND FOR SEVERANCE PAYMENT IF HE HAS NOT YET RECEIVED HIS RETIREMENT SCHEME PAYMENT," SAID MR LAM.

"HE MAY BE GRANTED EX-GRATIA PAYMENT OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT IF HE HAS SATISFIED THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE FUND.

"BECAUSE OF THE TIME LAPSE, THE EMPLOYEE MAY STILL RECEIVE HIS RETIREMENT SCHEME PAYMENT BY VIRTUE OF HIS EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT WITH THE INSOLVENT EMPLOYER AFTERWARDS."

CONSEQUENTLY, MR LAM POINTED OUT, THE EMPLOYEE MIGHT RECEIVE DOUBLE BENEFITS FROM BOTH THE FUND AND THE RETIREMENT SCHEME TO WHICH HE WAS A MEMBER.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO CONSOLIDATE CONTROL ON MOTOR VEHICLE FUEL

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO CONSOLIDATE CONTROL ON MOTOR VEHICLE FUEL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1993, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR LEO KWAN, SAID POLLUTION FROM DIESEL VEHICLE EMISSIONS WAS CAUSING SERIOUS AIR POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN THE URBAN AREAS.

"APPROXIMATELY 75 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL URBAN RESPIRABLE PARTICULATES AND NITROGEN OXIDES, AND 40 PER CENT OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO EMISSIONS FROM DIESEL-ENGINED VEHICLES.

"BETTER CONTROLS ON SUCH EMISSIONS ARE THEREFORE NEEDED AND ONE OF THE WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM DIESEL VEHICLES IS TO INTRODUCE BETTER QUALITY DIESEL FUEL," MR KWAN SAID.

/THE BILL

THE BILL WOULD ENABLE THE ADOPTION IN HONG KONG OF THE EUROPEAN STANDARD OF NO MORE THAN 0.2 PER CENT OF SULPHUR CONTENT FOR DIESEL FUEL.

"THIS WILL CLEAR THE WAY FOR A REQUIREMENT, IN APRIL 1995, THAT ALL NEW DIESEL ENGINES CONFORM TO HIGHER EMISSION STANDARDS," MR KWAN SAID.

HE SAID THE INTRODUCTION OF HIGHER QUALITY DIESEL WOULD REDUCE THE SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FROM DIESEL VEHICLES BY UP TO 40 PER CENT AND THE ADOPTION OF THE EUROPEAN STANDARD WOULD CUT OTHER POLLUTANTS SUCH AS PARTICULATES AND NITROGEN DIOXIDE.

"THIS MEASURE, TOGETHER WITH OTHER CONTROL MEASURES IN THE PIPELINE, SUCH AS HIGHER PENALTIES FOR SMOKY VEHICLES AND A MORE STRINGENT INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME, SHOULD RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN AIR QUALITY IN THE URBAN AREAS," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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HIGHER COMPENSATION FOR INJURED WORKERS

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, MOVED TWO MOTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO REVISE THE LEVELS OF COMPENSATION UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE RESPECTIVELY.

MR LAM SAID THESE LEVELS WERE REVISED EVERY TWO YEARS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF WAGE MOVEMENTS, INFLATION AND OTHER CHANGES.

"THE REVISED RATES WILL BE EFFECTIVE AS FROM JANUARY 1, 1994," HE ADDED.

UNDER THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE, THE MINIMUM LEVELS OF COMPENSATION FOR DEATH WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$183,000 TO \$219,000, AND FOR PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY FROM \$207,000 TO \$248,000.

THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION FOR CARE AND ATTENTION WILL BE REVISED FROM \$248,000 TO \$297,000, WHICH IS IN LINE WITH THE INCREASE IN NOMINAL WAGES IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

THE CEILING OF TWO OTHER ITEMS OF COMPENSATION WILL ALSO BE RAISED.

THESE INCLUDE INCREASING THE COMPENSATION FOR BURIAL EXPENSES FROM \$10,000 TO \$12,000; AND INCREASING THE PAYMENTS BY AN EMPLOYER TOWARDS THE COSTS OF SUPPLYING AND FITTING A PROSTHESIS OR A SURGICAL APPLIANCE FROM \$20,000 TO \$24,000, AND FOR ITS REPAIR AND RENEWAL FROM \$62,000 TO \$74,000 RESPECTIVELY.

THE MAXIMUM DAILY REIMBURSEMENT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES WILL BE RAISED FROM \$90 TO \$120.

FOR CALCULATING COMPENSATION, MR LAM SAID THE LEVEL OF THE DEEMED MINIMUM EARNINGS A MONTH WOULD BE RAISED FROM \$1,450 TO \$2,250.

SIMILAR REVISION WILL BE MADE TO THE RATES OF FUNERAL AND MEDICAL EXPENSES PAYABLE UNDER THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE.

THE NEW RATES HAVE BEEN ENDORSED BY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD.

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MFA AGREEMENT POSSIBLE BEFORE EXPIRY DATE

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THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT AN AGREEMENT TO RENEW OR EXTEND THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT (MFA) WOULD BE REACHED BEFORE IT EXPIRED AT THE END OF THIS YEAR.

IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD EXTEND BEYOND THAT DATE, HONG KONG'S POSITION WILL BE PROTECTED BY THE BILATERAL TEXTILES AGREEMENTS COVERING ITS MAIN MARKETS, ALL OF WHICH ARE VALID UNTIL AT LEAST THE END OF NEXT YEAR, HE SAID.

UNDER THE TEXTILES AND CLOTHING AGREEMENT BEING NEGOTIATED IN THE URUGUAY ROUND OF MULTILATERAL TRADE TALKS, RESTRICTIONS MAINTAINED UNDER THE MFA WILL BE PHASED OUT DURING A PROPOSED 10-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

MR CHAU EXPLAINED THAT DELAYS IN COMPLETING THE URUGUAY ROUND MEANT THAT, EVEN IF THE ROUND WAS COMPLETED BY THE DEADLINE OF DECEMBER 15 THIS YEAR, IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO IMPLEMENT THE RESULTS UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1995 AT THE EARLIEST.

"IT IS, THEREFORE, NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE MFA, IF ONLY TO BRIDGE THE ONE-YEAR GAP BETWEEN THE EXPIRY OF THE MFA AND THE START OF THE PROPOSED PHASE-OUT PERIOD UNDER A POSSIBLE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENT," MR CHAU SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON DAVID K P LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD FORESEEN THIS SITUATION FOR SOME TIME.

AND IT CONSULTED THE TEXTILES ADVISORY BOARD IN MAY THIS YEAR ON NEGOTIATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE MFA.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WORKING SINCE THEN WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER TEXTILES EXPORTING ECONOMIES IN GENEVA TO CO-ORDINATE A COMMON POSITION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IMPORTING COUNTRIES ON THE EXTENSION.

"UNFORTUNATELY, DESPITE THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY HONG KONG, MANY OF THE OTHER PARTIES CONCERNED HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO ENTER INTO SUCH NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THEY HAD A CLEARER IDEA OF THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE URUGUAY ROUND BY THE DEADLINE OF DECEMBER 15."

"SUCH NEGOTIATIONS HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN IN EARNEST AT LAST," HE SAID.

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WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION DUE NEXT YEAR
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PUBLISH A WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION NEXT YEAR, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), DR LEE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONSULTED THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (RDCC) ON WHICH AREAS IN THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION SHOULD BE ACCORDED PRIORITY.

"HAVING REGARD TO PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER, THE RDCC DREW UP A SET OF CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE RELATIVE PRIORITY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE DOCUMENT," HE SAID.

THESE CRITERIA INCLUDE THE EXTENT OF SHORTFALL IN SERVICE PROVISION AND THE DEGREE OF HARDSHIP IT HAS CAUSED TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

IN THE LIGHT OF RDCC'S ADVICE ON PRIORITISATION, DR LEE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD PROCEEDED WITH THE WORK ON THE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE WHICH HAD RECENTLY BEEN FINALISED.

IT COVERS SOCIAL REHABILITATION, MEDICAL REHABILITATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION, TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

FUNDS FOR THE VARIOUS ITEMS IN THE SCHEDULE HAVE BEEN SECURED THROUGH LAST YEAR'S CAPITAL INJECTION OF \$2.3 BILLION INTO THE LOTTERIES FUND AND THE ANNUAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION EXERCISE.

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SECURITY CHECKS POLICY EXPLAINED
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THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE SPECIAL BRANCH TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION FOR SECURITY CHECKS AND REPORTS ON SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS IS IN NO WAY CONNECTED WITH THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN HONG KONG.

IT NEITHER DENOTES ANY CONCERN WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE EFFICIENCY AND MORAL INTEGRITY OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE TRANSFER WAS TO REALLOCATE AN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION WHICH THE SPECIAL BRANCH WOULD FIND INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO PERFORM WITH A REDUCED NUMBER OF STAFF, MR ASPREY SAID.

IT ALSO REFLECTS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE CHECKS, THAT IS, IN VERIFYING THE INTEGRITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN POSTS REQUIRING A HIGH DEGREE OF TRUST, HE ADDED.

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ICAC CONDUCTS CHECKS ON CIVIL SERVANTS' INTEGRITY

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FOR A SMALL NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT POSTS REQUIRING A HIGH DEGREE OF TRUST, THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE RECORD CHECKS AND INTERVIEWS WILL IN FUTURE BE CONDUCTED BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (ICAC).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TANG YING-YEN, MR ASPREY SAID THE NATURE OF THE CHECKS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VETTING CONDUCTED BY THE ICAC AND THAT CURRENTLY CARRIED OUT BY THE SPECIAL BRANCH WAS ADMINISTRATIVE IN NATURE.

HE SAID: "THERE WILL, AS BEFORE, BE CHECKS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME, CORRUPTION, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH MIGHT CAST DOUBT UPON A CIVIL SERVANT'S INTEGRITY."

THE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE THE VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE CIVIL SERVANT BY MEANS OF INTERVIEWS WITH HIMSELF AND WITH REFEREES, MR ASPREY ADDED.

ON THE POSTS THAT WILL BE SUBJECT TO VETTING, THE SECRETARY SAID: "SUCH CHECKS WILL BE REQUIRED OF THOSE OCCUPYING A LIMITED NUMBER OF POSTS OF PARTICULAR SENSITIVITY OR TRUST, AT DEPUTY SECRETARY/DEPUTY DIRECTOR LEVEL AND ABOVE."

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NO DECISION YET ON PA ADVISER'S CONTRACT

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THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER THE CONTRACT OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISER SHOULD BE RENEWED, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU, MR SUEN ADDED THAT IF THE CONTRACT WAS TO BE RENEWED, ANY CHARGE TO PUBLIC FUNDS WOULD BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ESTABLISHED AUTHORITIES AND LIMITS FOR THE INCURRENCE OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.

THE CONTRACT FOR THE SERVICE OF THE ADVISER WILL EXPIRE ON AUGUST 31 NEXT YEAR.

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SHA EXPLAINS ADVISORY BOARD SYSTEM

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THE SYSTEM OF ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES IN ITS CURRENT FORM ENABLES THE ADMINISTRATION TO OBTAIN CANDID ADVICE FROM A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANNA WU HUNG-YUK, MR SUEN SAID THESE BODIES COMPRISED PEOPLE WITH A VAST RESERVOIR OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE WHO GAVE FREELY OF THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AWAY FROM THE LIMELIGHT.

THERE ARE, HE SAID, AROUND 350 FULL GOVERNMENT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES THAT ARE EITHER WHOLLY OR PARTLY ADVISORY IN NATURE.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES, THEY RENDER ADVICE AND ACT AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION AT THE INITIAL STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION-TAKING.

SEVERAL FURTHER STAGES ARE NORMALLY GONE THROUGH AFTER CONSIDERATION BY THE RELEVANT ADVISORY BOARD OR COMMITTEE AND BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN ON THE MATTER CONCERNED.

"IT IS GENERALLY DURING THESE FURTHER STAGES THAT MORE OPEN DISCUSSION TAKES PLACE.

"ULTIMATELY, ANY MATTER THAT REQUIRES THE SANCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE PROCEDURES OF THE COUNCIL, WHICH ARE TOTALLY OPEN," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, MR SUEN NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES REGULARLY CONSIDER CONFIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL SENSITIVE INFORMATION.

ON THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT OF ACCESS TO THESE BODIES, MR SUEN SAID MEETINGS AND PAPERS OF THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, FOR EXAMPLES, ARE ALL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, WHILE MEETINGS OF AREA COMMITTEES ARE OFTEN OPEN AND THEIR PAPERS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ON REQUEST.

FURTHERMORE, CHAIRMEN OF A LARGE NUMBER OF THESE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES GIVE PRESS BRIEFINGS EITHER ON A REGULAR OR OCCASIONAL BASIS ON THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE BOARD OR COMMITTEE CONCERNED.

FOR INSTANCE, THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHOSE CHAIRMAN ROUTINELY BRIEFS THE PRESS ON THE COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSIONS.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM SERVES HONG KONG VERY WELL AND THE GOVERNMENT SEES NO REASON TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO, MR SUEN AFFIRMED.

1995-98 TRIENNIUM, A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION
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THE INTAKE OF FIRST-YEAR-FIRST-DEGREE PLACES IN THE 1995-98 TRIENNIUM IS LIKELY TO REMAIN STABLE, WHILE MARGINAL INCREASES MAY BE MADE TO THE NUMBER OF POSTGRADUATES.

THIS IS BECAUSE FOLLOWING THE MASSIVE EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION BETWEEN 1991 AND 1995, THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE (UPGC) ENVISAGES THAT THE 1995-98 TRIENNIUM SHOULD BE A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID IN RECOMMENDING THE OVERALL INDICATIVE STUDENT NUMBER TARGETS, THE UPGC HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- * THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TARGET OF PROVIDING FIRST-YEAR FIRST-DEGREE PLACES FOR AT LEAST 18 PER CENT OF THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP;
- * NATURAL GROWTH IN STUDENT NUMBERS AS A RESULT OF THE EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 1992-95 TRIENNIUM;
- * THE PROJECTED MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS FOR HONG KONG IN THE NEXT DECADE;
- * THE NEED TO UPGRADE THE QUALITY OF MANPOWER IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS; AND
- * FACTORS AFFECTING INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THEIR ROLES AND MISSIONS, ACADEMIC PROFILES, AND THE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONS.

THE UPGC'S RECOMMENDED INDICATIVE STUDENT NUMBER TARGETS FOR THE TRIENNIUM HAVE SINCE BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR BROAD PLANNING PURPOSES.

"THEY HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE UPGC-FUNDED INSTITUTIONS TO ENABLE THEM TO FORMULATE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE 1995-98 TRIENNIUM," SAID MR LAM.

"THE UPGC IS CURRENTLY IN DISCUSSION WITH THE INSTITUTIONS ABOUT THEIR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS."

AS REGARDS THE CORRESPONDING MEASURES ADOPTED IN RESPECT OF BASIC AND SIXTH FORM EDUCATION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED THE POLICY TARGET OF PROVIDING SIXTH FORM PLACES FOR ONE-THIRD OF THE SECONDARY 4 COHORT.

"WE HAVE ALSO MADE SURE THAT THESE PLACES ARE FILLED IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER," MR LAM ADDED.

SUBVENTED AGENCIES URGED TO BE MORE INDEPENDENT
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO REQUIRE SUBVENTED AGENCIES TO MEET PART OF THEIR EXPENDITURE FROM FEES.

HOWEVER, THE ABILITY TO REQUIRE OR ENCOURAGE THEM TO GENERATE MORE INCOME FROM THIS SOURCE DEPENDS ON THE NATURE OF THE SERVICE INVOLVED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ROGER LUK KOON-HOO, MR TSANG SAID THERE WERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGENCIES TO RAISE MORE REVENUE THEMSELVES AND TO REDUCE THEIR DEPENDENCE ON GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION.

"THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES EXIST IN AREAS WHERE AGENCIES ARE PROVIDING SERVICES OF A QUASI-COMMERCIAL NATURE," MR TSANG SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL RECEIVES ABOUT HALF OF ITS INCOME FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION, HE ADDED.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTED AGENCIES IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES FIELD TO RAISE A CERTAIN LEVEL OF INCOME FROM FEES, WITH GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION MEETING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FEE INCOME AND THE RECOGNISED COST OF THE SERVICE.

"IF AN AGENCY MANAGES TO RAISE MORE THAN THE ASSUMED LEVEL OF INCOME, IT CAN KEEP THE EXCESS WITHOUT SUFFERING ANY REDUCTION IN ITS SUBVENTION," HE SAID.

WHEN THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS ESTABLISHED, THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES IT TO MAXIMISE ITS OWN INCOME.

WHILST THE INCOME FROM FEES PAYABLE BEFORE THE SETTING-UP OF THE AUTHORITY WAS DEDUCTED FROM ITS ANNUAL GRANT, MR TSANG NOTED THAT REVENUE FROM NEW FEES OR OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME WOULD NOT BE TREATED IN THE SAME WAY.

THE SECRETARY TOLD THE LEGISLATORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT ALSO URGED THE AGENCIES TO RAISE AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE FROM PRIVATE DONATIONS.

"THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR WHICH AGENCIES ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION," MR TSANG SAID.

EXCO'S ADVICE ON SAHR TO BE SOUGHT

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY SUBMIT A SUMMARY OF THE VIEWS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE SCIENTIFICALLY ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION (SAHR) CONSULTATION PAPER TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR ADVICE ON POLICY PROPOSALS.

IF THE PROPOSALS WERE ACCEPTED, A START COULD BE MADE TO INTRODUCE THEM IN 1994/95, SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND THE PASSAGE OF ANY NECESSARY LEGISLATION.

UNTIL THEN, SAHR REMAINS A MEDICAL PROCEDURE AND MAY ONLY BE PROVIDED BY A REGISTERED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE NOTED THAT A REGISTERED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER WAS SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE MEDICAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE AND MUST OPERATE WITHIN THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY THE MEDICAL COUNCIL OF HONG KONG.

"IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH DOCTOR TO EXPLAIN TO THE PATIENT IN HIS CARE ABOUT THE TREATMENT PROPOSED, ITS COST, EFFICACY AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES. IT IS THEN FOR THE PATIENT TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED.

"SHOULD ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WISH TO MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER FOR THE SAHR TREATMENT RECEIVED, HE OR SHE HAS RECOURSE TO COMPLAIN TO THE MEDICAL COUNCIL," DR LEE SAID.

ON THE CONSULTATION PAPER ON SAHR PUBLISHED IN MARCH THIS YEAR, DR LEE SAID 30 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED, MAINLY FROM MEDICAL, SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND ACADEMIC ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS. THERE WAS LITTLE INDICATION OF INTEREST FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

WHILE A FEW RESPONDENTS FAVOURED TOTAL PROHIBITION OF SAHR, THE GENERAL TENOR OF RESPONSES WAS THAT SAHR SHOULD BE ALLOWED BUT BE SUBJECT TO REGULATION.

"THE DIVERSITY OF VIEWS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SAHR IS A SUBJECT WITH SERIOUS SOCIAL, ETHICAL, MORAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, WHERE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT MUST FULLY REFLECT AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY OPINION," DR LEE SAID.

JOB-RELATED ALLOWANCES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS
 UNDER REGULAR REVIEWS
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THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH UNDERTAKES REGULAR REVIEWS OF JOB-RELATED AND SERVICE-WIDE ALLOWANCES TO CONFIRM THAT THEY ARE STILL JUSTIFIED.

WHERE THERE ARE CHANGES IN OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH RENDER THE ORIGINAL JUSTIFICATIONS INVALID, THE ALLOWANCE WILL CEASE TO BE PAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, EXTRANEOUS DUTY ALLOWANCE (SUPPLEMENTARY DUTIES) FOR TYPISTS OPERATING WORD PROCESSORS WAS WITHDRAWN LAST YEAR.

"THIS WAS BECAUSE, OVER THE YEARS, WORD PROCESSORS HAD BECOME STANDARD OFFICE EQUIPMENT FACILITATING TYPING DUTIES RATHER THAN REQUIRING SPECIAL SKILLS TO OPERATE," THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HARBINSON EXPLAINED THAT JOB-RELATED ALLOWANCES WERE USED TO COMPENSATE STAFF FOR ASPECTS OF WORK NOT NORMALLY EXPECTED OF THEIR RANK AND NOT REFLECTED IN THEIR PAY SCALE.

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE ELIGIBILITY FOR JOB-RELATED ALLOWANCES WERE ENDORSED BY THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, HE ADDED.

THE NATURE OF JOB-RELATED ALLOWANCES AND THEIR EXISTING RATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

NATURE -----	RATES -----
* <u>EXTRANEOUS DUTIES ALLOWANCE (EDA)</u>	
- EDA (SUPPLEMENTARY DUTIES)	\$369 (LEVEL 1) PER MONTH \$492 (LEVEL 2) PER MONTH
- EDA (RESPONSIBILITY)	FROM \$33 PER SHIFT TO THREE INCREMENTS ABOVE THE SUBSTANTIVE SALARY
* <u>HARDSHIP ALLOWANCE (HA)</u>	
- OBNOXIOUS DUTIES ALLOWANCE	\$445 PER MONTH
- DANGEROUS DUTIES ALLOWANCE	\$544 PER MONTH
- HA (MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS)	\$6.5 PER DAY TO \$544 PER MONTH

/* SHIFT DUTY

* SHIFT DUTY ALLOWANCE (SDA)

- FOR A MINIMUM OF 25 IRREGULAR HOURS WORKED PER MONTH \$298 PER MONTH
- FOR 50 OR MORE IRREGULAR HOURS WORKED PER MONTH \$591 PER MONTH

* SPECIAL ALLOWANCE

FROM \$59 PER DAY TO TWO INCREMENTS ABOVE THE SUBSTANTIVE SALARY

HOME-TO-OFFICE MILEAGE ALLOWANCE IS ALSO PAYABLE TO OFFICERS WHO ARE AUTHORISED TO USE THEIR OWN CARS FOR REGULAR OFFICIAL DUTIES OUTSIDE THEIR OFFICE AND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. THE PROVISION OBVIATES THE NEED TO USE GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT FOR SUCH JOURNEYS.

MR HARBINSON NOTED THAT JOB-RELATED ALLOWANCES WERE ADMINISTERED BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND, WITHIN THE EXISTING PAYMENT CRITERIA, THEY COULD APPROVE NEW CASES OF EDA (SUPPLEMENTARY DUTIES), HA (DANGEROUS DUTIES), HA (OBNOXIOUS DUTIES) AND SDA.

"THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE WILL, UPON ADVICE FROM THE STANDING COMMISSION, WHERE APPROPRIATE, AND IN CONSULTATION WITH THE FINANCE BRANCH, APPROVE NEW CASES OF HA (MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS), EDA (RESPONSIBILITY) AND ANY OTHER SPECIAL ALLOWANCES," HE SAID, ADDING THAT STAFF WERE USUALLY CONSULTED ON ANY CHANGES TO EXISTING ALLOWANCES WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTED THEM.

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ADEQUATE FITTINGS PROVIDE IN HOS FLATS

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IT IS THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S POLICY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FITTINGS WHICH ARE OF A STANDARD THAT WILL RENDER A HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLAT IMMEDIATELY HABITABLE UPON OCCUPATION, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR LEO KWAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR KWAN SAID THE STANDARD OF FITTINGS OF THESE FLATS WERE ALSO UPDATED AND REVISED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHANGING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

IN JULY 1993, THE AUTHORITY APPROVED CHANGES TO STANDARD FITTINGS FOR KITCHENS, BATHROOMS AND THE COMMON AREAS OF HARMONY BLOCKS.

MR KWAN NOTED THAT RESULT OF A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT ON ITS TENANTS AND HOS FLAT OWNERS SHOWED THAT BETWEEN 20 TO 50 PER CENT OF HOS FLAT OWNERS WOULD LIKE TO MAKE VARYING DEGREES OF ALTERNATIONS TO THE STANDARD FITTINGS IN KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS.

THE MAIN REASONS GIVEN WERE A DESIRE TO PERSONALISE THE DECORATION OF ONE'S OWN FLAT, TO UPGRADE THE STANDARD OF THE FITTINGS AND FIXTURES, AND TO FIX OUT A FLAT MORE ATTUNED TO THE NEEDS OF ONE'S FAMILY.

"ON THE BASIS OF SUCH FEEDBACK, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING THE FEASIBILITY OF MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FITTING-OUT STANDARDS OF BATHROOMS, KITCHENS AND THE COMMON AREA OF BUILDINGS," HE SAID.

THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS PLANNED TO CONDUCT A FULL-SCALE SURVEY ON INTERNAL FITTINGS FOR HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLATS IN EARLY 1994 TO OBTAIN A MORE ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF HOS FLAT OWNERS' PREFERENCES BEFORE PUTTING FURTHER IMPROVEMENT MEASURES TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR CONSIDERATION, MR KWAN SAID, ADDING THAT THE SURVEY RESULTS AND ANY IMPROVEMENTS APPROVED WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC.

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CHAIRS AND DESKS IN SCHOOLS SUITABLY DESIGNED

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE NEED TO HAVE SUITABLY DESIGNED CHAIRS AND DESKS FOR USE BY SCHOOL CHILDREN, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR W K LAM, SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIMOTHY HA WING-HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR LAM NOTED THAT CHAIRS AND DESKS USED IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS FOLLOWED A STANDARD DESIGN FOR FOUR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS.

IT IS BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A MULTI-DISCIPLINE WORKING GROUP MADE UP OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS, INCLUDING A SPECIALIST IN ERGONOMICS; SCHOOL HEADS; AND STAFF OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS ALSO CONSULTED ON THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR LAM ALSO TOLD MEMBERS THAT CHAIRS AND DESKS USED IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS WERE BOUGHT THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT.

AIDED SCHOOLS BUY THEIR OWN FURNITURE THROUGH THEIR OWN TENDERING PROCEDURE WHICH IS SUBJECT TO VETTING BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

THE EXPENSES INCURRED ARE THEN REIMBURSED BY THE DEPARTMENT, MR LAM ADDED.

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CAUSES OF KWUN TONG TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS EXPLAINED

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INVESTIGATIONS INDICATE THAT THE MAIN CAUSES OF THE ACCIDENTS ON THE KWUN TONG BYPASS WERE EXCESSIVE SPEED, DRIVERS FOLLOWING TOO CLOSELY TO THE VEHICLE IN FRONT AND CARELESS LANE CHANGING.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FRED LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE DESIGN OF THE ROAD WAS A FACTOR, MR BARMA SAID, ADDING THAT THE ACCIDENT RATE ON THIS ROAD WAS LOWER THAN THE AVERAGE FOR OTHER EXPRESSWAYS.

BETWEEN JUNE 1991 AND OCTOBER THIS YEAR, 211 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS OCCURRED ON THE EXPRESSWAY, RESULTING IN 389 CASUALTIES WHICH INCLUDED THREE FATALITIES.

THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR BLACKSPOT AS THE MAJORITY OF ACCIDENTS DID NOT OCCUR AT OR NEAR THE SAME LOCATIONS BUT TOOK PLACE ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE ROAD.

"TO HELP REDUCE THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS, THE POLICE HAVE MOUNTED REGULAR PATROLS AND THESE HAVE RESULTED IN THE DETECTION OF 2,300 OFFENCES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1992.

"IN ADDITION, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING THE ERECTION OF MORE WARNING SIGNS TO GIVE ADVANCE NOTICE OF BENDS IN THE ROAD AND LOCATIONS WHERE TRAFFIC MERGES," MR BARMA SAID.

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14 STRUCTURES CLOSED/VACATED FOLLOWING HEAVY RAIN

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FORTY STRUCTURES REPORTED TO BE IN DANGER AFTER THE HEAVY RAIN LAST MONTH WERE INSPECTED BY THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT AND 14 OF THEM WERE SUBSEQUENTLY CLOSED OR VACATED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR LEO KWAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIM PUI-CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR KWAN SAID THE DEPARTMENT WAS TAKING FOLLOW-UP ACTION TO ENSURE THAT STRUCTURES ON PRIVATE LAND WERE SAFE WHILE THE LANDS DEPARTMENT WOULD ARRANGE EVACUATION AND DEMOLITION AS REQUIRED FOR STRUCTURES ON GOVERNMENT LAND.

TEMPORARY SHELTER WAS ARRANGED BY THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WHEN STRUCTURES WERE CLOSED.

/"OWNERS WHO

"OWNERS WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THEIR BUILDINGS AFTER FLOODING OR HEAVY RAIN SHOULD NORMALLY SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.

"WHERE THERE IS MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERN, A REPORT SHOULD BE MADE TO THE DANGEROUS BUILDINGS SECTION OF THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT," MR KWAN SAID.

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TREATMENT OF PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS AT PUBLIC HOSPITALS

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ALL PATIENTS, INCLUDING PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS, ATTENDING THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS ARE TREATED BY MEDICAL STAFF TRAINED TO HANDLE A FULL RANGE OF EMERGENCIES.

SUBJECT TO TRIAGE, URGENT CASES WILL RECEIVE IMMEDIATE TREATMENT WHILE THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME FOR OTHER CASES IS LESS THAN 30 MINUTES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S H LEE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MICHAEL HO MUN-KA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID PATIENTS WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR ADMISSION TO PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS FROM ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT.

FOR THOSE ADMITTED UNDER THE MENTAL HEALTH ORDINANCE, THE ACTUAL WAITING TIME WOULD VARY BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO COMPLY WITH RELEVANT PROVISIONS FOR AUTHORISATION BY A MEDICAL DOCTOR AND A JUDGE.

PATIENTS IN GENERAL HOSPITALS WHO SUFFER SEVERE SYMPTOMS ARE REFERRED UNDER THE ORDINANCE FOR TREATMENT IN PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS.

DR LEE ADDED THAT WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF NETWORKING, ADVICE AND CONSULTATION SERVICES ON PSYCHIATRIC CASES WERE SHARED BETWEEN PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME OF CONSULTATIONS FOR NON-URGENT CASES WAS WITHIN THREE DAYS.

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OVERSEAS STUDENTS MAY APPLY FOR ENTRY VISAS
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TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ARE PERMITTED TO ENROL NON-LOCAL STUDENTS AT SUB-DEGREE, FIRST DEGREE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE LEVELS UP TO A MAXIMUM OF TWO PER CENT OVER AND ABOVE THE APPROVED STUDENT NUMBER TARGETS.

THE POLICY WAS EXPLAINED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR ASPREY SAID STUDENTS FROM TAIWAN AND ELSEWHERE ADMITTED BY THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE POLICY MAY APPLY FOR VISAS TO STUDY IN HONG KONG.

A NUMBER HAVE BEEN ADMITTED IN THE PAST, HE ADDED.

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AIRPORT TAXI SERVICES IMPROVED
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AN OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN TAXI SERVICES AT THE AIRPORT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED FOLLOWING THE RELOCATION OF THE AIRPORT BUS TERMINUS AND EXTENSION OF THE AREA FOR THE TWO AIRPORT TAXI STANDS IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

RESULTS OF THE LATEST SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SHOWED THAT THE AVERAGE HOURLY TAXI THROUGHPUT DURING PEAK PERIODS HAD INCREASED FROM 410 TO 450, REPRESENTING A 10 PER CENT IMPROVEMENT.

THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME FOR A TAXI HAD REDUCED BY 22 PER CENT, FROM 6.7 MINUTES BEFORE THE EXTENSION WAS PUT IN PLACE TO 5.2 MINUTES NOW, HE ADDED.

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TICKET VENDING MACHINES CAN ACCEPT NEW COINS

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AMONG THE 361 TICKET VENDING MACHINES ON THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) SYSTEM, 215 WERE MODIFIED BY MARCH THIS YEAR TO ACCEPT NEW COINS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOR THE REMAINING 146 MACHINES, MR BARMA SAID THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) HAD NOW MANAGED TO DEVELOP A MODIFIED MECHANISM TO ACCEPT NEW COINS.

THIS WAS BEING FIELD-TESTED AND SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY RESULTS, ALL THE MACHINES WOULD BE ADJUSTED BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH.

"MEANWHILE, TO MINIMISE THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED TO PASSENGERS, THE CORPORATION HAS HAD SOME SUCCESS IN PERSUADING MORE COMMUTERS TO TRAVEL ON MULTI-RIDE PASSES.

"ACCORDING TO KCRC, THE NUMBER OF LRT PASSENGERS USING MULTI-RIDE PASSES HAS INCREASED FROM 49 PER CENT IN APRIL 1993 TO 57 PER CENT IN NOVEMBER 1993," MR BARMA SAID.

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31 VENUES AVAILABLE FOR PLAYING GATEBALL

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THERE ARE 31 VENUES AVAILABLE FOR PLAYING GATEBALL IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE INCLUDE ONE DESIGNATED GATEBALL COURT EACH IN SHA TIN, YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN; AND 15 GRASS PITCHES WITHIN SPORTS GROUNDS IN THE URBAN COUNCIL AREA AND 13 IN THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR SO POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER 19 PURPOSE-BUILT GATEBALL COURTS WERE EITHER UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR PLANNING BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS.

THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS ALSO CONSIDERING CONVERTING A SITE IN THE KWONG FUK ESTATE IN TAI PO INTO ITS FIRST GATEBALL COURT.

MORE GATEBALL COURTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS IF OTHER SUITABLE SITES CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITHIN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, MR SO ADDED.

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LEGCO PASSES MOTION ON CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT ON CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES.

ELEVEN MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE DEBATE THAT LASTED ONE-AND-A-HALF HOURS. THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR LEE SHIU-HUNG, SPOKE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

COUNCILLORS ALSO PASSED A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM ON THE GREEN PAPER ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN.

A TOTAL OF 21 MEMBERS DEBATED THE MOTION WITH THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, REPLYING TO THE POINTS RAISED.

TWO OTHER MOTIONS PROPOSED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, UNDER EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE AND PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE WERE ALSO PASSED.

IN ADDITION, BILLS OF LADING AND ANALOGOUS SHIPPING DOCUMENTS BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENT. QUARANTINE AND PREVENTION OF DISEASE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 AND CENSUS AND STATISTICS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 WERE PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENTS.

ALSO PASSED WAS A PRIVATE BILL - BISHOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993 - WHICH WAS MOVED BY THE HON RONALD ARCULLI.