



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994

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GOVERNOR WELCOMES APEC AGREEMENT

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) WELCOMED THE STEPS TOWARDS FREE TRADE OFFERED BY THE AGREEMENT REACHED AT THE ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION'S (APEC) ECONOMIC LEADERS MEETING IN JAKARTA.

ADDRESSING THE MEDIA IN LOS ANGELES DURING HIS WEEK-LONG VISIT TO THE U.S., MR PATTEN SAID: "WE BELIEVE PASSIONATELY IN FREE TRADE AND ARE DELIGHTED BY THE NEWS FROM THE APEC SUMMIT TODAY THAT THE ECONOMIC LEADERS OF APEC HAVE TAKEN A HISTORIC STEP ALONG THE ROAD TO FREE TRADE IN THE REGION."

STRESSING THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS BOTH AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MR PATTEN SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD GIVE FURTHER MOMENTUM TO TRADE LIBERALISATION, NOT JUST IN THE REGION, BUT GLOBALLY.

MR PATTEN SAID HE RECOGNISED THAT THERE WAS A DANGER OF BACKSLIDING FROM THE URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENT.

"THERE'S OBVIOUSLY A DANGER THAT, EVEN WHEN WE'VE GOT THAT ESTABLISHED IN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION, THAT THERE WILL BE RESISTANCE TO FURTHER LIBERALISATION IN AREAS LIKE AGRICULTURE AND SERVICES.

"WE WANT TO SEE THINGS CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD BECAUSE, IN OUR JUDGMENT, FREER TRADE IS VASTLY TO THE GOOD OF ALL HUMANITY, WHETHER THEY LIVE IN RICH COUNTRIES OR POOR COUNTRIES, OR COUNTRIES IN BETWEEN."

MR PATTEN BEGAN HIS DAY IN LOS ANGELES WITH A CALL ON LOS ANGELES MAYOR RICHARD RIORDAN AT CITY HALL.

HE ADDRESSED A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE LOS ANGELES WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ASIA SOCIETY AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, ATTENDED BY 600 BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

LATER IN THE DAY, THE GOVERNOR TRAVELLED TO SAN FRANCISCO ON THE SECOND LEG OF HIS VISIT TO THE WEST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES.

MR PATTEN'S FIRST APPOINTMENT FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO WAS A MEETING WITH CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR PETE WILSON. THE TWO GOVERNORS DISCUSSED MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST INCLUDING TRADE AND IMMIGRATION.

"WE TALKED A BIT ABOUT OUR SHARED PROBLEMS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION," MR PATTEN SAID.

"WE TALKED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL LINKS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CALIFORNIA. WE SPOKE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT PUTTING UP PROTECTIONIST BARRIERS TO TRADE, ENSURING THAT WE BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE RATHER THAN MORE PROTECTIONIST."

/FOLLOWING HIS

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FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH GOVERNOR PETE WILSON, MR PATTEN ATTENDED AND ADDRESSED A RECEPTION IN HIS HONOUR HOSTED BY THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM AND THE ASIAN BUSINESS LEAGUE AT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM OF SAN FRANCISCO IN GOLDEN GATE PARK.

HOME TO THE AVERY BRUNDAGE COLLECTION, THE MUSEUM IS THE LARGEST OUTSIDE ASIA DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO ASIAN ART.

MR PATTEN SPENDS ANOTHER DAY IN SAN FRANCISCO TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

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SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION 29TH MEETING

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THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION WILL BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 17, 1994. THE TWO SIDES WILL DISCUSS THE ARRANGEMENT FOR LAND REQUIRED FOR THE NEW AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, THE 1994/95 SUPPLEMENTARY LAND DISPOSAL PROGRAMME AND THE AVERAGE COST OF LAND PRODUCTION.

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SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

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IT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT MR STEPHEN LAM, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, WILL REPLACE MR PETER LAI AS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH SIDE OF THE LAND COMMISSION WITH EFFECT FROM NOVEMBER 17, 1994.

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TRANSCRIPT OF FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REMARKS AT AIRPORT

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FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF REMARKS MADE BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, AT THE AIRPORT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTER RETURNING FROM THE APEC MEETINGS IN INDONESIA:

FS: RIGHT, WELL I'LL JUST MAKE A FEW REMARKS ABOUT OBVIOUSLY THE APEC MEETING. I USED THE WORD HISTORIC, I USE IT AGAIN. I THINK IT GENUINELY IS A HISTORIC MEETING. THE KEY ELEMENT OBVIOUSLY IS, THE COMMITMENT TO A TARGET OF FREE TRADE BY 2010 TO 2020. THAT WAS WHAT WE WANTED TO GET OUT OF THE MEETING, AND THAT'S WHAT WE DID GET OUT OF THE MEETING. THE NEXT TASK CLEARLY IS OVER THE NEXT YEAR, IN OTHER WORDS BY THE NEXT LEADERS' MEETING IN A YEAR'S TIME IN OSAKA TO HAVE WORKED OUT THE DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT VERY BROAD TARGET, AND WE ALL KNOW THAT IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY. BUT THIS IS THE FIRST STEP. IT'S A MAJOR STEP. IT WAS NOT A FOREGONE CONCLUSION AS, YOU KNOW, THERE WERE THOSE WHO HAD CONCERNS, BUT IN THE END THEY ALL WENT ALONG WITH THE CONSENSUS ON THE DECLARATION. I KNOW THAT OF COURSE ONE MEMBER EXPRESSED SEPARATELY RESERVATIONS, BUT THE FACT IS THAT THE DECLARATION, THERE WAS A CONSENSUS. SO THAT'S A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT, I THINK PARTICULARLY OF INTEREST FOR SOMEWHERE LIKE HONG KONG BECAUSE, OF COURSE IT IS RELATIVELY EASY FOR US TO ACHIEVE FREE TRADE, WE THINK WE HAVE ALREADY ACHIEVED IT, BUT LET'S SEE EXACTLY WHAT THE DEFINITION IS. IT MAY WELL FOR EXAMPLE INCLUDE TRADE IN SERVICES AS WELL AS TRADE IN GOODS. THAT IS ONE OF THE THINGS YET TO BE DETERMINED, SO THAT'S ACCEPTED, EVERYONE WHO WAS THERE KNOWS THAT. QUESTIONS?

QUESTION: DIDN'T YOU YOURSELF EXPRESS SOME DISSATISFACTION WITH THE FACT THAT THERE WERE THESE OPT OUT CLAUSES CONTAINED WHICH GAVE COUNTRIES LIKE MALAYSIA...

FS: WELL, IT ALWAYS GETS TURNED AROUND THAT I EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION. I WAS ACTUALLY ASKED A QUESTION ABOUT PARAGRAPH 9 WHICH THE FIRST SECTION OF PARAGRAPH 9 HAS A PRETTY FUZZY, IT'S A PRETTY FUZZY SECTION AND IT IS QUITE DIFFICULT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS, AND MY ANSWER THEN AND NOW WAS -- I ASKED THE SAME QUESTION IN THE LEADERS' MEETING, I THINK WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT MEAN, AND THE ANSWER I WAS GIVEN WAS VERY CLEAR. FIRST OF ALL I WAS ASSURED THAT IT DOES NOT WEAKEN THE CONSENSUS RULE, THAT IS TO SAY IN APEC DECISIONS ARE REACHED BY CONSENSUS, THAT IS QUITE AN IMPORTANT SAFEGUARD FOR MEMBERS. AND SECONDLY THAT THE IMPLICATION THERE THAT MEMBERS CAN CHOOSE HOW FAST THEY IMPLEMENT IS AIMED AT NEW MEMBERS, THAT IS TO SAY PEOPLE WHO JOIN APEC LATER. WE WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT WHAT ARRANGEMENTS APPLY TO NEW MEMBERS, SO THAT IS NOT A GET OUT CLAUSE, AND I SPECIFICALLY ASKED AND CONFIRMED IT DOES NOT MODIFY PARAGRAPH 6 WHICH IS THE KEY COMMITMENT TO REACH FREE TRADE. SO I AM NOT TOO WORRIED ABOUT THAT ONE, I WAS ASKED ABOUT IT. THAT WAS MY ANSWER. DID YOU ASK ANOTHER QUESTION? OH YES THE OTHER ONE THAT I DID SAY I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO BE STRONGER WAS TO USE THE SHORTHAND, THE STANDSTILL PARAGRAPH, THAT IS TO SAY THE PARAGRAPH WHICH SAY WE'LL DO OUR BEST, WE'LL ALL DO OUR BEST, MEANWHILE IN THE SHORT TERM NOT TO INTRODUCE ANY NEW PROTECTIONIST MEASURES. I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED IF THAT WASN'T JUST WE'LL DO OUR BEST, BUT THAT IT WAS A CLEAR COMMITMENT NOT TO. BUT THAT WAS NEVER DRAFTED IN THAT WAY, IT WAS ALWAYS WE WOULD DO OUR BEST.

/QUESTION

QUESTION: THE MONETARY AUTHORITY TODAY INCREASED THE INTEREST RATE, FOLLOWING THE USA, TO 3.75 PER CENT. DO YOU THINK IT WILL HELP TO CONTROL THE INFLATION RATE AND SMOOTH THE ...

FS: YES, NORMALLY IT WILL WORK THROUGH INTO INTEREST RATES HERE AND THAT WILL BE HELPFUL IN TERMS OF THE BROAD APPROACH TO INFLATION. I GUESS IT WILL ALSO PROBABLY HELP TO KEEP PROPERTY PRICES DAMPED DOWN A BIT SO I AM ENTIRELY RELAXED ABOUT INTEREST RATES GOING UP. INDEED IT IS WHAT SOME HAVE BEEN URGING ME TO DO.

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THAT IT WILL AFFECT THE INVESTORS TO INVEST IN THE PROPERTY MARKET IN HONG KONG, NOW LOAN FROM THE BANK... DO YOU THINK IT WILL AFFECT THE BURDEN ...

FS: WELL, IT WILL HELP TO KEEP THE PROPERTY MARKET FROM BECOMING OVERHEATED AGAIN, I HOPE, THAT IS THE WAY I WOULD LIKE TO PUT IT.

QUESTION: MR MACLEOD, HOW YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR CHOICES OF ATTENDING NEXT YEAR?

FS: ABOUT NEXT YEAR, WELL WE HAVE ONLY JUST FINISHED THIS YEAR'S, SO ALL WE KNOW AT THE MOMENT IS, IT'S OSAKA BUT THERE'LL BE A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE, AS I SAID, EVEN IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, TO MAKE SURE THAT THE NEXT MEETING IS A SUCCESS.

QUESTION: YOUR CHOICES OF ATTENDANCE?

FS: MY CHOICES OF WELL WE'LL HAVE TO SEE.

QUESTION: ANY CONCERNS ABOUT THINGS IN THE AGREEMENT CHANGING BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING? HOW FIRM....

FS: THE DECLARATION IS THERE, THAT'S IT, IT'S AGREED SO IT CAN'T CHANGE, BUT WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS PUT FLESH ON THE BONES OF THAT AGREEMENT. WE ALL KNOW IT'S VERY GENERAL AT THE MOMENT. BUT YOU KNOW, IT'S AMAZING THAT NO ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT A YEAR OR SO AGO THAT WE WOULD GET THAT RANGE OF DIFFERENT ECONOMIES SIGNING UP TO FREE TRADE, THIS IS ABSOLUTELY EXTRAORDINARY.

QUESTION: IS IT NOW THE CASE THAT THE STRONGER MEMBERS OF APEC HELPING THE WEAKER MEMBERS? IS THAT HOW IT WORKS OUT? AND HOW DOES THAT WORK OUT IN PRACTICE TO HELP TO IMPLEMENT IT? OR DID YOU MENTION THAT?

FS: YES, IT WAS MENTIONED. AGAIN I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON YOUR PERCEPTION, OF COURSE AS WE SEE IT, FREE TRADE BRINGS IT'S OWN REWARDS REGARDLESS OF WHAT OTHERS DO, SO WE ARE RATHER LESS LOOKING AT IT AS STRONG HELPING WEAK OR MORE DEVELOPED HELPING LESS DEVELOPED. I THINK AS THAT GROUP LOWERS BARRIERS TO TRADE THEN THEY WILL ALL BENEFIT. THERE'S NO NEED FOR GREAT AGONISING. BUT I REALISE THAT FOR SOME OF THEM IT IS DIFFICULT, AND I JUST HAVE TO MENTION THE WORD AGRICULTURE TO ILLUSTRATE IT. SO THE FACT THAT THEY SIGNED UP AND THERE IS NO EXCLUSION CLAUSE THERE FOR PARTICULAR SECTORS IS A PRETTY GOOD ACHIEVEMENT.

QUESTION: QUICK QUESTION ABOUT GATT TOO. IS CHINA'S CHANCE OF GETTING IN BY THE END OF THE YEAR DIMMING?

FS: IT WASN'T DISCUSSED AT ALL IN THE LEADERS MEETING, IT MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN BILATERAL MEETINGS, BUT NOT IN ANY THAT I WAS AT. IT DIDN'T REALLY COME UP SO I DON'T HAVE ANY FRESH INSIGHT INTO THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE.

QUESTION: OVER THAT TIME, IT SEEMS LIKE THERE IS MORE TALK ABOUT CHINA NOT GETTING IN BY THE END.

FS: WELL, I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THE END OF THE YEAR WAS A PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL DATE, THERE IS A SORT OF PSYCHOLOGY THERE, IT DOESN'T ACTUALLY MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO ONE'S RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS WHETHER ONE IS IN BY THE END OF THE YEAR OR LATER. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHATSOEVER.

QUESTION: SIR HAMISH, DO YOU FEEL THAT THERE IS AN URGENCY FOR THE LAND COMMISSION TOMORROW TO ACHIEVE ALL THE TARGETS?

FS: I HOPE SO, IT WILL BE VERY HELPFUL IF IT DOES, BECAUSE WE HAVE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT THE SIGNING OF THE FINANCING SIDE, FINANCING AGREEMENTS WAS ONLY PART OF THE STORY AND IT WILL BE VERY REASSURING IF THE LAND COMMISSION COMES TO A CONCLUSION THIS WEEK.

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A TIMETABLE FOR IT?

FS: NO, I HOPE IT WILL BE TOMORROW. WE'LL SEE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

COMPETITION STUDY ON SUPERMARKET INDUSTRY

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WELCOMES THE PUBLICATION OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL'S COMPETITION STUDY REPORT ON THE SUPERMARKET INDUSTRY.

"WE CONGRATULATE THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ON ITS COMPLETION OF THE STUDY," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE COUNCIL HAS PUT IN A LOT OF EFFORTS IN STUDYING THE STATE OF COMPETITION IN THE SUPERMARKET INDUSTRY.

"WE WILL EXAMINE THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT IN DETAIL WITH A VIEW TO PUBLISHING A GOVERNMENT RESPONSE BEFORE MAY 1995," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"WE WELCOME COMMENTS ON THE REPORT FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS WELL AS INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE, INCLUDING THE SUPERMARKETS THEMSELVES," HE SAID.

"WE WILL APPROACH THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH AN OPEN MIND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THESE COMMENTS."

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY SEND THEIR VIEWS ON THE REPORT IN WRITING TO THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH, HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AT EIGHTH FLOOR, WEST WING, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, ICE HOUSE STREET, CENTRAL BEFORE DECEMBER 31.

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NEW LOCALISATION DRIVE IMPLEMENTED IN LEGAL DEPARTMENT

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A NEW SCHEME TO SPEED UP LOCALISATION IN THE SENIOR DIRECTORATE LEVEL OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM NEXT MONTH.

SIX LOCAL DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CROWN COUNSEL (DPCC) HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO TAKE PART IN THE SUCCESSION POSTS SCHEME WHICH PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS SCHEME TO TAKE ON SOME RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE PRINCIPAL CROWN COUNSEL (PCC) LEVEL IN ADDITION TO THEIR OWN DUTIES. IN RECOGNITION OF THIS, THEY WILL BE APPOINTED TO ACT IN SUPERNUMERARY PCC POSTS.

THE SIX DPCC CHOSEN WILL ALSO BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO ACT IN FUNCTIONAL PCC POSTS WHILE THE INCUMBENTS ARE AWAY ON OFFICIAL DUTIES OR ON HOLIDAY, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ARRANGEMENTS WILL ALSO BE MADE FOR THEM TO ATTEND SHORT SENIOR MANAGEMENT COURSES, DUTY VISITS, CONFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEM FOR FURTHER CAREER DEVELOPMENT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE DPCC CHOSEN TO TAKE PART IN THE SCHEME ARE MR HARRY MACLEOD OF THE PROSECUTIONS DIVISION, MS MAY WONG OF THE LAW DRAFTING DIVISION, MR ANTHONY WU AND MS AMELIA LUK OF THE CIVIL DIVISION, MR KENNETH YUEN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW DIVISION AND MR STEPHEN WONG OF THE LEGAL POLICY DIVISION.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE SUCCESSION POSTS SCHEME IS THE LATEST DRIVE BY THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT TO SPEED UP LOCALISATION WITHIN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS.

SINCE 1988, TWO LOCALISATION SCHEMES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE DEPARTMENT TO SPEED UP THE PACE OF LOCALISATION IN THE CROWN COUNSEL GRADES. THESE ARE THE DOUBLE LADDER SCHEME INTRODUCED IN 1988 FOR FAST PROMOTION OF CROWN COUNSEL (CC) TO SENIOR CROWN COUNSEL (SCC) AND THE DEVELOPMENT POSTS SCHEME INTRODUCED IN 1991 FOR GROOMING OF SCC TO DPCC.

AS A RESULT OF THESE LOCALISATION DRIVES, THE PROPORTION OF LOCAL COUNSEL IN THE DIRECTORATE LEVEL HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM 9.3 PER CENT IN DECEMBER 1990 TO 32 PER CENT THIS MONTH.

LOCALISATION IN THE CC GRADE OVERALL HAS ALSO INCREASED FROM 38.6 PER CENT IN DECEMBER 1988 TO 60 PER CENT NOW. THIS IS 14 MONTHS AHEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT'S TARGET OF END OF 1995, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO CONFIDENT TO ACCOMPLISH THE 50 PER CENT TARGET IN THE DIRECTORATE LEVEL BY END OF NEXT YEAR.

NOTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS VARIOUS LOCALISATION EFFORTS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS MINDFUL THAT THE PACE OF LOCALISATION MUST BE REALISTIC AND MEASURED.

"OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY OF SERVICE SHOULD IN NO WAY BE SACRIFICED," HE STRESSED.

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LIQUIDITY ADJUSTMENT FACILITY RATES GO UP
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THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY (HKMA) ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE MONEY MARKETS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AN INCREASE IN THE KEY INTEREST RATES, THE LIQUIDITY ADJUSTMENT FACILITY (LAF) RATES, BY 0.75 PERCENTAGE POINT.

IN LINE WITH THE INCREASE IN THE U.S. DISCOUNT RATE AND FED FUNDS RATE BY THE FEDERAL RESERVE LATE LAST NIGHT, THE HKMA INCREASED THE LAF BID AND OFFER RATES TO 3.75 PER CENT AND 5.75 PER CENT FROM 3 PER CENT AND 5 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

THE BID AND OFFER RATES OF LAF, HONG KONG'S VERSION OF A DISCOUNT WINDOW, SET THE FLOOR AND CEILING FOR OVERNIGHT INTEREST RATES IN THE HONG KONG INTERBANK MARKET.

THE LATEST ADJUSTMENT REPRESENTS THE THIRD TIME THE HKMA HAS RAISED LAF BID AND OFFER RATES THIS YEAR. THE PREVIOUS TWO OCCASIONS TOOK PLACE ON AUGUST 17 AND MAY 17.

THE DETERMINATION OF THE BEST LENDING RATE AND INTEREST RATES ON DEPOSITS WITH MATURITIES OF MORE THAN ONE MONTH IS A MATTER FOR INDIVIDUAL BANKS.

THE INTEREST RATES ON RETAIL DEPOSITS WITH MATURITIES OF ONE MONTH OR LESS WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS LATER THIS WEEK, HAVING REGARD TO THE INCREASE IN LAF RATES THIS MORNING AND AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE HKMA.

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VISA REQUIREMENT FOR MACAU RESIDENTS

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THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE WAIVER OF VISA REQUIREMENT FOR MACAU RESIDENTS TRAVELLING ON PORTUGUESE ALIENS PASSPORTS IN TRANSIT THROUGH HONG KONG AND RELAXATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR ISSUING MACAU VISIT PERMITS TO EX-CHINA RESIDENTS OF MACAU.

WITH EFFECT FROM NOVEMBER 21, 1994, HOLDERS OF PORTUGUESE ALIENS PASSPORTS WHO HAVE HELD MACAU IDENTITY CARDS FOR TWO YEARS AND ARE IN TRANSIT THROUGH HONG KONG MAY BE GRANTED VISA-FREE ENTRY OF UP TO SEVEN DAYS, PROVIDED THAT THEY POSSESS ONWARD FACILITIES (INCLUDING ENTRY FACILITIES FOR THE DESTINATION COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES EN ROUTE, IF NECESSARY) AND CONFIRMED ONWARD TICKETS (THIS REQUIREMENT MAY BE WAIVED FOR TRAVELLERS RETURNING TO MACAU), A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID.

AT PRESENT, THESE TRAVELLERS REQUIRE VISAS WHILE IN TRANSIT IN HONG KONG FOR 24 HOURS.

"IT IS ALSO PLANNED TO RELAX THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE MACAU VISIT SCHEME," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

AT PRESENT, EX-CHINA RESIDENTS OF MACAU WHO HAVE BEEN RESIDENT IN MACAU FOR FIVE YEARS ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR A SINGLE VISIT PERMIT EVERY SIX MONTHS WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO VISIT HONG KONG FOR 14 DAYS.

THEY MAY APPLY FOR MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS (VALID FOR ONE YEAR AND COSTS \$45 EACH) WHICH WILL ALLOW THEM TO VISIT HONG KONG FOR UP TO SEVEN DAYS IN ANY CALENDAR MONTH IF THEIR VISITS FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS HAVE BEEN TROUBLE-FREE.

WITH EFFECT FROM NOVEMBER 21, 1994, EX-CHINA RESIDENTS OF MACAU WHO ARE HOLDERS OF MACAU IDENTITY CARDS FOR FIVE YEARS OR LONGER WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR A NEW TYPE OF MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE NEW MULTIPLE VISIT PERMIT IS VALID FOR TWO YEARS AND COSTS \$90, HE ADDED.

"THE EXISTING PRACTICE OF ISSUING TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS SINGLE VISIT PERMITS AND MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS VALID FOR ONE YEAR WILL DISCONTINUE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE SAID THERE WAS A PLAN TO FURTHER LOWER THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR EX-CHINA RESIDENTS OF MACAU FOR THE ISSUE OF MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS.

"IT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES AND FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE MADE IN DUE COURSE," HE SAID.

"THE REASONS FOR THE RELAXATION ARE THAT RESIDENTS OF MACAU HAVE PROVED TO BE LESS AN IMMIGRATION PROBLEM FOR US AND THEIR VISITS HAVE A GOOD TRACK RECORD.

"THERE IS NO EASING OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF IMMIGRATION CONTROL AND THAT VISITORS MUST LEAVE HONG KONG AT THE END OF THEIR PERMITTED STAY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUND PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO SET UP A PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUND TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR PRISONERS TO ENGAGE IN ACADEMIC PURSUITS.

SUCH A FUND WILL BE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUND BILL TO BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 18).

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THIS WAS PART OF A SCHEME TO ENCOURAGE PRISONERS TO OBTAIN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS WHILE IN PRISON.

THE AIM WAS TO HELP PRISONERS BETTER PREPARED TO REINTEGRATE INTO THE COMMUNITY UPON THEIR RELEASE FROM PRISON, HE SAID.

"AT PRESENT, YOUNG OFFENDERS AGED BETWEEN 14 AND 21 ARE PROVIDED WITH GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL COURSES IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS ON A COMPULSORY BASIS," THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

"AS FOR ADULT PRISONERS, EVENING CLASSES, SELF-STUDY PACKAGES AND CORRESPONDENCE COURSES ARE AVAILABLE ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS."

ALL ADULT PRISONERS ARE ENCOURAGED AND ASSISTED, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, TO TAKE PART IN EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS SUCH AS THOSE ORGANISED BY THE LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND THE CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON INSTITUTE, AS WELL AS THE PITMAN EXAMINATIONS AND THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION.

IN 1993-94, 1,136 ADULT PRISONERS ATTENDED EVENING CLASSES PROVIDED BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, WHILE 420 ADULT PRISONERS ENROLLED IN EXTERNAL SELF-STUDY AND CORRESPONDENCE COURSES. TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY ADULT PRISONERS TOOK PART IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS DURING THIS PERIOD.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID SOME PRISONERS, IN PARTICULAR ADULT PRISONERS, HOWEVER, WERE UNABLE TO PURSUE ACADEMIC STUDIES THROUGH A LACK OF MONEY.

"WHILE EVERY ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED TO THE PRISONERS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO MEET THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF EACH PRISONER, SUCH AS CONDUCTING COURSES AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OR PURCHASING BOOKS AND SIMILAR MATERIALS FOR PRISONERS," HE SAID.

DONATIONS AMOUNTING TO \$1.31 MILLION HAVE BEEN OFFERED BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, THE HONGKONG BANK AND DUTY FREE SHOPPERS LTD TO SET UP THE PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUND.

THE FUND WILL PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS FOR ACADEMIC PURSUITS AND WILL ALSO BE USED TO SET UP APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS A COMPUTER LABORATORY, FOR USE BY PRISONERS.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES WILL BE THE TRUSTEE OF THE FUND, WHICH WILL BE MANAGED BY A PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUND COMMITTEE.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WILL APPOINT THE CHAIRMAN AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, WHO WILL NOT BE PUBLIC OFFICERS.

AN INVESTMENT ADVISORY BOARD, ALSO TO BE APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS TO INVEST THE MONIES IN THE FUND.

"THE ACCOUNTS OF THE FUND WILL BE TABLED EACH YEAR AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS A POSITIVE INITIATIVE TOWARDS ENHANCING PRISONERS' REHABILITATION.

SEAFARERS BILL TO BE INTRODUCED

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THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (SEAFARERS) BILL, WHICH AIMS AT LOCALISING THE CURRENT UNITED KINGDOM ENACTMENTS RELATING TO SEAFARERS, WILL BE GAZETTED THIS FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 18), ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARINE (SHIPPING), MR MATHAI VARGHESE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT WILL ALSO CONSOLIDATE ALL LEGISLATION APPLICABLE TO SEAFARERS UNDER ONE ORDINANCE.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RATIONALISE AND MODERNISE THE LEGISLATION, SOME OF WHICH DATE BACK TO 1894.

THE BILL PROVIDES A COMPREHENSIVE BODY OF LAWS RELATING TO THE SUPPLY, SELECTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF SEAFARERS.

IT WILL REGULATE THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS AND WILL PRESCRIBE STANDARDS OF SAFETY, HEALTH, WELFARE AND HOURS OF WORK ON BOARD HONG KONG SHIPS.

"THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL WILL ENSURE THAT THE LAW OF HONG KONG CONTINUES TO IMPLEMENT, AS AT PRESENT, THE OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED ON US THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS WHICH APPLY TO HONG KONG," MR VARGHESE SAID.

THE DRAFTING OF THE BILL AND ITS 28 SUBSIDIARY REGULATIONS HAS TAKEN SOME TIME. EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WERE CARRIED OUT WITH THE INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE DRAFTING PROCESS.

THE PROPOSALS FOR LOCALISATION OF THE LAWS RELATING TO SEAFARERS HAS ALSO BEEN AGREED BY THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP IN JUNE THIS YEAR.

"THE BILL ENSURES CONTINUITY OF THE EXISTING SYSTEMS RELATING TO THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF SEAFARERS. IT WILL PROVIDE CERTAINTY FOR THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY AND HELP MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S POSITION AS A LEADING MARITIME AND SHIPPING CENTRE," MR VARGHESE SAID.

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MORE EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT PROCEDURES
UNDER BUILDINGS ORDINANCE

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THE GOVERNMENT IS ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE PROCEDURES UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE WITH AMENDMENT LEGISLATION.

THE AMENDMENT LEGISLATION, COMPRISING THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1994, THE BUILDING (APPEAL) REGULATION AND THE BUILDING (ADMINISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) REGULATION 1994, CAME INTO OPERATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PROCEDURES RELATE TO THE REGISTRATION OF AUTHORISED PERSONS, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS AND TO APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF THE BUILDING AUTHORITY.

"CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRATION WILL BE ISSUED TO AUTHORISED PERSONS, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS AND CONTRACTORS UNDER THE NEW PROCEDURES. THIS FACILITATES EASIER IDENTIFICATION BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND BY STAFF OF THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT," THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS, MRS HELEN YU, SAID.

THE ONUS FOR ENSURING CONTINUED REGISTRATION NOW RESTS WITH BUILDING PROFESSIONALS AND CONTRACTORS. THEY CANNOT PRACTISE FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE WITHOUT A VALID CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION.

THE PROCEDURES FOR APPEALS AGAINST THE BUILDING AUTHORITY'S DECISIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN AMENDED SO THAT THE APPEAL PROCESS CONFORMS TO PRESENT-DAY LEGAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES, INCLUDING THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

THE AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE PROVIDE FOR THE SETTING UP OF AN APPEAL TRIBUNAL ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT, AND FOR ITS CONDUCT OF MEETINGS AND HEARINGS TO BE HELD IN PUBLIC GENERALLY.

"I WELCOME THESE CHANGES. THEY MAKE FOR BETTER EFFICIENCY AND GREATER TRANSPARENCY," MRS YU NOTED.

THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT WILL ANSWER ENQUIRIES ON TEL 848 2222 ABOUT THE NEW REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPEAL PROCEDURES. ENQUIRIES MAY ALSO BE MADE IN PERSON AT THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, 11TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, CENTRAL.

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REGISTRATION FEES FOR LIFT AND ESCALATOR PERSONNEL REVISED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TO REVISE FEES FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL TO BECOME AN AERIAL ROPEWAY PROFESSIONAL OR OPERATOR AND FOR REGISTRATION AS A LIFT OR ESCALATOR ENGINEER AND CONTRACTOR.

FEES FOR PROCESSING AND ISSUING OF THE RELEVANT CERTIFICATES UNDER THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE WILL ALSO BE REVISED.

THE FEES WILL GO UP BY ABOUT 10 PER CENT WITH EFFECT FROM DECEMBER 30, 1994 TO REFLECT THE COST INCREASE IN PROVIDING THESE SERVICES SINCE THE LAST REVISION IN 1993.

DETAILS OF THE FEE REVISION ARE SET OUT IN THE AERIAL ROPEWAY (FEES) (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) REGULATION 1994 AND THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (FEES) (AMENDMENTS) (NO.2) REGULATION 1994 WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY.

/DETAILS OF

DETAILS OF THE EXISTING AND THE NEW FEES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

DESCRIPTION OF FEE ITEM -----	EXISTING FEE ----- \$	PROPOSED FEE ----- \$
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF SURVEYORS, COMPETENT PERSONS, CONTROLLERS AND OPERATORS UNDER AERIAL ROPEWAY (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE) REGULATIONS -----		
FOR SURVEYOR	2,480.00	2,730.00
FOR COMPETENT PERSON	880.00	965.00
FOR CONTROLLER	880.00	965.00
FOR OPERATOR	550.00	605.00
APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT OF DUTIES IN THE CERTIFICATE BY AN OPERATOR HOLDING A LIMITED CERTIFICATE	550.00	605.00
FEES SPECIFIED UNDER THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE (CAP. 327) -----		
UNDER SECTION 6 FOR INCLUSION OF PERSON IN THE REGISTER OF LIFT ENGINEERS	3,030.00	3,330.00
UNDER SECTION 6 FOR INCLUSION OF PERSON IN THE REGISTER OF ESCALATOR ENGINEERS	3,030.00	3,330.00
UNDER SECTION 6 FOR INCLUSION AT THE SAME TIME OF PERSON IN THE REGISTER OF LIFT ENGINEERS AND THE REGISTER OF ESCALATOR ENGINEERS	3,030.00	3,330.00
UNDER SECTION 11C FOR INCLUSION OF PERSON IN THE REGISTER OF LIFT CONTRACTORS	805.00	885.00
UNDER SECTION 11C FOR INCLUSION OF PERSON IN THE REGISTER OF ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS	805.00	885.00
UNDER SECTION 12(2)	465.00	510.00
UNDER SECTION 13(2)	520.00	570.00
UNDER SECTION 26(1)(B)	190.00	210.00
UNDER SECTION 27(2)	190.00	210.00

MEDICAL RELATED REGISTRATION FEES TO GO UP
* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT HAS REVISED THE LEVELS OF CHARGES UNDER THE DENTISTS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE, MEDICAL REGISTRATION ORDINANCE, MIDWIVES REGISTRATION ORDINANCE AND NURSES REGISTRATION ORDINANCE TO RECOVER OPERATING COSTS.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT A RECENT STUDY BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SHOWED THE EXISTING FEE LEVELS WHICH WERE LAST REVIEWED IN 1989 WERE BELOW COST.

THE NEW FEES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE ON NOVEMBER 18 (FRIDAY). THEY WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON DECEMBER 28 (WEDNESDAY).

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GAS SAFETY FEES TO BE REVISED
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VARIOUS FEES PAYABLE UNDER THE GAS SAFETY ORDINANCE WILL BE REVISED ON DECEMBER 30 THIS YEAR, TO REFLECT THE INCREASED COSTS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES.

THREE SETS OF REGULATIONS TO THIS EFFECT WILL BE GAZETTED THIS FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 18).

THEY ARE THE GAS SAFETY (GAS SUPPLY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1994, GAS SAFETY (REGISTRATION OF GAS INSTALLERS AND GAS CONTRACTORS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994, AND GAS SAFETY (REGISTRATION OF GAS SUPPLY COMPANIES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994.

THE GAS SAFETY (GAS SUPPLY) REGULATIONS STIPULATE THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION WORK ON NOTIFIABLE GAS INSTALLATION; APPROVAL TO USE NOTIFIABLE GAS INSTALLATIONS; AND ISSUE AND ANNUAL RENEWAL OF PERMITS FOR GAS TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES - ROAD TANKERS AND LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS CYLINDER WAGONS.

THE GAS SAFETY (REGISTRATION OF GAS INSTALLERS AND GAS CONTRACTORS) REGULATIONS STIPULATE THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AS A GAS INSTALLER AND A GAS CONTRACTOR.

THE GAS SAFETY (REGISTRATION OF GAS SUPPLY COMPANIES) REGULATIONS STIPULATE THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF AN APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A GAS SUPPLY COMPANY.

"IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT FEES CHARGED BY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD IN GENERAL BE SET AT A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO RECOVER THE FULL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS INCURRED," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE EXISTING FEES WERE LAST REVIEWED IN 1993. TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INCREASE IN COSTS SINCE THEIR LAST REVIEW, THE FEES SHOULD NOW BE INCREASED BY 10 PER CENT," HE SAID.

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TRAVEL AGENTS' LICENSING FEES ON RISE
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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, IN EXERCISE OF THE POWER DELEGATED TO HIM TO VARY FEES AND CHARGES, HAS APPROVED REVISION TO THE TRAVEL AGENTS' LICENSING AND RELATED FEES WITH EFFECT FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR.

THE REVISED FEES ARE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

	EXISTING ----- (\$)	NEW RATE ----- (\$)
FOR AN APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE	575	630
FOR A LICENCE OR THE RENEWAL OF A LICENCE (FOR EACH MONTH OF THE TERM)	440	485
FOR AMENDING A LICENCE -		
A) FOR AN ADDITIONAL ADDRESS FOR EACH NEW PREMISES	605	665
B) OTHERWISE	143	160
FOR ISSUING A DUPLICATE OF A LICENCE	840	925
FOR INSPECTING THE REGISTER OR ANY PART THEREOF	33	35
FOR ISSUING OR SUPPLYING A COPY OF OR EXTRACT FROM ANY ENTRY IN THE REGISTER	33	35
FOR CERTIFYING A COPY OF OR EXTRACT FROM ANY ENTRY IN THE REGISTER	77	85

"THE TRAVEL AGENTS' LICENSING AND RELATED FEES WERE LAST REVISED ON JANUARY 1, 1994," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THEY ARE SUBJECT TO REGULAR REVIEW AND THE REVISED RATES ARE PRESCRIBED TO RECOVER THE OPERATING COSTS RELATING TO LICENSING FUNCTIONS AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REGISTER OF LICENSED TRAVEL AGENTS," HE SAID.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL AGENTS HAS BEEN CONSULTED AND IT ADVISES THAT THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN FEES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION DATE ARE ACCEPTABLE.

THE REVISED FEES ARE SET OUT IN THE TRAVEL AGENTS (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 TO BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 18).

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ELECTRICITY ORDINANCE FEES TO BE REVISED

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VARIOUS FEES PAYABLE UNDER THE ELECTRICITY ORDINANCE WILL BE REVISED ON DECEMBER 30 THIS YEAR, TO REFLECT THE INCREASED COSTS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES.

TWO SETS OF REGULATIONS TO THIS EFFECT WILL BE GAZETTED THIS FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 18).

THEY ARE THE ELECTRICITY (REGISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 AND THE ELECTRICITY (WIRING) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994.

THE ELECTRICITY (REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS STIPULATE THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION, AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION, AS AN ELECTRICAL WORKER, AS AN ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR AND OF A GENERATING FACILITY.

THE ELECTRICITY (WIRING) REGULATIONS STIPULATE THE FEES PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF AN APPLICATION FOR ENDORSEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES OF A CERTIFICATE FROM THE OWNER PREPARED BY A REGISTERED ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR OR WORKER AS TO THE SAFETY OF PRESCRIBED TYPES OF FIXED ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS.

"IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT FEES CHARGED BY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD IN GENERAL BE SET AT A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO RECOVER THE FULL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS INCURRED," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"DURING THE LAST COSTING EXERCISE IN 1993, THE FEES SHOULD HAVE BEEN REVISED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INFLATION SINCE 1989.

"HOWEVER, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE VIEWS OF THE ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNIONS, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE INCREASE SHOULD BE PHASED IN OVER TWO YEARS: FEES BE INCREASED BY 40 PER CENT IN THE FIRST YEAR, AND BE FURTHER BROUGHT UP TO THE FULL COSTS AT 1994/95 PRICE LEVEL IN THE SECOND YEAR.

"TO MEET THIS SECOND TARGET, THE FEES SHOULD NOW BE INCREASED BY ABOUT 36 PER CENT," HE SAID.

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POPULATION SURVEY IN NEW TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

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THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS COMMISSIONED A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CARRY OUT A SURVEY ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN PRIVATE HOUSING IN SELECTED NEW TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS.

THE SURVEY RESULTS WILL BE USED TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT IN PRODUCING POPULATION DISTRIBUTION ESTIMATES OR PROJECTIONS FOR THE PLANNING OF VARIOUS FACILITIES, SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.

A SAMPLE OF ABOUT 9,000 HOUSEHOLDS ON TSING YI AND IN TSEUNG KWAN O, TIN SHUI WAI, MA ON SHAN, FAIRVIEW PARK, PALM SPRINGS, HONG LOK YUEN, MARINA COVE AND DISCOVERY BAY HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR INTERVIEWS.

THE SURVEY HAS COMMENCED AND NOTIFICATION LETTERS HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE DEPARTMENT TO ALL THE SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS, REQUESTING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY. INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION COLLECTED IN THE SURVEY WILL BE KEPT IN CONFIDENCE.

ENQUIRIES REGARDING THE SURVEY CAN BE DIRECTED TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT ON TEL 848 2205.

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REDRESS SYSTEM PUBLICISED

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS (COMAC), MR ANDREW SO, SPOKE ON "THE ACCESS AND AWARENESS OF COMAC" AT A LUNCHEON MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT THE MEETING, HE FURTHER PROMOTED PUBLIC AWARENESS OF COMAC BY PUBLICISING A SUMMARY OF AN ANONYMISED INVESTIGATION REPORT ON A COMPLAINT.

THE REPORT WAS ON A COMPLAINT LODGED AGAINST THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT FOR FAILURE IN IMPLEMENTING PROPERLY AND IMPARTIALLY THE "OVERCROWDING RELIEF SCHEME" IN A HOUSING ESTATE.

MR SO STATED THAT APART FROM PUBLISHING INVESTIGATION REPORTS, THE COMAC OFFICE WOULD PLAN FOR A SERIES OF PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES TO AROUSE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE REDRESS SYSTEM AND DIRECT ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE "ACCESS" BROADCAST ON AIR LAST SUNDAY INTRODUCED THE WORK OF THE COMAC OFFICE.

IN ADDITION, STATISTICAL DATA ON ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION WOULD BE PUBLICISED ON THE "COMAC NEWS" ISSUED TO THE MEDIA EVERY MONTH.

BEFORE CONCLUDING HIS TALK, MR SO REITERATED THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE REDRESS SYSTEM VERY MUCH DEPENDED ON THE PUBLIC'S CONFIDENCE IN AND SUPPORT OF THE SYSTEM.

HE APPEALED TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO MAKE USE OF THE DIRECT ACCESS SYSTEM TO REDRESS GRIEVANCES AND INJUSTICE IF THEY WERE SUBJECT TO MALADMINISTRATION WITH A VIEW TO IDENTIFYING FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE FOR SUCH MALADMINISTRATION, BRINGING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS IN PROCEDURES AND POLICY AND ACHIEVING FAIRNESS IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

ENQUIRIES ON THE ABOVE CAN BE MADE OF MS ANNA CHAN, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER (ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS), ON TEL 805 7015.

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AIR QUALITY REPORT FOR OCTOBER

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RELEASED AIR QUALITY INFORMATION FOR LAST MONTH.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS TO KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF THE AIR QUALITY LEVELS IN THE TERRITORY AND TO EXPLAIN THE MEASUREMENTS.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT CONTAINS MONITORING RESULTS FROM MONG KOK, CENTRAL/WESTERN AND KWAI CHUNG, WHICH REPRESENT THREE IMPORTANT LAND USE TYPES IN THE TERRITORY:

- * LOCATIONS CLOSE TO ROAD TRAFFIC IN BUILT-UP URBAN AREAS,
- * COMBINED COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, AND
- * DISTRICTS CLOSE TO INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

THE DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY MONITORS AIR QUALITY CONTINUOUSLY AT EIGHT STATIONS, INCLUDING THE THREE MENTIONED. SHORT-TERM MEASUREMENT EXERCISES ARE ALSO UNDERTAKEN AS AND WHERE THE NEED ARISES.

THE REPORTED AIR POLLUTANTS INCLUDE SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO₂), NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO₂), TOTAL SUSPENDED PARTICULATES (TSP) WHICH COMPRISE ALL SIZES OF DUST PARTICLES, AND THE RESPIRABLE FRACTION OF THE DUST (RSP). ALL THESE POLLUTANTS CAN AFFECT RESPIRATORY HEALTH IN SUFFICIENT CONCENTRATION.

IN OCTOBER, TWO EXCEEDANCES OF THE 24-HOUR AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES WERE RECORDED AT MONG KOK. TSP LEVELS WERE FOUND EXCEEDING THE OBJECTIVE ON OCTOBER 20 WHILE NO₂ BREACHED ITS LIMIT ON OCTOBER 28.

STRONG WIND ON OCTOBER 20 BLEW A LOT OF HEAVY SURFACE DUST INTO THE AIR. WHILE THIS CAUSED SIGNIFICANT AIR POLLUTANT CONCENTRATIONS AT ALL STATIONS, THE STREET LEVEL SITE AT MONG KOK MEASURED THE GREATEST INCREASE AS IT IS NEAREST TO THE SURFACE.

ON OCTOBER 28 WHEN NO₂ LIMIT WAS BREACHED, SIGNIFICANT CONCENTRATIONS WERE MEASURED AT ALL THREE SITES. LOW WIND SPEEDS, ASSOCIATED WITH THE MEETING OF COLDER CONTINENTAL AIR AND WARMER MARINE AIR, RESULTED IN THE ACCUMULATION OF THIS VEHICLE RELATED POLLUTANT.

IN GENERAL, SULPHUR DIOXIDE LEVELS WERE LOW AT ALL STATIONS IN OCTOBER.

THE GASES AND PARTICLES DESCRIBED ORIGINATED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES. SO₂ IS MOSTLY PRODUCED WHEN FUELS THAT CONTAIN SULPHUR ARE BURNED. NO₂ IS FORMED DURING COMBUSTION BY THE COMBINATION OF NITROGEN AND OXYGEN.

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HOWEVER THE MAJORITY OF IT IS FORMED IN THE ATMOSPHERE BY THE OXIDATION OF NITRIC OXIDE (NO), ALSO A PRODUCT OF COMBUSTION.

VEHICLE EXHAUST IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF NO AND NO₂ IN TERMS OF IMPACT ON LOCAL AIR QUALITY. IT IS ALSO A MAJOR SOURCE OF AIRBORNE PARTICULATE MATTER, ESPECIALLY THE SMALLER RESPIRABLE PARTICLES.

DIESEL-ENGINED VEHICLES SUCH AS TAXIS, PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES, PASSENGER COACHES, FRANCHISED BUSES AND LIGHT AND HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES ARE THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTOR OF PARTICULATE MATTER. OTHER SOURCES INCLUDE INDUSTRY, FURNACES AND BOILERS, CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, THE SEA AND THE SOIL.

IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT WHILE THE WEATHER AND CLIMATE ALWAYS AFFECT THE CONCENTRATIONS OF POLLUTANTS IN THE AIR, THE ONLY SURE WAY OF REDUCING THE LEVELS IS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM THE MAN-MADE SOURCES.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS AIR QUALITY REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT MR RAYMOND LEUNG ON TEL 594 6401.

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION	TIME (HOURS)	CUMULATIVE CHANGE (\$ MILLION)
	-----	-----	-----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,832	0930	-182
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,551	1000	-193
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	-173
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	-176	1200	-176
LAF TODAY	-105	1500	-176
		1600	-176
LAF RATE 3.75% BID/5.75% OFFER	TWI 121.6	*+0.2*	16.11.94

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	4.79	18 MONTHS	2605	6.35	99.78	6.61
1 MONTH	4.74	23 MONTHS	3610	4.20	100.03	7.00
3 MONTHS	5.11	29 MONTHS	3704	6.15	97.69	7.32
6 MONTHS	5.48	36 MONTHS	3710	7.25	99.43	7.61
12 MONTHS	6.04	58 MONTHS	5909	7.45	97.43	8.26

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 38,978 MN

CLOSED 16 NOVEMBER 1994

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994

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MOTION DEBATE ON JUVENILE CRIME: S FOR S

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN MOTION DEBATE ON JUVENILE CRIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

AS MANY MEMBERS HAVE EXPLAINED VERY CLEARLY THIS EVENING, THERE IS NO SINGLE CAUSE OF JUVENILE CRIME. IT HAS MANY SOCIAL CAUSES, WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED BY A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MEASURES - THROUGH THE FAMILY, THROUGH THE SCHOOLS, THROUGH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES. I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE CRIME IS A PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT. MANY DEPARTMENTS ARE INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT - THE POLICE, THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT. THERE EXISTS THE NECESSARY INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY TO CO-ORDINATE THEIR WORK AND MONITOR THE RESULTS.

THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE HAS ALWAYS GIVEN PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE CRIME. IT HAS ESTABLISHED A STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS, ON WHICH BOTH NON-OFFICIALS AND ALL THE DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST JUVENILE CRIME ARE REPRESENTED:

- * TO PUT FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS OF PREVENTING POTENTIAL YOUNG OFFENDERS FROM OFFENDING;
- * TO ADVISE THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE ON POSSIBLE WAYS IN WHICH THE TREATMENT OF YOUNG OFFENDERS COULD BE IMPROVED; AND
- * TO MONITOR THE WORK OF THE YOUNG OFFENDERS ASSESSMENT PANEL AND CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION OF YOUNG OFFENDERS.

THE STANDING COMMITTEE HAS COMMISSIONED THE SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTO THE SOCIAL CAUSES OF JUVENILE CRIME, TO HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM BETTER AND TO HELP US FORMULATE NEW AND IMPROVED POLICIES TO TACKLE IT. THE RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE.

BUT I SHOULD LIKE FIRST TO OUTLINE THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM AND WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN DOING TO ADDRESS IT.

DURING EACH OF THE PAST TEN YEARS, THE PROPORTION OF JUVENILES ARRESTED FOR CRIME HAS VARIED BETWEEN 12% AND 18% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS ARRESTED FOR CRIME. IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1994, 5,220 JUVENILES WERE ARRESTED, REPRESENTING 14% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS ARRESTED FOR CRIME DURING THAT PERIOD. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO NOTE THAT, APART FROM A SLIGHT INCREASE IN 1991, THE PROPORTION OF JUVENILES ARRESTED HAS REDUCED CONSISTENTLY IN EACH OF THE LAST SEVEN YEARS.

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BUT WE ARE FAR FROM COMPLACENT ABOUT THIS. THE TREND OF THE JUVENILE OFFENDER RATE IS NOT SO ENCOURAGING. OVER THE SAME SEVEN YEARS, THE RATE HAS DECREASED; BUT ONLY marginally AND NOT CONSISTENTLY. THE PROBLEM REMAINS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN; IN PARTICULAR THE INVOLVEMENT OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN SHOP THEFT, MISCELLANEOUS THEFT AND OFFENCES RELATING TO UNLAWFUL SOCIETIES, WHICH CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY OF OFFENCES FOR WHICH JUVENILES ARE ARRESTED.

WE ARE TACKLING THE PROBLEM, FIRST, THROUGH CO-ORDINATED ACTION IN THE SCHOOLS, INVOLVING THE POLICE, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

WE ARE NOT DENYING THE PROBLEM OF INVOLVEMENT OF JUVENILE WITH TRIAD SOCIETIES AND OTHER GANGS, NOR WE IGNORING THE PROBLEM. THE POLICE DEPLOY OFFICERS, BOTH IN UNIFORM AND IN PLAIN CLOTHES, IN THE VICINITY OF SCHOOLS, AND IN OTHER AREAS FREQUENTED BY JUVENILES, IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY BAD ELEMENTS AND ELIMINATE POTENTIAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES; THEY PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ATTEMPTS TO RECRUIT YOUNG PEOPLE INTO TRIAD ORGANISATIONS AND STREET GANGS.

IN GENERAL, THE POLICE MAINTAIN GOOD LIAISON WITH AND RECEIVE GOOD CO-OPERATION FROM SCHOOLS IN TACKLING THIS PROBLEM. THEY OBTAIN INFORMATION ON TRIAD AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES TO A NUMBER OF SOURCES, INCLUDING CRIME REPORTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS. CERTAINLY RELUCTANCE TO REPORT IS A PROBLEM. BUT THE POLICE ARE TAKING A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM. THROUGH THE SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICERS, WHO CONTACT WITH PUPILS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS, AND THROUGH MAKING IT EASIER TO REPORT CRIME ANONYMOUSLY IF PREFERRED BY THE INFORMANTS.

THE POLICE ALSO PROVIDE DEDICATED SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS, AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR DISTRICT ANTI-TRIAD SECTIONS, WHICH CONDUCT REGULAR VISITS TO SCHOOLS TO WARN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF GETTING INVOLVED WITH TRIADS; TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS RELATING TO TRIAD ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS; TO IDENTIFY AND ARREST TRIAD RECRUITERS; TO INTERVIEW ARRESTED PERSONS, VICTIMS AND WITNESSES; AND TO ASSIST IN THE FORMULATION OF STRATEGIES TO COMBAT VIOLENT AND TRIAD-RELATED CRIME INVOLVING STUDENTS.

HARD-HITTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, AIMED PRIMARILY AT YOUNG PEOPLE, ARE MOUNTED AT REGULAR INTERVALS TO WARN OF THE DANGERS OF CRIME AND ITS CONSEQUENCES AND TO ENCOURAGE VICTIMS AND WITNESSES TO REPORT CRIME, IN CONFIDENCE, USING THE POLICE HOTLINE.

WE ARE, AS MRS PEGGY LAM HAS PROPOSED, ABOUT TO LAUNCH A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN, TO DEMYSTIFY AND DEGLAMOURISE THE TRIADS. THIS CAMPAIGN IS TARGETED AT JUVENILES AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE POLICE ALSO LIAISE CLOSELY WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS, AND HAS PROVIDED IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE TEACHERS, TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH DIFFICULT AND DELINQUENT STUDENTS, WHO ARE FREQUENTLY THE TARGETS OF TRIADS. THE DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES AFTER SCHOOL HOURS; ENCOURAGES STUDENT GUIDANCE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS TO TALK TO PARENTS ABOUT THE ROLE WHICH PARENTS CAN PLAY IN PREVENTING THEIR CHILDREN FROM COMMITTING CRIME AND BECOMING ASSOCIATED WITH TRIADS; AND ASSISTS STUDENTS WITH ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN ORDER TO HELP THEM OVERCOME THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, PROVIDES SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK. THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDED 39 ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 227, TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN TRIAD ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS. THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO STEPPING UP ITS MEASURES TO TACKLE YOUTH PROBLEMS; IT WILL PROVIDE 22 ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR; INTENDS TO EXPAND ITS OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK SERVICE; AND TO FORM INTEGRATED TEAMS TO POOL TOGETHER RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS SO AS TO BE ABLE TO MEET BETTER THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK. THERE IS SURE GOOD LIAISON BETWEEN THE POLICE, SCHOOLS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND IN PARTICULAR IN HELPING SCHOOLS TO DEAL WITH TRIADS AND DELINQUENT STUDENTS AND TO DISSEMINATE THE MESSAGE ON THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF TRIADS AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.

WE ARE ALSO TAKING MEASURES TO REHABILITATE THOSE WHO HAVE COMMITTED CRIME.

THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS' DISCRETION SCHEME AIMS TO REHABILITATE OFFENDERS UNDER THE AGE OF 17 BY GIVING POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS THE DISCRETION TO CAUTION, INSTEAD OF PROSECUTE, YOUNG OFFENDERS; AFTERCARE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE YOUNG OFFENDERS WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE POLICE JUVENILE PROTECTION SECTION AND THE FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT. THE SUPERINTENDENTS' DISCRETION SCHEME HAS ACHIEVED GOOD RESULTS. THE RECIDIVISM RATE FOR THOSE CAUTIONED UNDER THE SCHEME IS LOW (ONLY 20%). THE SCHEME HAS RECENTLY BEEN REVIEWED BY AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, WHICH HAS MADE A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE SCHEME, WHICH WE SHALL BE IMPLEMENTING.

THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT ALSO RUNS CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROVIDES AFTERCARE SERVICES FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS TO HELP WITH THEIR REHABILITATION. THE DEPARTMENT IS NOW OPERATING A SCHEME KNOWN BY THE RATHER CUMBERSOME TITLE OF "PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH PRISONERS BY STUDENTS AT RISK." SINCE MARCH 1993, CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF, IN CONJUNCTION WITH SCHOOLS, HAVE BEEN TARGETING STUDENTS AND ARRANGING FOR THEM TO VISIT PRISONS TO MEET, AND TALK TO, LONG TERM PRISONERS. OUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT IS THAT THIS SCHEME IS PROVING SUCCESSFUL IN DISSEMINATING THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF BECOMING INVOLVED WITH CRIME. MORE THAN 1,500 STUDENTS SO FAR HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHEME.

/THE RECENT

THE RECENT INCREASE IN DRUG ABUSE BY YOUNG PERSONS IS CERTAINLY WORRYING. AND WE ARE TAKING ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO TACKLE IT. AMENDMENTS TO THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE WERE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION LAST MONTH. ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST THE ILLEGAL SALE OF DRUGS BY RETAIL PREMISES HAS BEEN STEPPED UP. ADDITIONAL MANPOWER HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR THIS PURPOSE. INCREASED EMPHASIS IS BEING GIVEN TO DRUG EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND THE TREATMENT OF YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS. A PILOT PROJECT FOR A TREATMENT CENTRE FOR YOUNG ABUSERS IS BEING PLANNED.

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO TURN TO THE RESEARCH COMMISSIONED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS. THE RESEARCH AIMS AT IDENTIFYING THE SOCIAL CAUSES OF JUVENILE CRIME AND AT MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE. IT IS A LARGE-SCALE, TERRITORY-WIDE RESEARCH PROJECT. MORE THAN 2,000 SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ABOUT 400 YOUNG PERSONS WHO WERE KNOWN TO BE OFFENDERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. MAJOR FIELD WORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE FINAL REPORT WILL BE COMPLETED BY END OF THIS YEAR.

I BELIEVE THAT THE RESEARCH WILL GIVE US A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION REGARDING JUVENILE CRIME IN HONG KONG. IT SHOULD ALSO HELP POINT TO NEW INITIATIVES WHICH WE MIGHT TAKE TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE CRIME.

I EXPECT THAT IT WILL RECOMMEND AN OVERALL CO-ORDINATED STRATEGY, INVOLVING PARENTS, SCHOOLS, REHABILITATION AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE. I DO NOT RULE OUT THAT AT THIS STAGE ANY NEW INITIATIVES. BUT I MUST EXPRESS SOME DOUBTS AS TO THE VALUE OF RE-INTRODUCING THE TRIAD RENUNCIATION SCHEME AS SUGGESTED BY SOME MEMBERS. THIS SCHEME WAS SUSPENDED IN 1991 BECAUSE THERE WAS A DOWNWARD TREND IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SUGGESTING THAT THE POOL OF POTENTIAL RENOUNCERS WAS DWINDLING BECAUSE A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS WAS LONG ENOUGH FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO RELINQUISH THEIR TRIAD LINKS TO COME FORWARD AND BECAUSE OF FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE SCHEME COULD HAVE THE NEGATIVE OR EVEN COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE EFFECT ENCOURAGING POTENTIAL RENOUNCERS TO DEFER THEIR APPLICATIONS. IT COULD ALSO TEMPT OTHERS, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, TO EXPERIMENT WITH TRIAD MEMBERSHIP IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THEY COULD RENOUNCE THEIR MEMBERSHIP LATER. THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME EARLIER THIS YEAR, BUT FELT THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE RIGHT, EVEN IF LIMITED TO YOUNG PERSONS, FOR THE REASONS SEDUCED IN 1991, WHICH STILL REMAIN VALID.

SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RESEARCH IN SEPTEMBER 1992, ITS PROGRESS HAS BEEN CLOSELY MONITORED BY A WORKING GROUP, SET UP UNDER THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS. THE WORKING GROUP COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES OF SECURITY BRANCH, THE POLICE, HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH, SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, AND MEMBERS OF THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE AND THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS. IT HAS REVIEWED REGULARLY THE PROGRESS OF THE RESEARCH. THE STANDING COMMITTEE WILL SOON MEET TO DISCUSS THE FINAL REPORT AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO YOUNG OFFENDERS. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH, THE COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW, AND WHERE NECESSARY, REVISE THE STRATEGY FOR TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE CRIME. IT WILL ALSO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ENSURE THAT THE MEASURES WE ARE PROPOSING TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM ARE EFFECTIVE, AND ARE CARRIED OUT AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. I SHALL BE VERY GLAD TO REPORT REGULARLY TO THIS COUNCIL ON PROGRESS.

/MR PRESIDENT,

MR PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED THAT THIS COUNCIL HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEBATE THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT TODAY. I AGREE WITH THE THRUST AND INTENT OF THE MOTION: WE MUST SEEK TO PURSUE NEW INITIATIVES TO TACKLE JUVENILE CRIME. I AM GRATEFUL FOR MEMBERS' SUGGESTIONS ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS WE SHOULD MAKE IN OUR APPROACH TO THIS DIFFICULT PROBLEM. WE SHALL CERTAINLY CONSIDER THESE SUGGESTIONS CAREFULLY.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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SHW ON FAMILY POLICY

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN MOTION DEBATE ON FAMILY POLICY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I AM MOST GRATEFUL TO HONOURABLE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY. THE FAMILY IS THE OLDEST FORM OF BONDAGE BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS. IT CAN BE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH, PROVIDING AN INTIMATE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PHYSICAL CARE, MUTUAL SUPPORT AND EMOTIONAL SECURITY OF ITS MEMBERS, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. IT IS WITHIN THE FAMILY THAT WE LEARN BASIC SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES, DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS, SHARE WHAT WE HAVE WITH OTHERS, COPE WITH CONFLICTS, CRISES AND TRAGEDIES, AND LOVE, NURTURE AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

OUR POLICY IN SUPPORT OF THE FAMILY IS SET OUT IN OUR 1991 WHITE PAPER ENTITLED "SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990S AND BEYOND" DESCRIBES THE FAMILY UNIT AS "A VITAL COMPONENT OF SOCIETY" AND STATES THAT THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF OUR FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES ARE TO PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY AS A UNIT AND TO DEVELOP CARING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, ENABLE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS TO PREVENT PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS AND TO DEAL WITH THEM WHEN THEY ARISE AND TO PROVIDE FOR NEEDS WHICH CANNOT BE MET FROM WITHIN THE FAMILY.

FAMILY WELFARE POLICY

WITH THESE OBJECTIVES IN MIND AND HAVING REGARD TO THE RAPID SOCIAL CHANGES IN HONG KONG, OUR WELFARE SERVICES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO ASSIST FAMILIES TO DISCHARGE THEIR CARING AND PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THE FAMILY SO THAT IT CAN FUNCTION PROPERLY AND INTERVENE ONLY WHEN MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY ARE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION. OUR FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES THEREFORE SUPPORT AND SUPPLEMENT RATHER THAN SUBSTITUTE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY. OUR FAMILY WELFARE POLICY FOCUSES ON THREE MAIN AREAS AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED AND DEVELOPED TO IMPLEMENT EACH OF THEM.

/FIRSTLY, ON

FIRSTLY, ON

PREVENTION

PREVENTION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CURE. TO PRESERVE THE FAMILY, WE HAVE TO REASSERT FAMILY VALUES. THROUGH THE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION, WE PROMOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY LIFE AND IMPART PARENTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO HELP FAMILY MEMBERS GROW INTO CONTRIBUTING AND RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. FAMILY ACTIVITY AND RESOURCE CENTRES HAVE BEEN SET UP THIS YEAR IN ALL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG TO PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT FOR LOCAL FAMILIES TO DROP IN FOR ADVICE, MUTUAL AID AND SOCIAL NETWORKING. AN INNOVATIVE FAMILY CARE DEMONSTRATION AND RESOURCE CENTRE HAS ALSO BEEN ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE PARENTAL AND HOME-MAKING SKILLS PRACTICE IN A HOME-LIKE SETTING.

SECONDLY,

SUPPORTING THE FAMILY

WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WHO NEED SPECIFIC HELP BOTH AT HOME AND WITH CHILD CARE. WE HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT AIDED PLACES IN CHILD CARE CENTRES. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ARE ALSO RUNNING AFTER-SCHOOL CARE PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS WHO COME FROM NEEDY FAMILIES. ALL THESE SERVICES HELP FAMILIES TO CARE FOR THEIR YOUNG AND MINIMISE THE RISK OF CHILDREN BEING LEFT UNATTENDED AT HOME.

OTHER SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY INCLUDE TRAINING BY FAMILY AID WORKERS IN HOME MANAGEMENT FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE INADEQUATE HOME MAKING SKILLS AND THE PROVISION OF HOME HELP SERVICE SUCH AS CLEANSING, LAUNDRY, COOKING AND ESCORT SERVICES. IN ADDITION, A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO HELP FAMILIES CARE FOR THEIR ELDERLY OR DISABLED MEMBERS. THESE INCLUDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME, COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS SOCIAL CENTRES, MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES AND DAY CARE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY, AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES FOR ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. WE ALSO PROVIDE DAY ACTIVITY AND TRAINING CENTRES AS WELL AS SHELTERED WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH DISABLED MEMBERS.

THIRDLY,

HELPING FAMILIES IN TROUBLE

DESPITE OUR BEST INTENTIONS, FAMILIES DO ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS AND WE NEED TO BE THERE TO HELP THEM. WE NOW HAVE 54 FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES WHICH ASSIST FAMILIES TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS ARISING FROM INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, CARE FOR THE YOUNG, ILLNESS, DISABILITIES AND PROBLEMS RELATING TO FINANCE, ACCOMMODATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOL PLACEMENT.

FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT BE CARED FOR BY THEIR FAMILIES OR WHOSE SAFETY ARE AT RISK, WE HAVE A WELL ESTABLISHED LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO LOOK AFTER THEIR WELFARE. WE PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN WHO, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, CANNOT CONTINUE TO LIVE AT HOME WITH THEIR PARENTS. FOR WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PROTECTION IS GIVEN UNDER THE LAW. TWO SHELTERS OPERATE ROUND THE CLOCK TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR BATTERED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN.

TO HELP FAMILIES IN TROUBLE, WE ALSO HAVE IN PLACE THE MEDICAL SOCIAL SERVICE AND THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE. THE FORMER ASSISTS FAMILIES WITH PROBLEMS RELATED TO ILLNESS SITUATIONS AND THE LATTER HELPS WITH CHILD ABUSE, CHILD CUSTODY AND FAMILY TRAGEDIES. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, OUR COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SCHEME PROVIDES A SAFETY NET FOR THOSE FAMILIES WHO ARE IN NEED OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

WE WILL SPEND ABOUT \$930 MILLION THIS YEAR ON FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES WHICH IS 22% MORE THAN LAST YEAR. NEXT YEAR, SPENDING WILL BE INCREASED FURTHER TO ABOUT \$1,050 MILLION.

FAMILY POLICY

MANY MEMBERS HAVE ARGUED ELOQUENTLY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FAMILY POLICY. ACCORDING TO THE EMINENT PROFESSOR SHEILA B KAMERMAN, AN EXPERT IN FAMILY POLICY, THE TERM IS USED TO DESCRIBE WHAT GOVERNMENT DOES TO AND FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES, IN PARTICULAR THOSE PUBLIC POLICIES THAT ARE DESIGNED TO AFFECT THE SITUATION OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN - OR INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR ROLES - AND THOSE THAT HAVE CLEAR CONSEQUENCES FOR SUCH FAMILIES EVEN THOUGH THE IMPACTS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN INTENDED.

IN CONSIDERING THE ISSUE OF FAMILY POLICY, PROFESSOR KAMERMAN HAS GIVEN A CLEAR WARNING OF THE OBSTACLES AND HAZARDS. TO QUOTE FROM HER ARTICLE "FAMILY POLICY : A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE" PUBLISHED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY, THEY INCLUDE :

- * THE FEAR THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES MAY SERVE TO UNDERMINE THE FAMILY;
- * THE DIFFERENCES REGARDING THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT;
- * VALUE DIFFERENCES WITH PREFERENCES AND CHOICES VARYING ACROSS CLASS, RACE, ETHNIC GROUP, RELIGION, GENDER, AGE, AND SO FORTH;
- * CONCERN THAT FAMILY POLICY IS DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP BECAUSE THE KNOWLEDGE BASE IS LIMITED AND WE ARE NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO FORETELL ALL THE CONSEQUENCES; AND
- * THE ECONOMIC COSTS, HOW MUCH THE COSTS ARE, HOW AND BY WHOM THEY SHOULD BE PAID.

OVERSEAS, "FAMILY POLICY" WHERE IT EXISTS, TENDS TO BE RELATED TO INCOME DISTRIBUTION THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES AND INCOME TAX ARRANGEMENTS. IT IS ALSO USED AS A SOCIETAL POLICY IN A BROADER SENSE WITH THE AIM OF TRANSFORMING SOCIAL RELATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOCIALIST OBJECTIVES AND ENSURING THAT THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FAMILY WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT. IT IS ALSO TIED TO POPULATION POLICY FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING LONG TERM DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS THAT MAY AFFECT LABOUR AND ECONOMIC MARKET. IN OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE THERE IS NOT AN EXPLICIT FAMILY POLICY, THE EMPHASIS IS PLACED MORE ON THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICIES ON INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN FAMILIES.

HERE IN HONG KONG, MR PRESIDENT, WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE AN EXPLICIT FAMILY POLICY, OUR PUBLIC POLICIES ALREADY TAKE THE FAMILY INTO CONSIDERATION. MY COLLEAGUE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS HAS ALREADY GIVEN A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND POLICIES TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND TO STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY AS THE BASIC UNIT IN SOCIETY. LET ME GIVE SOME OTHER EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN WHICH THE INTEREST OF THE FAMILY IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT :

- (A) THE GOAL OF TOWN PLANNING IN HONG KONG AS PROMULGATED IN THE PREAMBLE OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IS TO "PROMOTE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, CONVENIENCE AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY". IN CARRYING OUT ITS PLANNING FUNCTIONS, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS ALWAYS TAKEN THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES INTO ACCOUNT.
- (B) FAMILY FACTORS ARE DULY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE FORMULATION OF EDUCATION AND MANPOWER POLICIES. SUFFICIENT SCHOOLS, MANPOWER TRAINING AND TERTIARY EDUCATION PLACES ARE PROVIDED TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS FULLY AWARE THAT THE FAMILY HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND MUCH HAS BEEN DONE TO INVOLVE THE FAMILY IN THIS REGARD.
- (C) THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY ON THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSON AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WELL-BEING OF AN INDIVIDUAL ARE FREQUENTLY EMPHASISED IN MANY OF OUR HEALTH PROGRAMMES.

MR PRESIDENT, WE HAVE A CLEAR FAMILY WELFARE POLICY WHICH PROMOTES THE WELL-BEING OF THE FAMILY. THE 1991 SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER, REQUIRES RELEVANT POLICY BRANCHES TO CONSIDER THE FAMILY PERSPECTIVE WHEN DEVELOPING POLICIES THAT HAVE IMPLICATIONS ON THE FAMILY AS A UNIT AND A RESOURCE. THE EXAMPLES I HAVE JUST GIVEN ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES TO THE FAMILY IN THE MANY FACETS OF ITS PUBLIC POLICIES.

IN SUPPORTING THE FAMILY, I CANNOT SUPPORT THE WORDING OF THE MOTION CALLING ON GOVERNMENT TO FORMULATE A FAMILY POLICY IN HONG KONG. WE HAVE CONSULTED OVERSEAS EXPERTS ON THE SUBJECT. AS ADVISED BY THE WORLD RECOGNISED EXPERTS IN THIS FIELD, PROFESSOR S KAMERMAN AND PROFESSOR A KAHN. I NOW QUOTE : "TO WRITE A FORMAL FAMILY POLICY REQUIRES CONFRONTING VALUE DIFFERENCES AND MAY GENERATE CONSIDERABLE VALUE DEBATE AROUND SYMBOLIC ISSUES WHICH CAN BE AVOIDED BY MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT CONCRETE BENEFITS AND PROGRAMMES." THEY HAVE OBSERVED THAT COUNTRIES DO WELL WITHOUT A FAMILY POLICY. I BELIEVE THAT WE TOO CAN DO WELL AS WE ARE COMMITTED TO IMPLEMENTING CONCRETE PROGRAMMES TO HELP PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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LAND TITLES BILL INTRODUCED

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN MOVING THE LAND TITLES BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE LAND TITLES BILL.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF LAND DEEDS REGISTRATION GOVERNS ONLY THE PRIORITY OF REGISTERED DEEDS. REGISTRATION PER SE DOES NOT CONFER ON A DEED ANY VALIDITY IT DOES NOT OTHERWISE HAVE. THEREFORE, EVEN IF A PERSON IS REGISTERED IN THE LAND REGISTRY AS OWNER OF A PROPERTY, HE MAY NOT BE THE LEGAL OWNER BECAUSE THERE MAY BE SOME UNCERTAINTY IN HIS TITLE TO THE PROPERTY OR HIS TITLE MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE CLAIM OF SOME OTHER PERSON WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE LAND REGISTER KEPT BY THE LAND REGISTRY.

THE LAND TITLES BILL SEEKS TO CONVERT THE PRESENT LAND DEEDS REGISTRATION SYSTEM TO A TITLE REGISTRATION SYSTEM. UNDER THE PROPOSED SYSTEM, THE LAND REGISTER WILL BE CONCLUSIVE AS TO TITLE OF THE PROPERTY. REGISTRATION OF A PERSON AS OWNER WILL CONFER FULL AND ABSOLUTE TITLE TO THE PROPERTY CONCERNED SUBJECT ONLY TO ANY MATTERS REGISTERED ON THE LAND REGISTER, CERTAIN OVERRIDING INTERESTS AND RECTIFICATION BY THE HIGH COURT. IN PRACTICE, A STATE OF TITLE CERTIFICATE WILL CERTIFY THE STATE OF THE LAND REGISTER AT THE TIME THE CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED. IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY FOR THE CONVEYANCING SOLICITOR TO LOOK BEHIND THE LAND REGISTER AND INVESTIGATE THE TITLE BY READING THROUGH ALL THE DEEDS.

/SINCE NOT

SINCE NOT ALL THE LAND DEEDS CURRENTLY REGISTERED ARE FREE OF CLAIMS, WE PROPOSE THAT THERE WILL BE A PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY 12 MONTHS AFTER ENACTMENT OF THE BILL BEFORE IT IS BROUGHT INTO OPERATION, THUS ALLOWING PERSONS HAVING UNREGISTERED CLAIMS TIME TO REGISTER THEM UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM. THIS WILL ALSO GIVE THE LAND REGISTRY SOME TIME TO PREPARE FOR CONVERSION TO THE NEW SYSTEM, AND ENABLE CONVEYANCING SOLICITORS TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE NEW OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES.

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM, WE PROPOSE THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE LIABLE FOR ANY INDEMNITY, UNLIMITED AS TO AMOUNT, FOR LOSS SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE LAND REGISTRY IN OPERATING THE NEW SYSTEM. SINCE PROPERTY CONVEYANCING UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM WILL STILL BE UNDERTAKEN ON BEHALF OF PROPERTY OWNERS BY PERSONS WHO ARE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED UNDER THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE, WE DO NOT PROPOSE THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD INDEMNIFY PERSONS SUFFERING LOSS AS A RESULT OF NEGLIGENCE OTHER THAN NEGLIGENCE OF THE LAND REGISTRY. AS FOR LOSSES SUFFERED BY MEANS OF INFORMATION ENTERED IN OR OMITTED FROM LAND REGISTRY RECORDS AS A RESULT OF FRAUD, WE PROPOSE THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FOR AN INDEMNITY, UP TO A LIMIT TO BE DETERMINED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, FOR SUCH FRAUD BY EITHER THE LAND REGISTRY STAFF OR ANYONE OUTSIDE THE LAND REGISTRY.

IT IS INTENDED THAT THE FUNDING FOR INDEMNITIES BE SELF-FINANCING WITH NO SUBSIDY FROM GENERAL REVENUE. A SEPARATE RESERVE FUND, WHICH WILL BE BUILT UP BY SETTING ASIDE PART OF THE REGISTRATION FEES, WILL BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE LAND REGISTRY TRADING FUND FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN CASE OF ANY CLAIMS THAT CANNOT BE MET BY THE RESERVE FUND, GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE A DRAW-DOWN LOAN FACILITY TO MEET THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.

MR PRESIDENT, THE PROPOSED TITLE REGISTRATION SYSTEM IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE CERTAINTY OF TITLE FOR EXISTING OWNERS AND A HIGHER DEGREE OF PROTECTION FOR PURCHASERS THAN THE PRESENT LAND DEEDS REGISTRATION SYSTEM. I COMMEND IT TO MEMBERS FOR FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS (REGISTRATION)
(MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1994

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS (REGISTRATION) (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THAT THE MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS (REGISTRATION) (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 BE READ THE SECOND TIME.

CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE EXISTING LEGISLATION ARE OUTDATED OR INADEQUATE AS A RESULT OF CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES OVER TIME. THE BILL PROPOSES FOUR AREAS OF CHANGE.

THE FIRST PROPOSED CHANGE CONCERNS THE RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION OF DENTAL PRACTITIONERS. UNDER THE EXISTING DENTISTS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE, HOLDERS OF UNITED KINGDOM, IRISH OR COMMONWEALTH DIPLOMAS ARE AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO REGISTER AS DENTAL PRACTITIONERS IN HONG KONG. THIS IS DISCRIMINATORY AND CONTRAVENES THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES. THE ORDINANCE THEREFORE NEEDS TO MAKE PROVISIONS FOR THE USE OF A UNIVERSAL LICENSING EXAMINATION FOR THE REGISTRATION OF DENTAL PRACTITIONERS IN HONG KONG, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHERE THE PRACTITIONER RECEIVED HIS OR HER TRAINING IN DENTISTRY.

AT PRESENT SOME OF THE MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ARE EXEMPTED FROM REGISTRATION AND THE PAYMENT OF CERTAIN FEES. THE SECOND PROPOSAL AIMS TO RATIONALISE THE TREATMENT FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A MANDATORY PRACTISING CERTIFICATE SYSTEM FOR NURSES IS OUR THIRD PROPOSED CHANGE. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE PRACTICE OF OTHER RELATED PROFESSIONALS, SUCH AS DOCTORS, DENTISTS AND PHARMACISTS. IN ADDITION, IT WILL ENABLE US TO HAVE AN UP-TO-DATE RECORD OF PRACTISING NURSES, BOTH REGISTERED AND ENROLLED, IN HONG KONG.

OUR FOURTH PROPOSAL IS TO REMOVE THE OUTDATED STAMPING REQUIREMENT. A COMPLAINT AGAINST A MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONAL, WHICH MAY CONTAIN AN ALLEGATION OF "UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT", NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY A STATUTORY DECLARATION ON THE FACTS OF THE CASE. IT IS A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT UNDER THE RESPECTIVE LEGISLATION THAT SUCH A DECLARATION SHOULD BE DULY STAMPED, THAT IS A STAMP DUTY OF \$3 IS CHARGED. HOWEVER, WITH AN AMENDMENT TO THE STAMP ORDINANCE IN 1973 AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE IN 1981, STATUTORY DECLARATIONS ARE NO LONGER CHARGEABLE WITH STAMP DUTY. WE NEED TO REPEAL THE NUGATORY STAMPING REQUIREMENT.

CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1994
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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THAT THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1994 BE READ A SECOND TIME.

THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE AIMS TO PREVENT CORRUPTION AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES AT ELECTIONS. AT PRESENT, IT ONLY APPLIES TO THE ELECTIONS OF THE THREE-TIER REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK.

THE BILL BEFORE MEMBERS NOW SEEKS TO EXTEND THE ORDINANCE TO THE ELECTIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMEN AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE 27 RURAL COMMITTEES WHICH MAKE UP THE NEXT TIER IN THE HIERARCHY OF RURAL ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE HEUNG YEE KUK.

THE EXTENSION IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THESE ELECTIONS, WHICH HAVE CONSTITUTIONAL LINKS WITH THE THREE-TIER REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, ARE FAIR AND OPEN.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL LINKS WORK AS FOLLOWS. FIRST, THE RURAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN ARE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICT BOARDS. SECOND, THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE RURAL COMMITTEES ARE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK WHICH HAS A RURAL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THIRD, THE CHAIRMAN AND THE TWO VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE KUK ARE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WHICH MAY RETURN ONE CANDIDATE TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THROUGH THE REGIONAL COUNCIL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY.

UNDER THE BILL, ALL GENERAL OFFENCES PROVISIONS OF BRIBERY, TREATING, ELECTION PUBLICITY AND OFFENCES IN RELATION TO NOMINATION AND BALLOT PAPER WILL BE EXTENDED TO RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS. ELECTION FEATURES WHICH DO NOT EXIST IN RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS NOW, BUT WHICH ARE PART OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE, SUCH AS ELECTION EXPENSES, APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORIZED PERSONS TO INCUR ELECTION EXPENSES AND FILING OF RETURNS ON ELECTION EXPENSES AND DONATIONS, WILL BE INTRODUCED.

CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL PROVIDES DEFINITIONS FOR THE TERMS 'ELECTOR', 'RETURNING OFFICER' AS THEY APPEAR IN RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS. THE TERMS 'EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE' AND 'RURAL COMMITTEE' ARE ALSO DEFINED.

CLAUSES 5 AND 8 PROVIDE FOR WHAT IS MEANT BY A PERSON AUTHORIZED TO INCUR ELECTION EXPENSES, AN INCUMBENT CANDIDATE AND A PERFORMANCE REPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS.

CLAUSE 9 PROVIDES THAT FOR RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS, AN ADVANCED FILING OF A RETURN OF DONATIONS IS TO BE MADE TO THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS INSTEAD OF THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION. AS THE ELECTION RESULTS OF RURAL COMMITTEES ARE NOT GAZETTED, THE TIMETABLE FOR FILING OF RETURN ON ELECTION EXPENSES AND DONATIONS IN RURAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS IS TIED TO THE DATE OF THE RELEVANT ELECTION.

CLAUSE 10 PROVIDES THAT CONSEQUENTIAL UPON CLAUSE 9, THE RELEVANT RETURNS ARE TO BE KEPT BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS INSTEAD OF THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN MOVING THE PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THAT THE PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 AS SET OUT UNDER MY NAME IN THE PAPER CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS BE APPROVED.

VARIOUS FEES AND CHARGES FOR LICENCES AND CERTIFICATES AS WELL AS FOR OTHER PURPOSES ARE PRESCRIBED IN THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE.

IT IS GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT FEES SHOULD IN GENERAL BE SET AT LEVELS SUFFICIENT TO RECOVER THE FULL COSTS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES. THE EXISTING FEES CHARGED UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS WERE LAST SET IN 1989. TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INCREASE IN COSTS AND INFLATION SINCE THEN, WE PROPOSE THAT THE FEES SHOULD NOW BE INCREASED.

THE PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994 SEEKS TO INCREASE THE FEES PAYABLE UNDER THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS. THE PROPOSED FEES, IF APPROVED, REPRESENT AN INSIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL OPERATING COSTS OF THE TRADE. THE IMPACT OF THE FEE REVISION ON CONSUMERS SHOULD BE NEGLIGIBLE. THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD, THE AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF LICENSING OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS AND REGISTRATION OF PHARMACISTS SET UP UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE, HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND SUPPORT THE AMENDMENT REGULATION.

WITH THESE REMARKS, I MOVE THE MOTION.

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INFORMATION HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE TREND TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION HIGHWAY SYSTEMS IN MANY COUNTRIES, WILL GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- (A) WHETHER THE TERRITORY IS LAGGING BEHIND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH SYSTEMS; IF SO, HOW HAS IT AFFECTED THE TERRITORY'S COMPETITIVENESS IN THE REGION; AND
- (B) WHAT MEASURES WILL THE GOVERNMENT TAKE TO ENSURE THAT POLICIES IN THIS AREA WILL BE FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED?

REPLY:

MR PRESIDENT,

THE TERM "INFORMATION HIGHWAY" DESCRIBES AN ADVANCED INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE WITH NETWORKS LINKING HOMES, BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS TO A WIDE RANGE OF INTERACTIVE SERVICES, FROM DATA BANKS, ELECTRONIC COMMERCE, BANKING AND BUSINESS SERVICES TO EDUCATION, CULTURAL SERVICES, ENTERTAINMENT, TELEMEDICINE AND SOCIAL SERVICES, AND THE THEORY IS, ALL AVAILABLE AT THE TOUCH OF ONE BUTTON OR KEY.

THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY LINKS EXISTING CABLE, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, BROADCASTING, SATELLITE AND COMPUTING NETWORKS INTO A FULLY INTERCONNECTED "NETWORK OF NETWORKS". IT MAKES USE OF THE MUCH LARGER CAPACITY AND HIGH TRANSMISSION SPEED OF FIBRE OPTICS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE CONVERGENCE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, BROADCASTING AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES AND CAN TRANSFORM HOW BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED AND HOW PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN FUTURE. HONOURABLE MEMBERS MAY ASK WHETHER ANY COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CONSTRUCTED AN INFORMATION HIGHWAY. THE ANSWER IS NO, NOT YET, BUT ALL INDUSTRIALISED NATIONS HAVE PUBLISHED POLICIES WHICH ARE MOVING TOWARDS THAT DIRECTION.

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TURNING TO HONG KONG, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT WE ARE IN NO WAY LAGGING BEHIND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INFORMATION HIGHWAY. ON THE CONTRARY, WE ARE WELL UP WITH THE MOST ADVANCED COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. IN HONG KONG WE HAVE ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE FIBRE OPTIC NETWORKS IN THE WORLD AND THE FIRST FULLY DIGITALISED TELEPHONE SYSTEM, CAPABLE OF DELIVERING THE MOST ADVANCED FORM OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES. MORE THAN 300 OF OUR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN CONNECTED DIRECTLY ONTO THIS OPTICAL FIBRE NETWORK. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A SEPARATE NETWORK BEING BUILT AND EXTENDED BY OUR CABLE TELEVISION COMPANY. BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, THIS NETWORK WILL REACH MORE THAN 1.1 MILLION HOMES. THE COMPANY HAS PLANS TO GRADUALLY REPLACE THE NETWORK WITH FIBRE OPTICS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. FROM MID-1995, THROUGH COMPETITION IN LOCAL FIXED NETWORK SERVICES, WE EXPECT TO SEE A RAPID MOVE TOWARDS BRINGING OPTICAL FIBRE TECHNOLOGY TO INDIVIDUAL HOMES AND OFFICES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A WHOLE RANGE OF NEW AND INNOVATIVE SERVICES, SUCH AS PERSONAL NUMBERING FOR THE TELEPHONE, ADVANCED DATA AND VIDEO COMMUNICATION SERVICES AND SO ON.

OUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY OBJECTIVE IS TO ENSURE THAT THE WIDEST RANGE OF QUALITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY AT REASONABLE COST. THE PRO-COMPETITION POLICY WE HAVE ADOPTED HAS ENABLED HONG KONG TO ENJOY ONE OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AND ADVANCED INFRASTRUCTURES IN THE WORLD. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THIS POLICY. SPECIFICALLY, WE WILL CONTINUE TO -

- * PROMOTE COMPETITION IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS IS THE BEST MODE TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT AND STIMULATE INNOVATION;
- * CREATE A FLEXIBLE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO KEEP PACE WITH TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS;
- * ENCOURAGE INTERCONNECTION AND PROVIDE OPEN ACCESS TO THE NETWORKS; AND
- * ENSURE THAT SERVICES CAN BE UTILISED BY ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY.

WE BELIEVE, MR PRESIDENT, THAT THIS IS THE WAY TO BUILD THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY THAT WILL TAKE HONG KONG TO THE NEXT CENTURY.

PAINTER'S COMPLAINT AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IT WAS REPORTED THAT A PAINTER WHO WAS ASSAULTED, ACCUSED WITHOUT CAUSE AND DETAINED BY THE POLICE IN DECEMBER 1990 HAD RESORTED TO LEGAL PROCEEDINGS TO CLAIM DAMAGES FROM THREE POLICE OFFICERS AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS REPRESENTING THE POLICE. THE CASE WAS HEARD BEFORE THE HIGH COURT ON 11 OCTOBER THIS YEAR AND THE CLAIMANT WAS AWARDED A SIX-FIGURE SUM OF DAMAGES IN AN OUT-OF-COURT SETTLEMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :-

- (A) WHETHER AN INQUIRY INTO THIS CASE HAS BEEN MADE BY THE POLICE, AND WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY CRIMINAL CHARGES HAVE NOT BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST THE POLICE OFFICERS CONCERNED;
- (B) WHETHER THE POLICE OFFICERS CONCERNED HAVE BEEN CONVICTED BY THE POLICE'S INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE; IF SO, WHAT DISCIPLINARY ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN AGAINST THEM; AND
- (C) WHAT IS THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGES INVOLVED IN THIS CASE AND WHO WILL PAY FOR IT?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

AS REGARDS PART (A) OF THE QUESTION, THE POLICE INVESTIGATED A COMPLAINT LODGED BY THE PAINTER IN MID-1991. ON LEGAL ADVICE, NO CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS WERE INSTITUTED AGAINST THE THREE OFFICERS DUE TO INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO PROVE ASSAULT.

AS REGARDS PART (B), DISCIPLINARY ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST THE THREE POLICE OFFICERS CONCERNED. ONE OF THE OFFICERS RECEIVED A SEVERE REPRIMAND, WHILE THE OTHER TWO WERE CAUTIONED.

AS REGARDS PART (C), DAMAGES OF \$100,000 WERE PAID TO THE PLAINTIFF, OF WHICH THE GOVERNMENT PAID \$70,000 AND EACH OF THE THREE OFFICERS CONCERNED PAID \$10,000.

FIGHT AGAINST ENDANGERED SPECIES TRADE

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG HONG-YUEN AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN REGARD TO THE CURB ON THE SALE OF ANIMALS PARTS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH PURPOSES, WILL THE ADMINISTRATION INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE PROGRESS MADE BY THE FAUNA CONSERVATION SECTION OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT AND THE CURRENT ENFORCEMENT MEASURES TAKEN BY VARIOUS AGENCIES ?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

THE ANIMALS AND PLANTS (PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES) ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT NO PERSON SHALL IMPORT, EXPORT OR POSSESS ANY SCHEDULED SPECIES, OR PARTS AND DERIVATIVES OF SUCH SPECIES, EXCEPT UNDER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A LICENCE ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS APPLY TO THE PRODUCTS OF SOME HIGHLY ENDANGERED SPECIES SUCH AS RHINOCEROSES AND TIGERS. IN PRACTICE, NO LICENCES ARE ISSUED FOR THE IMPORT, EXPORT OR POSSESSION OF MEDICINES CONTAINING, OR CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINOCEROS OR TIGER INGREDIENTS. THE EFFECT IS TO BAN THESE ITEMS FROM INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND DOMESTIC SALE.

THE ORDINANCE ALSO CONTROLS THE IMPORT, EXPORT AND POSSESSION OF BEAR GALL BLADDER, BEAR BILE AND BEAR BILE POWDER ORIGINATING FROM ANY SPECIES OF BEAR.

ENFORCEMENT OF THESE CONTROLS IS UNDERTAKEN BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S ENFORCEMENT TEAM CARRIES OUT UNDERCOVER CHECKS OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE SHOPS TO SUPPRESS AND DETER THE ILLEGAL SALE OF BANNED ITEMS. CUSTOMS AND EXCISE OFFICERS CHECK SHIPMENTS AT VARIOUS POINTS OF ENTRY AND EXIT. THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE INVESTIGATE ANY POSSIBLE ORGANISED CRIME THAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN SUCH ILLEGAL TRADE, THEY PARTICIPATE IN OPERATIONS WITH THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT AND PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES.

THE ENFORCEMENT EFFORT IS CO-ORDINATED BY AN ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION LIAISON GROUP CONSISTING OF MEMBERS OF ALL THREE DEPARTMENTS. DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, THE GROUP HAS DIRECTED A VIGOROUS PROGRAMME OF OVER 3,300 INSPECTIONS OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE SHOPS. 387 SUCH SHOPS HAVE BEEN RAIDED UNDER SEARCH WARRANTS, RESULTING IN 230 PROSECUTIONS.

/I BELIEVE

I BELIEVE THAT THE MESSAGE IS NOW GETTING THROUGH CLEARLY TO RETAILERS AND THEIR SUPPLIERS THAT IT IS NOT WORTH DEALING IN PRODUCTS EVEN CLAIMING TO CONTAIN RHINO HORN AND TIGER BONE. THIS MESSAGE WAS REINFORCED LAST WEEK WHEN I INTRODUCED A BILL TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR SUCH OFFENCES TO A FINE OF \$5 MILLION AND IMPRISONMENT FOR 2 YEARS.

MR PRESIDENT, I BELIEVE THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST ILLEGAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES. WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF ENFORCEMENT AND INCREASE OUR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE PUBLIC AWAY FROM CONSUMPTION OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING ENDANGERED SPECIES.

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MEASURES TO COMBAT VICE ACTIVITIES STEPPED UP

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : RECENTLY QUITE A NUMBER OF FEMALES FROM PLACES OUTSIDE GUANGDONG, HOLDING TRANSIT VISAS FOR A STOPOVER IN THE TERRITORY ON THEIR WAY TO THAILAND, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENTER THE TERRITORY AND HAVE MANAGED TO STAY BEHIND AND ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION ACTIVITIES. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO STEPPING UP MEASURES TO COMBAT THESE ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS BLACKLISTING THEM AND PREVENTING THEM FROM VISITING THE TERRITORY AGAIN TO ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION ACTIVITIES, SIMILAR TO THE MEASURES ADOPTED TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM OF FEMALES FROM THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN REGION COMING TO THE TERRITORY TO PROSTITUTE?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

WE ARE AWARE THAT SOME VISITORS TO HONG KONG ENGAGE IN PROSTITUTION. WE HAVE STEPPED UP MEASURES TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND FOREIGN VISITORS, INCLUDING TRANSIT VISITORS FROM CHINA, FOUND WORKING IN VICE ESTABLISHMENTS OR WORKING AS PROSTITUTES ARE PROSECUTED FOR ILLEGALLY REMAINING IN HONG KONG OR FOR BREACH OF THEIR CONDITIONS OF STAY.

THE POLICE AND THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MOUNT OPERATIONS AGAINST THESE ACTIVITIES.

VISITORS (INCLUDING TRANSIT VISITORS FROM CHINA) WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY ABUSED THEIR CONDITIONS OF STAY IN HONG KONG ARE SUBJECT TO SPECIAL SCRUTINY ON FUTURE ENTRY INTO HONG KONG. THEY MAY BE REFUSED ENTRY IF THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO BREACH THEIR CONDITIONS OF STAY.

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VEGETABLE HYGIENE

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF ACUTE FOOD POISONING INCIDENTS IN THE TERRITORY ARISING FROM THE CONSUMPTION OF CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES. AS A LARGE PORTION OF THE VEGETABLES IS IMPORTED FROM THE MAINLAND, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :-

- (A) OF THE AVERAGE DAILY NUMBER OF VEGETABLE SAMPLES EXAMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AT THE MAN KAM TO BORDER CHECKPOINT, AND WHAT IS THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SAMPLES EXAMINED OUT OF ALL IMPORTED VEGETABLES;
- (B) OF THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING SPOT CHECKS AT THE BORDER AT PRESENT; AND WHETHER THERE ARE PLANS TO INCREASE THE MANPOWER FOR THESE DUTIES;
- (C) OF THE RESPECTIVE PERCENTAGES OF VEGETABLES FOUND TO BE CONTAMINATED OUT OF THE SAMPLES EXAMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN EACH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS; AND
- (D) WHAT ARE THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CURB THE IMPORTATION OF CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES THROUGH ILLEGAL MEANS?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER PESTICIDE-CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES DEPENDS ON A COMBINATION OF MEASURES AT SOURCE, UPON IMPORT, AT SALES OUTLETS AND IN THE KITCHEN. TO SAFEGUARD PUBLIC HEALTH, GOVERNMENT CO-ORDINATES ACTION THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO MONITOR THE HYGIENE OF VEGETABLES.

ABOUT 50% OF THE FRESH LEAFY VEGETABLES CONSUMED LOCALLY COME FROM CHINA, 25% ARE LOCAL PRODUCE AND THE REST ARE IMPORTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS IN PLACE AT THE BORDER A WELL-TESTED MONITORING SYSTEM TO CHECK THE QUALITY OF IMPORTED VEGETABLES. IN 1994, AN AVERAGE OF 70 QUICK TESTS ARE PERFORMED DAILY AT THE MAN KAM TO CHECKPOINT.

/AN AVERAGE

AN AVERAGE OF 8.5 SAMPLES PER DAY ARE COLLECTED FROM VEHICLES FOR FULL LABORATORY TESTS FOR USE AS EVIDENCE IN CASE OF PROSECUTION OR TO SUPPORT DESTRUCTION OF VEGETABLES. THE PERCENTAGE OF VEGETABLE SAMPLES FOUND TO BE CONTAMINATED AFTER FULL LABORATORY TESTS IS 0.35% FOR THE FIRST TEN MONTHS OF 1994. THIS REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT OVER 1.75% IN 1992 AND 0.56% IN 1993.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE TWO SHIFTS OF SIX HEALTH INSPECTORS STATIONED AT MAN KAM TO, PLUS OTHER SUPPORTING STAFF. THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES SUBJECT TO SAMPLING REPRESENTS ROUGHLY 30% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VEHICLES PASSING THROUGH. DURING PESTICIDE CONTAMINATION OUTBREAKS, ADDITIONAL STAFF ARE QUICKLY DEPLOYED AND THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES SAMPLED INCREASED.

APART FROM THESE REGULAR CHECKS, THERE ARE FREQUENT EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND MEETINGS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE GUANGDONG AND SHENZHEN IMPORT AND EXPORT COMMODITY INSPECTION BUREAU TO CONTROL THE PROBLEM AT SOURCE. THIS HAS LED TO A TAGGING SYSTEM FOR VEGETABLE PRODUCE FROM FARMS APPROVED BY THE COMMODITY INSPECTION BUREAU. THESE IMPORTS ARE ALSO ISSUED WITH PESTICIDE DECLARATION FORMS.

IN ADDITION TO THESE RANDOM CHECKS AT THE BORDER, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OPERATES A SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME AT BOTH WHOLESALE AND RETAIL VEGETABLE MARKETS. THERE IS ALSO REGULAR PUBLICITY TO ADVISE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NOT TO PATRONISE ILLEGAL HAWKERS AND TO FOLLOW GOOD FOOD HANDLING PRACTICES, SUCH AS THOROUGH SOAKING AND WASHING OF VEGETABLES.

IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE SHENZHEN AUTHORITIES, WE WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW CONTROL STRATEGIES IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FURTHER OUTBREAKS.

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HOTEL ROOMS STUDY FINDINGS OUT BEFORE YEAR END

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON MOSES CHENG MO-CHI AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR GORDON SIU, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : AS THE COMPLETION OF THE NEW AIRPORT WILL RESULT IN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS VISITORS COMING TO THE TERRITORY, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) OF THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BEING PROCESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT WHICH INVOLVE THE DEMOLITION OF HOTELS TO MAKE WAY FOR THE BUILDING OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS;
- (B) OF THE HOTELS REFERRED TO IN (A) ABOVE, WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF HOTEL ROOMS INVOLVED;
- (C) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT ENVISAGES A SHORTAGE OF HOTEL ROOMS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS;

/(D) WHETHER ANY

- (D) WHETHER ANY MEASURES WILL BE ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE TERRITORY; IF SO, WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING OR WILL BE ADOPTED; AND
- (E) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER ALLOCATING MORE LAND RESTRICTED TO HOTEL USAGE ONLY, SO AS TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO BUILD NEW HOTELS?

ANSWER :

MR PRESIDENT,

AT THE END OF 1993, HONG KONG HAD APPROXIMATELY 34,000 HOTEL ROOMS. DURING 1994, FIVE HOTELS WITH A TOTAL OF 1,250 ROOMS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE CLOSED DOWN. IN ADDITION, THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY PROCESSING TWO APPLICATIONS FOR CONVERSION OF HOTEL TO COMMERCIAL USE. IF APPROVED, THESE CONVERSIONS WILL RESULT IN A FURTHER REDUCTION OF SOME 1,000 ROOMS. HOWEVER, DURING THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, FOUR NEW HOTELS ARE SCHEDULED TO COME ON STREAM AND A NUMBER OF EXISTING HOTELS ARE BEING EXTENDED. THE NEW AND EXTENDED HOTELS WILL PROVIDE A TOTAL OF 4,200 NEW ROOMS, INCLUDING ONE WHICH SHALL HAVE 2,400 ROOMS.

CURRENT FORECASTS OF VISITOR ARRIVALS, COMPILED BY THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION, SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY BE SOME TIGHTNESS IN THE SUPPLY OF MEDIUM TARIFF HOTEL ROOMS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, PARTICULARLY AT PERIODS OF PEAK DEMAND. IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE THE PRESSURE, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS INCORPORATED SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR HOTEL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AREAS ON THE CENTRAL AND WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATIONS, WHICH ARE TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE MTRC IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. THIS IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SOME 4,700 ADDITIONAL HOTEL ROOMS. HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS ARE ALSO TO BE INCLUDED IN TWO COMMERCIAL SITES ON THE HUNG HUM BAY RECLAMATION, AND NEW SITES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED ON THE AIRPORT ISLAND AT CHEK LAP KOK AND IN TUNG CHUNG NEW TOWN WHICH WOULD YIELD SOME 2,900 ROOMS.

THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, HAS COMMISSIONED CONSULTANTS TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG. AMONGST OTHER THINGS THE CONSULTANTS WILL BE TASKED TO REVIEW PROJECTIONS OF THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF HOTEL ROOMS, TO DECIDE WHETHER SHORTAGES OF HOTEL ACCOMMODATION ARE LIKELY TO POSE A CONSTRAINT ON TOURISM GROWTH AND, IF SO, TO ADVISE WHETHER THERE IS A NEED FOR INTERVENTION BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT A SIGNIFICANT MIS-MATCH BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF HOTEL ROOMS.

THE CONSULTANTS ARE DUE TO SUBMIT THEIR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THEIR STUDY ON THE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION SITUATION BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. THE ADMINISTRATION WILL GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE CONSULTANTS ON THE POSSIBLE NEED TO INTRODUCE MEASURES TO STIMULATE HOTEL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS WHICH MAY BE PUT FORWARD RECOMMENDING CHANGES TO CURRENT LAND ALLOCATION POLICY SO AS TO ENSURE THAT FORECAST DEMAND IS MET.

PROGRAMMES TO REHOUSE ELDERLY "CAGED" PEOPLE
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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- (A) HOW MANY ELDERLY PERSONS ARE AT PRESENT LIVING IN WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS "CAGED HOMES" AND WHAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION IN THE LAST THREE YEARS; AND
- (B) WHETHER THERE IS ANY POLICY OR PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION FOR THOSE ELDERLY PERSONS WHO HAVE LIVED IN SUCH CONDITIONS OVER A CONSIDERABLE TIME; IF SO, HOW EFFECTIVE SUCH POLICY OR PROGRAMME HAS BEEN AND HOW MANY "CAGED" PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REHOUSED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

REPLY

MY REPLY IS AS FOLLOWS :

- (A) THE NUMBER OF ELDERLY PERSONS (AGED 60 AND ABOVE) AT PRESENT LIVING IN WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS "CAGED HOMES" IS ESTIMATED AT 1,200. IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, OFFICERS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT PAID HALF-YEARLY VISITS TO BEDSPACE APARTMENT LODGERS TO OFFER WELFARE ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, INSTITUTIONAL CARE, COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING, EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND COUNSELLING, TO THOSE ELIGIBLE. SUCH VISITS ARE CONTINUING AND WILL CONTINUE. THE CITY NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION ESTABLISHED 17 SINGLETON HOSTELS WHICH OFFER REHOUSING TO SOME OF THE BEDSPACE APARTMENT LODGERS. THE BEDSPACE APARTMENTS ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN APRIL 1994 TO PROVIDE FOR A LICENSING SCHEME TO REGULATE THE FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY OF BEDSPACE APARTMENTS. UPON FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LICENSING SCHEME, LODGERS WILL LIVE IN BEDSPACE APARTMENTS WHICH MEET THE SAFETY STANDARDS; AND
- (B) AS POINTED OUT UNDER (A) ABOVE, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ASSISTING ELDERLY BEDSPACE APARTMENT LODGERS WITH INSTITUTIONAL CARE AND COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING. UNDER THE ELDERLY PRIORITY SCHEME, PERSONS AGED 58 AND ABOVE CAN APPLY FOR REHOUSING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. FLATS WILL USUALLY BE ALLOCATED WITHIN TWO YEARS FROM THE DATE OF REGISTRATION. BEDSPACE APARTMENT LODGERS CAN ALSO APPLY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING THROUGH THE GENERAL WAITING LIST. BEDSPACE APARTMENT LODGERS AGED BELOW 60 CAN APPLY FOR ADMISSION INTO THE SINGLETON HOSTELS OF THE CITY NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION. THESE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE. IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, ABOUT 650 "CAGED" PEOPLE WERE REHOUSED.

LAW ON TELEPHONE BANKING SYSTEM NOT NEEDED

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR MICHAEL CARTLAND, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

- QUESTION : REGARDING THE TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES PROVIDED BY BANKS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:
- (A) OF THE NUMBER OF BANKS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY PROVIDING SUCH SERVICES;
 - (B) WHAT SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE TO PROTECT CLIENTS AGAINST LOSSES FROM WITHDRAWALS WHICH ARE EITHER WITHOUT THE CLIENT'S AUTHORISATION OR MISHANDLED BY THE BANKS;
 - (C) WHAT GUIDELINES OR MONITORING MECHANISM ARE AVAILABLE TO ENSURE THAT THE NECESSARY DEGREE OF PRUDENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM IS EXERCISED IN PROVIDING SUCH SERVICES; AND
 - (D) WHETHER LEGISLATION WILL BE INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THE CONSUMERS' RIGHTS IN USING SUCH SERVICES?

REPLY:

- (A) THERE ARE CURRENTLY 34 LICENSED BANKS OFFERING SOME FORM OF TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES, WHICH MAY INCLUDE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES -
 - (I) PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ACCOUNT BALANCES, EXCHANGE RATES, DEPOSIT AND LENDING RATES;
 - (II) TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN ACCOUNTS OF THE SAME CUSTOMER OR TO PREDESIGNATED THIRD PARTY ACCOUNTS;
 - (III) RENEWAL OR DISPOSAL OF TIME DEPOSITS UPON MATURITY;
 - (IV) FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND INVESTMENT PRODUCT TRANSACTIONS; AND
 - (V) PAYMENT OF CREDIT CARD, UTILITY BILLS, ETC.

/(B) ACCESS TO

(B) ACCESS TO TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES IS MOSTLY THROUGH A TOUCH TONE PHONE. INPUT OF A PASSWORD IS NECESSARY BEFORE TRANSACTIONS ARE ALLOWED. SUCH TRANSACTIONS ARE NORMALLY RESTRICTED TO ACCOUNTS OF THE CUSTOMER HIMSELF OR PREDESIGNATED ACCOUNTS AND NO CASH WITHDRAWAL IS ALLOWED. DETAILS OF TRANSACTIONS ARE RECORDED WITH WRITTEN CONFIRMATION SUBSEQUENTLY MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CUSTOMER.

AS IN THE CASE OF OTHER BANKING SERVICES OPERATED BY PASSWORDS, THE CUSTOMER HAS A DUTY TO KEEP HIS PASSWORDS CONFIDENTIAL TO PREVENT UNAUTHORISED ACCESS. AT THE SAME TIME, BANKS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE IN PLACE ADEQUATE INTERNAL CONTROL TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF THEIR TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES SYSTEMS.

(C) THERE ARE NO GUIDELINES OR MONITORING MECHANISM SPECIFICALLY TARGETED AT TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES. IT IS NOT THE PRACTICE OF THE BANKING SUPERVISOR TO DICTATE HOW BANKS SHOULD CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS UNLESS THERE ARE PRUDENTIAL CONCERNS. SO FAR, TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES HAVE NOT BEEN A CAUSE OF CONCERN.

(D) WE DO NOT SEE THE NEED FOR SPECIFIC LEGISLATION ON TELEPHONE BANKING SERVICES.

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CONTAINER VEHICLES ENCOURAGED TO USE LOK MA CHAU CROSSING

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE INTRODUCTION OF 24-HOUR SERVICE AT THE LOK MA CHAU - HUANG GANG BORDER CROSSING POINT AS FROM 3 NOVEMBER 1994 THIS YEAR, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) WHETHER, APART FROM INCREASING THE MANPOWER OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT AND IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, OTHER MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE MORE CONTAINER DRIVERS TO USE THE CROSSING POINT BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND DAWN; AND
- (B) WHETHER SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE AT THE CONTAINER TERMINALS TO TIE IN WITH THE NEW ARRANGEMENT AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINT?

/REPLY:

REPLY:

MR PRESIDENT,

ON AVERAGE ABOUT 800 VEHICLES HAVE BEEN USING THE LOK MA CHAU BORDER ROAD CROSSING EACH NIGHT BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10 PM AND 7 AM, SINCE IT OPENED ROUND THE CLOCK ON NOVEMBER 3, 1994. THIS IS ABOUT 50 PER CENT OF THE THROUGHPUT CAPACITY OF THE TWO CHANNELS IN USE. IT IS A GOOD START AND SHOULD HOPEFULLY RESULT IN CROSS BORDER TRAFFIC BEING SPREAD OVER A LONGER PERIOD EACH DAY.

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS :

- (A) THE PORT DEVELOPMENT BOARD AND THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ARE CONTINUING THEIR EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE MORE CONTAINER VEHICLES TO USE THE LOK MA CHAU CROSSING AT NIGHT, THROUGH THEIR CONTACTS WITH SHIPPERS, TERMINAL OPERATORS, VEHICLE OWNERS AND DRIVERS ASSOCIATIONS.
- (B) THE CONTAINER TERMINALS ALREADY OPERATE ON A 24-HOUR BASIS AND HAVE HAD NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS IN COPING WITH THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC NOW BEING GENERATED AT NIGHT. THE OPERATORS ARE, HOWEVER, MONITORING THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THEIR PROCEDURES WILL BE CONSIDERED IF THIS PROVES NECESSARY.

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HK POLYTECHNIC PUBLISHES GUIDELINES ON STAFF IN PUBLIC OFFICES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC'S RECENT DECISION TO CUT THE SALARY OF TEACHING STAFF WHO ARE MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER IT IS AWARE OF ANY OTHER SUBSIDISED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN SIMILAR MEASURES TO REDUCE THE SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFITS OF STAFF MEMBERS WHO SERVE AS MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS OR OTHER TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT?

/REPLY:

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

THE ADMINISTRATION IS AWARE THAT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC HAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED POLICY GUIDELINES ON STAFF ENGAGING IN PUBLIC OFFICES THROUGH ELECTION. HOWEVER, THE POLYTECHNIC HAS NOT IMPOSED A CUT IN SALARY ACROSS THE BOARD FOR THOSE TEACHING STAFF WHO ARE ELECTED TO DISTRICT BOARDS.

THE GUIDELINES SERVE TO PROMULGATE AN EXISTING REQUIREMENT WITHIN THE POLYTECHNIC'S EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR STAFF TO OBTAIN WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THE DIRECTOR FOR ENGAGING IN ANY REMUNERATIVE ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS FROM WHICH A STAFF MEMBER CAN CHOOSE WHEN APPLYING TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE POLYTECHNIC FOR CONSENT IF HE/SHE IS ENGAGED IN PUBLIC OFFICES THROUGH ELECTION. UNDER ONE OF THESE OPTIONS THE STAFF CONCERNED MAY APPLY TO THE DIRECTOR FOR RETENTION OF THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS, BUT WITH THE LEVEL OF REMUNERATION ADJUSTED ON A PRO-RATA BASIS DEPENDING ON THE PROPORTION OF TIME TO BE SPENT IN THE DISCHARGE OF NORMAL DUTIES AT THE POLYTECHNIC. ADJUSTMENT OF SALARY FOR THE STAFF CONCERNED CAN BE WAIVED IF THE STAFF CONCERNED CONTRIBUTE AN ACCEPTABLE AMOUNT OF TIME TO THE POLYTECHNIC AND THE DIRECTOR, UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT, IS SATISFIED THAT THE QUALITY OF DELIVERY OF WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL NOT BE JEOPARDISED.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOT AWARE OF OTHER TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS HAVING ADOPTED SIMILAR POLICY GUIDELINES ON STAFF ENGAGING IN PUBLIC OFFICES THROUGH ELECTION. HOWEVER, ALL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS HAVE SIMILAR CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS WITH RESPECT TO STAFF ENGAGING IN OUTSIDE WORK OR OUTSIDE PRACTICE.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AT COVERED TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON FRED LI WAH-MING AND A REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN HIS REPLY TO A WRITTEN QUESTION ON AIR POLLUTION IN LAM TIN INTERCHANGE ON JANUARY 26, 1994, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS STATED THAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS OF THAT AREA HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER WRITTEN QUESTION ON OCTOBER 26, 1994, HE INDICATED THAT THE STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) TO EXAMINE THE DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR COVERED TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN MAY 1994. THE STUDY CONCLUDED THAT THE MECHANICAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS IN MOST COVERED BUS INTERCHANGES, EVEN WHEN OPERATING AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY, WERE UNABLE TO SUPPLY ADEQUATE FRESH AIR TO WAITING PASSENGERS. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) OF THE REASON WHY THE EXISTING MECHANICAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS CANNOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF AIR POLLUTION IN COVERED TRANSPORT EXCHANGES;
- (B) IT IS UNDERSTOOD THE EPD HAS PLANNED TO SET UP ENCLOSED WAITING PLATFORMS IN THE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE IN EITHER LAM TIN OR TSUEN WAN NEXT YEAR ON A TRIAL BASIS AND HAS ALREADY APPLIED FOR FUNDS FROM THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE PROJECT. WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT REQUIRED FOR THIS PILOT SCHEME; AND WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED TOTAL AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE INVOLVED IF THE PILOT SCHEME IS TO BE EXTENDED TO ALL COVERED BUS TERMINALS ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE TERRITORY;
- (C) WHAT OTHER REMEDIAL MEASURES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IF THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT SCHEME TURN OUT TO BE UNSATISFACTORY; AND
- (D) AS THE PILOT SCHEME WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED TILL NEXT YEAR, WHAT SPECIFIC SHORT-TERM MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM IN THE INTERIM?

/REPLY:

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) WHEN THE MECHANICAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS IN COVERED TRANSPORT EXCHANGES WERE DESIGNED, IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE ADEQUATE IN AMELIORATING THE AIR POLLUTION PROBLEM IN THESE INTERCHANGES. HOWEVER, IN A RECENT STUDY, IT WAS FOUND THAT VERY HIGH VENTILATION RATES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT THE AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVES AT THE WAITING PLATFORMS COULD BE MET. THE REQUIRED VENTILATION RATES ARE BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING SYSTEMS.
- (B) THE PILOT PROJECT WILL REQUIRE \$3,980,000. IT IS AN 18-MONTH PROJECT TO STUDY THE VARIOUS DESIGNS OF VENTILATION SYSTEMS FOR WAITING PLATFORMS. WE ARE STILL SEEKING FUNDS FOR THIS PROJECT. THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONSIDER APPLYING THE SUCCESSFUL DESIGN TO OTHER COVERED TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES. AN ESTIMATE OF THE TOTAL COST IS NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT YET DECIDED ON THE DESIGN TO BE ADOPTED.
- (C) GOVERNMENT IS OPTIMISTIC THAT ONE OR MORE OF THE DESIGNS WILL BE SATISFACTORY. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE STUDY IS TO CHOOSE THE MOST PRACTICAL OPTION AND TO COLLECT TECHNICAL DATA AND DETAILS ON THE COSTS OF THE DESIGN.
- (D) IN THE INTERIM, WE HAVE ADVISED TRANSPORT COMPANIES TO TURN OFF ENGINES OF IDLE VEHICLES INSIDE THE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES. PROPERTY MANAGERS ARE ALSO ADVISED TO OPERATE THE VENTILATION SYSTEMS TO FULL CAPACITY DURING PEAK TRAFFIC HOURS WHENEVER SUCH IS PRACTICABLE. WE HOPE THE ABOVE MEASURES WOULD HELP ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM.

SEWAGE CHARGES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION :

REGARDING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR ON THE PROPOSED CHARGES FOR SEWAGE SERVICES, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING :

- (A) OF THE SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD, HOW MANY ARE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED LEVEL OF SEWAGE CHARGES; HOW MANY CONSIDER IT TOO HIGH AND HOW MANY ARE IN FAVOUR OF NO CHARGES AT ALL; AND
- (B) WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY THE FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE HAVE NOT YET BEEN DISCLOSED AFTER THE EXPIRY OF THE CONSULTATION PERIOD?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) DURING PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SEWAGE CHARGES LAST YEAR, THE GOVERNMENT RECEIVED 80 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS - 57 FROM ORGANISATIONS AND 23 FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. APART FROM 14 SUBMISSIONS WHICH WERE ENQUIRIES ONLY, 60% OF THESE SUBMISSIONS GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE, THE REMAINING WERE NOT IN FAVOUR OF A SEPARATE CHARGE FOR SEWAGE SERVICES. ONLY NINE SUBMISSIONS ASKED FOR LOWER CHARGES. FROM THESE SUBMISSIONS, IT WAS APPARENT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING THAT SEWAGE CHARGES WOULD BE FIXED AT 50% OF WATER BILLS.
- (B) THE RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE WERE SET OUT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF AND IN A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED ON 11 JANUARY 1994.

VIGOROUS ACTION TO AVERT YOUTH DRUG OFFENCES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TO KUN-SUN AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE INCREASING NUMBER OF YOUNGSTERS BEING INVOLVED IN DRUG OFFENCES IN RECENT YEARS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS WILL THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS MAKE TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM; AND
- (B) WHETHER CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO ALLOCATING MORE RESOURCES TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, INCLUDING GOSPEL DRUG REHABILITATION GROUPS, IN ORDER TO ASSIST THESE ORGANIZATIONS IN THEIR WORK OF PREVENTING YOUNGSTERS FROM ABUSING DRUGS AND TREATMENT OF YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS, THUS EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THIS AREA?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON YOUNG OFFENDERS WILL SHORTLY CONSIDER THIS PROBLEM AND THE RESULTS OF A RESEARCH PROJECT CONDUCTED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG ON SOCIAL CAUSES OF JUVENILE CRIME.

VIGOROUS ACTION IS ALREADY BEING TAKEN TO PREVENT YOUNGSTERS FROM INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG OFFENCES. THE POLICE TARGET DRUG BLACKSPOTS WHICH YOUNG DRUG ABUSERS FREQUENT. THEY HAVE ALSO ENHANCED THE SCHOOL LIAISON NETWORK TO IDENTIFY DRUG PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS.

- (B) RESOURCES FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ALLOCATED TO SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. THE LEVEL OF ALLOCATIONS AND THE SUBVENTIONS TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE KEPT UNDER REVIEW, AND CHANGES MADE AS NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF THE DEMAND FOR THE SERVICES PROVIDED. IN ADDITION, MANY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES NOT RECEIVING SUBVENTIONS ARE NEVERTHELESS HELPED IN OTHER WAYS: THEY ARE ASSISTED WITH ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORTED IN RAISING FUNDS FROM CHARITABLE SOURCES.

TRAFFIC OFFENCES BY DIPLOMATS AND CONSULAR CORPS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF :-

- (A) ITS POLICY TOWARDS MEMBERS OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS STATIONED IN HONG KONG WHO MAY HAVE CONSISTENTLY VIOLATED TRAFFIC REGULATIONS AND WHO, THEREBY, HAVE ACCUMULATED SUBSTANTIAL FIXED PENALTY FINES FOR ILLEGAL PARKING AND OTHER TRAFFIC OFFENCES; AND
- (B) THE NUMBER OF SUCH OFFENDERS AND THE COUNTRIES THEY REPRESENT, TOGETHER WITH CUMULATIVE TOTALS OF UNPAID FINES DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS?

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) THE WAIVER OF UNPAID FIXED PENALTY FINES IS AN ACT OF COURTESY EXTENDED TO CONSULAR OFFICES BY MANY COUNTRIES. THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT FOLLOWS THIS PRACTICE.
- (B) OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS, WE HAVE WRITTEN OFF ABOUT \$38,000 IN RESPECT OF THE 180 FIXED PENALTY TICKETS WHICH HAVE BEEN WAIVED. DETAILS ARE ANNEXED.

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NUMBER OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WITH REGARD TO THE PROBLEM CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) OF THE RESPECTIVE WASTAGE RATES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN VARIOUS TYPES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS; TOGETHER WITH THE REASONS FOR THESE SOCIAL WORKERS LEAVING THEIR JOBS;
- (B) OF THE RESPECTIVE PROPORTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO THE STUDENT CASELOAD FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS AT PRESENT;
- (C) OF THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS WHICH DO NOT HAVE ANY POST OF ASSISTANT SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ON THEIR ESTABLISHMENT AND THE REASONS THEREOF; AND
- (D) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONSIDERED STANDARDISING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN ALL SPECIAL SCHOOLS?

REPLY :

THE ANSWERS IN SERIATIM ARE AS FOLLOWS -

THE WASTAGE RATES OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN VARIOUS TYPES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN THE PAST THREE SCHOOL YEARS ARE: -

CATEGORY	WASTAGE RATE		
	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94
VISUALLY IMPAIRED	0%	0%	66.7%
HEARING IMPAIRED	0%	40%	15%
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED	11%	22%	22%
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED	14%	22.9%	39.6%
MALADJUSTED	24%	40%	10%

/REASONS ARE

REASONS ARE SELDOM GIVEN BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS FOR THEIR RESIGNATIONS. HOWEVER, IT IS UNDERSTOOD FROM SCHOOL HEADS AND SOME SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS, THAT AMONG THOSE RESIGNATIONS WITH KNOWN REASONS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, SOME TOOK UP ASSISTANT SOCIAL WORK OFFICER (ASWO) POSTS OR JOINED OTHER SERVICE UNITS IN THE WELFARE SECTOR. SOME EMIGRATED, WHILE A FEW PURSUED FURTHER STUDIES OR CHANGED PROFESSION.

THE PROVISION RATIO OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR ALL TYPES OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS IS 0.5 WORKER FOR EVERY 35 PUPILS.

THERE ARE 62 SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN 1994/95, EXCLUDING ONE HOSPITAL SCHOOL WHERE PUPILS ARE SERVED BY MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF AID FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS, ASWOS ARE PROVIDED IN 28 SPECIAL SCHOOLS, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE FOR MALADJUSTED CHILDREN AND THOSE WITH SENIOR SECONDARY CLASSES. THE REMAINING 34 SCHOOLS ARE PROVIDED WITH SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS AT THE SENIOR SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANT RANK. THESE 34 SCHOOLS COMPRISE 32 SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR PUPILS WITH MILDLY OR MODERATELY MENTAL HANDICAP, ONE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PUPILS AND ANOTHER ONE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS. THIS PROVISION IS BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A JOB INSPECTION TEAM WHICH PREPARED THE CODE OF AID FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN 1981. THE TEAM, CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE, HONG KONG SPECIAL SCHOOLS COUNCIL, SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, CONSIDERED THAT THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN THESE SCHOOLS WERE LESS COMPLICATED OR DIVERSIFIED.

AS REGARDS STANDARDISATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN ALL SPECIAL SCHOOLS, IT WILL BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY A SUB-COMMITTEE SET UP UNDER THE BOARD OF EDUCATION. THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS ALSO CONSULTING THE HONG KONG SPECIAL SCHOOLS COUNCIL ON THIS ISSUE.

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USE OF POWDERED-GLASS LINES IN KITE-FLYING DISCOURAGED

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON HA WING-HO AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : THE USE OF "GLASS THREAD" TO FLY KITES, WHICH IS A LONGSTANDING HABIT AMONG MANY KITE LOVERS, CONSTITUTES A DANGER TO OTHER PICNICKERS. ONLY RECENTLY, A CHILD CYCLING AT PAK TAM CHUNG IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WAS CUT IN THE NECK BY A "GLASS THREAD". IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER:

- (A) ANY MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO PREVENT SUCH ACCIDENTS FROM OCCURRING; IF SO, WHAT THOSE MEASURES ARE; IF NOT, WHAT THE REASONS ARE; AND

/(B) THE GOVERNMENT

- (B) THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER CLASSIFYING "GLASS THREAD" AS A DANGEROUS TOY AND ADVISING RETAILERS TO STOP SELLING IT; IF NOT, WHY NOT?

REPLY:

MR PRESIDENT,

KITE-FLYING IS A POPULAR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY. IT IS INEXPENSIVE AND CAN BE ENJOYED BY THE WHOLE FAMILY.

KITE-FLYING IS PROHIBITED IN PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS MANAGED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS UNDER THE RESPECTIVE PLEASURE GROUNDS BY-LAWS. HOWEVER, TO ENABLE THE PUBLIC TO ENJOY KITE-FLYING IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL ORGANISES KITE-FLYING ACTIVITIES IN OPEN AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. THE USE OF "POWDERED-GLASS LINES" IS PROHIBITED IN SUCH ACTIVITIES.

"POWDERED-GLASS LINES" ARE MAINLY USED IN KITE FIGHTING. SUCH LINES ARE NORMALLY HOME-MADE OR SELF-MADE. MEASURES CONTROLLING THEIR SALE OR USE WOULD THEREFORE BE DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE. IT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF THE PUBLIC IS DISCOURAGED FROM USING "POWDERED-GLASS LINES" THROUGH EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL EXAMINE WAYS OF DOING THIS.

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EMPLOYMENT TERMS OF LECTURERS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WITH REGARD TO THE TEACHING STAFF EMPLOYED BY THE SEVEN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

(A) OF THE CATEGORIES OF TERMS OF APPOINTMENT UNDER WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED;

(B) WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES IN THE CRITERIA ADOPTED FOR DETERMINING THE APPOINTMENT TERMS, SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS FOR VARIOUS RANKS IN RESPECT OF (I) LOCAL AND EXPATRIATE STAFF ON BOTH CONTRACT AND PERMANENT TERMS OF SERVICE AND (II) ETHNIC CHINESE AND NON-CHINESE STAFF RECRUITED FROM OVERSEAS; HOW AND ON WHAT BASIS ARE THESE CRITERIA DETERMINED;

/(C) WHETHER THE

- (C) WHETHER THE EXISTING PRACTICE, WHICH GRANTS DIFFERENT SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS TO STAFF OF THE SAME RANK AND WITH THE SAME QUALIFICATIONS ON ACCOUNT OF DIFFERENCES IN APPOINTMENT TERMS, IS IN BREACH OF ARTICLE 22 OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS; IF SO, WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH BREACH; AND
- (D) WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONSIDER AMENDING THOSE APPOINTMENT TERMS AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT IN WHICH DISCREPANCIES OCCUR BEFORE 1997, SO THAT DIFFERENT CONDITIONS OF SERVICE CAN BE STANDARDIZED AND THAT THE EQUITABLE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK CAN BE ACHIEVED?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS -

(A)&(B) TEACHING STAFF OF THE UPGC-FUNDED INSTITUTIONS ARE GENERALLY EMPLOYED ON EITHER SUPERANNUABLE OR CONTRACT TERMS. (CURRENTLY ONE INSTITUTION, LINGNAN COLLEGE, ONLY OFFERS APPOINTMENTS ON FIXED TERM CONTRACTS, BUT THIS POLICY IS UNDER REVIEW). STAFF EMPLOYED IN EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES MAY BE OFFERED EITHER LOCAL OR OVERSEAS TERMS. THE OFFER OF OVERSEAS TERMS FOLLOWS CIVIL SERVICE PRACTICE I.E. IS DEPENDENT ON WHETHER THE PERSON CONCERNED :-

- HABITUALLY RESIDES IN HONG KONG, CHINA, TAIWAN OR MACAU;
- HAS HIS/HER GENERAL BACKGROUND OR SOCIAL TIES SOMEWHERE OTHER THAN HONG KONG, CHINA, TAIWAN OR MACAU; AND
- IF APPOINTED ON LOCAL TERMS, WOULD SUFFER A MATERIAL DEGREE OF DISLOCATION OR UPROOTING FROM AN ENVIRONMENT TO WHICH HE/SHE BELONGS.

NO DISTINCTION IS MADE SOLELY ON GROUNDS OF THE PERSON'S ETHNICITY. THERE ARE NO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS TERMS AS REGARDS SALARIES; THE DIFFERENCES ARE MAINLY IN TERMS OF STAFF'S ELIGIBILITY FOR PASSAGE AND BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES, HOUSING BENEFITS AND OVERSEAS EDUCATION ALLOWANCES.

/(C) THE DIFFERENCES

(C) THE DIFFERENCES IN TERMS AND CONDITIONS ARE NOT CONSIDERED INCONSISTENT WITH ARTICLE 22 OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

(D) THE EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF IS AN AREA OF INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY IN WHICH IT WOULD BE NEITHER APPROPRIATE NOR DESIRABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO INTERFERE. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, OTHER THAN SALARIES, FOR ACADEMIC AND EQUIVALENT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF THE UPGC-FUNDED INSTITUTIONS DO NOT REQUIRE GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, SUBJECT TO SUCH TERMS BEING COMPARABLE WITH, AND NO BETTER THAN, THOSE OFFERED TO COMPARABLE RANKS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

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SUBSIDISED HOUSING SCHEMES BENEFIT FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : RECENTLY, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY REMARKED THAT THE POLICY ADOPTED BY BANKS TO OFFER A MAXIMUM OF 70% OF MORTGAGE LOANS TO HOME BUYERS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED. HOWEVER, THE CURRENT LEVEL OF PROPERTY PRICES IS STILL FAR BEYOND THE AFFORDABILITY OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, PARTICULARLY THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST STARTED THEIR CAREER. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SPECIFIC PLANS TO ASSIST FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS, SUCH AS OFFERING THEM A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF MORTGAGE LOANS?

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OBJECTIVE UNDER THE LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE OR RENT TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. ON HOME OWNERSHIP PROMOTION, WE WILL HELP AN ADDITIONAL 180,000 FAMILIES BUY THEIR OWN HOMES THROUGH VARIOUS SUBSIDISED HOUSING SCHEMES ADMINISTERED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE HOUSING SOCIETY BEFORE 2001. UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME, THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME AND THE SANDWICH CLASS HOUSING SCHEME, FLATS ARE SOLD TO LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES AT AFFORDABLE PRICES. THE HOME PURCHASE LOAN SCHEME AND THE SANDWICH CLASS HOUSING LOAN SCHEME OFFER INTEREST-FREE AND LOW-INTEREST LOANS RESPECTIVELY TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS TO PURCHASE A FLAT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY EXPLICIT POLICY TO ASSIST FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS, MANY OF THEM HAVE BECOME BENEFICIARIES UNDER THESE SCHEMES.

/IN JUNE

IN JUNE 1994, THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED A PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO CHECK THE PROPERTY PRICE SPIRAL. THE NOTICEABLE MODERATION IN PROPERTY PRICES SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE MEASURES WILL DEFINITELY HELP FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS PURCHASE THEIR OWN HOMES. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET CLOSELY.

GIVEN THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF THE PROPERTY MARKET, THE BANKING SECTOR HAS TO MAINTAIN A PRUDENTIAL CUSHION ON MORTGAGE LENDING IN ORDER TO LIMIT ITS EXPOSURE TO THE PROPERTY SECTOR. THE 70% LOAN-TO-VALUE RATIO PROVIDES SUCH A CUSHION AND IS THUS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING STABILITY IN THE BANKING SYSTEM IN THE EVENT OF ADVERSE MOVEMENTS IN THE PROPERTY MARKET.

LENDING DECISIONS ARE COMMERCIAL DECISIONS. BANKS WOULD NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FACTORS SUCH AS THE CREDIT RISK OF THE BORROWER IN MAKING LENDING DECISIONS. FIRST TIME BUYERS, HOWEVER, TEND TO SUFFER GREATER STRAINS ON AFFORDABILITY. CONSEQUENTLY, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY A HIGHER LENDING RATIO FOR THIS GROUP OF BORROWERS ALONE WHILE CAUTION HAS TO BE EXERCISED GENERALLY ACROSS THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LENDING.

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API MESSAGE ON PENSION SCHEME CLEAR

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG YING-YEN AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : AS THE CONTENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMOTION FILM AND TAPE ABOUT THE "CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE PROPOSED OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME" BROADCAST ON TELEVISION AND THE RADIO ARE MISLEADING IN NATURE AND MAY CREATE THE MISCONCEPTION THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS ALREADY BEEN FINALISED, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) OF THE MESSAGE WHICH IS IMPLICIT IN THE PROMOTION FILM AND TAPE;
- (B) WHETHER, IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN SOLICITING PUBLIC VIEWS ON A PARTICULAR ISSUE IN ORDER TO GET THE PUBLIC TO BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE ISSUE, TO PUBLICISE THE RELEVANT ISSUE IN AN OVERLY AFFIRMATIVE TONE;
- (C) WHETHER THE CONTENTS OF SUCH PROMOTION FILMS AND TAPES CURRENTLY BROADCAST ON TELEVISION AND THE RADIO ARE SUBJECT TO SCRUTINY BY ANY MECHANISM; IF NOT, WHAT THE REASONS ARE; AND

/(D) WHETHER THERE

- (D) WHETHER THERE ARE RULES OR GUIDELINES COVERING THE PRODUCTION OF PROMOTION FILMS AND TAPES ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES; IF SO, WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED FILM AND TAPE; IF NOT, WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER DRAWING UP GUIDELINES TO DISTINGUISH GOVERNMENT MESSAGES WHICH SEEK TO CONSULT THE PUBLIC FROM THOSE WHICH AIM TO PUBLICISE AND PROMOTE GOVERNMENT POLICIES SO THAT THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BECOME CONFUSED?

MR PRESIDENT,

THE SUGGESTION THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN PUBLIC INTEREST (API) IN QUESTION IS MISLEADING IS UNFOUNDED. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE API AND FROM RELATED PUBLICITY MATERIALS DISSEMINATED ON THE PROPOSED OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME (OPS) THAT THE SUBJECT IS UNDER PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND THAT GOVERNMENT IS INVITING PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT.

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS -

- (A) THE API IS DESIGNED TO FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC ON THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED OPS, WHICH IS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH INCOME PROTECTION AT OLD AGE.
- (B) GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED ITS INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT AN OPS SUBJECT TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, COMMUNITY ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSAL. THE PROPOSED OPS IS THE OUTCOME OF A DETAILED TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDY AND IT HAS BEEN COMMENDED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC BY THE ADMINISTRATION AT THE SAME TIME AS PUBLIC VIEWS ARE INVITED. IT IS REASONABLE AND LEGITIMATE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO RECOMMEND ITS PROPOSED POLICY FOR PUBLIC CONSIDERATION AND ACCEPTANCE.
- (C) & (D) GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENTS OF ITS APIS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY IN THE NORMAL WAY.

/THE DIRECTOR

THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADVISING ON AND FOR THE PRODUCTION OF RADIO AND TV APIS REQUESTED BY INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS. ALL APIS ARE PRODUCED IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH CLIENT DEPARTMENTS AND THE END-PRODUCT CAREFULLY VETTED BEFORE IT IS RELEASED FOR BROADCAST. APIS ARE PRODUCED ALONG THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES THAT THEY SHOULD BE INFORMATIVE, EDUCATIONAL AND HEIGHTEN THE PUBLIC'S AWARENESS ON PARTICULAR TOPICS OF CONCERN. THEY SERVE TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF IMPORTANT POLICIES, MEASURES OR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AFFECTING THEM; EDUCATE THEM AS TO THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS CITIZENS; AND/OR ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT OR CO-OPERATION ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC CONCERN. DEPENDING ON PUBLIC CONCERN ON THE TOPIC AND THE SCALE OF PUBLICITY REQUIRED, APIS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT FORM ONLY ONE COMPONENT IN A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLICITY PACKAGE.

AS FAR AS THE API IN QUESTION IS CONCERNED, THERE IS NO QUESTION OF CONFUSION. THE COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED OPS DISSEMINATED THROUGHOUT THE CONSULTATION PERIOD, INCLUDING THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT, BOOKLETS, LEAFLETS, POSTERS, PRESS ADVERTISEMENTS AND APIS ALL MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE SEEKING PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT.

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EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE BILINGUALISM IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : REGARDING THE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS IN SECTION 3(2) OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE THAT BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH POSSESS EQUAL STATUS AND ENJOY EQUALITY OF USE, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) OF THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WHICH ACCEPT DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC IN ENGLISH ONLY, TOGETHER WITH A LIST OF THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED AND THE TYPE OF DOCUMENTS INVOLVED;
- (B) WHETHER THE DEPARTMENTS REFERRED TO IN (A) HAVE VIOLATED THE PRINCIPLE AND INTENT OF THE PROVISIONS IN SECTION 3(2) OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE; IF SO, WHAT ARE THE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION; AND

/(C) WHAT MEASURES

- (C) WHAT MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO RECTIFY THE PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH ENGLISH IS STILL WIDELY USED AS THE PRINCIPAL LANGUAGE IN DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE A LEGAL BINDING EFFECT; AND HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATION ADDRESS THE ISSUE SO AS TO AVOID ANY CONTRAVENTION OF ARTICLE 9 OF THE BASIC LAW OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION --- WHICH STIPULATES THAT BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH ARE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES --- IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE SMOOTH OPERATION OF THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION?

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) A RECENT SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 3(2) OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE SHOWS THAT A LARGE DEGREE OF SUCCESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE EQUAL USE OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. NEVERTHELESS, SOME DOCUMENTS ARE STILL REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT IN ENGLISH ONLY. THESE ARE LISTED IN APPENDIX I.
- (B) ALTHOUGH SECTION 3 OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT ENGLISH AND CHINESE ARE BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OR ANY PUBLIC OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, THIS PROVISION DOES NOT OVERRULE AN EXPRESS EXISTING PROVISION IN ANY OTHER ORDINANCE NOR DOES IT PROVIDE FOR THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE TO PREVAIL SHOULD THERE BE A CONFLICT WITH AN EXISTING ORDINANCE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE EXISTENCE OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSIONS TO BE MADE IN ENGLISH DOES NOT VIOLATE THE PROVISIONS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE.
- (C) IT IS INDEED GOVERNMENT POLICY THAT DOCUMENTS WHICH HAVE A LEGALLY BINDING EFFECT SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE BILINGUAL. HOWEVER, THE CONTENTS OF THESE DOCUMENTS ARE TECHNICALLY COMPLEX AND INVOLVE LEGAL LIABILITY. THE TRANSLATION OF THESE DOCUMENTS WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL EXPERT INPUT FROM BILINGUAL LAWYERS.

/GIVEN THE

GIVEN THE LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF BILINGUAL GOVERNMENT LAWYERS, PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO THE DRAFTING OF BILINGUAL LAWS AND TO THE LAW TRANSLATION PROGRAMME. EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO HAVE THE CHINESE TEXTS OF ALL EXISTING LAWS AUTHENTICATED BY 1997. ONCE THE AUTHENTIC CHINESE VERSIONS OF THE LAWS, AND THUS CHINESE LEGAL TERMS BECOME AVAILABLE, WE WOULD BE WELL PLACED TO PREPARE DOCUMENTS WITH LEGALLY BINDING EFFECT BILINGUALLY.

SINCE THE BASIC LAW PROVIDES THAT IN ADDITION TO CHINESE, ENGLISH MAY ALSO BE USED AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BY THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES, LEGISLATURE AND JUDICIARY OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, THE MAINTENANCE OF THE USE OF ENGLISH FOR SUCH DOCUMENTS SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE SMOOTH OPERATION OF THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY WILL BE IN BILINGUAL FORM WHEN RESOURCES PERMIT.

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MOTION ON FAMILY POLICY AND JUVENILE CRIME PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED TWO MOTIONS - ONE ON FAMILY POLICY AND THE OTHER ON JUVENILE CRIME.

COUNCIL MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION ON FAMILY POLICY PROPOSED BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT, FOLLOWED BY REPLIES FROM THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, AND THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK.

THE OTHER MOTION ON JUVENILE CRIME WAS PROPOSED BY THE HON MRS SELINA CHOW AND REPLIES WERE GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, AFTER MEMBERS DEBATED ON IT.

DURING THE SITTING, THREE BILLS WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS. THEY WERE THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994.

ALSO PASSED WERE TWO PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILLS - THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE (TRANSFER OF HONG KONG IMMOVABLE PROPERTY) BILL MOVED BY THE HON JAMES TO AND THE PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 MOVED BY THE HON PETER WONG.

IN ADDITION, FOUR BILLS INCLUDING ONE PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THESE BILLS WERE THE FILM CENSORSHIP (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 MOVED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE, THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1994, THE LAND TITLES BILL AND THE MEDICAL AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS (REGISTRATION MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1994.

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