



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CS ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF EXPANDED LEGISLATURE FOR 1991
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, ANNOUNCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DETAILS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEXT STEPS TOWARDS A MORE DIRECTLY REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1991 WOULD BE INCREASED FROM THE 10 PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED FOR IN THE 1988 WHITE PAPER TO 18.

"IN CONSIDERING THE COMPOSITION OF THE REST OF THIS COUNCIL, THE CHALLENGE TO US HAS BEEN TO SET IN TRAIN A PROCESS OF REFORM WHICH WILL TAKE US SMOOTHLY THROUGH THE TRANSITION YEARS," HE ADDED.

FURTHER CHANGES PROPOSED ARE:

- A) TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS FROM 14 TO 21;
- B) TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS FROM 20 TO 17;
- C) TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COUNCIL ALL OFFICIAL MEMBERS EXCEPT THE THREE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS AND;
- D) TO APPOINT A NON-OFFICIAL MEMBER AS DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL.

AS REGARDS THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE IN THIS LATEST STAGE OF REFORM HAD BEEN TO BROADEN THE BASE OF REPRESENTATION BY FUNCTIONAL GROUPS.

"IN 1995, WE WILL CONTINUE THIS PROCESS SO THAT THE BROADEST SPECTRUM OF INTERESTS CAN BE SEPARATELY IDENTIFIED IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS COUNCIL," HE ADDED.

THE SEVEN NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE:

THE URBAN COUNCIL;

THE REGIONAL COUNCIL;

RURAL INTERESTS - REPRESENTED BY THE HEUNG YEE KUK;

TOURISM;

FINANCIAL SERVICES - COMPRISING STOCKBROKING, COMMODITIES AND FUTURES TRADING, THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER EXCHANGE AND THE INSURANCE SECTOR;

/THE CONSTRUCTION

THE CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE INDUSTRIES; AND ENGINEERING, WHICH WILL BE SEPARATED FROM AN EXISTING CONSTITUENCY.

"IN ADDITION, THE EXISTING FINANCE CONSTITUENCY IS TO BE EXPANDED BY THE ADDITION OF BOTH RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY NOTED THAT INEVITABLY, THERE WOULD BE SOME GROUPS WHICH FELT THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN DISTINCT REPRESENTATION AND WHO HAD NOT BEEN SO IDENTIFIED THIS TIME.

"FURTHER THOUGHT WILL BE GIVEN TO THEM IN CONSIDERING OUR NEXT STEP, IN 1995, WHEN THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES IS TO BE INCREASED TO 30, OR FULLY ONE HALF OF THIS COUNCIL," HE SAID.

"IN THIS CONTEXT, I THINK IT IS WORTHWHILE NOTING THE GENERAL DIFFICULTY OF IDENTIFYING THE ELECTORATES FOR THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES. OUR AIM IN THESE TRANSITION YEARS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMUNITY'S INTERESTS ARE PROPERLY REPRESENTED, BOTH GEOGRAPHICALLY AND BY OCCUPATION," THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT.

HE SAID THAT DEFINITION AND REGISTRATION OF THE ELECTORATE FOR THE FORMER WAS RELATIVELY EASY, FOR THE LATTER LESS SO EVEN WHEN THE FUNCTION ITSELF WAS READILY IDENTIFIABLE.

CITING TOURISM AS A USEFUL ILLUSTRATION, SIR DAVID SAID: "ALL ARE AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SECTOR TO THE ECONOMY AND THE DESIRABILITY OF ITS INTERESTS BEING REPRESENTED ON THIS COUNCIL."

"IDENTIFYING AN ELECTORATE WITHOUT DUPLICATION OF INTEREST PROVED RATHER MORE DIFFICULT, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE NOW ARRIVED AT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION," HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID SAID IN 1995, THE KEY FACTOR IN BROADENING AND REFINING THE SYSTEM WOULD BE THE SATISFACTORY IDENTIFICATION OF AN UNAMBIGUOUS ELECTORATE FOR OTHER CONSTITUENCIES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY NOTED.

"WE WILL BE LOOKING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DEFINE A CONSTITUENCY TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE RETAIL TRADE. WE HOPE THAT MEMBERS OF THIS AND OTHER POTENTIAL GROUPS WILL ORGANISE THEMSELVES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FACILITATE DEFINITION OF THAT CONSTITUENCY," SIR DAVID SAID.

FROM OCTOBER 1991 THE ONLY OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL BE THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY. AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE PROPOSING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL ALLOW BRANCH SECRETARIES TO ATTEND BEFORE THE COUNCIL BY INVITATION BUT WITHOUT THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

/"THIS WILL

"THIS WILL ALLOW GREATER FLEXIBILITY, IN THAT THE SECRETARY DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR A PARTICULAR SUBJECT WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND BEFORE COUNCIL TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION AND TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS. THE LATTER, WE FEEL CERTAIN, WILL BE A DISTINCT IMPROVEMENT OVER PRESENT PRACTICE.

"IT WILL ALSO HELP PREPARE US FOR THE POSITION AFTER 1997 WHEN ALL OFFICIALS WILL HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THIS COUNCIL AND WILL SIT ONLY IN ATTENDANCE," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THESE CHANGES, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS TO 17, WOULD PRODUCE A COUNCIL OF 60 MEMBERS, COMPRISING THREE ROUGHLY EQUAL PARTS: DIRECTLY ELECTED, FUNCTIONAL AND APPOINTED.

IN 1995, THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE ELECTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FROM AMONG THEMSELVES.

"THE INDIVIDUAL CHOSEN, ONCE HE TAKES OFFICE, WILL BE OBLIGED TO BE COMPLETELY NEUTRAL IN HIS DEALINGS WITH ALL MEMBERS. TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THIS CHANGE, WE HAVE DECIDED TO APPOINT A DEPUTY PRESIDENT TO COUNCIL TO PRESIDE OVER SOME OF ITS MEETINGS," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNOR INTENDED TO APPOINT TO THIS OFFICE SOMEONE WHO HAD BROAD EXPERIENCE OF THE WORKINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IT IS OUR INTENTION THAT THIS CHANGE BE INTRODUCED GRADUALLY. THE GOVERNOR WILL ATTEND IMPORTANT MEETINGS, SUCH AS THOSE ON THE BUDGET, AND THE TRADITION OF THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS TO COUNCIL WILL OF COURSE BE CONTINUED," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1991 ELECTIONS, SIR DAVID NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DEBATE ABOUT THE TYPE OF CONSTITUENCIES TO BE USED IN THE ELECTIONS, WITH SOME FAVOURING SINGLE SEAT, SOME DOUBLE SEAT AND OTHERS REGIONAL, MULTI-SEAT CONSTITUENCIES.

"WE HAVE DECIDED TO HAVE NINE DOUBLE SEAT CONSTITUENCIES, KEEPING CLOSELY TO THE DISTRICT BOARD BOUNDARIES," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS BEHIND THIS. "FIRST WE WANT TO BUILD ON THE SENSE OF DISTRICT IDENTITY, WHILE PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WITHOUT FAVOURING ANY PARTICULAR GROUP."

"SECONDLY, THERE IS A PRACTICAL NEED TO AVOID THE DISRUPTION WHICH A CHANGE IN BOUNDARIES WOULD PRODUCE. AND THIRDLY, WE RECOGNISE THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH A DYNAMIC SITUATION, IN WHICH OUR DEVELOPMENT PLANS CONTINUOUSLY CHANGE THE SHAPE OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

THE NINE CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE:

HONG KONG ISLAND EAST, COMPRISING EASTERN DISTRICT AND WAN CHAI;

HONG KONG ISLAND WEST, COMPRISING CENTRAL AND WESTERN AND SOUTHERN;

KOWLOON EAST, COMPRISING KWUN TONG;

KOWLOON CENTRAL, COMPRISING WONG TAI SIN AND KOWLOON CITY;

KOWLOON WEST, COMPRISING SHAM SHUI PO, MONG KOK AND YAU TSIM;

NEW TERRITORIES NORTH, COMPRISING NORTH AND TAI PO;

NT EAST, COMPRISING SHA TIN AND SAI KUNG;

NT WEST, COMPRISING YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN; AND

NT SOUTH, COMPRISING TSUEN WAN, KWAI TSING AND ISLANDS.

SIR DAVID SAID MOST PEOPLE SEEMED TO FAVOUR A SIMPLE "FIRST PAST THE POST" VOTING SYSTEM FOR THE DIRECT ELECTIONS, WITH EACH ELECTOR HAVING TWO VOTES, THIS WAS, ONE FOR EACH OF THE SEATS IN A CONSTITUENCY.

"THIS SYSTEM WILL BE ADOPTED FOR THE 1991 DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THIS COUNCIL. HOWEVER, THE PREFERENTIAL ELIMINATION VOTING SYSTEM, WHICH WAS USED SUCCESSFULLY IN THE 1988 INDIRECT ELECTIONS, WILL BE RETAINED FOR THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES," HE SAID.

REGISTERED ELECTORS WOULD BE ABLE TO VOTE IN A GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY FOR THE DIRECT ELECTIONS AND, WHERE QUALIFIED, IN A FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY.

TURNING TO THE VOTING AGE, SIR DAVID SAID: "WHEN WE LAST CANVASSED PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS QUESTION IN 1987, THE RESPONSE WAS A RESOUNDINGLY CONSERVATIVE ONE; THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IT AT 21. THE ARGUMENTS ARE FINELY BALANCED."

"YOUNG PEOPLE NOW MATURE EARLIER. THIS HAS BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION, AND WE ARE ALREADY MOVING TO BRING THE AGE OF MAJORITY FOR SOME OTHER PRACTICAL MATTERS DOWN TO 18.

"ALSO WE WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A GREATER SENSE OF INVOLVEMENT AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THEIR AFFAIRS. AGAINST THESE WE HAVE WEIGHED THE VERY MAJOR CHANGES ALREADY PROPOSED FOR 1991 AND THE NEED TO HASTEN CAUTIOUSLY," SIR DAVID SAID.

"IN ADDITION, EXPERIENCE OF VOTER REGISTRATION SO FAR SUGGESTS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LESS PREPARED TO COME FORWARD AS VOTERS. WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED FOR THE PRESENT TO MAINTAIN THE VOTING AGE AT 21, BUT TO CONSIDER LOWERING IT TO 18 IN 1995," HE ADDED.

/SIR DAVID

SIR DAVID SAID THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS ON THIS OCCASION. THIS WAS NOT A PASSIVE DECISION, HE SAID NOTING THAT ARGUMENTS HAD BEEN ADVANCED IN FAVOUR OF ALTERING THE BALANCE OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND ALSO IN THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"WE ACCEPT THAT THESE ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN WELL MADE. OUR REASON FOR NOT PROCEEDING IS ESSENTIALLY THAT THE CHANGES PROPOSED TO THIS COUNCIL ARE ENOUGH TO DIGEST AT ONE TIME AND THAT CHANGES TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND DISTRICT BOARDS AT THE SAME TIME MIGHT DISTRACT FROM THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THIS COUNCIL," SIR DAVID SAID.

"THUS, FOR THE MOMENT, THEY WILL PRESERVE THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT BY WHICH ABOUT ONE THIRD OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP IS APPOINTED. HOWEVER, WE WILL REVIEW THE SITUATION AGAIN BEFORE THE 1995 ELECTIONS, WITH A VIEW TO FURTHER CHANGES," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY IN DUE COURSE TO SCRUTINISE AND DEBATE THE LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD GIVE EFFECT TO THE ARRANGEMENTS HE HAD OUTLINED TODAY.

"THE LEGISLATION WILL INCLUDE OTHER PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW INCLUDING ELECTION EXPENSES, NOMINATION PROCEDURES AND ELECTION DEPOSITS. I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO SET THEM IN PLACE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO ALLOW THOSE WHO WISH TO STAND FOR ELECTION ADEQUATE TIME TO PREPARE THEMSELVES," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY PAID TRIBUTE TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF OMELCO WHO HAD INVOLVED THEMSELVES IN DISCUSSIONS OF THESE ISSUES.

"THEIR ENTHUSIASM IN ENCOURAGING PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE PACE OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND THEIR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THAT DEBATE HAVE BEEN OF ENORMOUS ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING THE WAY FORWARD," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT LOOKED FORWARD TO A WARM PUBLIC RESPONSE IN REGISTERING TO VOTE, IN PUTTING FORWARD CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION, AND IN TURNING OUT TO VOTE ON THE DAY," HE SAID.

"AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE COUNCIL WHICH CONVENES IN THIS CHAMBER IN OCTOBER 1991 WILL PROVIDE A FIRM FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BASE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM," SIR DAVID SAID.

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PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN ON ELECTRICITY BILL'S PROVISIONS

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A SUSTAINED PROGRAMME OF EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY WILL BE DRAWN UP IN CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT PARTIES REGARDING THE PROVISIONS IN THE ELECTRICITY BILL 1989, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ANSON CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MRS CHAN SAID THE PROGRAMME WOULD ALSO COVER THE SIX SETS OF REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD EMBODY THE TECHNICAL AND DETAILED MEASURES TO GIVE FULL EFFECT TO THE BILL.

SHE SAID SHE WAS GRATEFUL TO PROF THE HON C.K. POON AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP FOR THEIR PAINSTAKING EXAMINATION OF THE BILL AND FOR THEIR USEFUL SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE BOTH THE ENGLISH AND CHINESE VERSIONS OF IT.

NOTING THE AD HOC GROUP'S MAIN COMMENTS ON CERTAIN KEY PROVISIONS OF THE BILL AS HIGHLIGHTED BY PROF POON, MRS CHAN SAID, FIRSTLY, THE SUGGESTION THAT THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES SHOULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL SHOULD, AS SHE ACCEPTED, ENHANCE THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE TRIBUNAL.

"SECONDLY, THE PROPOSED EXEMPTION OF RESEARCH WORKERS FROM THE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT IN RESPECT OF WORK DONE IN RELATION TO THEIR RESEARCH WOULD REMOVE ANY UNNECESSARY RESTRICTIONS ON RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME INCREASING THE LEVEL OF RISK INVOLVED," SHE ADDED.

THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT THESE AMENDMENTS, TOGETHER WITH OTHER AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD BE MOVED DURING THE COMMITTEE STAGE BY PROF POON, THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG AND THE HON MIRIAM LAU, HAD THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

MRS CHAN EXPLAINED THAT SUBSEQUENT TO THE GAZETTING OF THE BILL, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD RECEIVED FURTHER PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FROM VARIOUS PARTIES CONCERNED.

"IT HAS ALSO BECOME APPARENT THAT A NUMBER OF CLAUSES SHOULD BE REFINED TO PUT BEYOND DOUBT THEIR INTENDED PURPOSES," SHE SAID.

ACCORDINGLY, SHE WOULD MOVE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS IN THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

WHILST MOST OF THEM WERE TECHNICAL IN NATURE, ONE RELATED TO THE PROPOSAL FOR THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL AND THE APPEAL BOARD TO BE EMPOWERED TO AWARD COSTS IN RESPECT OF THEIR PROCEEDINGS.

/"CONSISTENT WITH

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"CONSISTENT WITH SIMILAR PROVISIONS IN OTHER LEGISLATION, THIS AMENDMENT WILL PROVIDE THESE BODIES WITH GREATER DISCRETION IN THE HEARING OF CASES BUT THERE WILL BE SAFEGUARDS TO DISCOURAGE FRIVOLOUS ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PROCEEDINGS," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID SHE WAS GRATEFUL TO THE AD HOC GROUP FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THESE AMENDMENTS.

THE BILL WAS LATER PASSED.

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SEM RESPONDS TO OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE'S CONCERNS

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THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, RESPONDED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLI) IN HAVING TO UNDERGO ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION THROUGH ITS INCLUSION IN THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION BILL 1990.

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR YEUNG SAID THE IMPRESSION OF A STRAINED WORKING RELATIONSHIP MIGHT HAVE ARISEN OWING TO THIS CONCERN.

HE SAID HE WAS GLAD THERE WAS NO INHERENT DISAGREEMENT ON THE NEED FOR THE OLI TO UNDERGO ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION.

"INDEED, THE OLI HAD AN INITIAL ACCREDITATION VISIT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS LAST YEAR, HAD BUDGETTED FOR A FURTHER REVIEW THIS YEAR AND HAS INVITED THE HKCAA TO UNDERTAKE IT," HE SAID.

"THE OLI APPEARS TO BE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT, BY ITS INCLUSION IN THE BILL, AN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WILL MAKE EXTRA DEMANDS ON ITS FINANCIAL AND STAFF RESOURCES."

THIS COULD NOT BE THE CASE, HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID GIVEN THAT THE ESTIMATED COST OF AN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW WAS LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF THE OLI'S OPERATING BUDGET FOR 1990-91, HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT FUNDING SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE.

"INDEED, SHOULD THE OLI GENUINELY RUN SHORT, I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO A REQUEST FOR A SUPPLEMENTARY SUBVENTION.

/"WHILST I

"WHILST I ALSO APPRECIATE THE DEMANDS ANY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW MAKES ON A NEW INSTITUTION'S ADMINISTRATION IN THE PREPARATION OF A SUBMISSION, THIS IS A NECESSARY FACET OF ANY ACCREDITATION EXERCISE.

"INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS HAVE, AS ONE OBJECTIVE, TO EVALUATE WHETHER THE INSTITUTION, AS A WHOLE, HAS AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT SUITABLE FOR OFFERING DEGREE PROGRAMMES OF AN APPROPRIATE STANDARD.

"ASSUMING THE OUTCOME OF THE OLI REVIEW IS POSITIVE, THIS WILL GIVE PROVISIONAL RECOGNITION TO ITS DEGREE PROGRAMMES," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID A FURTHER REVIEW WOULD BE NECESSARY SOME YEARS HENCE, AT A TIME WHEN "COHORTS" OF STUDENTS WERE EITHER JUST COMPLETING OR APPROACHING THE FINAL STAGES OF THEIR COURSES.

"WHILE THE PROCEDURES AND SCOPE OF ANY EXERCISE IS ULTIMATELY WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE HKCAA, I AM SURE THAT IT WILL RECOGNISE THE DIFFERENCES OF ORGANISATION, PROCEDURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE INSTITUTIONS IT ACCREDITS," HE POINTED OUT.

MR YEUNG ALSO NOTED THAT THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING AND WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE METHODS WHICH MUST BE EMPLOYED TO EVALUATE INSTITUTIONS OFFERING SUCH COURSES.

HE SAID IT WAS SENSITIVE TO THE NEED NOT TO COMPROMISE THE OLI'S POSITION WITH THE SUPPLIERS OF COURSE MATERIALS.

"HOWEVER, A DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE IS NOT JUST ITS MATERIALS, BUT ALSO THE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE HANDLED AND USED WITH STUDENTS," HE ADDED.

MR YEUNG THANKED MEMBERS OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE HON RITA FAN, FOR THE EFFORTS THEY HAD MADE IN IMPROVING THE BILL.

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CALL FOR PROPER ACCREDITATION OF OLI COURSES

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THERE IS A NEED FOR ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO ENSURE THAT THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS ARE COMPARABLE WITH INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED STANDARDS, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLI), THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION BILL 1990 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHENG SAID THAT IN THE DELIBERATION OF THE BILL, THE SENIOR STAFF OF THE OLI HAD EXPRESSED TO THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE OLI'S LIMITED RESOURCES AND COMMITMENTS TO SELF-FINANCING, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION.

/MR CHENG

MR CHENG SAID THAT HE SHARED THE CONCERN AND THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO SAFEGUARD THE POSITION OF HONG KONG'S NEWEST TERTIARY INSTITUTION WHICH OFFERED COURSES AND PROGRAMMES BY USING THE PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING.

HE WELCOMED THE ADVICE OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND INDEED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PROVISIONAL HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION (HKCAA) THAT, IN THE CASE OF THE OLI WHERE NON-TRADITIONAL METHOD OF DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION WAS USED, INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OR REVIEW WOULD BE REQUIRED ABOUT ONCE EVERY THREE YEARS AND, IN-BETWEEN REVIEWS, ONLY PROVISIONAL APPROVAL WOULD BE GIVEN TO NEW COURSE UNITS WITH A VIEW TO GRANTING FORMAL APPROVAL TOGETHER WITH INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OR REVIEW.

NOTING THAT THE OLI DEPENDED VERY HEAVILY ON BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS UNIVERSITIES FOR SUPPLY OF MANY OF ITS COURSES AND THAT EXPOSING THEIR COURSES TO LOCAL SCRUTINY WOULD RAISE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS FOR THEM THAT COULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS IN SUPPLY, MR CHENG SAID HE HOPED THAT THE HKCAA WHEN ESTABLISHED WOULD HAVE THIS REGARD IN FORMULATING ITS ACCREDITATION POLICY.

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, THE HON SELINA CHOW SAID THAT THE HKCAA HAD TO EARN THE RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE ACADEMIC FIELD LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, BY SETTING FOR ITSELF THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL STANDARD OF OPERATION.

"I WOULD LIKE TO LEND MY SUPPORT TO THE BILL BEFORE THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING THE CONTENTIOUS PART REGARDING WHETHER OLI OUGHT TO BE PLACED IN A CATEGORY WHICH IS SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE GOVERNOR OR WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO EXERCISE THEIR OWN CHOICE AND DISCRETION IN SELECTING REGARDING COURSES FOR VALIDATION.

"I AM SATISFIED THAT PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS VISUALISED BY OLI EXIST, BUT CAN BE RESOLVED IF AN OPEN AND OBJECTIVE ATTITUDE IS ADOPTED ON ALL SIDES," SHE SAID.

MRS CHOW POINTED OUT THAT OLI'S CONCERN WAS TRIGGERED MAINLY BY A STRANDED WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION, WHICH LED THEM TO GRAVE WORRY THAT SUCH DIFFICULTIES COULD WELL PERPETRATE INTO THE FUTURE WHEN THE COUNCIL CAME INTO BEING.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT THE WORRY NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED BUT IT SHOULD NOT BE DONE AT THE COST OF THE STANDARD OF DEGREE COURSES.

TIMELY TO AMEND PROVISIONS IN EDUCATION ORDINANCE: SEM

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HONG KONG'S EDUCATION SYSTEM HAS DEVELOPED RAPIDLY OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, AND IT IS NOW TIMELY TO AMEND A NUMBER OF PROVISIONS IN THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE WHICH NOW APPEAR OUT OF DATE, DEFECTIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR YEUNG WAS MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, WHICH HE SAID PROPOSED A VARIETY OF AMENDMENTS. THESE COULD BE GROUPED INTO FOUR CATEGORIES:

- * UPDATING OF TERMINOLOGY AND PENALTY LEVELS;
- * REMEDYING OF CERTAIN DEFICIENCIES WHICH HAVE EMERGED IN THE COURSE OF ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE;
- * REPEAL OF THE POWER TO REGULATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS;
- * PROVISION OF AN APPEALS MECHANISM IN RELATION TO POWERS EXERCISED UNDER REGULATIONS.

MR YEUNG EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESENT ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO, WITH MANY OF ITS PROVISIONS HAVING BEEN TAKEN OVER FROM AN EARLIER ORDINANCE DATING FROM 1952.

HE SAID THE SUBSTANCE OF THE BILL WAS CONTAINED IN FOUR CLAUSES: 3, 6, 9 AND 10.

CLAUSES 3, 6 AND 9 WERE INTENDED TO REMEDY DEFICIENCIES IN THREE AREAS.

THE FIRST DEFICIENCY WAS THE LACK, AT PRESENT, OF A PROVISION FOR A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO RESIGN. CLAUSE 3 PROPOSED SUCH A PROVISION.

THE SECOND DEFICIENCY CONCERNED ATTENDANCE ORDERS. SUCH ORDERS WERE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE DID ATTEND SCHOOL, UNLESS THERE WAS A REASONABLE EXCUSE.

"HOWEVER, THE PRESENT WORDING OF SECTION 74(1) REQUIRES THAT A PARENT BE WITHHOLDING A CHILD FROM SCHOOL BEFORE AN ORDER CAN BE SERVED.

"THIS IS UNDULY RESTRICTIVE, AND MAKES IT EASY FOR SOME PARENTS TO DISCLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CHILD'S TRUANCY.

"CLAUSE 6(1) PROVIDES FOR THE SERVING OF AN ATTENDANCE ORDER WHENEVER A CHILD IS IN FACT NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THERE IS NO REASONABLE EXCUSE.

"THE RIGHT OF A PARENT TO APPEAL AGAINST AN ORDER, HOWEVER, IS NOT AFFECTED BY THIS AMENDMENT," HE SAID.

/MR YEUNG

MR YEUNG SAID ANOTHER PROBLEM IN CONNECTION WITH ATTENDANCE ORDERS WAS THE DIFFICULTY WHICH SOMETIMES AROSE IN FINDING A SCHOOL WILLING TO ACCEPT A TRUANT OR PROBLEM CHILD.

CLAUSE 6(2) PROPOSED TO GIVE THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION THE POWER TO REQUIRE A SCHOOL TO ADMIT A CHILD NAMED IN AN ATTENDANCE ORDER, AND TO PROHIBIT THE EXPULSION OF THAT CHILD WITHOUT THE DIRECTOR'S WRITTEN PERMISSION.

"I CAN WELL UNDERSTAND THE RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF CERTAIN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO ACCEPTING TRUANT OR PROBLEM CHILDREN, BUT AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IS INVOLVED HERE.

"IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION HAS THE MEANS OF ENSURING THAT ALL CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE HAVE A SCHOOL TO GO TO.

"I SHOULD LIKE TO MENTION, IN THIS CONNECTION, THE EDUCATION COMMISSION'S CURRENT STUDY OF CURRICULA AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS.

"ONE PROPOSAL BEING CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION IS THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING A SMALL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS CATERING SPECIFICALLY FOR THOSE CHILDREN WHO, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, REJECT THE TYPE OF EDUCATION OFFERED IN THE MAINSTREAM OF OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID THE THIRD DEFICIENCY RELATED TO THE POWER OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TO ENTER PREMISES.

SECTION 81 OF THE ORDINANCE PERMITTED THE INSPECTION OF ANY PREMISES WHERE AN OFFENCE AGAINST THE ORDINANCE WAS SUSPECTED.

HOWEVER, THE WORDING OF SECTION 87(1)(D)(I) CREATED AN OFFENCE OF OBSTRUCTION ONLY IN THE CASE OF A SCHOOL.

THIS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE DIRECTOR TO OBTAIN EVIDENCE THAT PREMISES WERE BEING USED ILLEGALLY AS AN UNREGISTERED SCHOOL. CLAUSE 9 PROVIDED FOR ENTRY TO PREMISES SUSPECTED OF BEING ILLEGAL SCHOOLS, UNDER A WARRANT ISSUED BY A MAGISTRATE.

REFERRING TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS AN IMPORTANT ITEM IN THE BILL, MR YEUNG SAID CLAIMS HAD BEEN MADE IN RECENT YEARS THAT PROVISIONS IN THE LAW RELATING TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS INHIBITED EFFORTS TO PROMOTE CIVIC EDUCATION.

"WHILST THERE IS LITTLE SUBSTANCE IN THESE CLAIMS, IF ONLY BECAUSE THE RELEVANT POWERS HAVE NEVER BEEN INVOKED, THE PROVISIONS WERE ENACTED AT A TIME WHEN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF EDUCATION PROVIDED ONLY A SMALL MINORITY OF PLACES, AND WHEN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM WAS IN DANGER OF DISRUPTION BY CONTENDING POLITICAL FORCES EMANATING FROM OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

"OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS NOW MATURE, AND IT IS NOW CONSIDERED TIMELY TO REMOVE THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY FROM THIS STATUTE.

"THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE AND REGULATIONS SHOULD PROPERLY CONFINE THEIR SCOPE TO SAFEGUARDING THE WELFARE OF PUPILS AND THE INTERESTS OF EDUCATION GENERALLY," HE SAID.

ACCORDINGLY, CLAUSE 10 PROVIDED FOR THE REPEAL OF THE POWER TO MAKE REGULATIONS PROHIBITING POLITICAL, SUBVERSIVE OR TENDENTIOUS PROPAGANDA IN SCHOOLS AND AMONG TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

"IT FOLLOWS THAT ALL REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THIS POWER NEED TO BE REVIEWED.

"I AM HAPPY TO INFORM HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT SUCH A REVIEW HAS IN FACT BEEN COMPLETED, AND THAT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS NOTED THE CHANGES WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED.

"IT IS OUR FIRM INTENTION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR AMENDING REGULATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL WHEN THIS BILL IS PASSED INTO LAW," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID THE FINAL AMENDMENT OF SUBSTANCE CONCERNED APPEALS. THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE CONTAINED TWO APPEAL MECHANISMS: IN PART V FOR APPEALS RELATING TO REGISTRATIONS, AND IN PART VII FOR APPEALS AGAINST ATTENDANCE ORDERS.

NO PROVISION WAS MADE FOR APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ARISING FROM POWERS CONFERRED BY REGULATIONS.

"SINCE SOME OF THESE POWERS COULD BE ARGUED TO AFFECT THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF SCHOOLS OR INDIVIDUALS, WE CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR APPEALS UNDER REGULATIONS. CLAUSE 10 SO PROVIDES. THE INTENTION IS THAT THE APPEALS BOARD CREATED UNDER PART V OF THE ORDINANCE WOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEARING APPEALS UNDER REGULATIONS," MR YEUNG SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

NEW SYSTEM OF KEEPING COMPANY DOCUMENTS ON MICROFILM

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THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1990 INTRODUCES AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE TO IMPLEMENT A NEW SYSTEM OF KEEPING COMPANY RECORDS ON MICROFILM, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR NENDICK SAID THAT CURRENTLY, COMPANY RECORDS FILED WITH THE COMPANIES REGISTRY OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT WERE KEPT IN PAPER FORM.

"TO SAVE STORAGE SPACE AND TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC, THE COMPANIES REGISTRY PROPOSES IN FUTURE TO KEEP COMPANY RECORDS ON MICROFILM AND TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC SEARCH ON MICROFICHE.

"THE AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE THAT ARE REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW SYSTEM RELATE TO THE DESTRUCTION, INSPECTION, STORAGE, PRODUCTION AND EVIDENTIAL USE OF MICROFILMED DOCUMENTS, AND TO THE PAYMENT OF INSPECTION FEES," HE SAID.

ON DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS, MR NENDICK SAID SECTION 348B OF THE ORDINANCE CURRENTLY ENABLED THE REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES TO DESTROY VARIOUS DOCUMENTS AFTER SPECIFIED PERIODS OF TIME WHICH VARIED WITH EACH CLASS OF DOCUMENT.

"THIS PROVISION HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO APPLY IN PRACTICE BECAUSE IT INVOLVES SIFTING THROUGH EACH COMPANY FILE TO ESTABLISH THE RELEVANT DESTRUCTION DATE FOR THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF DOCUMENT.

"CLAUSE 3 AMENDS SECTION 348B TO GRANT THE REGISTRAR A DISCRETION TO DESTROY ALL DOCUMENTS AFTER SEVEN YEARS OR AT ANY TIME AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN MICROFILMED," HE SAID.

ON INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS, HE SAID UNDER SECTION 305(1) OF THE ORDINANCE, ANY PERSON MIGHT AT PRESENT, ON PAYMENT OF A PRESCRIBED FEE, INSPECT COMPANY DOCUMENTS KEPT BY THE REGISTRAR.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, THE REGISTRAR WOULD PROVIDE A COPY OF THE MICROFICHE AND ONLY MAKE AVAILABLE THE DOCUMENT ITSELF WHERE IT HAD NOT BEEN MICROFILMED (FOR EXAMPLE IN THE CASE OF SHAREHOLDERS' LISTS). CLAUSE 2 AMENDED THE SECTION ACCORDINGLY.

ON PRODUCTION AND EVIDENCE OF DOCUMENTS, MR NENDICK SAID SECTION 305(3) OF THE ORDINANCE RELATED TO THE ADMISSIBILITY AS EVIDENCE OF COPIES OF DOCUMENTS CERTIFIED BY THE REGISTRAR.

TO PERMIT THE USE OF COPIES OF MICROFILMED DOCUMENTS, CLAUSE 2 AMENDED THE SECTION TO PROVIDE EXPRESSLY THAT A COPY WAS TO BE REGARDED AS A COPY OF A DOCUMENT NOTWITHSTANDING THAT IT WAS ITSELF TAKEN FROM A COPY OR OTHER REPRODUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL.

ON PROVISION FOR THE REGISTRAR TO KEEP REGISTERS OR ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS IN A FORM OTHERWISE THAN IN A LEGIBLE FORM, HE SAID SECTION 347 OF THE ORDINANCE DID NOT STATE THE MANNER IN WHICH THE REGISTRAR MUST KEEP HIS RECORDS.

TO ENABLE THE REGISTRAR TO KEEP RECORDS ON MICROFILM, CLAUSE 4 AMENDED THIS SECTION TO PROVIDE EXPRESSLY THAT THE RECORDS KEPT BY THE REGISTRAR NEED NOT BE IN DOCUMENTARY FORM.

ON INSPECTION FEES, MR NENDICK SAID THAT UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, A SEARCH OF COMPANY RECORDS KEPT ON MICROFILM WOULD BE MADE BY REFERENCE TO A PARTICULAR YEAR OR NUMBER OF YEARS.

"TO RECOVER THE COSTS OF THE NEW SERVICE, THE COMPANIES REGISTRY PROPOSES TO CHARGE A FEE OF \$10 FOR EACH YEAR SEARCHED, AND A FURTHER FEE OF \$10 FOR INSPECTION OF ANY REMAINING DOCUMENTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN MICROFILMED. CLAUSE 5 AMENDS THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE TO THE ORDINANCE ACCORDINGLY," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BANKING AMENDMENT BILL INTRODUCED
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THE PURPOSE OF THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1990 IS TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE PROVISIONS RELATING TO AUDITORS AND TO RECTIFY SOME MINOR ANOMALIES AND UNCERTAINTIES, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR NENDICK SAID THAT UNDER SECTION 61 OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE, DIRECTORS OF AN INSTITUTION, AUDITORS OR THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING MIGHT CALL TRIPARTITE MEETINGS TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO THE INSTITUTION.

"WHILST THIS SITUATION IS GENERALLY SATISFACTORY, CIRCUMSTANCES CAN ARISE WHERE THE REQUIREMENT TO INVOLVE THE AUTHORISED INSTITUTION MAY NEGATE THE USEFULNESS OF A MEETING.

"THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS, RECOGNISING THE PRESENT SHORTCOMING, HAS RECOMMENDED IN A GUIDANCE NOTE THAT, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES THE AUDITOR SHOULD APPROACH THE COMMISSIONER DIRECTLY WITHOUT INVOLVING THE AUTHORISED INSTITUTION.

"ALTHOUGH THE SOCIETY'S LEGAL ADVICE IS THAT, IN SO DOING, AN AUDITOR SHOULD NOT BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES TO HIS CLIENT FOR BREACH OF CONFIDENCE, THE MATTER IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBT.

/"THE SOCIETY

"THE SOCIETY HAS THEREFORE SUGGESTED TO THE ADMINISTRATION THAT, AS IN THE UK, STATUTORY PROTECTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO AUDITORS TO COVER INFORMATION THAT THEY MIGHT DISCLOSE AT SUCH A MEETING," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK SAID IT WAS PROPOSED IN CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL THAT THE EXISTING LEGISLATION CONCERNING TRIPARTITE MEETINGS BE REPEALED, AND REPLACED BY A MORE GENERAL PROVISION EMPOWERING AUDITORS TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION TO THE COMMISSIONER IN GOOD FAITH.

THE SOCIETY'S GUIDELINES WOULD THEN GOVERN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE AUDITORS AND THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD BE HELD.

ON DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST AUDITORS, HE SAID THE PRESENT PROVISIONS CONCERNING COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST AUDITORS WERE UNDULY RESTRICTIVE.

UNDER SECTION 62 OF THE ORDINANCE, THE COMMISSIONER COULD MAKE A COMPLAINT IN RESPECT OF ANY AUDITORS OF AN AUTHORISED INSTITUTION.

THIS IMPLICITLY EXCLUDED AUDITORS OF FORMER AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS AND FORMER AUDITORS OF AUTHORISED INSTITUTIONS.

FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH THE COMMISSIONER WAS PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION TO THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS IN RESPECT OF SUCH COMPLAINTS, HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO DISCLOSE SUCH INFORMATION TO THE AUDITOR UNDER COMPLAINT OR TO GIVE EVIDENCE AT THE HEARING.

"THESE RESTRICTIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST AUDITORS OR FORMER AUDITORS. CLAUSE 9 INTRODUCES CHANGES TO RECTIFY THESE DEFICIENCIES AND CLAUSE 6 REPEALS SECTION 62 WHICH IS CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY AS A CONSEQUENCE," HE SAID.

REFERRING TO OTHER AMENDMENTS, MR NENDICK SAID THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED A MISCELLANY OF MINOR AMENDMENTS TO REMOVE SOME UNCERTAINTIES AND ANOMALIES. CLAUSE 4 RELATED TO NOTIFICATIONS CONCERNING AUDITORS. CLAUSE 10 WIDENED THE SCOPE OF THE DEFENCE PROVISIONS. CLAUSE 11 EXTENDED THE TIME LIMIT FOR SUMMARY PROSECUTIONS. OTHER CLAUSES REPEALED REFERENCES TO UNINCORPORATED BANKS AS THIS CATEGORY NO LONGER EXISTED.

MR NENDICK SAID THE SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS WAS CONSULTED ON THE PROPOSALS RELATING TO MEETINGS WITH AUDITORS AND HAD EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT.

THE BANKING AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ADVISORY COMMITTEES WERE CONSULTED AND HAD EXPRESSED SUPPORT TO THE PRINCIPAL PROPOSALS OF THE BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

BILL SETS FEE FOR BILINGUAL PRIVATE BILLS

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THE PRIVATE BILLS BILL 1990, WHICH SETS A FEE FOR BILINGUAL PRIVATE BILLS, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THE EXISTING PRIVATE BILLS ORDINANCE PROVIDED FOR THE PAYMENT OF A FEE BY THE PROMOTER OF A PRIVATE BILL FOR PRESENTING SUCH A BILL TO THE COUNCIL.

"THE PURPOSE OF THE FEE IS TO COVER THE COSTS TO GOVERNMENT FOR PROCESSING A PRIVATE BILL, IN PARTICULAR THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS IN VETTING AND WHERE NECESSARY, IN REVISING A BILL.

"THE CURRENT FEE, WHICH WAS LAST REVISED IN 1984, IS \$25,000," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT FOLLOWING THE AMENDMENT TO SECTION 4 OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE, WHICH CAME INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 7 LAST YEAR, ALL ORDINANCES, EXCEPT THOSE WHICH WERE URGENT OR AMENDED EXISTING ORDINANCES, HAD TO BE ENACTED AND PUBLISHED IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.

"IT NECESSARILY TAKES MORE TIME TO VET A BILINGUAL BILL THAN A BILL DRAFTED IN ONLY ONE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.

"THE PRIVATE BILLS BILL 1990 NOW BEFORE THE COUNCIL PROVIDES THAT THE FEE CHARGEABLE FOR A PRIVATE BILL DRAFTED IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BE TWICE THAT FOR A BILL DRAFTED IN ONE LANGUAGE I.E. \$50,000.

"THE FEE FOR PRIVATE BILLS SUBMITTED IN ONLY ONE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES WILL CONTINUE TO BE \$25,000," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID ADDED THAT THE BILL WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THE WAIVER OF FEES FOR PRIVATE BILLS FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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TRANSFER OF STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSFER OF THE HYGIENE DIVISION FROM THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

MOVING THE MOTION UNDER THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THE PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER THE DIVISION RESULTED FROM THE DECISION THAT THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE DISSOLVED ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR.

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS PROPOSED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SHOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HYGIENE DIVISION WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1.

HE ADDED THAT CERTAIN STATUTORY FUNCTIONS NOW RESTING WITH THE SECRETARY FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES WOULD NEED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH.

"THESE STATUTORY FUNCTIONS ARE SET OUT IN THE MOTION AND ITS SCHEDULE," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THE HYGIENE DIVISION WAS MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EXERCISING CERTAIN STATUTORY FUNCTIONS IN RESPECT OF FOOD SAFETY CONTROL ON BEHALF OF THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL.

IT ALSO ADVISED THE TWO COUNCILS ON MATTERS CONCERNING PEST CONTROL AND IMPLEMENTED HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR THE COUNCILS.

"THE TRANSFER OF THE HYGIENE DIVISION WILL COMPLEMENT THE OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

"IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO DISLOCATION BETWEEN THE WORK OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH IN HONG KONG, A COMMITTEE WILL BE SET UP TO ADVISE THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH ON MATTERS RELATING TO FOOD HYGIENE, ON WHICH THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS WILL BE REPRESENTED," HE SAID.

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FIXED PENALTY FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OFFENCE
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE IMPOSITION OF A FIXED PENALTY OF \$200 ON DRIVERS WHO CONTRAVENE THE YELLOW STRIPED MARKING AT PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE YELLOW STRIPED MARKING WAS INTRODUCED TO PREVENT ANY PERSON FROM DRIVING A VEHICLE INTO THE MARKED AREA AND STOPPING.

DURING A TWO-YEAR TRIAL OF THE MARKING AT 32 LIGHT SIGNAL CONTROLLED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, RESULTS SHOWED THAT VEHICULAR OBSTRUCTION WAS REDUCED BY 60 PER CENT AND ACCIDENTS TO PEDESTRIANS BY 18.2 PER CENT, HE ADDED.

THE RESOLUTION WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR.

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INCREASED LEGAL AID FEES APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION APPROVING THE LEGAL AID IN CRIMINAL CASES (AMENDMENT) RULES 1990, MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE UNDER SECTION 9A OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE.

MOVING A MOTION UNDER THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE AMENDED RULES WAS TO EFFECT AN INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM FEES PAYABLE TO COUNSEL AND SOLICITORS ASSIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID TO CONDUCT CRIMINAL CASES.

HE SAID THE FEES WERE LAST INCREASED IN 1987 AND THE PRESENT PROPOSAL WAS TO REFLECT INFLATION AND THE RISE IN OPERATING COSTS SINCE THEN.

"WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1990, THE MAXIMUM FEES WILL BE INCREASED ON AVERAGE BY 25 PER CENT, BUT WITH GREATER INCREASES IN RESPECT OF APPEAL CASES WHICH REQUIRE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE PREPARATION," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE REVISION HAD BEEN MADE WITH REGARD TO THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT EXPERIENCED AND ABLE LAWYERS WERE AVAILABLE TO CONDUCT CRIMINAL CASES AND IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FAIR AND REASONABLE REMUNERATION FOR THE WORK DONE.

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MORE POWER FOR CONSUMER COUNCIL URGED

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THE HON MARTIN LEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED THE GOVERNMENT AND HIS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT HIS BID TO EXPAND THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL TO COVER FRANCHISED PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

TABLING THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 1988-89 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LEE ALSO CALLED FOR SUPPORT TO IMPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ORDINANCE TO REFLECT THE IMPORTANT INVOLVEMENT OF THE COUNCIL BY PROVIDING IT WITH CLEAR POWER ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND PROPERTY TRANSACTION MATTERS.

AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, MR LEE NOTED THAT PROPERTY TRANSACTION MATTERS HAD OCCUPIED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF THE COUNCIL'S RESOURCES IN TERMS OF DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO RECURRING PROBLEMS FACED BY FLAT BUYERS.

HE SAID THE EXPANSION OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE WAS AMONG THE VARIOUS VIEWS IN THE REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S JURISDICTIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS WORK AND TO BETTER MEET THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE CONSUMING PUBLIC.

"THE DECADE AHEAD PROMISES TO BE A TRYING AND CHALLENGING TIME FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION AS THE MARKETPLACE IS EXPECTED TO UNDERGO DYNAMIC CHANGES WHILST HONG KONG ADAPTS TO ITS NEW FUTURE," HE SAID.

"BUT WE BEAR A DUTY TO ENSURE THAT THE CONSUMER INTERESTS, INDEED, THE QUALITY OF LIFE, WILL NOT BE UNDULY SACRIFICED.

"IT IS IN RECOGNITION OF OUR SUCH RESPONSIBILITIES THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL MUST STEP UP VIGILANCE OF A MARKETPLACE, A COMMITTEE TO STUDY BUSINESS MONOPOLISTIC TENDENCIES AND PRACTICE HAS JUST BEEN SET UP."

MR LEE NOTED THAT ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION WAS TO ENHANCE THE SELF-HELP ABILITY OF THE CONSUMER AGAINST MISLEADING AND EXPLOITATIVE TRADE PRACTICES. THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL WOULD CONTINUE TO INTENSIFY ITS EFFORT IN EDUCATING THE CONSUMING PUBLIC.

MORE STRINGENT CONTROL ON GAME CENTRES PROPOSED

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A SET OF MORE RESTRICTIVE LICENCE CONDITIONS AIMED AT BETTER CONTROL OF AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL SHORTLY, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH, MR TSAO SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING CONDUCTED A REVIEW RECENTLY TO STRENGTHEN THE MONITORING OF THE CENTRES.

"VIEWS FROM THE PUBLIC AND DISTRICT BOARDS WERE SOUGHT. AS A RESULT, AN APPLICANT FOR A NEW LICENCE IS NOW REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH EVEN MORE STRINGENT CRITERIA BEFORE A LICENCE IS GRANTED," HE SAID.

MR TSAO ADDED THAT THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY WOULD STREAMLINE THE PROCEDURES FOR REVOKING, OR NOT RENEWING, THE LICENCES OF REPEATED OFFENDERS SO AS TO MAKE THE SYSTEM MORE EFFECTIVE.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE LICENCE CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES WERE ENFORCED BY THE POLICE WHO CARRIED OUT REGULAR CHECKS ON THE ESTABLISHMENTS, WHILE THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING, AS THE LICENSING AUTHORITY, WAS EMPOWERED TO REVOKE, OR REFUSE TO RENEW, A LICENCE.

"A BREACH OF LICENCE CONDITIONS WILL SUBJECT THE LICENSEE, UPON CONVICTION, TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$10,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS.

"REPEATED BREACHES MAY LEAD TO THE ISSUE OF WARNING LETTERS AND FINALLY REVOCATION OF, OR REFUSAL TO RENEW, A LICENCE," MR TSAO SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN 1989, THE POLICE ISSUED 2,406 SUMMONSES AND SECURED 1,116 CONVICTIONS AGAINST AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRE OPERATORS WHO HAD BREACHED THEIR LICENCE CONDITIONS.

IN THE SAME PERIOD, 150 WARNING LETTERS WERE ISSUED AND FIVE LICENCES WERE NOT RENEWED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING, HE SAID.

SPIRIT OF LANGUAGES ORDINANCE FOLLOWED

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IN A RECENT SURVEY OF 64 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, NONE OF THEM WAS FOUND TO REQUIRE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THEM ONLY IN ENGLISH.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON DANIEL TSE AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR TSAO POINTED OUT THAT ALL INCOMING LETTERS WRITTEN IN CHINESE RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENTS WERE ANSWERED EITHER IN CHINESE OR IN ENGLISH WITH CHINESE TRANSLATION ATTACHED.

"HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS RELATED TO TENDER, LAND, CONTRACT AND AGREEMENTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN TRANSLATED INTO CHINESE BECAUSE OF THE TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY AND LEGAL LIABILITIES INVOLVED.

"THE PROFESSIONS WHICH DEAL WITH THESE DOCUMENTS ARE INVARIABLY VERSED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

"IN PRACTICE, THEREFORE, THE PUBLIC IS NOT INCONVENIENCED BY THESE EXCEPTIONS," MR TSAO SAID.

THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE LANGUAGES ORDINANCE HAD BEEN FOLLOWED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS THAT ALL DOCUMENTS SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE BILINGUAL.

"WHEN STAFF RESOURCES PERMIT WE WILL REACH A POINT WHERE ALL DOCUMENTS WILL BE IN BOTH LANGUAGES," MR TSAO ADDED.

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TEACHERS' PROVIDENT FUNDS WELL MANAGED

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THE GRANTS SCHOOLS PROVIDENT FUND AND THE SUBSIDISED SCHOOLS PROVIDENT FUND ARE WELL MANAGED AS TO FUNDING, INVESTMENT AND LIQUIDITY, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR YEUNG WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DAVID CHEUNG, WHO HAD ASKED WHAT SAFEGUARDS WERE AVAILABLE TO ENSURE THAT ALL CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROVIDENT FUNDS WOULD RECEIVE PAYMENTS UNDER THE EXISTING TERMS UPON THEIR CEASING TO BE TEACHERS IN SUBVENTED SCHOOLS.

MR CHEUNG SAID TEACHERS IN SUBVENTED SCHOOLS WERE CONCERNED THAT CURRENT HIGH WASTAGE OF TEACHERS WOULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE OPERATION OF THEIR PROVIDENT FUNDS.

/MR YEUNG

MR YEUNG SAID HE COULD NOT AGREE THERE HAD BEEN A HIGH WASTAGE OF TEACHERS RECENTLY.

"THE FIGURES DO NOT SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION. AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTORS, THE FIGURES FOR WITHDRAWALS FROM THE FUNDS HAVE AVERAGED 6 PER CENT ANNUALLY. SIX YEARS AGO THE FIGURE WAS 6.16 PER CENT. THE PRESENT IS 6.92 PER CENT.

"AS A PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTORS' BENEFITS, THE AMOUNTS WITHDRAWN HAVE ALSO REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT -- 5.4 PER CENT SIX YEARS AGO AND 5.7 PER CENT NOW. CLEARLY THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID FUND ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL WERE VESTED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATUTORY BOARDS OF CONTROL WHICH WERE MADE UP LARGELY OF TEACHERS WHO WERE THEMSELVES CONTRIBUTORS.

OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION CONSISTED OF TWO MEMBERS OUT OF 11 AND 13 RESPECTIVELY. THUS MANAGEMENT OF THE FUNDS WAS CONTROLLED LARGELY BY TEACHERS THEMSELVES.

MR YEUNG SAID AS REGARDS FUNDING, TO MATCH TEACHERS' MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS OF 5 PER CENT OF SALARY, THE GOVERNMENT DONATED 5 PER CENT, 10 PER CENT OR 15 PER CENT, ACCORDING TO THE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF THE TEACHER.

THE FUNDS STOOD AT OVER \$7 BILLION AS AT AUGUST 31, 1989, AND THE UNDERLYING ASSETS HAD NOT BEEN DEPLOYED FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN THOSE PRESCRIBED FOR THE FUNDS BY LAW.

"AS REGARDS INVESTMENT, THIS I UNDERSTAND IS MANAGED BY THE TREASURER, WHO IS APPOINTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES. THE MONEY IS INVESTED IN CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT, FIXED DEPOSITS, TRIPLE A RATED BONDS AND EQUITIES IN COMPANIES WITH TRUSTEE STATUS.

"THE RETURN OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS HAS PRODUCED HEALTHY AVERAGE ANNUAL DIVIDENDS OF ABOUT 14 PER CENT -- CLEARLY A VERY IMPRESSIVE TRACK RECORD," HE SAID.

"AS REGARDS LIQUIDITY, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE BOARDS OF CONTROL HAVE TAKEN STEPS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS TO INCREASE THE RESERVE ACCOUNT OF EACH FUND FROM 5 PER CENT TO 7 PER CENT OF THE SUMS DUE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

"THIS HAS HELPED TO STRENGTHEN THE LIQUIDITY OF THE FUNDS. THE BOARDS OF CONTROL HAVE ALSO TAKEN STEPS TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF LIQUIDITY SO AS TO ENABLE THE TWO FUNDS TO MEET A POSSIBLE INCREASE IN WITHDRAWALS WITHOUT HAVING RECOURSE TO THE 'FORCED' SALE OF INVESTMENTS.

"THIS SHOULD RESULT IN \$1.4 BILLION BEING AVAILABLE FOR PAYMENT AT THE END OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, I.E. AUGUST 31, 1990, COMPARED WITH ESTIMATED WITHDRAWALS OF ABOUT \$400 MILLION IN 1989-90.

/"THUS THE

"THUS THE LIQUID RESOURCES OF THE FUNDS ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND A THREE-FOLD INCREASE IN WITHDRAWALS DURING 1990-91," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID THE THREE CRITERIA FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT, THEREFORE, WERE MORE THAN WELL MET.

"I CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT CONTRIBUTORS NEED HAVE NO FEAR AS TO THE HEALTH AND INTEGRITY OF THE TWO PROVIDENT FUNDS OR THEIR ABILITY TO WITHSTAND FUTURE EVENTUALITIES," HE ADDED.

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INCREASE IN OFFICE AREA LIMIT UNLIKELY

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INCREASED DEMAND FOR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IS BEING MET THROUGH REZONINGS AND APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE.

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR, MR BARNES SAID OFFICE USE IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS HAD BEEN UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD OVER THE LAST YEAR.

THE PROPORTION OF ANY INDUSTRIAL OR GODOWN UNIT WHICH COULD BE USED FOR ANCILLARY OFFICES WITHOUT APPLICATION TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD HAD RECENTLY BEEN RAISED FROM 20 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT.

BUT IT MUST BE FIRMLY TIED TO THE INDUSTRIAL USE IT IS SUPPORTING, THE SECRETARY ADDED.

"INDIVIDUAL FACTORIES MAY ALSO SEEK THE BOARD'S PERMISSION FOR GREATER AREAS OF OFFICE SPACE TO SUPPORT THEIR INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS," HE SAID.

MR BARNES BELIEVED THAT THE BOARD WOULD NOT AT PRESENT SUPPORT RAISING THE LIMIT OF THE AREA TO BE USED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES NOT RELATED TO INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

THE BOARD'S APPROVAL OF INDUSTRIAL-OFFICE BUILDINGS WHERE THE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED WAS SUITABLE FOR EITHER USE WAS A DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIRECTION SOUGHT BY MR MCGREGOR, HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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NEW VISA ARRANGEMENTS FOR TAIWANESE VISITORS SOON

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THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS TO SHORTLY INTRODUCE NEW VISA ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITORS FROM TAIWAN, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARTIN BARROW, MR ASPREY SAID: "WE SHALL BE PROPOSING THAT MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL TAIWANESE VISITORS."

SUCH MULTIPLE VISIT PERMITS WOULD BE VALID FOR 12 MONTHS AND WOULD BE RENEWABLE IN HONG KONG, HE NOTED.

"THE PURPOSE OF THESE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IS TO MAKE IT MORE CONVENIENT FOR BOTH BUSINESSMEN AND TOURISTS FROM TAIWAN TO VISIT HONG KONG; AND AT THE SAME TIME TO REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR SINGLE AND DOUBLE VISIT PERMITS, AND HENCE THE WORKLOAD ON THE VISA SECTION OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT," HE ADDED.

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ACTION IN HAND TO TACKLE BEDSPACE APARTMENT PROBLEMS

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ACTION IS IN HAND ON SEVERAL FRONTS TO TACKLE PROBLEMS OF BEDSPACE APARTMENTS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG, MRS WONG SAID SINCE 1987 SPECIAL ATTENTION HAD BEEN PAID TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND FIRE REGULATIONS IN SUCH APARTMENTS.

"IN PARTICULAR, A PILOT SCHEME HAS BEEN TARGETTING A LIMITED NUMBER OF BEDSPACE APARTMENTS TO ELIMINATE OVERCROWDING AND FIRE HAZARDS AND TO SEE WHAT IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO EXISTING CONTROL MECHANISMS TO ACHIEVE A MORE EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF CONDITIONS IN SUCH APARTMENTS," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONCLUDED THAT FURTHER MEASURES WOULD BE REQUIRED IN ORDER TO PUT IN PLACE A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF CONTROL SO AS TO ENSURE THAT MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS COULD BOTH BE EFFECTED AND MAINTAINED.

"THE FEASIBILITY OF SUCH A SYSTEM, POSSIBLY IN THE FORM OF A LICENSING SCHEME FOR SUCH APARTMENTS, IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY GOVERNMENT," SHE ADDED.

/MEANTIME, MRS

MEANTIME, MRS WONG SAID, VARIOUS FORMS OF ASSISTANCE WERE BEING PROVIDED TO RESIDENTS OF BEDSPACE APARTMENTS INCLUDING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING AND THE OFFER OF VARIOUS FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND THE DISABLED.

HOWEVER, SHE NOTED THAT MANY OF THESE ELDERLY PEOPLE WERE RELUCTANT TO MOVE FROM THEIR PRESENT ACCOMMODATION BECAUSE OF THEIR STRONG LOCAL TIES.

"PROVIDING THAT THE ACCOMMODATION COMPLIES WITH FIRE AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS, THE QUESTION OF EVICTION BY GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ARISE," MRS WONG SAID.

IN VIEW OF THE SCARCITY OF LOW RENTAL ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE IN THE URBAN AREA, MRS WONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD IN THE LAST TWO YEARS OBTAINED SPECIAL FUNDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF PREMISES FOR URBAN HOSTELS FOR THOSE WHO WERE EITHER WITHOUT HOUSING OR WERE INADEQUATELY HOUSED.

"ONE SUCH HOSTEL HAS BEEN SET UP TO CATER TO THESE NEEDS AND WE ARE ENDEAVOURING TO ESTABLISH A SECOND," SHE SAID.

IN 1989, A WORKING PARTY ON HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY RECOMMENDED THE PROVISION IN FUTURE WITHIN EACH HOUSING ESTATE OF A SPECTRUM OF SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY RANGING FROM SHELTERED HOUSING TO RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES, AS WELL AS MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNGER GENERATION TO CONTINUE TO CARE FOR THEIR ELDERLY PARENTS AND RELATIVES AS PART OF THE FAMILY.

"THIS WORKING GROUP ALSO RECOMMENDED, AMONGST OTHER POINTS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HOSTELS FOR ELDERLY PERSONS IN DENSELY POPULATED URBAN AREAS.

"THESE PROPOSALS ARE, I BELIEVE, NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AS APPROPRIATE," MRS WONG SAID.

NOTING THAT MUCH REMAINED TO BE DONE, MRS WONG SAID THE SUCCESS OF ALL THESE ENDEAVOURS WOULD DEPEND NOT SOLELY ON GOVERNMENT ACTION BUT WOULD ALSO REQUIRE ACTIVE COMMUNITY SUPPORT, NOT LEAST BY THOSE DIRECTLY CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE OPERATORS AND OWNERS OF SUCH APARTMENTS.

"AS A CARING COMMUNITY, WE MUST NOT IGNORE THE NEEDS OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED IN OUR MIDST," SHE SAID.

RATE OF INFLATION EXPECTED TO FALL GRADUALLY

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ALTHOUGH INFLATION REMAINS UNCOMFORTABLY HIGH, DESPITE A SLOWING DOWN IN ECONOMIC GROWTH, THIS HAS TO BE VIEWED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF AMPLE JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND A CONTINUING INCREASE IN THE REAL PURCHASING POWER OF THE TERRITORY'S WORK FORCE.

THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID NENDICK, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER H.Y. WONG.

MR NENDICK SAID THE SO-CALLED WAGE-PRICE SPIRAL DID NOT HAVE AS GREAT A SIGNIFICANCE IN HONG KONG AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

NOTING THAT BY FAR THE LARGEST PART OF THE GOODS PRODUCED LOCALLY WERE EXPORTED, HE SAID DOMESTICALLY GENERATED INFLATION SUCH AS THAT AT THE MOMENT WOULD, SOONER OR LATER, RESULT IN HONG KONG'S PRODUCTS BECOMING LESS PRICE COMPETITIVE IN OVERSEAS MARKETS.

"THIS WILL LEAD TO A SLOW-DOWN IN DEMAND FOR THESE PRODUCTS.

"AS THE EFFECT OF THIS WORKS THROUGH THE SYSTEM, INFLATION SHOULD EASE," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK SAID THE PROCESS WOULD BE ACCELERATED IF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN HONG KONG EXERCISED RESTRAINT IN THE CURRENT WAGE ROUND.

IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPECTATION THAT THE RATE OF INFLATION WOULD FALL GRADUALLY OVER THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE RECENT CPI FIGURES SUGGESTED THAT WE WERE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

MR NENDICK POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF HONG KONG'S SMALL OPEN ECONOMY AND THE DESIRE TO ENSURE EXCHANGE RATE STABILITY WITHIN THE LINKED EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM, THERE WAS IN FACT VERY LITTLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO OTHER THAN MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO CONTROL THE GROWTH IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, WHICH HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY STRESSED AS ESSENTIAL.

"MEASURES SUCH AS CONTROLLING PRIVATE SECTOR EXPENDITURE OR IMPOSING COMPREHENSIVE PRICE CONTROLS WOULD BE CONTRARY TO OUR FREE MARKET PRINCIPLES AND DAMAGING TO THE WORKINGS OF THE ECONOMY," HE SAID.

MR NENDICK SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT OVER THE MEDIUM TERM, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND OF OTHER MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS COULD LEAD TO CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS IN THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES AND WE MUST TAKE CARE TO SEE THAT THIS DID NOT GIVE RISE TO INFLATIONARY PRESSURES.

/"THE BUILDING

"THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ITSELF CAN DO MUCH TO HELP AVOID SUCH PRESSURES, BY INTRODUCING FURTHER MECHANISATION TO SAVE MANPOWER AND BY IMPROVING LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY.

"MASSIVE CIVIL ENGINEERING PROJECTS ARE LESS LABOUR INTENSIVE THAN BUILDING PROJECTS," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, IF THE NEED WERE TO ARISE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER EXCEPTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS SO THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF LABOUR TO ENSURE THAT THE PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE STRAINS ON THE ECONOMY, HE SAID.

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LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM FOR HK ISLAND BEING ASSESSED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING THREE SEPARATE PROPOSALS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BUILD A LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM BETWEEN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SO CHAU YIM-PING, WHO WANTED TO KNOW THE LIKELY ALIGNMENT OF THE SYSTEM AND THE TIMING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON THE MATTER.

HE SAID THE ALIGNMENTS SUGGESTED UNDER THE DIFFERENT SCHEMES VARIED, BUT ALL CONNECTED CENTRAL DISTRICT WITH THE VARIOUS POPULATION CENTRES ON THE SOUTHERN PART OF HONG KONG ISLAND.

ALL THREE PROPOSALS INCLUDED SUBSTANTIAL ASSOCIATED PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS AND LAND REQUIREMENTS ALONG THE ROUTES.

MR LEUNG SAID IT WAS PREMATURE TO DETERMINE AT THIS STAGE THE LIKELY ALIGNMENT OF THE RAILWAY AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS ASSESSING THE TRANSPORT, ECONOMIC, PLANNING AND LAND USE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS.

HE HOPED THAT RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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SPECIAL EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOTE

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE MAKING A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME FORWARD AND EXERCISE THEIR ELECTORAL RIGHTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS SPECIAL EFFORT WOULD BE PART OF A GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN ON VOTER REGISTRATION IN THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR, SIR DAVID SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ROSANNA TAM.

HE EXPLAINED THAT AN ANALYSIS OF THE 1989 FINAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS REVEALED THAT, OVERALL, 43.9 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO WERE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, HAD ACTUALLY REGISTERED.

"THE FIGURE FOR THOSE IN THE 21 TO 25 AGE GROUP IS ONLY 12 PER CENT.

"THIS IS DISAPPOINTING," HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID SAID A GOVERNMENT WORKING PARTY HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED VERY RECENTLY TO PLAN THE DETAILS OF THE VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN.

IT WOULD DRAW ON THE EXPERIENCE GAINED IN PREVIOUS VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGNS, WHICH HAD ACHIEVED MOST SUCCESS IN REGISTERING ELECTORS THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACT.

"IN REGISTERING YOUNG ELECTORS, WE WILL THEREFORE BE CONTACTING YOUTH ORGANISATIONS, STUDENT BODIES AND INSTITUTES OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TO SEEK THEIR ASSISTANCE," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS AN INCREASING AWARENESS IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE NEED TO MAKE THE 1991 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS A SUCCESS.

"WE WILL BE BUILDING ON THIS AND DOING ALL WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE, INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE, TO REGISTER AS ELECTORS AND THEN TO VOTE IN THE ELECTIONS," HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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PROVISION OF ESCALATOR LINK HAS TO BE JUSTIFIED

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THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE PROVISION OF HILLSIDE ESCALATOR LINKS SUCH AS THE MID-LEVELS PROJECT DEPENDED ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM IN RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION, ENGINEERING FEASIBILITY, AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND PRIORITY IN THE ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

MR LEUNG WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI ON WHETHER OTHER AREAS WOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ESCALATOR LINK.

HE SAID THE CONDUIT ROAD TO CONNAUGHT ROAD ESCALATOR LINK WAS A PILOT PROJECT RECOMMENDED BY THE TRAFFIC STUDIES COMPLETED IN 1984 TO HELP RELIEVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE AREA.

WORK ON THIS PROJECT, COSTING \$100 MILLION, WOULD START IN AUGUST WITH A VIEW TO COMPLETION IN MID-1992.

THEREAFTER, ITS USE AND EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED BEFORE ANY CONCLUSIONS COULD BE REACHED ON THE SUCCESS OF SUCH SCHEMES, HE SAID.

BEFORE CONSIDERING OTHER SIMILAR LINKS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO BE CERTAIN THAT SUCH SYSTEMS WOULD PROVE EFFECTIVE IN RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND THAT THE TRAFFIC BENEFITS WERE OVERRIDING.

DETAILED STUDIES WOULD HAVE TO BE UNDERTAKEN TO IDENTIFY ROUTES WHERE THERE WOULD BE A HIGH DEMAND FOR SUCH PEDESTRIAN LINKS AS WELL AS ALIGNMENTS WHICH WERE FEASIBLE IN ENGINEERING TERMS.

MR LEUNG STRESSED THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES IN THE ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WERE ALSO IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS.

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REVIEW OF PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME SCHEDULED FOR MID-1990

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THE NEXT REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME RELATING TO THE TWO FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES IS DUE IN MID-1990, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE REVIEW WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, MR LEUNG ADDED IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW WAS TO CONSIDER, IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE, WHETHER THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS FOR CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY AND KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY, COVERING MAINLY ACCOUNTING MATTERS, COULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED.

UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TWO FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES MUTUALLY AGREED TO A CHANGE, BOTH PARTIES WERE LEGALLY OBLIGED TO ABIDE BY THE BASIC TERMS OF THE AGREEMENTS UNTIL THE EXISTING FRANCHISES EXPIRED, HE ADDED.

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THREE BILLS PASSED

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THE PROTECTION OF NON-GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION BILL 1990, AND THE ELECTRICITY BILL 1989 WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOUR BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THEY WERE THE PRIVATE BILLS BILL 1990, THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1990, THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1990, AND THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

DURING THE MEETING, THE CHIEF SECRETARY MADE A STATEMENT ON DETAILS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN 1991.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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1991 ELECTIONS AND COMPOSITION OF LEGCO

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THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) GAVE FURTHER DETAILS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1991, AND THE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS BEING PROPOSED FOR THE 1991 ELECTIONS.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SUEN SAID THE 1991 LEGISLATURE WOULD HAVE A TOTAL OF 60 MEMBERS, INCLUDING A DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

ITS COMPOSITION WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

- * 18 DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS
- * 21 FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES
- * 17 APPOINTED MEMBERS
- * 3 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
- * 1 DEPUTY PRESIDENT

MR SUEN SAID THE DECISION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES FROM 14 TO 21 REPRESENTED A STEP TOWARDS THE 30 FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AIMED FOR 1995.

THE SEVEN NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE:

- * URBAN COUNCIL
- * REGIONAL COUNCIL
- * TOURISM (REPRESENTED BY THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION AND MEMBERS OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL)
- * FINANCIAL SERVICES (INCLUDING STOCKBROKING, COMMODITIES AND FUTURES TRADING, THE INSURANCE SECTOR, AND THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER EXCHANGE)
- * CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE (REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION, THE REAL ESTATES DEVELOPER ASSOCIATION AND THE HONG KONG ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION)

/* RURAL INTERESTS

- * RURAL INTERESTS REPRESENTED BY THE HEUNG YEE KUK, AND
- * ENGINEERING (WHICH WILL BE SEPARATED FROM AN EXISTING CONSTITUENCY WHICH ALSO INCLUDES ARCHITECTS, SURVEYORS AND PLANNERS)

IN ADDITION, RESTRICTED LICENCE BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE EXISTING FINANCE CONSTITUENCY ALONG WITH LICENSED BANKS.

MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT IN PREPARATION FOR A WHOLLY-ELECTED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1995, THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS IN 1991 WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 20 TO 18, AND THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS FROM 10 TO THREE.

"THE THREE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS WHO WILL REMAIN ARE THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL," HE SAID.

MR SUEN ADDED THAT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR BRANCH SECRETARIES TO TAKE PART IN COUNCIL MEETINGS, BUT WITHOUT THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

"THIS WILL ALLOW GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN THAT THE SECRETARY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUBJECT UNDER DISCUSSION WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND."

ON THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SUEN SAID A NON OFFICIAL MEMBER WOULD BE APPOINTED TO PRESIDE OVER SOME MEETINGS, SUCH AS WHEN THE GOVERNOR WAS AWAY FROM HONG KONG.

"THIS IS AN INTERIM STEP, PAVING THE WAY FOR THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT FROM AMONG MEMBERS IN 1995."

FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS, MR SUEN SAID THERE WOULD BE NINE DOUBLE-SEAT CONSTITUENCIES, WHICH WOULD KEEP CLOSELY TO THE DISTRICT BOARD BOUNDARIES AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POPULATION DISTRIBUTION.

THE NINE CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE:

- * HONG KONG ISLAND EAST, COMPRISING EASTERN DISTRICT AND WAN CHAI;
- * HONG KONG ISLAND WEST, COMPRISING CENTRAL AND WESTERN AND SOUTHERN;
- * KOWLOON EAST, COMPRISING KWUN TONG;
- * KOWLOON CENTRAL, COMPRISING WONG TAI SIN AND KOWLOON CITY;
- * KOWLOON WEST, COMPRISING SHAM SHUI PO, MONG KOK AND YAU TSIM;
- * NT NORTH, COMPRISING NORTH AND TAI PO;

- * NT EAST, COMPRISING SHA TIN AND SAI KUNG;
- * NT WEST, COMPRISING YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN; AND
- * NT SOUTH, COMPRISING TSUEN WAN, KWAI TSING AND ISLANDS.

TURNING TO THE VOTING SYSTEM, MR SUEN SAID THERE WOULD BE A "FIRST PAST THE POST" SYSTEM FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS WITH EACH ELECTOR GETTING TWO VOTES -- ONE FOR EACH OF THE SEATS IN THE CONSTITUENCY.

"THIS SYSTEM HAD BEEN USED IN ELECTIONS FOR THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, AND IS WELL UNDERSTOOD BY THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

"FOR FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, THE PREFERENTIAL ELIMINATION VOTING SYSTEM, WHICH WAS USED SUCCESSFULLY IN THE 1988 ELECTIONS, WILL BE RETAINED.

"REGISTERED VOTERS WILL BE ABLE TO VOTE IN A GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY FOR THE DIRECT ELECTIONS, AS WELL AS IN A FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY WHERE THEY ARE QUALIFIED TO DO SO," HE ADDED.

AS FOR VOTING ELIGIBILITY, MR SUEN SAID THE MINIMUM VOTING AGE OF 21 YEARS WOULD BE RETAINED FOR THE 1991 ELECTIONS.

"WE WILL CONSIDER LOWERING IT TO 18 YEARS PRIOR TO THE 1995 ELECTIONS," HE SAID.

MR SUEN ADDED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN 1991, AND THAT ABOUT ONE THIRD OF THEIR MEMBERS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE APPOINTED.

"THE SITUATION WILL BE REVIEWED AGAIN BEFORE THE 1995 ELECTIONS."

ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT BOARDS, HE SAID CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES HAD BEEN REVIEWED AS IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS.

"THE REVIEW TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION A NUMBER OF FACTORS RELATED TO INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS, SUCH AS POPULATION SIZE AND MOVEMENT, GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, SENSE OF BELONGING AMONG RESIDENTS, MIX OF HOUSING TYPES AND THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES," HE SAID.

"MAPS SHOWING THE CHANGES TO DISTRICT BOARDS' BOUNDARIES AND CONSTITUENCIES WITHIN A DISTRICT WILL BE DISPLAYED AT DISTRICT OFFICES FROM MARCH 22 FOR SIX WEEKS FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMENTS."

MR SUEN SAID THE REVIEW ALSO COVERED THE PROVISION OF ELECTED SEATS FOR EACH CONSTITUENCY OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

"AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, SINGLE-SEAT CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE PROVIDED.

"SINCE THE DISTRICT BOARDS ARE IN ESSENCE ADVISORY BODIES ON LOCAL AFFAIRS, THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL ENABLE BOTH THE ELECTORATE AND ELECTED MEMBERS TO IDENTIFY WITH EACH OTHER MORE CLEARLY.

"DOUBLE-SEAT CONSTITUENCIES WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED WHEN THE LOCAL SITUATION JUSTIFIES," HE SAID.

MR SUEN POINTED OUT THAT THESE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 1991 ELECTIONS WOULD REQUIRE CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL LAW.

"IN SEEKING THESE AMENDMENTS, THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO SCRUTINISE AND DEBATE THESE PROPOSALS," HE SAID.

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EXCO APPROVES NEW TUNNEL TOLLS

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THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT THE TOLL FOR ABERDEEN TUNNEL WILL REMAIN AT \$3, AND THAT THE TOLLS FOR THE SHING MUN AND JUNK BAY TUNNELS WILL ALSO BE SET AT \$3, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE TOLL FOR LION ROCK TUNNEL WILL BE ADJUSTED TO \$6 WITH EFFECT FROM APRIL 20, 1990 WHEN THE SHING MUN TUNNELS OPEN TO TRAFFIC.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID TUNNEL TOLLS WERE LAST REVISED IN 1985.

HE SAID IT WAS GOVERNMENT POLICY TO USE TOLLS TO REDUCE CONGESTION IN THE TUNNELS AND ADJACENT ROADS.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT, AT PRESENT, AN AVERAGE OF 105,000 VEHICLES USE THE LION ROCK TUNNEL EACH DAY, WHICH IS 25,000 VEHICLES MORE THAN THE 80,000 VEHICLES FOR WHICH THE LION ROCK TUNNEL WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED.

THIS HAS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE CONGESTION ON THE APPROACH ROADS TO THE TUNNEL, AND UNACCEPTABLY LONG QUEUES DURING RUSH HOURS.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED VARIOUS TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO RELIEVE CONGESTION AT THE LION ROCK TUNNEL, SUCH AS TIDAL FLOW AND THE CONTROLLED MERGING OF VEHICLES.

HOWEVER, THESE HAVE LED TO ONLY MARGINAL IMPROVEMENTS. CONGESTION AT THIS TUNNEL WILL CONTINUE UNLESS THE TOLL IS REVISED.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT A TOLL OF \$6 WILL HELP REDUCE CONGESTION TO A MORE ACCEPTABLE LEVEL.

THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT THE ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENT IN TRAFFIC CONDITIONS SHOULD BENEFIT THE PUBLIC IN TERMS OF REDUCED TRAVELLING TIMES AND FUEL COSTS.

THOSE MOTORISTS NOT WISHING TO PAY THE NEW TOLL HAD THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTE OF TAI PO ROAD, WHICH WAS WIDENED RECENTLY, AS WELL AS THE SHING MUN TUNNELS FOR WHICH THE TOLL WOULD BE ONLY \$3.

BY THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR, HE SAID, SUBSTANTIAL RELIEF TO THE LION ROCK TUNNEL WOULD BE PROVIDED UPON THE OPENING OF THE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL.

TUNNEL TOLLS ARE USED PRIMARILY FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PURPOSES, THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

THE TOLLS FOR THE SHING MUN AND JUNK BAY TUNNELS HAVE THEREFORE BEEN SET AT ONLY \$3 IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE WIDER USE OF THESE NEW FACILITIES, WHEN THEY OPEN TO TRAFFIC IN APRIL AND OCTOBER THIS YEAR RESPECTIVELY.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS HOUSING FOR ELDERLY

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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS A REPORT ON HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE REPORT CONTAINS PROPOSALS ON ACCOMMODATION AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, ESPECIALLY IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. THESE PROPOSALS WERE PUT FORWARD BY A JOINT WORKING GROUP OF THE HOUSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS.

THE DB COMMITTEE HAS SET UP AN AD HOC WORKING GROUP TO HELP RESIDENTS LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REPORT AND TO COLLECT THEIR VIEWS. THESE VIEWS, TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS' COMMENTS, WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED FOR CONSIDERATION.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TWO SCHOOLS WHICH WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE REDEVELOPMENT OF CHEUNG SHA WAN ESTATE.

/OTHER ITEMS

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OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A BRIEFING ON GROUP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE IN SHAM SHUI PO AND REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEE'S FOUR WORKING GROUPS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE SHEK KIP MEI COMMUNITY HALL, BLOCK 42, SHEK KIP MEI ESTATE, NAM CHEONG STREET.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM.

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DB COMMITTEE TO REVIEW PROGRESS OF PROJECTS

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD WILL REVIEW THE PROGRESS OF ITS PROJECTS AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE REPAINTING OF A MURAL ON A SLOPE IN PUI CHING ROAD, THE PROVISION OF A LAVATORY IN A HUNG HOM PARK AND THE RELOCATION OF DISTRICT BOARD AND AREA COMMITTEE NOTICE BOARDS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE KOWLOON CITY DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.15 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, 141 KAU PUI LUNG ROAD, TO KWA WAN.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1990

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COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR VISITS ELECTRONICS FACTORY

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR TONY HAMMOND, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED AN ELECTRONICS FACTORY IN KWUN TONG TO FAMILIARISE HIMSELF WITH THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE LABOUR SCENE.

THE NATIONAL SEMICONDUCTOR (HONG KONG) LTD, WHICH WAS SET UP ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO, PRODUCES COMPUTER PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS FOR EXPORT TO THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE, CANADA AND OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES.

THE COMMISSIONER WAS BRIEFED BY THE COMPANY'S HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, MR BEN LEUNG, AND PLANT MANAGER, MR ALEX WONG, ON THE FACTORY'S DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS SITUATION.

MR HAMMOND WAS INFORMED THAT THE FACTORY CURRENTLY EMPLOYS ABOUT 430 WORKERS OPERATING TWO SHIFTS A DAY AND HAS MAINTAINED GOOD LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS THROUGH FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE FACTORY HAS TAKEN A SERIOUS VIEW ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, WITH AN IN-PLANT SAFETY COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY A SAFETY OFFICER. THIS HELPS THE FACTORY MAINTAIN A VERY GOOD SAFETY RECORD.

MR HAMMOND WAS LATER TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE FACTORY'S DESIGN SECTION, THE ASSEMBLY LINES AND THE PRODUCT QUALITY TESTING SECTION.

BEFORE CONCLUDING THE VISIT, MR HAMMOND DISCUSSED WITH THE MANAGEMENT THE LABOUR RELATIONS AND STAFF WELFARE SITUATION IN THE FACTORY.

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AIDS EXHIBITION IN TAI PO

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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT AIDS WHEN THEY VISIT AN AIDS EXHIBITION IN TAI PO WHICH WILL BEGIN ON FRIDAY (MARCH 23).

THE THREE-DAY EXHIBITION, THE SEVENTH IN A SERIES OF MOBILE EXHIBITIONS ORGANISED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON AIDS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES, WILL BE HELD AT THE TAI PO COMMUNITY CENTRE FROM 10 AM TO 5 PM DAILY.

"THE EXHIBITION AIMS AT INCREASING COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AIDS, AND FOSTERING A POSITIVE, SYMPATHETIC AND SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDE IN THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS AIDS PATIENTS AND CARRIERS," A SPOKESMAN FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/"THE FOCUS

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"THE FOCUS IS ON YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO ENGAGE IN RISK BEHAVIOUR, YET ARE OFTEN LESS LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF THE RISKS OF INFECTION WITH AIDS," HE ADDED.

THE EXHIBITION, BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE AIDS COUNSELLING AND HEALTH EDUCATION SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, COVERS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF AIDS.

APART FROM SHOWING THE WORLDWIDE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE, IT ALSO ILLUSTRATES HOW AIDS THREATENS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THIS CAN BE COUNTERED.

MEDICAL STAFF WILL BE PRESENT AT THE EXHIBITION TO GIVE ADVICE AND ANSWER PUBLIC ENQUIRIES.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION LEAFLETS ON AIDS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO VISITORS WHO WILL ALSO HAVE A CHANCE TO WIN HANDSOME PRIZES BY ANSWERING A QUIZ DESIGNED TO TEST THEIR KNOWLEDGE ON AIDS.

THE EXHIBITION WILL RUN UNTIL SUNDAY (MARCH 25), AND WILL MOVE TO TAI HING COMMUNITY HALL IN TUEN MUN ON APRIL 6.

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GOVT LAND TO LET BY TENDER

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TENDERS ARE BEING INVITED BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCIES OF THREE PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES FOR STORAGE PURPOSES.

TWO OF THEM ARE IN D.D. NO. 51, ON LOK TSUEN, FANLING, WITH AN AREA OF 10,500 SQUARE METRES AND 1,535 SQUARE METRES RESPECTIVELY.

THEY CAN BE USED FOR OPEN STORAGE AND LOADING AND UNLOADING OF THE TENANT'S GOODS INCLUDING VEHICLES NOT LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE OF CAP. 374 OF THE LAWS OF HONG KONG, CONTAINERS ON TRAILERS, CONSTRUCTION PLANT AND EQUIPMENT.

THE THIRD ONE IS A 6,600-SQUARE-METRE LOT IN AREA 26C, KWAI CHUNG WHICH CAN BE USED EITHER FOR OPEN STORAGE (EXCLUDING STORAGE OF CONTAINERS) OR REPAIRING OF VEHICLES.

THE LEASES FOR ALL THREE LOTS ARE FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

FORMS OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICES AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLANS INSPECTED AT, THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG; THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON; AS WELL AS THE RESPECTIVE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES OF NORTH AND KWAI TSING.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING TENDERS IS NOON ON APRIL 6 THIS YEAR.

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ILLEGAL STRUCTURES REMOVED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

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SIXTEEN ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN YAU TSIM DISTRICT WERE CLEARED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

THE STRUCTURES - SHOPS, RESIDENTIAL UNITS, STORES AND CANOPIES - WERE SITUATED AT BACKLANES IN DUNDAS STREET, RECLAMATION STREET, WATERLOO ROAD, CANTON ROAD, PITT STREET AND TUNG ON STREET.

EX-GRATIA PAYMENT OF \$16,110 WERE PAID TO ELIGIBLE SHOP OPERATORS AND SUITABLE HOUSING ARRANGEMENT WAS MADE FOR A MAN AFFECTED BY THE CLEARANCE.

THE OPERATION WAS CO-ORDINATED BY THE YAU TSIM DISTRICT OFFICE, INVOLVING STAFF FROM THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS, HOUSING, URBAN SERVICES, SOCIAL WELFARE AND HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENTS, AS WELL AS THE POLICE.

A TOTAL OF 56 ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN THE DISTRICT WERE PULLED DOWN IN TWO EARLIER OPERATIONS CONDUCTED UNDER THE DISTRICT OFFICE'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT CLEARANCE PROGRAMME IN 1989-90.

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NINE II'S ARRESTED

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IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS ARRESTED NINE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA IN A SERIES OF OPERATIONS YESTERDAY (TUESDAY).

THE NINE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS - THREE WOMEN AND SIX MEN - WERE APPREHENDED IN TWO BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS AND TWO RESIDENTIAL FLATS.

AGED FROM 17 TO 25, THEY WERE NATIVES OF CHAOZHOU OR HAIFENG AND CLAIMED TO HAVE SNEAKED INTO HONG KONG DURING THE PERIOD FROM AUGUST TO OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TWO FACTORIES IN WHICH TWO OF THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE FOUND ARE ASSISTING WITH INVESTIGATIONS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT REITERATED THAT THERE WILL BE NO AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

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DTC REGISTRATION REVOKED

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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF ROYAL SCOT FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT TO FACILITATE DRAINAGE WORKS, HOI LEE STREET IN EASTERN DISTRICT WILL BE CLOSED FROM 9 AM ON FRIDAY (MARCH 23) FOR TWO WEEKS.

DURING THE CLOSURE, VEHICLES ON SAI WAN HO STREET WESTBOUND HEADING FOR SHAU KEI WAN ROAD WESTBOUND OR EASTBOUND MAY TRAVEL VIA HOI NING STREET, HING MAN STREET AND HOI AN STREET.

IN THE MID-LEVELS, FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY, THE EXISTING BAN ZONE (FROM 7 AM TO 8 PM DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS) ON EASTBOUND PARK ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 40 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH BONHAM ROAD TO HOUSE NO. 25 FOR ALL MOTOR VEHICLES EXCEPT BUSES, PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES AND THOSE WITH PERMITS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, WILL BE CANCELLED.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE EXISTING TEMPORARY URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY ON THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF GILMAN STREET IN CENTRAL BETWEEN CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL AND DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL WILL BE EXTENDED FOR THREE MONTHS TO FACILITATE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORKS.

IN WAN CHAI, THE EXISTING URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY ON THE EASTBOUND SECTION OF HARBOUR ROAD BETWEEN FLEMING ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 105 METRES TO THE EAST WILL BE CURTAILED WESTWARD BY ABOUT 23 METRES.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS THERE.

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN NORTH POINT

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MARCH 23), THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF ROADS IN NORTH POINT WILL BE DESIGNATED PUBLIC LIGHT BUS URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM 7 AM TO MIDNIGHT DAILY:

- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSAT TSZ MUI ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH TIN CHIU STREET TO A POINT ABOUT FIVE METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TIN CHIU STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH TSAT TSZ MUI ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT FIVE METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND
- * THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TIN CHIU STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH TSAT TSZ MUI ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 35 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

WITHIN THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUS URBAN CLEARWAYS, ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES, EXCEPT THOSE WITH PERMITS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING UP OR SETTING DOWN PASSENGERS, OR LOADING OR UNLOADING GOODS.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF AIRPORT EAST FLYOVER

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT THE AIRPORT EAST FLYOVER LINKING EASTBOUND PRINCE EDWARD ROAD EAST WITH THE EASTERN END OF DEPARTURES CIRCUIT AT THE HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WILL BE CLOSED FROM MIDNIGHT TO 6 AM ON FRIDAY (MARCH 23) TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE PUT UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN KWUN TONG

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MARCH 23), THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS IN KWUN TONG WILL BE DESIGNATED PEAK HOUR (7 AM - 10 AM AND 4 PM - 7 PM) DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS:

- * TSUN YIP STREET BETWEEN WAI YIP STREET AND HOI BUN ROAD;
- * LAI YIP STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH KWUN TONG ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES NORTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HOI BUN ROAD;
- * THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF HOW MING STREET BETWEEN HUNG TO ROAD AND WAI YIP STREET;
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF KWUN TONG FERRY CONCOURSE ACCESS ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH WAI YIP STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 80 METRES TO THE SOUTH; AND
- * KEI YIP STREET BETWEEN WAI YIP STREET AND HOI BUN ROAD.

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

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TEMPORARY LANE CLOSURE ON LION ROCK TUNNEL ROAD

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT TO FACILITATE ROAD MAINTENANCE WORKS, ABOUT 450 METRES LONG OF ONE SOUTHBOUND TRAFFIC LANE ON LION ROCK TUNNEL ROAD SOUTH OF HUNG MUI KUK ROAD INTERCHANGE WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 9 PM TO 6 AM THE NEXT DAY ON MARCH 23 (FRIDAY), 25 AND 26 AND ON APRIL 1, 2 AND 3.

MOTORISTS ARE URGED TO DRIVE WITH CARE AND PATIENCE. APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC AIDS WILL BE PROVIDED TO GUIDE THEM.

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