



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1987

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CS CONFIDENT MAJORITY WILL ACCEPT REPORT

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE MAJORITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL ACCEPT THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT FOR WHAT IT IS: "AN IMPARTIAL RECORD OF THE VIEWS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED -- NO MORE, NO LESS."

IN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE REPORT, WHICH COLLATED THE PUBLIC'S VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MR FORD MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- * THE GOVERNMENT HAD APPROACHED THE SURVEY ON THE GREEN PAPER WITH A COMPLETELY OPEN MIND;
- * THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT MANIPULATED PUBLIC OPINION;
- * IT WAS NOT FOR THE SURVEY OFFICE TO ASSESS THE VIEWS EXPRESSED OR DRAW CONCLUSIONS FROM THEM;
- * ALL SUBMISSIONS HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE REPORT, ALL HAD BEEN FAITHFULLY REPORTED.

MR FORD SAID THAT IN THE DEBATE MANY MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR FIRM CONVICTION IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE GREEN PAPER SURVEY AND OF THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT.

HOWEVER, IT APPEARED SOME PEOPLE MISUNDERSTOOD THE ROLE OF THE SURVEY OFFICE. "IT IS A MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH SEEMS TO BE SHARED BY MANY COMMENTATORS ON THE REPORT AND JUDGING BY SOME OF THE COMMENTS MADE THIS AFTERNOON, EVEN BY A FEW MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL," HE SAID.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SURVEY OFFICE WERE VERY CLEAR, WHICH WERE TO INVITE, RECEIVE AND RECORD ALL VIEWS EXPRESSED IN WRITING, AND TO SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL AN IMPARTIAL AND ACCURATE REPORT COLLATING AND PRESENTING ALL SUCH VIEWS.

IN THEIR 12-PAGE REPORT -- WHICH HE SAID HAD, OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL, RECEIVED SCANT ATTENTION OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS -- THE TWO INDEPENDENT MONITORS HAD CONCLUDED THAT "THE SURVEY OFFICE HAS PROPERLY, ACCURATELY AND IMPARTIALLY CARRIED OUT ITS DUTIES AND FOLLOWED THE PROCEDURES PRESCRIBED IN ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE."

MR FORD SAID IT WAS NOW FOR MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THE VIEWS WHICH WERE INCLUDED IN THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT AND THE COMMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE ON THE REPORT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER AND TO TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DECIDING WHAT ADVICE TO GIVE ON WHAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE TO THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN 1988.

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"WHEN THE WHITE PAPER IS PUBLISHED NEXT YEAR, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WILL BE ABLE TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER THEIR VIEWS AND THEIR NEEDS HAVE INDEED BEEN FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT," HE ADDED.

MR FORD SAID THAT THOSE WHO HAD CRITICISED THE REPORT ON THE BASIS OF ITS PRESENTATION WERE SOMEWHAT MISSING THE POINT.

"WHETHER ONE TYPE OF SUBMISSION IS CATEGORISED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WHETHER SIGNATURE CAMPAIGNS ARE TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM PRINTED FORMS, WHETHER PRINTED FORMS SHOULD HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE TABLES OF STATISTICS ARE NOT MATTERS OF SUCH MONUMENTAL IMPORTANCE AS SOME MEMBERS HAVE SUGGESTED," HE SAID.

"WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT ALL SUBMISSIONS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED, ALL HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY REPORTED AND ARE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE."

HE NOTED THAT THE MONITORS HAD BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE CLASSIFICATION OF SUBMISSIONS DECIDED ON BY THE SURVEY OFFICE.

MR FORD REFUTED ACCUSATIONS MADE OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DELIBERATELY MANIPULATED PUBLIC OPINION TO MEET ITS OWN ENDS AND HAD DECEIVED THE PEOPLE.

"I AM SURE THAT NO ONE WOULD EXPECT ME, AS THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF SPOKESMAN IN THIS COUNCIL, TO PRODUCE LAME EXCUSES OR TO TRY TO DUCK THE ISSUE," HE SAID.

"OUR CRITICS HAVE SOUGHT TO CREDIT US WITH A DEVIOSNESS WHICH IS ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF. IT IS CERTAINLY BEYOND OUR CAPABILITY."

MR FORD SAID THE WORD "CREDIBILITY" HAD BEEN MUCH USED RECENTLY AND SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY WHICH WAS NOW IN QUESTION BUT THE CREDIBILITY OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO CONCOCT THE CONSPIRACY THEORY.

"FOR WHAT THEY ARE SUGGESTING IS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT HAS DELIBERATELY WRITTEN A GREEN PAPER IN A CONFUSING WAY TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC OF HONG KONG. IT HAS THEN SET UP A SURVEY OFFICE WITH THE DELIBERATE INTENTION OF DISTORTING THE STATISTICS IT PRODUCED TO SUIT THE SO-CALLED WISHES OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

"DO PEOPLE WHO MAKE SUCH ACCUSATIONS REALLY BELIEVE THAT THERE HAS BEEN SUCH A CONSPIRACY?"

"DO THEY REALLY BELIEVE THAT THE MONITORS, WHO HAD BEEN CLOSELY INVOLVED AT EVERY STAGE OF THE SURVEY, WOULD BE A PARTY TO A PLOT TO DELIBERATELY DECEIVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG?"

MR FORD SAID THE TRUTH WAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD APPROACHED THE SURVEY ON THE GREEN PAPER WITH A COMPLETELY OPEN MIND.

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"WE HAVE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT WE HAD NO PRECONCEIVED IDEAS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE AND THAT WE WOULD NOT LEAD PUBLIC OPINION," HE SAID.

"INDEED, AT THE TIME OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER, WE WERE OFTEN CRITICISED FOR BEING TOO NEUTRAL.

"WE HAVE SOUGHT THE WIDEST POSSIBLE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES IT CONTAINS.

"THAT RESPONSE HAS BEEN OF A SCALE UNPRECEDENTED IN HONG KONG'S HISTORY."

THE RESPONSE HAD BEEN METICULOUSLY RECORDED BY AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY OFFICE, UNDER THE CLOSE SCRUTINY OF INDEPENDENT MONITORS OF THE HIGHEST CALIBRE AND INTEGRITY.

THE PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS COMMISSIONED BY THE SURVEY OFFICE, OVER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD HAD NO INFLUENCE WHATSOEVER, HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IMPARTIALLY BY PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR OWN FIELD.

"APART FROM LAYING DOWN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SURVEY OFFICE BEFORE THE WHOLE EXERCISE STARTED, THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN NO WAY SOUGHT TO INFLUENCE THE WAY IN WHICH THE SURVEY OFFICE CARRIED OUT ITS TASK," HE STRESSED.

"AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE CONSPIRACY THEORY CAN BE SEEN FOR WHAT IT IS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THOSE WHO PURSUE IT DO SO BECAUSE THE CONCLUSIONS THEY HAVE CHOSEN TO DRAW FROM THE FACTS PRESENTED IN THE REPORT ARE NOT TO THEIR LIKING.

"IT FURTHER APPEARS THAT THE ONLY REPORT WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THOSE CRITICS OUTSIDE THIS COUNCIL IS ONE WHICH IS TOTALLY IN ACCORD WITH THEIR OWN VIEWS."

TURNING TO THE COMMENTS THAT HAD BEEN MADE CONCERNING THE AGB MCNAIR SURVEYS, WHICH HE SAID HAD TAKEN UP MUCH OF MEMBERS' TIME IN THE DEBATE, MR FORD SAID THAT IN ANY SURVEY OF THIS NATURE THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE DIFFERENT JUDGEMENTS AS TO HOW PRECISELY ANY PARTICULAR QUESTION SHOULD BE PUT.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS PART OF MY TASK TO DEFEND THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT OF THE COMPANY OR THE APPROACH IT HAS ADOPTED," HE SAID.

"LISTENING TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES THIS AFTERNOON, IT IS CLEAR THAT WHILST THERE IS STRONG CRITICISM FROM SOME MEMBERS, OTHERS HAVE BEEN SATISFIED BY THE CAREFUL EXPLANATIONS WHICH THE COMPANY HAS PROVIDED.

"I SHOULD ASSURE MEMBERS THAT BOTH VIEWS WILL OF COURSE BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WHEN CONSIDERING THE REPORT."

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LEGCO VIEWS WILL BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT

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THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, SAID THAT COUNCILLORS WHO ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WILL FULLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE DEBATE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ON THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT.

MISS DUNN SAID THOSE WHO WERE MEMBERS OF BOTH COUNCILS HAD DECIDED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THEM TO SPEAK ON THE MOTION. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE DECISIONS ON WHAT SHOULD GO INTO THE WHITE PAPER IN THE LIGHT OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE GREEN PAPER OPTIONS HAD YET TO BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

HOWEVER, SHE EMPHASISED THAT THEY WOULD LISTEN KEENLY AND ATTENTIVELY, AND WOULD FULLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED, WHEN THEY TENDERED THEIR ADVICE IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

MISS DUNN WAS MOVING A MOTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE "COUNCIL TAKES NOTE OF THE REPORT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE AND THE REPORT OF THE MONITORS: PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER: THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT".

SHE SAID THAT THE DEBATE WOULD GIVE MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON THE VERY IMPRESSIVE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER AND TO DEVELOP FURTHER THEIR OWN VIEWS. THIRTY-ONE MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE DEBATE.

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DISCRETION URGED IN ASSESSING PUBLIC VIEWS

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THE GOVERNOR AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, IN ASSESSING THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, MUST EXERCISE DISCRETION IN ASSIGNING VARYING WEIGHTS AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FINDINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXPRESSION SENT TO OR COLLECTED BY THE SURVEY OFFICE, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DR HO WAS LEADING OFF DEBATE ON THE MOTION PUT BY THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, THAT THE "COUNCIL TAKES NOTE OF THE REPORT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE AND THE REPORT OF THE MONITORS: PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER: THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT."

HE POINTED OUT THAT DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXPRESSION CARRY DIFFERENT DEGREES OF SELF-INITIATIVE, SUBJECTIVITY AND STRENGTH OF CONVICTION OF RESPONDENTS.

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"IN OTHER WORDS, THE AMOUNT OF PASSIVITY, COLLUSION OR MANIPULATION TENDS TO BE MINIMUM IN INDIVIDUAL SPEECHES AND INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS, BUT MORE PREVALENT IN SIGNATURE CAMPAIGNS AND PRE-PRINTED IDENTICAL LETTERS, WITH WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS BY SMALL GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS IN BETWEEN," DR HO SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, THE INFERENCES DRAWN FROM A SURVEY INVOLVING A PROBABILITY SAMPLING CAN BE GENERALISED WITH MUCH MORE VALIDITY AND AUTHORITY THAN THOSE FROM A SURVEY INVOLVING A NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING.

"IN THE SAME VEIN, THE CONCLUSIONS DERIVED FROM A SURVEY SAMPLED ON A GENERAL POPULATION WILL BE SUBJECT TO MUCH LESS LIMITATIONS THAN THOSE OF A SURVEY SAMPLED ON A SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUP," HE CONTINUED.

DR HO COMMENDED THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT TO THE PUBLIC BECAUSE HE FELT THAT THE OFFICE HAD ADHERED CONSCIENTIOUSLY TO ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE BOTH IN GATHERING PUBLIC OPINION AND VIEWS SUBMITTED TO IT OR THOSE EXPRESSED IN THE MEDIA, AND IN CLASSIFYING, TABULATING, SUMMARISING AND PRESENTING THE VIEWS FACTUALLY IN A SYSTEMATIC AND COMPREHENSIBLE MANNER.

ALSO, THE OFFICE REFRAINED FROM INTERPRETING AND INFERRING FROM THE DATA COLLECTED. IT RESPECTED THE INDEPENDENT AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF AGB MCNAIR HK LTD, A RESEARCH FIRM WITH AN INTERNATIONAL STANDING IN PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS, AND LEFT THE FIRM TO CARRY OUT ITS JOB WITHOUT INTERFERENCE.

THE TWO INDEPENDENT MONITORS, WHO CLOSELY SUPERVISED THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE SURVEY OFFICE, WERE ALSO FULLY SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE COMMISSIONER HAD CONDUCTED THE PUBLIC OPINION COLLECTION EXERCISE, DR HO OBSERVED.

NOTING THAT POLITICAL REFORMS HAD FAR-REACHING, LONG-TERM SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS, DR HO HOPED THAT THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, IN DELIBERATING ON THE MOST APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT FOR HONG KONG IN 1988, WOULD NOT ONLY MAKE DECISIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, BUT ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A HOST OF INTERLOCKING CONSIDERATIONS.

THESE CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDED THE CONTINUOUS STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE TERRITORY; CONVERGENCE WITH THE BASIC LAW, A SMOOTH AND UNEVENTFUL TRANSITION; BUILDING ON THE GOOD FEATURES OF OUR EXISTING SYSTEM; RETAINING OR FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL.

MOREOVER, THE PUBLIC WISH FOR A GRADUAL, STEP BY STEP CHANGE; INCREMENTAL POLITICAL REFORMS ON A WIDER SCOPE RATHER THAN JUST ON DIRECT ELECTIONS; THE NEED FOR AN EFFICIENT, BUT RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT, AND SUGGESTIONS RAISED IN TODAY'S DEBATE SHOULD ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

DR HO ADDED THAT HIS VIEWS WERE SHARED AND ENDORSED BY HIS LEGCO COLLEAGUE, THE HON F.K. HU,

SURVEY REPORT "NOT WORTH ITS PAPER"

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THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT CONTAINED DISTORTIONS WHICH RENDERED IT NOT WORTH THE PAPER IT WAS WRITTEN ON, THE HON K. C. CHAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE DEBATE ON THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, MR CHAN NOTED THAT SOME 230,000 SIGNATURES WITH IDENTITY CARD NUMBERS VOLUNTARILY SIGNED IN A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN WERE EXCLUDED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME 70,000 STEREO TYPE LETTERS FROM ORGANISATIONS THAT EMPLOYED THE SIGNATORIES WERE INCLUDED, THUS DISTORTING THE PERCENTAGE OF SUPPORTERS FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988, HE SAID.

MR CHAN ADDED THAT THE SURVEY'S QUESTIONNAIRE CONTAINED TOO MANY DIFFICULT-TO-UNDERSTAND AND LOADED QUESTIONS WHICH 40 TO 45 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS DID NOT UNDERSTAND.

"NO MATTER HOW DILIGENTLY, CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND METICULOUSLY THE SURVEY OFFICE STAFF AND THE MONITORS COMPILED THEIR REPORTS, THE RESULT WOULD BE GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT," HE SAID.

HE OBSERVED THAT BOTH BRITAIN AND CHINA HAD EXPERIENCE IN USING A REFERENDUM. IN 1945, CHINA HELD A PLEBISCITE ON THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUTER MONGOLIA, WHILE IN 1967, BRITAIN HELD A REFERENDUM ON THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE. A MORE RECENT REFERENDUM HELD IN BRITAIN WAS FOR THE ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.

HE SAID THAT IN ALL THESE CASES, THE QUESTION ASKED WAS SIMPLE, JUST APPROVAL OR REJECTION.

HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH REFERENDUM WAS NOT A DIRTY WORD, IT WAS RESISTED IN THE STRONGEST TERMS BY BOTH BRITAIN AND CHINA.

ASKING FOR A REFERENDUM AT THIS TIME WOULD BE NEGOTIATING WITH A TIGER FOR ITS SKIN, AND ONE COULD EASILY FORECAST THE REALISTIC OUTCOME, HE SAID.

MR CHAN REITERATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS AN APPOINTED MEMBER, HE STILL SUPPORTED DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988.

HE SAID THAT IF A BUFFER BETWEEN THE BORDER OF CHINA AND HONG KONG WAS NOT ESTABLISHED BY DIRECT ELECTIONS SO THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD ADMINISTER HONG KONG, THE CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD SUFFER AND THOSE WHO WERE YET INDECISIVE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE UP THEIR MIND AND VOTE WITH THEIR FEET.

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REFERRING TO THE SPEECHES BY MEMBERS DURING THE POLICY DEBATE, HE SAID THE USE OF THE TERM "POLITICAL ARENA" WAS QUITE APPROPRIATE, AS THERE WERE NOT ONLY GLADIATORS FIGHTING AGAINST GLADIATORS BUT ALSO GLADIATORS KILLING OR KILLED BY FIERCE ANIMALS, SUCH AS LIONS AND TIGERS.

HE SAID CHINESE PEOPLE USED THE "TIGER" TO REPRESENT GENERALS AND ARMED FORCES, BUT IT WAS DEFINITELY NOT SUITABLE FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE. HE ALSO QUOTED A PIECE OF CLASSIC CHINESE LITERATURE ABOUT CONFUCIUS TELLING HIS DISCIPLES THAT "HARSH OR CRUEL ADMINISTRATION WAS FIERCER THAN TIGERS".

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SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE SHOULD PREVAIL

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HONG KONG PEOPLE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER IN A SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE RATHER THAN OF CONFRONTATION AND MISTRUST, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PEOPLE SHOULD ADDRESS AND RESOLVE THE MANY PROBLEMS LYING AHEAD OF THEM BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH A SENSE OF DEDICATION AND PRAGMATISM, HE SAID.

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE AS AN AUTONOMOUS POLITY, HONG KONG HAD TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN THE TWIN GOALS OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

MR CHEONG SAID THAT FOR ANYONE, OR ANY PRESSURE GROUP, TO ACT LIKE A WESTERN-STYLE OPPOSITION PARTY IN DISCREDITING THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS -- SUCH AS ACCUSING THE GOVERNOR OF INVITING INTERVENTION FROM PEKING -- TENDED TO INDICATE THAT NOT ENOUGH CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HONG KONG REALITIES.

"IF THE REALITY OF HONG KONG IS SUCH THAT THERE CAN BE NO READY ALTERNATIVE TO THE GOVERNMENT AS IT IS AT PRESENT CONSTITUTED, IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE FOR ALL OF US TO CONSIDER ACCEPTING A ROLE IN PERFORMING PUBLIC DUTIES SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF OUR COUNTERPARTS IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES," HE SAID.

IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES OPPOSITION PARTIES AIMED AT BRINGING DOWN THE PARTY IN POWER BY DISCREDITING THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS POLICIES, WITH A VIEW TO GETTING INTO POWER THEMSELVES.

HE BELIEVED THAT THIS SCENARIO WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE IN HONG KONG, BECAUSE IT COULD NEVER BE AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID THAT IF THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS CALLED SERIOUSLY INTO QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT FALL, BUT IT WOULD CEASE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY BECAUSE IT WOULD NO LONGER BE TRUSTED..

MR CHEONG SAID THAT SINCE PUBLICATION ON THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT, ATTEMPTS HAD BEEN MADE TO WAGE A CAMPAIGN WITH INTENT TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT.

"IT HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY ALLEGED IN ORGANISED FORA AS WELL AS THROUGH ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE MEDIA THAT THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE SURVEY OFFICE AND IN COLLUSION WITH THE MARKET RESEARCH FIRM, HAD PURPOSELY MISLED THE COMMUNITY ON THE ISSUE OF SUPPORT FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THIS CHAMBER IN 1988," HE SAID.

DESPITE STRONG VOCAL OBJECTIONS BY A FEW OVER THE DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ISSUE OF INTRODUCING DIRECT ELECTIONS, THERE WERE VERY FEW CRITICISMS OVER THE DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON OTHER RELATED AND EQUALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES RAISED IN THE GREEN PAPER.

THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE INDICATED A GENERAL TREND THAT THE PEOPLE DID NOT WANT DRASTIC CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED IMMEDIATELY, HE SAID.

THIS TREND WAS APPARENT IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WHICH HAD SOLICITED VIEWS ON POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS, MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, THE PRESIDENCY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND THE VOTING AGE.

"WE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR VIEWS IN ITS TOTAL CONTEXT AND SHOULD NOT LOOK IN ISOLATION AT ONE PARTICULAR ELEMENT IN THE EQUATION," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG ALSO SAID THE REPORTS OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORS MUST BE OBJECTIVELY TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BEFORE ANYONE CONDEMNED THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT.

THE TWO MONITORS, MR ANDREW SO AND MR F.K. LI, WERE BOTH MEN OF PRINCIPLE AND UNQUESTIONED INTEGRITY.

"IT IS THEREFORE ONLY RIGHT THAT WE GIVE DUE WEIGHT TO THE QUALITY OF THEIR WORK IN OVERSEEING THE WHOLE PUBLIC OPINION GATHERING EXERCISE," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG SAID IT WAS CRYSTAL CLEAR FROM THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT THAT, IN PRINCIPLE, THERE WAS STRONG SUPPORT FOR AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE SPLITTING THE COMMUNITY WAS THE QUESTION OF TIMING.

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"MAY I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE ALL OF US TO TAKE NOTE OF THIS FACT, COOL OUR HEADS, AND EXAMINE SERIOUSLY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF HONG KONG TO CONTINUE SQUABBLING OPENLY OVER JUST A FEW YEARS' DIFFERENCE IN ITS INTRODUCTION," HE SAID.

IT WAS NO LONGER CONSTRUCTIVE TO CONTINUE TO FOSTER DISRUPTION TO THE GENERALLY HARMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING IN THE COMMUNITY.

"INDEED, NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL OF US TO START WORKING CLOSER TOGETHER WITH A VIEW TO SECURING FROM THE GOVERNMENT AN ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT INTRODUCED TO THIS COUNCIL IN EITHER 1991 OR 1992," HE SAID.

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SURVEY REPORT FULFILLED ITS FUNCTION

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THE SURVEY REPORT HAS FULFILLED ITS FUNCTION OF PRESENTING IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE THE RESPONSE OF THE HONG KONG PUBLIC TO THE GREEN PAPER, THE HON SELINA CHOW SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS CHOW SAID THE REPORT HAD SET OUT CLEARLY AND FACTUALLY DIFFERENT GROUPS OF VIEWS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC ACCORDING TO THEIR VARIOUS SOURCES AND ORIENTATIONS AND IT ATTEMPTED NO ASSESSMENT AND DREW NO CONCLUSIONS FROM THE VIEWS IT PRESENTED, LEAVING THE READERS MAXIMUM FREEDOM TO DO BOTH.

AS EXPECTED, SHE SAID, THE CONTROVERSY ON DIRECT ELECTIONS WHICH HAD HAUNTED OUR COMMUNITY SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION PERSISTED.

"IT WOULD BE QUITE FRUITLESS TO SPLIT HAIRS OVER FIGURES, OR TO JUDGE THE ENTIRE REPORT ON A TABLE OR TWO."

MRS CHOW SAID THE TEMPTATION TO BE BOGGED DOWN BY A FEW EXTRACTED FIGURES WAS GREAT BUT MUST BE RESISTED.

"MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF THE 100,000 PRE-PRINTED SUBMISSIONS AND THE 230,000 SIGNATURES.

"WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT TO THEIR SIGNATORIES, AND WHATEVER THEIR PERSUASION, THEY ARE AFTER ALL ORGANISED VIEWS, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE ASSIGNED THE WEIGHTING OF REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION."

/SHE SAID

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SHE SAID TO ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST EITHER SYMPATHY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY WERE REPRESENTATIVE WAS AT BEST OFF THE MARK, AND AT WORST MISLEADING.

"THERE IS QUITE ENOUGH DATA IN THE ENTIRE REPORT FOR CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS TO BE DRAWN WHICH WOULD NO DOUBT HELP US IN ASSESSING WHAT THE COMMUNITY REALLY WANTS."

MRS CHOW SAID THE VOLUMINOUS INFORMATION GIVEN IN THE REPORT POINTED TO A FEW SIGNIFICANT MESSAGES.

FIRSTLY, A LARGE PROPORTION OF OUR COMMUNITY HAD NEITHER THE INTEREST NOR THE KNOWLEDGE IN OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE STATE OF GOVERNMENT. FROM THE VARIOUS SURVEYS, IT WAS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT THIS SEGMENT OF OUR COMMUNITY ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT ONE THIRD TO 40 PER CENT OF OUR POPULATION.

SECONDLY, THERE WAS A SENSE OF UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT EFFECT CHANGES WOULD HAVE ON OUR IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM FUTURE, ALTHOUGH IT SEEMED TO BE GENERALLY RECOGNISED THAT HONG KONG COULD WITHSTAND CHANGES WITHOUT SACRIFICING OUR STABILITY TO AN UNACCEPTABLE DEGREE, AND THAT SOME CHANGES WERE CONSIDERED BOTH NECESSARY AND WELCOME.

THIRDLY, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS.

"THE BONE OF CONTENTION IS THE TIMING OF ITS INTRODUCTION. HERE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY DISAPPEARS, AND THE COMMUNITY SEEMS FAIRLY SPLIT OVER THE IDEAL POINT."

MRS CHOW CITED FOUR SRH SURVEYS WHICH SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A DOWNWARD TREND IN THE SUPPORT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS FROM ABOUT 54 PER CENT TO 42 PER CENT IN THE TWO MONTHS FROM EARLY JULY TO EARLY SEPTEMBER.

AT THE SAME TIME THE PERCENTAGE CALLING FOR NO CHANGE INCREASED FROM 27 PER CENT TO 34 PER CENT, WHILE THOSE WHO OPTED FOR A LITTLE CHANGE DROPPED FROM 30 PER CENT TO 23 PER CENT. THOSE WHO HAD NO OPINION OR WERE UNSURE REMAINED AT 40 PER CENT.

"DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER, I MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT IN SPITE OF ALL MY MISGIVINGS ABOUT DIRECT ELECTION, I WOULD BE QUITE PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH THE MAJORITY VIEW IF THERE IS CLEAR SUPPORT FOR IT.

"TODAY OUR PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN. WHILE ENDORSING DIRECT ELECTION AS A DESIRABLE CHANGE SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE, THE MAJORITY IS EITHER NOT WILLING OR NOT READY TO INSIST ON DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988. THEY PREFER TO WAIT. I WOULD GO ALONG."

/HOWEVER, MRS

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HOWEVER, MRS CHOW SAID SINCE THE COMMUNITY HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO DIRECT ELECTION IN THE LONG TERM, THE SOONER WE STARTED OFF, THE MORE GRADUAL WOULD BE THE PROCESS.

"WE CANNOT AFFORD TO WASTE VALUABLE TIME IN PROCRASTINATION. WE MUST USE THE LIMITED TIME TO HONG KONG'S ADVANTAGE BY LEARNING THE ROPES OF HOW WE CAN BUILD A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SKILFULLY AND RESPONSIVELY."

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SURVEY REPORT IS SCIENTIFIC AND ACCEPTABLE
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THE SURVEY REPORT ON DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 IS ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE IT IS THE LARGEST, BEST-PUBLICISED, MOST EXTENSIVE, MOST PROLONGED, RELATIVELY LESS BIASED AND MORE SCIENTIFIC OF ALL SURVEYS DONE TO OBTAIN VIEWS ON POLITICAL REFORM.

THIS WAS STATED BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DISMISSING CLAIMS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD IN SOME WAYS MANIPULATED THE RESULTS, DR IP POINTED OUT THAT, IF ONE FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE MANY TABLES, ONE WOULD BEGIN TO SEE A TREND IN THAT, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE HIGHEST-RANKING CHOICE OR CLOSELY SIMILAR ONES REMAINED THE SAME IRRESPECTIVE OF WHICH CATEGORY OF SUBMISSIONS THEY BELONGED. THE ONLY DEVIATIONS FROM THIS TREND WERE WHERE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST EXISTED WITH THAT CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS.

"IF WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE RESULT OF THE SURVEY REPORT, WE ARE NOT GIVING DUE RESPECT TO THOSE WHO HAD FAITHFULLY SUBMITTED THEIR VIEWS AND THOSE WHOM WE PURPORT TO REPRESENT," DR IP ADDED.

SHE ALSO ASKED THAT THE SILENT MAJORITY BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

"THEY ARE SILENT BECAUSE THEY CONTINUE TO HAVE FAITH IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, IN THEIR ADMINISTRATION AND IN THEIR PROPOSAL OF CHANGES WHETHER POLITICAL OR OTHERWISE IN ENSURING THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG."

DR IP PERSONALLY DID NOT BELIEVE IN DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR HONG KONG AND WAS CONVINCED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE TERM SHOULD BE FOR FOUR YEARS.

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ACCUSATIONS OF FABRICATION ARE MISPLACED

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THE SURVEY OFFICE HAS ACHIEVED WHAT IT SET OUT TO DO BY PROVIDING IN ITS REPORT A "COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE" ACCOUNT OF ALL THE PUBLIC VIEWS COLLECTED, THE HON RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ACCUSATIONS OF CONSPIRACY AND FABRICATION WERE UNCALLED FOR AND MISPLACED.

"IT IS NOT THE JOB OF THE SURVEY OFFICE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS, NOR DID IT ATTEMPT TO DO SO," SHE SAID.

MRS FAN FELT THAT THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT CONTAINED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF USEFUL AND MEANINGFUL INFORMATION, SUCH AS THAT A CLEAR MAJORITY WOULD LIKE AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNOR TO PRESIDE OVER THE COUNCIL, THE VOTING AGE TO REMAIN AT 21, AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE PRESENT LEGISLATURE TO CHANGE IN A GRADUAL MANNER.

THESE VIEWS SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A WHOLE, SHE SAID.

"CONCERN FOR CONFLICTING VIEWS ON ONE ISSUE SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OVERSHADOW THE CLEAR INDICATION OF PUBLIC OPINION ON A NUMBER OF OFTEN EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT AND IMPORTANT ISSUES," SHE ADDED.

MRS FAN SAID SHE DEDUCED FROM SOME OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS THAT, FIRSTLY, MANY PEOPLE WERE REASONABLY HAPPY WITH THE EXISTING STRUCTURES OR WERE NOT LOOKING FOR CHANGES; AND SECONDLY, WHILE MANY PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE DIRECT ELECTIONS INTRODUCED IN 1988, THEY WERE NOT SO STRONGLY MOTIVATED TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY MUST HAVE THIS NEXT YEAR.

"I DO NOT THINK A DELAY OF A FEW YEARS WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY," SHE SAID.

WHAT PEOPLE WANTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT WAS A DEFINITE COMMITMENT THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1991, AND A CLEARLY DEFINED PROCEDURE FOR SUCH INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF SEATS, THE CONSTITUENCIES AND THE NOMINATION PROCESS, ACCORDING TO MRS FAN.

"IF THE GOVERNMENT FAILED TO MAKE THIS DEFINITE COMMITMENT, THEN THERE IS EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION MAY BE SUBJECTED TO QUESTION, AND THIS TIME FOR GOOD REASONS," SHE SAID.

MRS FAN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE PREPARATION OF HONG KONG PEOPLE FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS.

THE SURVEY RESULTS, SHE SAID, HAD ALSO SHOWN CONFUSION EXISTED IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE ABOUT THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AS WELL AS THE EXTENT OF PUBLIC DISINTEREST IN CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

"IF WE ARE TO HOLD A WORTHWHILE DIRECT ELECTION, WE MUST BATTLE AGAINST AND PREVAIL OVER 'INERTIA' AND 'IGNORANCE'," SHE SAID.

MRS FAN SAID SHE WANTED TO SEE A DIRECT ELECTION CONDUCTED WITH DIGNITY WHERE REASON PREVAILED OVER EMOTION.

SHE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THIS GOAL COULD BE ATTAINED IF PEOPLE DEVELOPED, THROUGH EFFECTIVE CIVIC EDUCATION, ATTITUDES OF FAIR-MINDEDNESS, OBJECTIVITY AND INDEPENDENT THINKING; AND ALSO DEVELOPED THE POWER TO DISTINGUISH PROPAGANDIST TACTICS FROM VALID REASONS, EMPTY PROMISES FROM ACTUAL PERFORMANCE, AND INSINUATIONS FROM FACTS.

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FOCUS ON THREE-TIER SYSTEM

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THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE MUST BE LOOKED AT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EVOLUTION OF HONG KONG'S GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, DR THE HON KIM CHAM SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN THIS RESPECT, HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S THREE-TIER SYSTEM.

NOTING THAT VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR OF EXPANSION, DR CHAM SAID THE PRACTICAL SOLUTION WAS THAT THE DB'S SHOULD TAKE DECISIONS AND THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SHOULD IMPLEMENT THEM.

HE ADDED: "THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT BOARD SHOULD INITIALLY BE A MEMBER OF THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, WHERE LATER ON, HE SHOULD TAKE OVER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

"THIS WOULD ENSURE BETTER MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE DISTRICT BOARDS."

ON THE COMPOSITION OF DB'S, DR CHAM SAID THOUGH EXPRESSED VIEWS MIGHT INDICATE A WISH FOR CHANGE, THERE WAS STRONG EVIDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS THAT NO CHANGE WAS PREFERRED.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT THE TWO SURVEYS COMMISSIONED BY THE SURVEY OFFICE INDICATED THAT WELL OVER 30 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE NOT IN FAVOUR OF CHANGING THE PRESENT PROPORTION OF APPOINTED AND ELECTED MEMBERS, AND WELL OVER 44 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS CHOSE THE OPTION THAT URBAN COUNCILLORS SHOULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

ON THE STRUCTURE AND AMALGAMATION OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE URBAN COUNCIL, DR CHAM FELT THE TWO PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS ALSO INDICATED THAT WE SHOULD NOT CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE.

"FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE TWO PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS REVEAL THAT WELL OVER 35 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS ARE NOT IN FAVOUR OF ANY INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL.

"ON THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, THERE APPEARS TO BE GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO CHANGE," HE SAID.

"COUPLED WITH VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE URBAN COUNCIL, IT IS APPARENT THAT THERE IS NO DEMAND FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO COUNCILS," HE ADDED.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR CHAM SAID THERE WERE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT THE SEATS OF THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES SHOULD BE INCREASED.

AND HE PERSONALLY FELT THAT AN ADDITIONAL SEAT FOR ACCOUNTANCY AND ONE FOR FINANCIAL MARKETS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED.

TURNING TO DIRECT ELECTIONS, DR CHAM SAID THE WAY TO MOVE AHEAD WAS TO LAY DOWN SPECIFIC PLANS FOR FUTURE INTRODUCTION, EVEN THOUGH CHANGE WAS NOT OPTED FOR IN 1988.

HE URGED THAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO COMPULSORY VOTING SO THAT WE WOULD NOT BE CONSTRAINED BY PUBLIC APATHY BUT RATHER ENSURE TOTAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN OUR FUTURE ELECTION PROCESS.

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POLITICAL CHANGES SHOULD CONFORM WITH MAJORITY WISH

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THE OUTCOME OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT SHOULD CONFORM WITH THE MAJORITY WISHES OF THE PEOPLE, ACCORD WITH THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE LETTER OF OTHER OBLIGATIONS, AND SHOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE OVERALL INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHENG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S TASK NOW WAS TO ASSESS ALL THE POINTS OF VIEW AND TO WORK OUT WHAT CHANGES -- IF ANY -- SHOULD BE MADE IN 1988.

"LIKE THE SURVEY ITSELF, IT IS A DIFFICULT TASK, AND IT WILL NEED ALL THE GOODWILL, CO-OPERATION AND WISDOM WHICH WE CAN MUSTER," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS TO THE SURVEY ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WERE IN FAVOUR OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, BUT FELT THAT 1988 WAS TOO SOON, MR CHENG EMPHASISED THAT THIS CONSIDERED OPINION, TOGETHER WITH OTHERS EXPRESSED IN THE SURVEY, MUST BE RESPECTED.

"IT IS NOT OUR BUSINESS TO QUESTION THE RESULTS OF THIS EXERCISE; NOR DO I SEE ANY REASON TO DISPUTE THE METHODS USED TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE.

"INDEED, I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE SURVEY OFFICE ON THE WAY IN WHICH IT HAS COLLECTED AND COLLATED THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OPINIONS. IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN AN EASY TASK," MR CHENG SAID.

HE ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE TWO INDEPENDENT MONITORS AND NOTED THAT THE OFFICER HAD COMMISSIONED SPECIALISTS TO CONDUCT TWO RANDOM PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS TO OBTAIN AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNITY'S VIEWS.

MR CHENG SAID THAT TO HIM, IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE WERE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE VIEW THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE EVOLUTIONARY AND NOT REVOLUTIONARY.

"THE RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY DEMONSTRATES THE PEOPLE'S FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION -- OTHERWISE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BOTHERED TO TAKE PART IN THE SURVEY," HE OBSERVED.

ON THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MR CHENG HELD FAST TO THE VIEWS HE EXPRESSED IN THE GREEN PAPER DEBATE LAST JULY.

/HE MAINTAINED

HE MAINTAINED THAT MORE TIME SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE TESTING OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES WHICH HAD BEEN SET UP THROUGH MAJOR INNOVATIONS AS RECENTLY AS 1985 AND THAT ANY MAJOR CHANGE IN 1988 WOULD RUN COUNTER TO THE SPIRIT OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION AND WOULD BE PRE-EMPTIVE OF THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF DRAFTING THE BASIC LAW.

"WE DO NOT DIMINISH OURSELVES BY HONOURING THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE LETTER OF OUR AGREEMENTS. INSTEAD WE DEMONSTRATE OUR INTEGRITY -- AND IT IS THIS INTEGRITY WHICH MAKES VIABLE OUR SYSTEM OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION," HE SAID.

MR CHENG POINTED OUT THAT IN HIS CONSTITUENCY OF ENGINEERING AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS, THE FOUR PROFESSIONAL BODIES SOUGHT THEIR MEMBERS' VIEWS ON THE GREEN PAPER AND MADE SEPARATE SUBMISSIONS TO THE SURVEY OFFICE. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS WAS IN FAVOUR OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, BUT OPINION WAS VERY CLOSELY DIVIDED ON WHETHER THESE SHOULD BE IN 1988 OR LATER.

"IT WAS ALSO CONSIDERED THAT ANOTHER SEAT IN THIS COUNCIL WAS NEEDED TO REPRESENT THE CONSTITUENCY," HE SAID.

"THIS VIEW ASSUMED NEW PROPORTIONS WHEN I SAW IN THE SURVEY REPORT THAT NEARLY A DOZEN MORE PROFESSIONAL BODIES OR ORGANISATIONS RELATING TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WERE SEEKING EITHER INCLUSION IN AN EXISTING CONSTITUENCY -- PRESUMABLY MINE -- OR RECOGNITION AS NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

"IT SEEMS LOGICAL TO ME THAT THESE BODIES OR ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IN THIS COUNCIL."

SHOULD THE ENGINEERING CONSTITUENCY BE ENLARGED, EXPANDED REPRESENTATION IN LEGCO WOULD BE NEEDED AS EXISTING CONSTITUENTS ALREADY FELT THAT REPRESENTATION SHOULD BE INCREASED, HE ADDED.

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POLITICAL INCLINATION CONSENSUS-ORIENTED

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THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WESTERN-STYLE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND THE EVOLVING POLITICAL SCENE IN HONG KONG WAS THAT HONG KONG'S INCLINATIONS AND APPROACHES WERE MORE CONSENSUS-ORIENTED RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION-ORIENTED, THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID HE BELIEVED THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FUTURE HONG KONG SAR GOVERNMENT, AS WOULD BE ENACTED IN THE BASIC LAW IN 1990, SHOULD BE UNDERPINNED BY THE DEMOCRATIC AND CONSENSUS-ORIENTED APPROACH AMONG THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PERSONALITIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH WOULD BE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS AN ARRAY OF STATISTICS LISTING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS OPTING FOR OR AGAINST DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988.

"THE STATISTICS GIVEN IN THE SURVEY REPORT ARE AS ACCURATE AS ONE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT IN THE CARRYING OUT OF SUCH A MAJOR EXERCISE," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THREE OTHER SURVEYS COVERING THE ADULT POPULATION SHOWED THAT THE SUPPORT FOR, OR NO OBJECTION TO, DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 WAS MUCH HIGHER THAN THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE -- PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE FEWER OPTIONS OFFERED AND ALSO BECAUSE REFERENCE TO DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 WAS MORE SPECIFIC.

FOR THE FOUR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY SURVEY RESEARCH HONG KONG LIMITED, THE PERCENTAGE IN SUPPORT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 RANGED FROM 46 PER CENT TO 54 PER CENT. FOR THE THREE SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY MARKETING DECISION RESEARCH COMPANY LIMITED, THE FIGURES RANGED FROM 41 PER CENT TO 62 PER CENT, AND THE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY FRANK SMALL AND ASSOCIATES SHOWED 43 PER CENT IN SUPPORT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS.

"MY READING OF THE MCNAIR SURVEYS AND THE SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY THESE THREE OTHER COMPANIES IS THAT THE HONG KONG ADULT POPULATION IS QUITE CLEARLY DIVIDED AS TO WHETHER DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN 1988," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG-LEEN ALSO NOTED THAT IN REGARD TO THE 21 SIGNATURE CAMPAIGNS COVERING THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, A LARGE NUMBER, ABOUT 225,000 SIGNATURES, WERE IN SUPPORT OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BEING HELD IN 1988.

AS FOR THE 125,833 SUBMISSIONS SENT DIRECT TO THE SURVEY OFFICE, OF WHICH 120,923 WERE FROM INDIVIDUALS AND 4,305 FROM GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS COMPRISING 16,294 INDIVIDUALS, THE LARGER MAJORITY -- 94,270 -- WERE NOT IN FAVOUR OF DIRECT ELECTIONS BEING INTRODUCED IN 1988.

"MY ASSESSMENT THEREFORE - AND I HAVE TO RECOGNISE IT SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY - IS THAT THERE IS NO OVERWHELMING MAJORITY AMONG THE POPULATION IN GENERAL FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED IN 1988.

"THAT BEING THE CASE, WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CAN COME ABOUT IF NOT IN 1988, THEN EITHER IN 1990 OR 1991," HE SAID.

PAY MORE ATTENTION TO QUALITY OF VIEWS

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF THE VIEWS SUBMITTED TO THE SURVEY OFFICE, RATHER THAN THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS, IN ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE SURVEY REPORT, THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCEDING THAT THE 130,000-ODD RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY OFFICE, AND THE 220,000 SIGNATURES, MIGHT NOT SIGNIFY A GROWING POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG RESIDENTS, OR CONSCIOUS EFFORTS OF THE MASS TO SUPPORT A WORTHY CAUSE, MR NGAI TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT IN IMPORTANT ISSUES LIKE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, THE FINAL DECISION MUST BE BASED LARGELY ON RATIONALISATION.

STRESSING THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988 WAS A HASTY AND RISKY STEP TO TAKE, MR NGAI SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CAREFULLY ASCERTAIN THE CONTENT OF POPULAR WILL AND HOW EFFECTIVE THE MECHANISM FOR EXPRESSING THIS WILL WAS.

HE WARNED THAT WITH THE GENERAL LACK OF POLITICAL AWARENESS AND GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TO POLITICAL ISSUES AMONG THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE, IT COULD BE DISASTROUS TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT ACCORDING TO ANY APPARENT UNITY.

"THERE HAS BEEN MUCH OVER-REACTION TO THE SURVEY REPORT EVER SINCE ITS PUBLICATION TWO WEEKS AGO. THOSE WHO HAVE PLEDGED THEIR FAITH TO WINNING MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR DIRECT ELECTION IN 1988 ARE UNDERSTANDABLY FRUSTRATED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY.

"FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COME FORWARD TO ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT FOR BEING INSINCERE AND BIASED IN THIS CONSULTATION EXERCISE, I REGRET TO SAY THAT THEIR VINDICTIVE ACCUSATIONS COULD HAVE BEEN MISFIRED. FOR IT WILL BE TOTALLY UNTHINKABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO BASE ITS DECISION AS TO INITIATE POLITICAL REFORMS OR NOT, PURELY ON THE OUTCOME OF A SURVEY AND NOTHING ELSE," HE SAID.

MR NGAI EMPHASISED THAT HONG KONG'S EXPORT-ORIENTED ECONOMY WAS VULNERABLE TO TOO MANY EXTERNAL FACTORS BEYOND OUR CONTROL AND WE SIMPLY COULD NOT AFFORD TO EXPERIMENT WITH POLITICAL REFORMS AND GAMBLE ON THE FUTURE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF OUR COMMUNITY.

"ANOTHER REALITY IS THE QUESTION OF CONVERGENCE OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM WITH THE BASIC LAW WHICH SHALL BE WITH US IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE QUESTION HAD TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE FORTHCOMING WHITE PAPER ON OUR FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

FINALLY, MR NGAI REMINDED THE COUNCIL THAT THE SUCCESS OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY HAD BEEN BUILT UPON A STABLE AND PREDICTABLE POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND SAID HE BELIEVED THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT SYSTEM COULD ENSURE A PRAGMATIC AND EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

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" SURVEY OFFICE DID AN EXCELLENT JOB

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THE SURVEY OFFICE DID AN EXCELLENT JOB IN A VERY SHORT TIME FOR WHICH THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF SHOULD BE THANKED AND CONGRATULATED, DR THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DR SOHMEN SAID THE SURVEY OUTCOME WAS HIGHLY PREDICTABLE: IN THE OPINION POLLS A MAJORITY ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR CHANGE BUT NOT IN 1988; A SMALLER NUMBER EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS IN 1988; AND THE LARGER PART OF THE POPULATION REMINED STUBBORNLY SILENT.

"THE SURVEY REPORT HAS ADHERED TO ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE; ITS FINDINGS AND HOW THEY WERE ARRIVED AT ARE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS FROM," HE SAID.

DR SOHMEN NOTED THAT THE SURVEY OFFICE ONLY HAD TO PRESENT AND NOT TO DECIDE, AND THE ATTACK ON ITS WORK WAS MISPLACED AND A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE ULTIMATE POLITICAL DECISION BY SUGGESTING THAT THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE SHOULD BE DISREGARDED.

HE SAID THE DEBATE ON THE SURVEY REPORT REMINDED HIM A BIT OF THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD.

"THE DRAMATIS PERSONAE ARE 'EXERCISE IN FUTILITY', PITTED AGAINST 'EXERCISE IN FRIVOLITY', PLAYED BY ACTORS WITHOUT A PROPER SCRIPT AND FEELING THEIR WAY FORWARD.

"THE REVIEWERS ARE BAFFLED BUT THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRIDE DEMANDS THAT THEY FIND MEANING; INTERPRETATIONS THUS DIFFER WIDELY AS TO WHAT IS GOING ON, BUT ON BALANCE THEY TEND TO FAVOUR FRIVOLITY.

"THE AUDIENCE AT LARGE BRIEFLY ENJOY THE THRILL OF BEING PART OF SOMETHING NEW AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE, BUT ULTIMATELY LEAVE WITH A SENSE OF UNEASE. THE MORAL OF THE STORY SOMEHOW REMAINS IN DOUBT."

HOWEVER, DR SOHMEN SAID THE GREEN PAPER DEBATE AND THE TRAVAILS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE HAD NOT BEEN TOTALLY USELESS.

"WHILE PROVIDING SOME MUCH-NEEDED CIVIC EDUCATION, THE RESULTS HAVE REVEALED THE TRUE IDENTITY OF OUR DEMOCRATIC REFORMERS.

"FIRST THEY ATTACKED THE GREEN PAPER QUITE RIGHTLY FOR BEING SOMEWHAT OBSCURE AND NOT CONTAINING ALL THE PROMISED OPTIONS.

"BUT PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SEE, OF CANNOT ACCEPT OBJECTIVE REALITY WHICH MAY NECESSITATE POLICY CHANGES OBVIOUSLY LACK COMMON SENSE. LET US, HOWEVER, ACCEPT THEM AS IDEALISTS," HE SAID.

/ "BUT PEOPLE

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"BUT PEOPLE WHO ARE SO WRAPPED UP IN THEIR OWN IDEALS THAT THEY BECOME UNAWARE OF, OR INSENSITIVE TO, THE REAL STRENGTH OF SENTIMENT IN THE COMMUNITY AS TO AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROCLAIMING THAT THEY, AND ONLY THEY, REPRESENT THAT COMMUNITY, ARE VERY POOR POLITICIANS.

"AND IF THESE SAME PEOPLE HAVE TO PUT UP A SMOKE-SCREEN OF FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS TO HIDE EMBARRASSMENT AND FRUSTRATION OVER THEIR FAILURE TO PRODUCE MORE CONVINCING ARGUMENTS OR TO MAKE ACCURATE PREDICTIONS, THEN THEY ARE IMMATURE, HYPOCRITICAL, IRRESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS.

"LET US BE CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT BAD LOSERS NEVER MAKE GOOD DEMOCRATS," DR SOHMEN ADDED.

"THIS COUNCIL AND OTHERS WILL REMEMBER THAT THOSE OF US WHO ARGUED AGAINST HASTY CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN THE JULY DEBATE MADE A COMMITMENT IN ADVANCE TO RESPECT THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE.

"SOME OF THOSE IN FAVOUR OF THE EARLY INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, WARNED HONG KONG OF THEIR LIKELY DEPARTURE IF THEY COULD NOT HAVE THEIR BRAND OF 'DEMOCRACY'.

"WHAT SORT OF DEMOCRACY CAN WE EXPECT IN HONG KONG FROM PEOPLE MAKING SUCH PUERILE THREATS? WHAT DEGREE OF COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG AND ITS FUTURE SHOULD BE READ INTO SUCH EGOCENTRIC BEHAVIOUR AND ATTEMPTS AT PSYCHOLOGICAL BLACKMAIL? AND WHAT SHOULD WE READ INTO THE ATTACKS ON THE MECHANICS OF THE SURVEY EFFORT OR THE METHODOLOGY OF THE OPINION POLLSTERS?" HE SAID.

DR SOHMEN ASKED WHAT CRIES OF OUTRAGE WOULD WE HAVE HEARD IF THE SURVEY OFFICE HAD INDEED GIVEN MORE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO AGB MCNAIR HONG KONG LTD, OR IF AGB MCNAIR HAD SUBSTANTIALLY DEVIATED IN THEIR QUESTIONS FROM THE TERMINOLOGY IN THE GREEN PAPER.

"CONVERSELY, CAN WE ASSUME THAT THE CRITICISMS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE WOULD HAVE BEEN AS STRONG IF BY CHANCE THE OPINION POLLS HAD REFLECTED THE RESULT DESIRED BY THE PRO-ELECTION LOBBY?

"HOW MANY DISGRUNTLED CITIZENS WOULD LIKELY HAVE TAKEN TO THE STREETS IN THAT EVENT PROTESTING AGAINST THE 'UNFAVOURABLE' FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE?

"WHY SHOULD IT BE SEEN AS 'UNFAIR' TO THE ACTIVISTS NOT TO GET THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG?"

DR SOHMEN WONDERED WHETHER THE REFORMERS, IN DENOUNCING THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN MOST SCRUPULOUS IN KEEPING AWAY FROM THE ASSESSMENT EXERCISE, WERE IN FACT CHIDING THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG FOR HAVING MADE THE WRONG DECISION.

/HOWEVER, HE

HOWEVER, HE SAID WE HAD TO ACCEPT THAT SOME PEOPLE WOULD NEVER BE SATISFIED UNTIL THEY GOT EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANTED, AND WOULD EVEN USE THE CLOCK OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES TO COVER UP THEIR ESSENTIALLY UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOURS.

"HONG KONG CANNOT AFFORD POLITICAL LEADERS WITHOUT VISION OR WITHOUT A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONCERNS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AND NOT JUST THOSE OF THEIR OWN LITTLE GROUP. WE CAN DO WITHOUT FRIVOLITY.

"WHAT WE NEED ARE PEOPLE WITH COMMITMENT THAT IS TEMPERED BY A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE, A KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR OWN LIMITATIONS, AND AN APPRECIATION OF ACHIEVABLE REALITY."

FORTUNATELY, DR SOHMEN ADDED, SUCH PEOPLE EXISTED IN HONG KONG AT ALL LEVELS AND WERE QUIETLY AT WORK IN HELPING TO SHAPE OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE.

"I AM ENCOURAGED BY THEIR DEDICATION AND CONVINCED THAT ULTIMATELY THEY, AND NOT THOSE NOW SHOUTING SO LOUDLY BUT SO UNCONVINCINGLY, WILL CARRY THIS TERRITORY THROUGH THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND BEYOND."

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SILENT MAJORITY SATISFIED WITH STATUS QUO

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HONG KONG PEOPLE'S SILENCE TOWARDS THE GREEN PAPER COULD BE TAKEN AS A STRONG INDICATION THAT THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO AND DID NOT WANT TO RISK ANY HASTY AND UNNECESSARY CHANGE, THE HON EDWARD HO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE FOUND IT A PITY THAT DESIGNERS OF PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS DID NOT PURSUE WHY PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE ANY OPINION IN REGARD TO THE GREEN PAPER.

HE FELT THAT "NO OPINION" IN ITSELF COULD BE TREATED AS A FORM OF OPINION, AND IT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE EVALUATION OF THE SURVEY REPORT.

THE LACK OF INFORMATION ON WHY SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAD NO COMMENT LEFT THE TASK OF INTERPRETING WHAT THEY MEANT, MR HO SAID.

"ARE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG SO INDIFFERENT TO POLITICS?"

"ARE THEY SO SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT SYSTEM THAT THEY DO NOT FEEL THE NEED TO VOICE THEIR VIEWS?"

/"OR ALTHOUGH

"OR ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO, ARE THEIR FEELINGS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO COMPEL THEM TO ASK FOR CHANGE?" MR HO ASKED.

HE, HIMSELF, BELIEVED ALL THREE OF THESE ASSUMPTIONS WERE VALID AS DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT YEARS HAD SHOWN THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD NOT LONGER HESITATE TO STAND UP AND MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD IF THEY HAD A GRIEVANCE.

"THEIR SILENCE TOWARDS THE GREEN PAPER CAN BE TAKEN AS A STRONG INDICATION THAT THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO AND DO NOT WANT TO RISK ANY HASTY AND UNNECESSARY CHANGE," MR HO SAID.

"THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG ARE PRAGMATIC AND PRUDENT.

"THEY VALUE THE PRESENT STABILITY AND PROSPERITY AND WILL NOT CALL FOR CHANGES JUST FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGING," HE CONTINUED.

HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE SAME APPROACH IN ASSESSING THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY OFFICE.

EARLIER, MR HO SAID THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE COULD BE DESCRIBED AS A SUCCESS IN TERMS OF QUANTITY AS MORE THAN 130,000 SUBMISSIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SURVEY OFFICE.

HOWEVER, IT WAS DISAPPOINTING THAT PUBLIC RESPONSES TOWARDS OTHER ISSUES WERE RELATIVELY SCARCE COMPARED TO THOSE ON DIRECT ELECTIONS.

THE 1987 POLITICAL REVIEW, IN THIS RESPECT, COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A PARTIAL SUCCESS, MR HO SAID.

NEVERTHELESS, HE STILL BELIEVED THAT THE SURVEY EXERCISE HAD PROVIDED A VALUABLE INDICATION AS TO THE NEXT STEP TO BE TAKEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT.

HE SAID IF THE SCOPE WAS WIDENED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION ALL THE PROFESSIONALLY CONDUCTED OPINION SURVEYS TOGETHER WITH THE SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED, ANALYSTS COULD STILL FIND A CLEAR TREND IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND - WHICH WAS THAT THERE WAS NO OVERWHELMING DEMAND FOR HASTY CHANGES.

"THIS APPLIES TO MOST ASPECTS OF THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM," HE ADDED.

ON THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS, EVEN IF THE AGB MCNAIR SURVEY WAS DISREGARDED, NINE SURVEYS UNDERTAKEN BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A STRONG SUPPORT FOR AN ELEMENT OF DIRECT ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THERE WAS NOT AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO INTRODUCE IT IN 1988, HE ADDED.

LEGAL SYSTEM CONTRIBUTED TO HK'S SUCCESS

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HONG KONG OWES PART OF ITS SUCCESS TO ITS LEGAL SYSTEM, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY US TIME) IN NEW YORK.

SPEAKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF AN EIGHT-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT THAT WILL TAKE HIM TO NEW YORK, BOSTON, LONDON AND PARIS, MR THOMAS SAID: "HONG KONG LIKE SO MANY OUTPOSTS OF BRITISH TRADE & COMMERCE, INHERITED THE COMMON LAW IN ITS GOLDEN AGE."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE OF MEMBERS OF THE BAR MAINLY INVOLVED WITH MATTERS RELATING TO CONSULAR AND DIPLOMATIC LAW AT A DINNER MEETING OF THE CONSULAR LAW SOCIETY.

"WE HAVE A LEGAL SYSTEM LARGELY REFLECTING THE BEST FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH LEGAL SYSTEM, WITH INCORRUPTIBLE JUDGES AND SKILLFUL PRACTITIONERS, INTERNATIONALIST IN OUTLOOK AND TRAINING," HE SAID.

IT WAS THE FACT THAT THE RULE OF LAW WAS WELL ESTABLISHED, THAT THE JUDGES HAD INDEPENDENCE, THAT THE COURTS WERE SECOND TO NONE IN THIS REGION THAT HAD ATTRACTED MANY TO HONG KONG.

"THEY KNOW THAT THEIR CONTRACTS WILL BE ENFORCED, THAT REMEDIES WILL BE AFFORDED WHERE WRONGS HAVE BEEN DONE. THEY KNOW TOO THAT CRIME IS VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTED AND THAT ON THE WHOLE JUSTICE IS DONE IN THE COURTS," HE SAID.

TO PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES, MR THOMAS SAID THAT HONG KONG HAD 1,500 SOLICITORS AND OVER 300 BARRISTERS, MOST OF WHOM HAD GRADUATED LOCALLY, ALTHOUGH MANY HAD BEEN TRAINED IN THE INNS OF COURT IN LONDON AND UNIVERSITIES OVERSEAS.

"MORE THAN 100 QUEENS COUNSEL TRAVEL EACH YEAR FROM THE U.K. TO APPEAR IN SOME OF HONG KONG'S MAJOR CASES.

"WE HAVE JUDGES FROM MANY DIFFERENT COMMON LAW COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS SOME FROM HONG KONG. THE COURTS ARE READY TO CONSIDER NOT ONLY HONG KONG CASES BUT JUDICIAL PRECEDENTS FROM MANY OTHER PLACES.

"FOREIGN LAWYERS ARE PERMITTED TO COME IN AND TO ESTABLISH PRACTICES IN ORDER TO SERVE FOREIGN BANKS AND TRADING GROUPS IN THEIR REGIONAL ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE MANY SUCH FIRMS IN HONG KONG, FROM AMERICA, CANADA, GERMANY, THE PHILIPPINES, HOLLAND ETC," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE FUTURE, MR THOMAS SAID THE JOINT DECLARATION PROVIDED THAT HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF LAW, ADMINISTRATION AND THE ECONOMY, ITS LIFE-STYLE AND FREEDOMS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED FOR 50 YEARS AFTER 1997.

/IT ALSO

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IT ALSO PROVIDED THAT IN 1997 HONG KONG WOULD BECOME A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, BUT THE SOCIALIST POLICY ADOPTED IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC WOULD NOT BE APPLIED, HE SAID.

"THE PRESENT SYSTEMS IN HONG KONG WILL, IN ALL ESSENTIAL RESPECTS, REMAIN FOR 50 YEARS AFTER 1997. IN PARTICULAR, HONG KONG WILL MAINTAIN ITS OWN FAMILIAR SYSTEM OF LAW," MR THOMAS SAID.

"THE LAWS CURRENTLY IN FORCE IN HONG KONG WILL REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. THE COMMON LAW, RULES OF EQUITY, ORDINANCES, SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION AND CUSTOMARY LAW WILL BE MAINTAINED.

"THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WILL REMAIN ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED, AND IN PARTICULAR THE INDEPENDENT EXERCISE OF JUDICIAL POWER AND THE OBLIGATION OF THE COURTS TO DECIDE CASES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW.

"THE POWER OF FINAL JUDGEMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WILL BE VESTED IN ITS OWN COURT OF FINAL APPEAL," MR THOMAS SAID.

EARLIER IN THE DAY, MR THOMAS ATTENDED A LUNCH HOSTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMIC AFFAIRS OFFICE IN NEW YORK, MR KERRY MCGLYNN. AT THE LUNCH HE MET REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND MEMBERS OF MAJOR FINANCIAL AND BANKING INSTITUTIONS WHO HAVE SPECIAL INTEREST IN HONG KONG.

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QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

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THE MAJORITY OF FIRMS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR REPORTED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE GENERAL BUSINESS SITUATION IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1987 AS COMPARED WITH THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987, ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT. IT IS EXPECTED THAT, FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR AS A WHOLE, THE BUSINESS SITUATION IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1987 WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW IMPROVEMENT, THOUGH THE PROSPECTS OF INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES VARY.

THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF OCTOBER. THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE RETURNS WERE RECEIVED BEFORE THE RECENT EVENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL MARKETS TOOK PLACE. SUCH EVENTS MAY, HOWEVER, HAVE EFFECTS ON BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER AS A WHOLE. THE SURVEY RESULTS SHOULD THEREFORE BE INTERPRETED WITH THIS CAVEAT IN MIND.

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FIRMS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR REPORTED A CONTINUED UPTREND IN BUSINESS DURING THE THIRD QUARTER AND THE BUSINESS SITUATION IS EXPECTED TO IMPROVE FURTHER IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

AS FOR THE FIRMS IN THE "WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS" SECTOR, A FAVOURABLE BUSINESS SITUATION WAS EXPERIENCED IN THE THIRD QUARTER AND AN OPTIMISTIC BUSINESS OUTLOOK IS ANTICIPATED FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.

IN THE THIRD QUARTER, FIRMS IN "BANKS", "REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES" AND "TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION" BUSINESSES CONTINUED TO EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENTS IN BUSINESS AND THEY EXPECT THE UPTREND TO PERSIST IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

ABOUT 1,000 FIRMS FROM VARIOUS INDUSTRIES AND BUSINESSES, FORMING A CROSS-SECTION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY AND WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS.

WITHIN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, FIRMS IN ALL INDUSTRIES EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE BUSINESS SITUATION IN THE THIRD QUARTER WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TEXTILES INDUSTRY WHICH SHOWED LITTLE CHANGE. THE EXTENT OF IMPROVEMENTS ARE QUITE REMARKABLE IN THE "FOOD, BEVERAGE AND TOBACCO", "PLASTICS", "FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS", "ELECTRICAL MACHINERY, APPLIANCES AND SUPPLIES" AND "ELECTRONICS" INDUSTRIES.

REGARDING THE EXPECTATIONS ON THE GENERAL BUSINESS SITUATION FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, FIRMS IN ALL INDUSTRIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION ON THE "PLASTICS" INDUSTRY, EXPRESS OPTIMISM OVER THE BUSINESS PROSPECT. FOR THE "PLASTICS" INDUSTRY, A SEASONAL DECLINE IN BUSINESS IS EXPECTED IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

THE MAJORITY OF THE FIRMS IN THE "WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES" AND "RESTAURANTS" BUSINESSES EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE GENERAL BUSINESS SITUATION IN THE THIRD QUARTER. FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARE EXPECTED BY THE RESPONDING FIRMS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER. AS FOR THE "HOTELS" BUSINESS, A STABLE BUSINESS SITUATION WAS EXPERIENCED BY FIRMS IN THE THIRD QUARTER AND THEY GENERALLY EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN THE BUSINESS OUTLOOK FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER, DUE MAINLY TO ANTICIPATION OF A SEASONAL UPTREND IN BUSINESS.

WITH REGARD TO THE "OTHER SERVICES" SECTORS, FIRMS IN THE "TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION", "BANKS" AND THE "REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES" ALSO EXPERIENCED AN UPTREND IN BUSINESS AND THERE WAS OPTIMISM ABOUT BUSINESS PROSPECT FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.

THE SURVEY ALSO COVERED BUSINESS PROBLEMS FACED BY FIRMS.

FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, SHORTAGE OF LABOUR GENERALLY BECOMES THE MOST PROMINENT PROBLEM IN THE THIRD QUARTER AND THIS IS EXPECTED TO REMAIN SO IN THE FOURTH QUARTER. BESIDES SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOUR, HIGH MATERIAL PRICES AND HIGH LABOUR TURNOVER WERE ALSO REGARDED BY FIRMS AS RELATIVELY MORE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IN BOTH THE THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS.

APART FROM FACING THE PROBLEM OF PRICE COMPETITION, FROM BOTH LOCAL AND FOREIGN FIRMS IN HONG KONG, CONSTRUCTION FIRMS WERE COMMONLY AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEMS OF SHORTAGE OF LABOUR GENERALLY, SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOUR, HIGH WAGES RATES AND HIGH LABOUR TURNOVER TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN IN PREVIOUS QUARTERS. THESE PROBLEMS ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN PROMINENT IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

AS FOR THE "WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS" SECTOR AND "OTHER SERVICES" SECTOR, THE PROBLEMS OF PRICE COMPETITION, SHORTAGE OF STAFF GENERALLY AND HIGH STAFF TURNOVER CONTINUED TO AFFECT THE RESPONDING FIRMS. IN PARTICULAR, SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED STAFF HAS BECOME A PROMINENT PROBLEM AMONG FIRMS IN THE "HOTELS", "BANKS" AND "REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES" BUSINESSES.

ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, THE SURVEY RESULTS, OBTAINED WITH A MINIMUM TIME LAG, ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE ONE SOURCE OF REFERENCE FOR MAKING A QUICK ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION OF HONG KONG.

IN THE SURVEY, PARTICIPATING FIRMS WERE ASKED TO INDICATE WHETHER, IN THEIR OPINION, THE GENERAL BUSINESS SITUATION AND LEVEL OF CAPACITY UTILISATION HAD "IMPROVED", "REMAINED THE SAME" OR "DETERIORATED" IN THE QUARTER JUST ENDED AS COMPARED WITH THE PRECEDING QUARTER.

FOR THE FORTHCOMING QUARTER, THEY WERE ALSO ASKED TO INDICATE WHETHER THE SITUATION WOULD "IMPROVE", "REMAIN THE SAME" OR "DETERIORATE". THE OPINIONS OF RESPONDENTS WERE TABULATED AND ANALYSED. THE SURVEY REPORT CONTAINS A SECTION ON THE BUSINESS PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED AND EXPECTED BY FIRMS IN DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SECTORS AND A BREAKDOWN OF THE VIEWS OF FIRMS BY SIZE GROUPS.

THE DEPARTMENT CAUTIONED THAT, IN A SURVEY OF THIS NATURE, THE RESULTS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED WITH CARE AS IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH PRECISELY THE EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE PAST AND THE FUTURE ACCORDS WITH THE UNDERLYING TRENDS.

COPIES OF THE REPORT, CONTAINING AN ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS AND STATISTICAL TABLES, HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO FIRMS TAKING PART IN THE SURVEY AND TO OTHER BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY OBTAIN COPIES FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, AT \$3.50 PER COPY.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE NATIONAL INCOME BRANCH OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON 5-8234779.

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE TO HOLD OPEN HEARINGS
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OPEN HEARINGS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE WILL BE HELD DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS FOLLOWING THE TABLING OF THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THESE HEARINGS WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON NOVEMBER 26 AND NOVEMBER 30, STARTING AT 9 AM.

IF NECESSARY, A THIRD PUBLIC HEARING MAY ALSO BE HELD.

CONTROLLING OFFICERS WILL APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO POINTS MADE IN THE REPORT.

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ONE-WAY TOLL ALSO APPLIES TO TAXIS
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TAXI PASSENGERS TRAVELLING TO THE NEW TERRITORIES VIA THE LION ROCK TUNNEL WILL HAVE TO PAY A \$6 TOLL CHARGE WHEN THE ONE-WAY TOLL ARRANGEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED FROM 3 AM ON MONDAY (NOVEMBER 23).

HOWEVER, TAXI PASSENGERS HEADING FOR KOWLOON USING THE LION ROCK TUNNEL WOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY ANY TOLL, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

NOTICES ADVISING TAXI DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS OF THE NEW TOLL ARRANGEMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION BY TAXI DRIVERS AT THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT'S FOUR LICENSING OFFICES IN MURRAY ROAD, DUNDAS STREET, LEI YUE MUN ROAD AND SHA TIN; AND DISTRICT OFFICES FROM 2 PM TOMORROW.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE NOTICES SERVED TO CLARIFY THE TOLL CHARGE ARRANGEMENT FOR BOTH TAXI DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS.

HE ADDED THAT THIS TOLL ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE IN FORCE FOR THE FOUR-WEEK DURATION OF THE ONE-WAY TOLL EXPERIMENT WHICH WOULD END ON DECEMBER 21.

BUT SHOULD THE EXPERIMENT BE CURTAILED AT ANY TIME, THE PREVIOUS TOLL CHARGE OF \$3 WOULD BE REINSTATED, HE SAID.

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MORE CARE-AND-ATTENTION PLACES BEING PLANNED

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THE NUMBER OF CARE-AND-ATTENTION PLACES WILL BE INCREASED BY MORE THAN 3,800 WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO REACH A TOTAL OF 5,300, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"TO CO-INCIDE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SERVICE TO MEET PUBLIC DEMAND, THE GOVERNMENT IS REVIEWING THE PLANNING RATIO OF THIS TYPE OF SERVICE WHICH NOW STANDS AT FIVE PLACES PER 1,000 ELDERLY PEOPLE," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG WAS OFFICIATING AT THE FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY OF THE CHUK LAM MING TONG HOME FOR THE AGED IN SANDY BAY, POK FU LAM.

SHE SAID SHE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY TO CARE FOR ITS ELDERLY MEMBERS AND THAT IN THE PROVISION OF WELFARE SERVICES, THE CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE NEEDED.

SHE COMMENDED CHUK LAM MING TONG FOR ACTIVELY PURSUING THIS HOME FOR THE AGED PROJECT, WHICH WHEN COMPLETED IN TWO YEARS' TIME, WOULD PROVIDE 120 CARE-AND-ATTENTION PLACES AND 60 ORDINARY HOME PLACES.

THE PROJECT IS ALSO SUBSIDISED BY THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERY FUND AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB.

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COUNCIL TO LOOK AFTER SMALL INVESTORS PROPOSED

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THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE FEASIBILITY OF SETTING UP AN INVESTOR COUNCIL TO LOOK AFTER THE INTEREST OF SMALL INVESTORS AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE DISCUSSION WAS PROPOSED BY A MEMBER, MR LAU CHI-SUM, TO SEEK OTHER MEMBERS' VIEWS ON URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP SUCH A BODY FOLLOWING THE RECENT SLUMP IN THE STOCK AND FUTURES MARKETS.

AT THE MEETING, MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS PROBLEMS CONCERNING STREET SLEEPERS IN THE DISTRICT AND THE PROPOSAL TO CANCEL THE REQUIREMENT FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICANTS TO DECLARE THEIR ASSETS AND INCOME.

/OTHER ITEMS

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A REGISTERED MAIL COLLECTION COUNTER AT OI MAN ESTATE POST OFFICE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO KCRC FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.15 PM TOWORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN.

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URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTIONS ON HONG KONG ISLAND

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FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 21), CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL WESTBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH GILMAN STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 100 METRES EAST OF THAT JUNCTION WILL BE DESIGNATED A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

THE RESTRICTION WILL BE IN FORCE FOR ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS TO FACILITATE PAVEMENT RECONSTRUCTION WORK.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE FOLLOWING 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS WILL BE RE-DESIGNATED 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY RESTRICTED ZONES:

- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF ON TAI STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH MORRISON STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES WEST OF THAT JUNCTION.
- * THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF ON TAI STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH MORRISON STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES WEST OF THAT JUNCTION.
- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL WESTBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTIONS WITH MORRISON STREET AND CLEVERLY STREET.
- * THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL EASTBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTIONS WITH MORRISON STREET AND CLEVERLY STREET.
- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL WESTBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH CLEVERLY STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES EAST OF THAT JUNCTION.
- * THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL EASTBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH CLEVERLY STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES EAST OF THAT JUNCTION.

WITHIN THE RESTRICTED ZONES, NO VEHICLE WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR GOODS OR PASSENGERS.

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STORAGE SITES TO LET BY TENDER

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TWO STORAGE SITES, ONE IN KOWLOON AND THE OTHER IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, ARE TO BE LET ON SHORT-TERM TENANCY BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

THE SITE AT THE JUNCTION OF WANG HOI ROAD, LAM HING STREET AND LAM LEE STREET IN KOWLOON MEASURES ABOUT 2,520 SQUARE METRES. IT IS FOR STORAGE OF NON-DANGEROUS GOODS.

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

THE NEW TERRITORIES SITE IS LOCATED IN TUEN MUN AREA 44.

COVERING AN AREA OF ABOUT 1,900 SQUARE METRES, IT IS FOR OPEN STORAGE PURPOSES.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

TENDERS FOR BOTH SITES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NOON ON DECEMBER 4.

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