



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 5-8428777

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989

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DURABLE SOLUTION LIES IN ENSURING COMMITMENTS ARE KEPT

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A DURABLE SOLUTION FOR HONG KONG IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE LIES NOT IN ABANDONING OUR COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES BUT IN ENSURING THAT OTHERS LIVE UP TO THEIRS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE, MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES IN GENEVA NEXT MONTH.

"WE MUST SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION IS AGREED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY," HE SAID IN HIS SPEECH SUPPORTING THE MOTION.

MR ASPREY STRESSED THAT SUCH A SOLUTION MUST CONTAIN A NUMBER OF ELEMENTS, EACH OF WHICH WAS A CRITICAL PART OF THE WHOLE STRUCTURE.

"IF ONE ELEMENT IS MISSING, THE STRUCTURE IS BOUND TO FAIL," HE SAID.

FIRST, A SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT CLANDESTINE DEPARTURES.

NOTING THAT MEASURES TAKEN BY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OVER THE RECENT MONTHS HAD NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL, MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG SHOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND SUSTAINED EFFORT FROM THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES.

"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT, WITH THE HELP OF OTHERS, THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG CAN BE SOLVED, PROVIDED THAT THE SIZE OF THAT PROBLEM IS CONTROLLED AND LIMITED.

"WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO DO SO WHILE THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM INCREASES EVERY DAY BEYOND OUR CONTROL," HE SAID.

"IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT VIETNAM ACCEPT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION TO STEM THE OUTFLOW OF ITS PEOPLE.

"THIS WOULD BE THE HUMANE AS WELL AS RESPONSIBLE POLICY FOR VIETNAM TO ADOPT," MR ASPREY SAID.

"SECONDLY, A SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE SCREENING OF ARRIVALS TO DETERMINE WHO ARE GENUINE REFUGEES AND WHO ARE NOT."

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS AN ESSENTIAL STEP BECAUSE EXPERIENCE HAD CLEARLY SHOWN THAT THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WERE NO LONGER WILLING TO ACCEPT AS REFUGEES THOSE WHO WERE SIMPLY SEEKING A BETTER LIFE, AS OPPOSED TO THOSE FLEEING PERSECUTION.

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"IT WAS THIS INESCAPABLE FACT AND THE CONTINUING AND INCREASING PROBLEM WHICH IT CREATED FOR HONG KONG WHICH CAUSED US TO INTRODUCE THE POLICY OF SCREENING LAST YEAR.

"THIS WAS A POLICY DEvised IN HONG KONG. IT WAS SUPPORTED AND APPROVED BY THE UK GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT HAS INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS.

"WE HAVE NEVER PRETENDED THAT SCREENING WOULD BY ITSELF BE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, NOR STOP THE FLOW OF NEW ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID SCREENING MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY REPATRIATION, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, IT COULD NOT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT SCREENING.

"THIRDLY, A SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE RESETTLEMENT OF THOSE WHO ARE FOUND TO BE REFUGEES.

"WE HOPE THAT 4,000 OF THE PRESENT 15,000 REFUGEES IN HONG KONG WILL BE RESETTLED THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

WHILE NOTING THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAD AGREED TO INCREASE RESETTLEMENT QUOTAS, MR ASPREY SAID WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK A LARGER AND QUICKER OFFTAKE, AND A CLEAR UNDERTAKING BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO RESETTLE ALL THE REFUGEES WITHIN A SHORT AND DEFINED TIME FRAME.

"FINALLY, A SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE REPATRIATION OF THOSE WHO ARE FOUND NOT TO BE REFUGEES.

"THEY SHOULD INDEED BE TREATED AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS," HE SAID.

REPATRIATION WAS INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH THE POLICY OF SCREENING, HE ADDED.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION HAD SO FAR PROVED VERY DISAPPOINTING AND LESS THAN 150 HAD RETURNED VOLUNTARILY TO VIETNAM.

MR ASPREY SAID HE AGREED WITH MEMBERS THAT VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION WAS NOT LIKELY TO PROVIDE THE SOLUTION WE SOUGHT.

"BUT, IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE REPATRIATION, WHETHER VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY, WE MUST DETERMINE QUICKLY AND FINALLY THE STATUS OF THE 18,500 BOAT PEOPLE NOW IN HONG KONG AND ANY FUTURE ARRIVALS.

"I WILL NOT PRETEND THAT MANY OF THOSE WHO ARE FOUND NOT TO BE REFUGEES ARE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER TO RETURN TO VIETNAM; BUT CERTAINLY FEW ARE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER WHILE THEY STILL HAVE THE HOPE OF SECURING REFUGEE STATUS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THAT THE RATE OF SCREENING SO FAR HAD BEEN TOO SLOW -- ONLY SOME 1,500 BOAT PEOPLE HAD BEEN SCREENED SINCE LAST OCTOBER.

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OUR APPEAL PROCEDURE WAS TOO LENGTHY AND NO APPEALS HAD BEEN DECIDED SO FAR.

"WE ARE DETERMINED TO IMPROVE THIS RECORD, THROUGH A SPEEDIER AND MORE EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF SCREENING AND REVIEW WHICH WILL AIM TO DISPOSE OF ALL OUTSTANDING CASES IN 12 MONTHS AND ALL NEW CASES WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF ARRIVAL," HE SAID.

HE TOLD MEMBERS THAT TO THIS END HE INTENDED TO BRING BEFORE THE COUNCIL BEFORE THE END OF THE PRESENT SESSION LEGISLATION TO INTRODUCE A MUCH SIMPLER APPEAL AND REVIEW PROCEDURE.

MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG SHOULD PRESS FOR MANDATORY REPATRIATION IF VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION FAILED TO DEVELOP SUFFICIENT MOMENTUM.

"WE BELIEVE THAT VIETNAM MUST BE PERSUADED TO HONOUR ITS OBLIGATIONS TO ACCEPT BACK ITS OWN NATIONALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, AND NOT TO TREAT THOSE WHO RETURN HARSHLY FOR FOLLOWING THEIR MISGUIDED BELIEF THAT A BETTER LIFE AWAITS THEM OUTSIDE VIETNAM," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY TOLD MEMBERS THAT THE DRAFT PLAN AGREED AT THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE IN KUALA LUMPUR IN MARCH HAD INCLUDED ALL THESE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS.

"I BELIEVE THAT IT PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION ON WHICH WE MUST BUILD IN GENEVA.

"THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED A LEADING ROLE IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE: AND HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RETURN TO VIETNAM WITHIN A REALISTIC TIMESCALE OF ALL THOSE SCREENED OUT AS REFUGEES," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THE BURDEN ON OUR RESOURCES WOULD REMAIN UNTIL ALL THESE ELEMENTS OF A LASTING SOLUTION, IN PARTICULAR REPATRIATION, COULD BE ACHIEVED.

REFERRING TO CALLS FOR THE UNHCR AND THE UNITED KINGDOM TO SHARE A LARGER PART OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN, HE SAID: "IT IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND WE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO MAKE A GREATER CONTRIBUTION EITHER FINANCIALLY OR BY PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION OUTSIDE HONG KONG FOR SOME OF OUR PRESENT POPULATION OF BOAT PEOPLE."

MR ASPREY NOTED THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM HAD PROVIDED EIGHT MILLION POUND STERLING TO HONG KONG THROUGH THE UNHCR IN THE LAST NINE MONTHS. THE MOST RECENT DONATION OF SIX MILLION POUND STERLING FOR REIMBURSING THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF THE PILLAR POINT CAMP WAS MADE AT SHORT NOTICE IN RESPONSE TO HONG KONG'S URGENT REQUEST.

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE BOTH FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE WIDER INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

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"RECALLING THE COMMITMENTS MADE AT THE 1979 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, MR ASPREY SAID: "IT IS PLAIN THAT NOT ALL HAVE HONOURED EQUALLY THE COMMITMENTS THEY GAVE THERE."

THE COMMITMENTS WERE THREEFOLD: HONG KONG AND COUNTRIES IN THE REGION WOULD CONTINUE TO OFFER TEMPORARY ASYLUM TO ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM; OTHERS WOULD RESETTLE THEM; AND VIETNAM WOULD PREVENT FURTHER DEPARTURES.

MR ASPREY SAID HONG KONG HAD KEPT ITS WORD AND NO ASYLUM SEEKERS HAD BEEN TURNED AWAY.

"WE HAVE FED, SHELTERED AND CARED FOR NEARLY 150,000 BOAT PEOPLE FROM VIETNAM.

"OF THESE, OVER 116,000 HAVE BEEN RESETTLED, AND WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WHO HAVE HELPED TO EASE OUR BURDEN," HE SAID.

THE MAIN RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG HAD BEEN THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAD TAKEN IN OVER 64,000, CANADA WHICH HAD ACCEPTED NEARLY 21,000, THE UNITED KINGDOM WHICH HAD RESETTLED OVER 13,000, AND AUSTRALIA WHICH HAD ADMITTED SIX AND A HALF THOUSAND.

HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN NO EFFECTIVE ACTION TO PREVENT DEPARTURES FROM VIETNAM, PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

MR ASPREY SAID ARRIVALS OF BOAT PEOPLE FROM VIETNAM SO FAR THIS YEAR HAD TOTALLED NEARLY 8,500 AND WERE NOW RUNNING AT THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.

"THIS HAS STRETCHED OUR RESOURCES TO THE LIMIT.

"WE ARE FACING MAJOR PROBLEMS IN PROVIDING THE ACCOMMODATION AND MANPOWER TO COPE WITH THIS INFLUX.

"AND I BELIEVE THAT UNDERLYING THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS IN THIS DEBATE IS THE BELIEF THAT WE HAVE BECOME THE VICTIMS OF OUR OWN WILLINGNESS TO HONOUR OUR COMMITMENTS," HE SAID.

AS TO SOME MEMBERS' SUGGESTION THAT THE POLICY OF GRANTING FIRST ASYLUM SHOULD BE CHANGED, MR ASPREY SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THAT WAS NOT THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM.

HE SAID AS THE PROBLEM WAS NOT OF HONG KONG'S MAKING, SO THE SOLUTION DID NOT LIE IN OUR HANDS ALONE.

"WE NEED THE HELP AND CO-OPERATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

"THE CONSEQUENCE OF ABANDONING THE POLICY OF FIRST ASYLUM WOULD BE THAT ASYLUM SEEKERS WOULD BE FORCED BACK TO SEA IN UNSEAWORTHY BOATS.

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"SUCH A POLICY, WHICH WOULD DENY ASSISTANCE EVEN TO THOSE WHO ARE GENUINE REFUGEES FLEEING PERSECUTION, WOULD BE CONDEMNED INTERNATIONALLY," HE SAID.

IT WOULD RISK DESTROYING THE REPUTATION AND THE GOODWILL WHICH HONG KONG HAD EARNED FOR ITS HUMANE HANDLING OF THIS PROBLEM, MR ASPREY WARNED.

"HONG KONG MUST DEPEND ON THIS GOODWILL, NOT ONLY TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION TO ITS PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, BUT ALSO IN ITS WIDER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS," HE ADDED.

AS TO THE POINT ABOUT THE STRAINS WHICH THE PRESENT INFLUX OF BOAT PEOPLE WAS PUTTING ON OUR RESOURCES AND MANPOWER, MR ASPREY SAID THE DEMANDS AND THE DIFFICULTIES WERE GREAT.

"BUT ALL, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, HAVE RESPONDED MAGNIFICENTLY TO REQUESTS FOR THEM TO UNDERTAKE NEW AND INCREASING COMMITMENTS, HE SAID.

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DEBATE PRODUCES A CLEAR MESSAGE

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THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES MUST BE REPATRIATED TO VIETNAM AND ALL THE OTHERS CONSIDERED AS REFUGEES SHOULD BE RESETTLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THIS WAS THE OVERWHELMINGLY OBVIOUS MESSAGE ARISING FROM TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MOTION DEBATE ON THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE, THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON ALLEN LEE, SAID IN WINDING UP THE DEBATE.

"AT NO TIME HAS SUCH A CALL FROM THE COMMUNITY, AS REFLECTED IN TODAY'S DEBATE, BEEN SO LOUD AND CLEAR AND THE FEELING BEEN SO INTENSE," HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID THE GENEVA AGREEMENT OF 1979 OBVIOUSLY NO LONGER CATERED FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TODAY AND MUST THEREFORE BE REPLACED BY A NEW AGREEMENT WHICH HAD TO NECESSARILY ENCOMPASS THE DUAL ELEMENTS OF RESETTLEMENT FOR REFUGEES AND MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF THOSE WHO WERE NOT.

"NOTHING LESS IS GOING TO WORK," HE SAID.

THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM HAD NOW CAUSED TREMENDOUS ANXIETY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, MR LEE SAID.

THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PLACED IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION: WHILE IT HAD INHERITED THE PROBLEM THROUGH NO FAULT OF ITS OWN, IT HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO CONTINUOUS CRITICISM, RATHER UNFAIRLY AT TIMES, THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN TACKLING THE ISSUE.

"TO BE SURE, THE RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT OURS BUT THAT OF THE UK AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID THE UK, FOR THE BENEFIT OF HONG KONG AND MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR THE SAKE OF THE UNFORTUNATE BOAT PEOPLE, MUST WORK TOWARDS THE GOAL OF SECURING MANDATORY REPATRIATION AT THE COMING GENEVA CONFERENCE.

IT SHOULD ALSO SET AN EXAMPLE BY INCREASING ITS INTAKE OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG.

"THE VOICE EXPRESSED IN THIS COUNCIL TODAY IS MORE THAN CLEAR AND SHOULD GIVE SUFFICIENT MANDATE TO THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONVEY OUR FEELINGS TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.

"IT WILL BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG IF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FAILS TO ACT UPON THEM," HE SAID.

TURNING TO SUGGESTIONS THAT HONG KONG SHOULD ABANDON THE PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM POLICY, MR LEE SAID HONG KONG MUST REMAIN CALM AND REALLY EXAMINE WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A CHANGE OF POLICY WERE.

"IS THE COMMUNITY WILLING TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES? AND CAN WE REALLY IMPLEMENT IT? WE MUST THINK, AND THINK DEEPLY, AND NOT LETTING OUR FRUSTRATIONS AND EMOTIONS RULE OUR HEAD," HE SAID.

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SENIOR MEMBER URGES UK TO PURSUE MANDATORY REPATRIATION

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THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON ALLEN LEE, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED THE UK GOVERNMENT TO VIGOROUSLY PURSUE AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY ALL VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES WOULD BE REPATRIATED MANDATORILY TO VIETNAM.

MR LEE WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER MOVING A MOTION ON THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE.

HIS MOTION READ: "THAT THIS COUNCIL, CONSIDERING THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCREENING POLICY FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE DEPENDS UPON THE SUCCESSFUL REPATRIATION OF ALL THOSE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES AND THE RESETTLEMENT OF ALL REFUGEES, URGES HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO FULFIL ITS RESPONSIBILITY BY TAKING A LEADING ROLE IN ACTIVELY PURSUING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPATRIATION, AND IN ACCEPTING FOR RESETTLEMENT MORE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG."

HE SAID HONG KONG WAS APPROACHING A CRISIS AND THE MOTION REFLECTED THE DEEP CONCERN EXPRESSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OVER THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM.

OUTLINING HONG KONG'S POSITION ON THE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE, MR LEE SAID THAT SINCE 1979 HONG KONG HAD PROVIDED FIRST ASYLUM TO OVER 130,000 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE (VBP) AND HAD SPENT OVER \$1.4 BILLION ON THE UPKEEP OF THESE BOAT PEOPLE OVER THE YEAR.

THE VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES FACED BY HONG KONG HAD LED TO THE ADOPTION OF THE SCREENING POLICY ON JUNE 16 LAST YEAR.

SINCE THEN, VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE HAD NOT BEEN AUTOMATICALLY GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS AND THOSE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES HAD TO BE PUT IN DETENTION CENTRES PENDING REPATRIATION.

UNFORTUNATELY, REPATRIATION HAD SO FAR BEEN ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS ONLY AND THE NUMBER WAS SO SMALL FOR IT TO BE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT.

"MANDATORY REPATRIATION FOR THOSE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES MUST BE THE ONLY ANSWER, SINCE IT IS NO LONGER REALISTIC TO EXPECT MOST OF THE RECENT VBP ARRIVALS TO BE GRANTED RESETTLEMENT IN WESTERN COUNTRIES," HE SAID.

MR LEE ADDED THAT THERE WAS AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION TO THE PROBLEM. THE WHOLE ISSUE WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND IT MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION.

"IN THIS CONNECTION, WE LOOK TO THE COMING CONFERENCE IN GENEVA, 10 YEARS AFTER THE FIRST ONE, TO FIND A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

"THE OPPORTUNITY MUST BE TAKEN TO EFFECT RESETTLEMENT OF ALL THE REFUGEES AND REPATRIATION BACK TO VIETNAM OF ALL THOSE SCREENED OUT," HE SAID.

TURNING TO BRITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ISSUE, MR LEE SAID IT HAD BEEN MOST DISTURBING TO HEAR RECENT EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THE HANDLING OF THE VBP ISSUE IN HONG KONG SHOULD BE TREATED AS A DOMESTIC AFFAIR.

"THIS CANNOT BE RIGHT," HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT GIVEN THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE ISSUE WAS A FOREIGN AFFAIRS MATTER AND LAY SQUARELY WITHIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TERRITORY'S SOVEREIGN STATE, THE UNITED KINGDOM.

HE NOTED THAT IT WAS AFTER THE 1979 CONFERENCE THAT THE FIRST ASYLUM POLICY WAS FIRMLY PUT IN PLACE AND AT THAT CONFERENCE HONG KONG WAS REPRESENTED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MR LEE ALSO QUOTED MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS LORD GLENARTHUR'S REPLY DATED OCTOBER 6, 1987 TO THE HON RITA FAN.

THIS SAID: "HONG KONG IS A DEPENDENT TERRITORY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESTS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM.

/"THIS RESPONSIBILITY

"THIS RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT VIGOROUSLY, WITH THE CLOSE INVOLVEMENT OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

"WE ARE RECEPTIVE TO ANY SUGGESTION FOR NEW INITIATIVES. BUT THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE PROPER CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK."

MR LEE SAID THIS REPLY LEFT NO ROOM FOR DOUBTING THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM, BEING HONG KONG'S SOVEREIGN STATE, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICIES APPLICABLE TO HONG KONG ON THE VBP PROBLEM.

IT WAS THEREFORE ONLY RIGHT FOR HONG KONG TO LOOK TO THE UK, AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING A SOLUTION TO THIS INTRACTABLE PROBLEM.

"BUT I AM AFRAID THE GENERAL FEELING AMONG THE COMMUNITY IN THIS REGARD IS ONE OF DISCONTENT," HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID THAT THE UK'S RECORD IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES WAS DISMAL.

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THE UK HAD TAKEN FEWER THAN 1,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG WHEREAS DURING THE SAME PERIOD THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAD RESETTLED 5,900 AND 5,300 RESPECTIVELY.

"CAN WE EXPECT OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES TO ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES WHEN OUR SOVEREIGN STATE HAS FAILED TO TAKE A LEAD?" HE ASKED.

HE DESCRIBED THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS A CRUCIAL OPPORTUNITY WHERE THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED COULD ARRIVE AT A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.

IN THIS RESPECT, MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF NON-REFUGEES AND RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES WERE THE TWO CRUCIAL MATTERS. THE UK MUST TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS RESPECT, HE SAID.

IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES TO ACCEPT MORE OF THOSE CLASSIFIED AS REFUGEES, THE UK GOVERNMENT SHOULD AGREE TO INCREASE ITS INTAKE QUOTA FROM HONG KONG SO THAT A CLEAR EXAMPLE COULD BE SET FOR OTHER COUNTRIES ATTENDING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

MR LEE SAID THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE LOOKED TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PRODUCE A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE VBP PROBLEM.

HE SAID IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE FOR THE UK AND, INDEED, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO IGNORE THE FEELINGS AND WISHES OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE.

"WE URGE THE UNITED KINGDOM TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT IT IS FULFILLING ITS BASIC RESPONSIBILITY AS THE SOVEREIGN STATE," HE CONCLUDED.

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UK HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO DO MORE

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THE UNITED KINGDOM OWES ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO HONG KONG IN TAKING A LEADING ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN SEARCHING FOR AN EARLY SOLUTION TO THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM. THE HON KINGSLEY SIT TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MR SIT SAID HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REFLECT TO THE UK AUTHORITIES THE STRONG FEELINGS ON THE PROBLEM OF BOTH LEGCO AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, AND URGE THEM TO DO MORE FOR HONG KONG.

HE SAID IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT HONG KONG SHOULD BE EXPECTING OTHER COUNTRIES TO INCREASE RESETTLEMENT OFF-TAKES FROM THE TERRITORY WHILE THE UK FOUND THAT IT COULD ONLY MANAGE WITH 20 REFUGEES A MONTH FROM HERE OVER THE LAST TWO YEAR.

IT WAS EVEN MORE DISAPPOINTING THAT THE UK WOULD ONLY BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT 1,000 REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG ON THE CONDITION THAT OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES ALSO INCREASED THEIR OFFERS.

"IF AT ALL OUR VOICE IS TO BE HEARD BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THE UK SHOULD AT LEAST BE PERCEIVED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROBLEM," HE SAID.

MR SIT ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, TO REFLECT AT THE COMING GENEVA CONFERENCE THE STRONG FEELINGS OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY OVER THE LACK OF SYMPATHY OF THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE PLACES OF FIRST ASYLUM IN THE REGION.

"IF COUNTRIES LIKE THE U.S.A. ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROBLEM AND WANT US TO BE AS HUMANE AS WE COULD BE TO THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE, THEY SHOULD ALSO BE HUMANE TO OUR OWN PEOPLE AND DO SOMETHING POSITIVE TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM INSTEAD OF LEAVING US TO STRUGGLE ON OUR OWN.

"IT IS ALSO UNFAIR THAT WE HAVE TO SHOULDER INDEFINITELY THE HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR THE UPKEEP OF THE BOAT PEOPLE ON OUR OWN.

"IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO REACH AN IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD AT LEAST SHARE THE COSTS FOR MAINTAINING THESE PEOPLE," HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SCREENING POLICY, MR SIT SAID IT WAS EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUED COMMITMENT OF HONG KONG TO THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-REJECTION AND NON-REFOULEMENT OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND OUR ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THAT THOSE WHO HAD A GENUINE FEAR OF PERSECUTION FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER WERE NOT DEPRIVED OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THEIR CASE.

HE SAID HE AGREED THAT THE SCREENING POLICY WAS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF THE DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AS IT COULD HELP REDUCE THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND THEREBY EASE THE BURDEN ON RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES.

/NEVERTHELESS,

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID THAT SCREENING ALSO IMPLIED A HEAVIER BURDEN ON COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM WITHOUT THE CERTAINTY OF THE ACCEPTANCE BY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPATRIATION OF ALL THOSE WHO WERE SCREENED OUT.

THE SCREENING POLICY WOULD NOT MAKE SENSE UNLESS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SECURED A COMMITMENT FROM VIETNAM TO ACCEPT THE REPATRIATION OF ALL BOAT PEOPLE WHO FAILED THE SCREENING TEST.

EVEN IF A PERSON WAS CLASSIFIED AS NOT A REFUGEE, HE WAS STILL A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, IN PARTICULAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 1979 GENEVA CONFERENCE.

"NOTHING IN THE WORLD CAN EXCULPATE ANY OF THESE COUNTRIES FROM THIS RESPONSIBILITY, HEAVY THOUGH IT IS," HE SAID.

MR SIT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT MOST OF THE ARRIVALS IN RECENT YEARS HAD BEEN PROMPTED TO LEAVE VIETNAM FOR ECONOMIC REASONS ONLY AND HENCE DID NOT QUALIFY AS REFUGEES, AND HE FELT THAT THEY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO VIETNAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION.

BUT WHILE REPATRIATION WAS THE ONLY DETERRENT TO A FURTHER EXODUS OF VIETNAMESE FROM THEIR COUNTRY, RESETTLEMENT WAS ANOTHER INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT OF A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM.

"WITHOUT A RENEWED COMMITMENT FROM RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES TO INCREASE RESETTLEMENT OFF-TAKES AND TO CLEAR THE BACKLOG OF LONG-STAYERS IN THE COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM, THERE IS NO REAL HOPE OF RESOLVING THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE PRESENCE OF A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THESE TERRITORIES," HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD DO SOMETHING POSITIVE TO HELP THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT RECONSTRUCT ITS WAR-TORN ECONOMY SO THAT ITS PEOPLE WOULD NO LONGER LEAVE IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE.

MR SIT SAID HE REGRETTED THAT WHILE HONG KONG HAD ABIDED BY THE 1979 GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND HAD NEVER TURNED AWAY ANY BOAT PEOPLE ARRIVING IN ITS WATERS, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAD NOT UPHELD THEIR AGREEMENT.

"NOT ONLY HAVE RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES DWINDLED BECAUSE OF THE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PLACES OFFERED BY THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AND THE MORE STRINGENT CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF REFUGEES USED, BUT WE WERE REQUIRED TO SHOULDER A GREATER PORTION OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR MAINTAINING THE VIETNAMESE WHO ARRIVED IN HONG KONG.

"MOREOVER, THE UNHCR HAS USED THE CLOSED CENTRE POLICY AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT INCREASING THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG AND HAS USED FINANCIAL RESOURCES AS THE BARGAINING CHIP TO PRESS US TO LIBERALISE OUR CLOSED CENTRES," HE SAID.

/COMMENTING THAT

COMMENTING THAT THE BOAT PEOPLE WERE ENJOYING A LIVING ENVIRONMENT BETTER THAN DID SOME LOCAL RESIDENTS LIVING IN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, MR SIT SAID HE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHY HONG KONG WAS STILL ACCUSED OF BEING INHUMANE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

"THERE WILL COME A STAGE WHEN HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL FIND THE SITUATION INTOLERABLE AND WE ARE NOT FAR FROM THAT.

"UNLESS SOMETHING POSITIVE IS DONE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, I AM AFRAID THAT HONG KONG WILL HAVE TO BE FORCED TO RESORT TO NEW INITIATIVES OUT OF SELF-PROTECTION WHICH I AM SURE WILL NOT PLEASE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

"AFTER ALL, AS A RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT, THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S PRIME OBLIGATION IS THE WELFARE AND WISHES OF ITS OWN PEOPLE AND ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE OF SECONDARY PRIORITY," HE SAID.

MR SIT ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE STAFF OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE CIVIL AID SERVICES AND THE DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FOR THEIR TOLERANCE IN MANNING AND RUNNING, UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS, THE VARIOUS REFUGEE AND BOAT PEOPLE FACILITIES.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CRITICISED FOR FAILING TO SOLVE PROBLEM

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THE HON RITA FAN TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CRITICISED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, SPECIFICALLY VIETNAM, THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN, FOR FAILING TO SOLVE THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM.

SHE CRITICISED VIETNAM FOR USING ITS PEOPLE AS BARGAINING CHIPS FOR FINANCIAL AID; THE UNITED STATES FOR PRACTISING DOUBLE STANDARDS; AND BRITAIN FOR SACRIFICING HONG KONG'S INTEREST FOR FEAR OF BRINGING WORLDWIDE CONDEMNATION UPON ITSELF.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MRS FAN SAID THAT HONG KONG MIGHT BE FORCED INTO TAKING DRASTIC MEASURES TO PROTECT THE SOCIAL STABILITY OF THE TERRITORY IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FAILED TO ACTIVELY HELP IT SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

SHE SAID THAT IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN, "LET IT BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT HONG KONG HAS BEEN PUSHED INTO A CORNER BY VIETNAM AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO TAKE SUCH A HARD-LINE POLICY TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM, OUT OF ABSOLUTE NECESSITY."

MRS FAN SAID THE COMMUNITY WAS FED UP TO THEIR TEETH WITH THE PROBLEM WHICH HAD DRAGGED ON FOR MORE THAN A DECADE.

/ "THEY HAVE

"THEY HAVE ENDURED THE EXPENDITURE, THE INCONVENIENCE, THE HIGHER THAN NORMAL CRIME RATE OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE. THE UNFAIR TREATMENT, AND UNREALISTIC CRITICISMS ALL THESE YEARS.

"BUT ALL THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AND HELP TO THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ARE BRUSHED ASIDE CASUALLY BY THOUGHTLESS REMARKS FROM SELF-RIGHTEOUS INDIVIDUALS WHO APPEAR TO CARRY THE OPINION OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

"TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, WE HAVE HERE A SITUATION WHICH CAN LEAD TO SOCIAL UNREST. IF THE TIME-BOMB IS NOT DEFUSED IN TIME," SHE SAID.

MRS FAN SAID IT WAS IMPERATIVE FOR THE UK DELEGATION AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO ACHIEVE THE TWIN OBJECTIVE OF RESETTLEMENT AND REPATRIATION WITH A CLEARLY DEFINED TIMETABLE.

RESETTLEMENT WITHOUT REPATRIATION WOULD INADVERTENTLY ATTRACT MORE BOAT PEOPLE TO HONG KONG.

FOR HONG KONG, THE "BOTTOM LINE" WAS THAT ALL BOAT PEOPLE SCREENED OUT SHOULD BEGIN TO LEAVE THE TERRITORY BEFORE NEXT MARCH, EITHER THROUGH MANDATORY REPATRIATION OR BY BEING TRANSFERRED TO A REGIONAL RECEPTION CENTRE.

AND ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES STRANDED HERE SHOULD BE RESETTLED OVER A PERIOD OF THREE TO FIVE YEARS.

SHE URGED THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO UNITE AND SPEAK WITH A COMMON VOICE ON THE ISSUE. SO THAT IT WOULD BE STRONG ENOUGH TO BE HEARD INTERNATIONALLY.

MRS FAN ACCUSED THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OF BEING INCOMPETENT, INSINCERE AND IRRESPONSIBLE. AND OF HAVING USED ALL KINDS OF EXCUSES TO SHED ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AFFAIR.

VIETNAM'S EXCUSE FOR OBJECTING TO MANDATORY REPATRIATION WAS THAT IT WOULD BE "INHUMANE" FOR IT TO TAKE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BACK AGAINST THEIR WILL.

"BY INFERENCE, THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IS ACCUSING MANY COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD OF BEING INHUMANE, SINCE THESE COUNTRIES DO ACCEPT REPATRIATION OF THEIR OWN PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENTERED ANOTHER COUNTRY ILLEGALLY TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVING STANDARDS," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT THE UNITED NATIONS AND SOME HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS, BY MOUNTING INTENSIVE LOBBYING EXERCISE IN THE WESTERN WORLD TO PREVENT MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF THE SCREENED OUT BOAT PEOPLE, WERE UNWITTINGLY AIDING THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IN USING ITS OWN PEOPLE AS BARGAINING CHIPS IN GETTING FINANCIAL AID.

SHE NOTED THAT A SENIOR BRITISH OFFICIAL HAD ESTIMATED THAT VIETNAM, THROUGH EXPORTATION OF ITS PEOPLE, HAD OBTAINED IN 1987 AN INCOME FROM REMITTANCES AMOUNTING TO US\$500 MILLION.

MRS FAN SAID IT WAS IRONIC THAT WHILE THE WEST WAS SORROWFUL OVER EVERY REPORT OF DEATH AT SEA AMONG THE BOAT PEOPLE, AND EVEN SUFFERED FROM A FEELING OF GUILT IN SOME INSTANCES, THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAD SHOWN LITTLE CONCERN OVER THE WELL-BEING OF ITS OWN PEOPLE.

"VIETNAM WANTS TO PLAY THE GAME ACCORDING TO THEIR RULES. AND THEY SEEM TO BE GAINING SUCCESS. BECAUSE THEY CHOOSE TO USE HUMANS AS THEIR WEAPON, THE UNHCR AND HUMANITARIAN AND REFUGEE ORGANISATIONS ARE LED BY THE NOSE BY VIETNAM," SHE SAID.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT EVEN IF VIETNAM AGREED TO TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO STOP THE OUTFLOW IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD NEED TO FIND A WAY TO BIND THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO THEIR AGREEMENT, AND ENSURE THAT SHOULD THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT GO BACK ON THEIR WORDS, IT WOULD SUFFER FINANCIALLY OR OTHERWISE AS A RESULT OF SUCH ACTION.

TURNING TO THE UNITED STATES, MRS FAN SAID THAT WHILE ADVOCATING HIGH-SOUNDING AND ADMIRABLE PRINCIPLES OF ENSURING "SAFE AND HUMANE TREATMENT FOR ALL ASYLUM SEEKERS", THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD CONVENIENTLY TURNED A BLIND EYE TO THE PROBLEMS FACED BY HONG KONG.

THE TERRITORY HAD HAD TO ACCOMMODATE THE MASSIVE AND NEVER ENDING INFLUX OF BOAT PEOPLE WHO WERE IN THE MAIN REJECTED BY THE SELECTION CRITERIA PASSED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THEMSELVES.

IN ESSENCE, U.S. CONGRESSMEN AND THEIR GOVERNMENT WERE NOT PRACTISING WHAT THEY WERE PREACHING, SHE SAID.

MOREOVER, WHILE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT EVEN ALLOW ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM HAITI TO LAND, THEY EXPECTED HONG KONG, WITH A POPULATION DENSITY 250 TIMES THAT OF THE U.S., TO ACCOMMODATE FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD BOAT PEOPLE SCREENED OUT AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

"THE DOUBLE STANDARD SO BLATANTLY APPLIED IS GROSSLY UNFAIR TO HONG KONG," SHE SAID.

REFERRING TO BRITAIN, MRS FAN SAID THAT, SADLY ENOUGH, THE PEOPLE WHO MADE DECISIONS IN THE UK WERE CONSTANTLY MISLED BY LOBBYISTS AS TO THE REAL SITUATION IN HONG KONG.

SHE FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT AS ONE OF THE CLOSEST ALLIES OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THE UK FOREIGN OFFICE COULD NOT EVEN RELATE THE FACTS TO THEIR FRIENDS IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, SENATE AND CONGRESS.

IN THIS RESPECT, THE LOBBYISTS FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SEEMED TO BE DOING A FAR MORE EFFECTIVE JOB THAN THE HIGHLY CAPABLE AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMATS OF THE THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

MRS FAN SAID THE RESETTLEMENT FIGURES CONCERNING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE UK HAD NOT BEEN IMPRESSIVE AT ALL IN RECENT YEARS, BEARING IN MIND THAT THE ARRIVAL RATE OF BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG IN ONE MONTH, SAY APRIL AND MAY THIS YEAR, WAS MORE THAN 10 TIMES THE ANNUAL INTAKE OF THE UK.

"APART FROM THE SMALL INTAKE, THE UK ALSO OFFERS A READY EXCUSE TO THE U.S. FOR REFUSING TO GIVE MORE CONSIDERATION TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG, BY SIMPLY POINTING OUT THAT HONG KONG IS THE UK'S RESPONSIBILITY," SHE ADDED.

MRS FAN CRITICISED THE UK GOVERNMENT FOR NOT EVEN OPENLY SUPPORTING MANDATORY RETURN OF THE BOAT PEOPLE FOUND NOT TO BE REFUGEES, WHEN IT KNEW FULL WELL THAT MANDATORY REPATRIATION WAS PART AND PARCEL OF THE SCREENING POLICY.

SHE RECALLED THAT A LOBBYIST FROM A REFUGEE ORGANISATION IN THE U.S. HAD TOLD THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION IN AMERICA THAT THE BRITISH MINISTER WAS RELUCTANT TO BACK FORCED REPATRIATION BECAUSE IT WOULD BRING BRITAIN WORLDWIDE CONDEMNATION.

MRS FAN SAID SHE COULD STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM AND ITS ASSOCIATED POLICIES WERE MATTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND THEREFORE THE RESPONSIBILITY RESTED WITH THE SOVEREIGN STATE - THE UK.

SHE SAID HER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LORD GLENARTHUR HAD PUT IN WRITING IN OCTOBER 1987 REGARDING THE SCREENING POLICY AND REPATRIATION OF BOAT PEOPLE WAS THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAD SUGGESTED THE SCREENING POLICY AS A NEW INITIATIVE TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS VERY RECEPTIVE AND GAVE APPROVAL FOR IT TO BE CARRIED OUT IN HONG KONG WITHIN THE PROPER CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.

HOWEVER, MP'S IN THE UK'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE APPEARED TO THINK THAT THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM WAS A MATTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, NOT A MATTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

"ARE THEY PAVING THE WAY FOR HMG TO SHED RESPONSIBILITY?" MRS FAN ASKED.

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BRITAIN MUST FOOT THE VBP BILL FOR HK

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THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MUST FROM NOW ON FINANCE ALL VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROGRAMMES IN HONG KONG, THE HON MARTIN LEE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT DO SO, THEN HONG KONG COULD DO IT FOR THEM BY DEDUCTING ALL THESE EXPENSES FROM HONG KONG'S FUTURE CONTRIBUTION UNDER THE DEFENCE COSTS AGREEMENT, MR LEE SAID IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE.

SOME FEARED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD SAY HONG KONG WAS IN BREACH OF AGREEMENT.

"BUT IT LIES ILL IN THE MOUTH OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO ACCUSE US OF BREAKING AN AGREEMENT WHEN IT HAS BEEN SHIRKING FROM ITS UNDOUBTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SO LONG OVER THIS MATTER," HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HONG KONG MUST WAKE UP TO THE TRUTH, WHICH WAS THAT THE BOAT PEOPLE WERE A PROBLEM FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND NOT FOR HONG KONG.

/HE SAID

HE SAID MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT THE SCREENING POLICY WAS THE DECISION OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

THIS WAS CLEARLY NOT SO, BECAUSE THE ISSUE INVOLVED HONG KONG'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS, AND HONG KONG'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WERE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

MR LEE SAID THE QUESTION NO ONE HAD YET ASKED WAS WHETHER THE SCREENING POLICY WAS IN THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG OR THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IF ALL ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM WERE ADMITTED AS REFUGEES TO HONG KONG AS A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM, THEN ALL THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THEM FROM HONG KONG.

AND SINCE THE UNITED KINGDOM EXERCISED SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG, IT WOULD BE EXPECTED TO TAKE MORE FROM HONG KONG THAN OTHER COUNTRIES.

MR LEE SAID SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE SCREENING POLICY, ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF THE ARRIVALS WERE SCREENED OUT AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

AS SUCH, THEY HAD TO BE KEPT IN CLOSED CENTRES WHICH WERE COSTING THE TAXPAYERS MORE MONEY TO RUN THAN IF THEY WERE TREATED AS REFUGEES AND KEPT IN CLOSED CAMPS.

BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONCE THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WERE SCREENED OUT AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS. THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM, HAD NO MORE OBLIGATION TO ACCEPT THEM, AND THEY BECAME HONG KONG'S SOLE RESPONSIBILITY.

BUT WHY SHOULD HONG KONG ADOPT THE SCREENING POLICY WHEN IT HAD INCREASED HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL BURDEN AND YET HAD NOT DETERRED THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM FROM COMING HERE? HE ASKED.

THE ANSWER WAS THAT THE SCREENING POLICY REDUCED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG.

MR LEE ADDED THAT THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE OF IMPLEMENTING THE SCREENING POLICY WAS THAT HONG KONG MUST THINK OF A WAY TO REPATRIATE THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SCREENED OUT AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

BUT VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION ALONE WOULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM, AND IT SEEMED EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY AGREEMENT ON FORCED REPATRIATION IN GENEVA NEXT MONTH.

"BUT EVEN IF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WERE TO AGREE TO FORCED REPATRIATION, THE CHANCES ARE THAT HONG KONG WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY IN ONE WAY OR OTHER," HE SAID.

FOR THESE REASONS, HE URGED COUNCILLORS AND THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG NOT TO CONTINUE TO MAKE THE MISTAKE OF TRYING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM THEMSELVES.

/IF THEY

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IF THEY DID, THEY WOULD BE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

MR LEE OBSERVED THAT MANY PEOPLE IN HONG KONG BELIEVED THAT AS SOON AS HONG KONG CHANGED ITS POLICY OF BEING A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM, THE WORRIES WOULD BE OVER. BUT THIS WAS NO SO.

FIRST, THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT COULD NOT COME TO SUCH A DECISION ON ITS OWN, FOR THIS PERTAINED TO FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND THUS ONLY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD SCRAP THE POLICY.

SECONDLY, EVEN IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WERE TO ALLOW HONG KONG TO DO SO, HONG KONG WAS STILL BOUND BY THE CUSTOMARY OR GENERAL INTERNATIONAL LAW OF "NON-REFOULEMENT".

AND THIS MEANT THAT THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT BE FORCIBLY RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNLESS THEY WERE IN NO DANGER OF PERSECUTION, AND IT DID NOT MATTER WHETHER THEY WERE BRANDED AS REFUGEES OR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

IF HONG KONG CEASED TO BE A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM, ALL ARRIVALS WOULD BE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, AND THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO ACCEPT THEM.

FOR THIS REASON, HONG KONG WOULD BE WORSE OFF SHOULD IT CEASE BEING A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM.

"IT IS SINGULARLY UNFORTUNATE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS NOT CLEARED UP THIS MISUNDERSTANDING, BUT HAS ALLOWED IT TO BECOME A GIGANTIC RED HERRING BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THIS CHAMBER," HE SAID.

MR LEE ALSO HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS WOULD SOW THE SEED OF LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS THE BOAT PEOPLE BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, THEY WERE THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS IN A WAR-TORN COUNTRY WITH A BROKEN ECONOMY.

CONCLUDING, MR LEE SAID HE WOULD ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON THE MOTION BECAUSE ITS WORDING IMPLIED ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCREENING POLICY, WHICH HE BELIEVED WAS MORE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM THAN HONG KONG.

NOR WAS THE MOTION CLEAR AS TO WHETHER HONG KONG WOULD HAVE TO PAY ANYTHING UNDER THE REPATRIATION SCHEME.

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HK ALONE CANNOT SOLVE VBP PROBLEM

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HONG KONG ALONE CANNOT SOLVE THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER COUNTRIES CONCERNED, THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MR TAI SAID THROUGHOUT THE LAST 10 YEARS, HONG KONG HAD PERFORMED A "LIFEGUARD'S" ROLE, RESCUING THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES AND NON-REFUGEES FROM THE CHINA SEA.

INDEED, IT HAD DONE MORE THAN A LIFEGUARD COULD DO, DESPITE ITS LIMITED RESOURCES AND OTHER CHALLENGING DOMESTIC PROBLEMS THAT IT HAD TO ENCOUNTER DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

"HOWEVER, A LIFEGUARD'S JOB IS MAINLY TO RESCUE PEOPLE FROM THE ROUGH SEA. ONE CANNOT EXPECT A LIFEGUARD TO ACT ALSO AS A FOSTER PARENT, OR EVEN ADOPTIVE PARENT, GIVING THE RESCUED A PERMANENT HOME."

MR TAI NOTED THAT HONG KONG, AS THE FIRST RECEPTION CENTRE FOR BOAT PEOPLE, HAD BEEN FORCED INTO ACTING BOTH AS A LIFEGUARD AND A FOSTER PARENT HOME. SOMETIMES IT WAS EVEN BLAMED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR NOT TREATING THE BOAT PEOPLE WELL ENOUGH.

MR TAI POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE HAD THREATENED THE INTEGRATION AND STABILITY OF SOCIETY.

HE SAID WHILE THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY WAS TRYING HARD TO SEEK EMERGENCY CENTRES FOR THE BOAT PEOPLE, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE ASKING WHY THEY SHOULD TAKE UP THE JOB, AND HOW LONG THEY HAD TO SHOULDER SUCH A BURDEN.

THE OPEN CAMP POLICY AND BOAT PEOPLE CAMPS IN RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES WITHOUT CAREFUL PLANNING AND ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WAS ITSELF A RISK FOR CRISIS, HE CONTENDED.

"WE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH A DIFFERENT COMMUNITY IN A COMMUNITY, AS A SUB-CULTURE WITHIN A DOMINANT CULTURE.

"THIS WOULD THREATEN OUR INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL STABILITY AND WOULD ONLY INDUCE UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL RESIDENTS.

"MOST OF ALL, WE WOULD INCREASE THE HARDSHIP BEING FACED BY THE RESIDENTS IN DISTRICTS WHERE OPEN CAMPS AND RECEPTION CENTRES ARE BEING SITUATED," HE SAID.

./MR TAI

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MR TAI STRESSED THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAD SUFFERED SERIOUSLY DUE TO THE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE, OTING THAT A CREDIBLE GOVERNMENT WAS MOST IMPORTANT DURING THIS TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

BALANCING THE VARIOUS FACTORS INVOLVED, HE SAID UNLESS THERE WAS SOME VERY POSITIVE SOLUTION TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL FROM THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN JUNE, HONG KONG COULD NOT CONTINUE WITH THE PRESENT POLICY OF BEING THE PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM.

IN PART, THE INITIATIVE FOR CHANGING THIS POLICY RESTED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG, HE SAID.

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A MATTER SOLELY IN CONTROL OF UK
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THE DECISION IN 1979 THAT HONG KONG BE A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM WAS ONE CONCERNING EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THEREFORE CONSTITUTIONALLY THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE WAS A MATTER SOLELY IN THE CONTROL OF BRITAIN, THE HON RONALD ARCULLI SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MR ARCULLI SAID THIS DECISION WAS PART AND PARCEL OF AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD RESETTLE ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

"THIS WAS ALL VERY LAUDABLE UNTIL THE RESETTLEMENT PART OF THIS INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT BROKE DOWN," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HONG KONG HAD DONE ITS BEST IN THE MATTER TO TRY TO COPE WITH THE VIETNAMESE INFUX, INCLUDING BEARING ALMOST THE WHOLE FINANCIAL BURDEN, HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAD CLAIMED THAT IT WAS HELPLESS IN ATTEMPTING TO STOP ITS PEOPLE FROM LEAVING, MR ARCULLI SAID THAT EVEN IF THERE WAS A SHRED OF TRUTH TO THIS, THERE SEEMED TO BE NO EXPLANATION WHATSOEVER AS TO WHY THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO TAKE BACK THOSE THAT WERE NOT REFUGEES.

TURNING TO BRITAIN, HE SAID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MUST BE GIVEN A CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL MESSAGE THAT HONG KONG WAS ENTITLED TO EXPECT AND INDEED DEMAND THAT IT FULFIL ITS OBLIGATION.

/IT SHOULD

IT SHOULD ACCEPT FOR RESETTLEMENT MANY MORE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG AND THEREBY ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO FOLLOW SUIT, AND ALSO PAY THE LION'S SHARE OF THE COST OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE HERE.

MR ARCULLI ALSO SAID THAT BRITAIN SHOULD PRESS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACCEPT MANY MORE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG AS WELL AS BEAR THEIR FAIR SHARE OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN, PARTICULARLY THOSE COUNTRIES THAT DID NOT HAVE A FIRST PORT OF ASYLUM POLICY OR THOSE THAT DID NOT ACCEPT REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT.

HE SAID BRITAIN SHOULD ALSO PRESS THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT MANDATORY REPATRIATION, AND ALSO TAKE SUCH FURTHER ACTION AGAINST VIETNAM, INCLUDING TRADE SANCTIONS, TO PREVENT A FURTHER OUTFLOW OF PEOPLE.

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BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM A 'TIME BOMB'
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THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG IS A TIME BOMB, AND NOTHING CAN BE MORE EXCRUCIATING THAN TO ANTICIPATE THE EXPLOSION OF SUCH A BOMB, THE HON DAVID CHEUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MR CHEUNG SAID HONG KONG PEOPLE HAD BEEN ENDURING FOR 10 YEARS THE PAINS CAUSED BY THE PROBLEM, AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS HAD BEEN SPENT TO LITTLE AVAIL.

"OUR PATIENCE HAS BEEN STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT; AND ANGER AND DISSATISFACTION ARE MOUNTING," HE STRESSED.

HE SAID BRITAIN MUST NOT SHIRK ITS DUE RESPONSIBILITIES, AND NEITHER SHOULD IT EXPECT HONG KONG TO CONTINUE SHOULDERING THE BURDEN.

MR CHEUNG POINTED OUT THAT FEW COUNTRIES HAD BEEN WILLING TO REACH OUT TO HELP HONG KONG ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM.

"LET THOSE WHICH CRITICISE US DEMONSTRATE THEIR HUMANITY BY TAKING CONCRETE STEPS TO EASE OUR BURDEN AND, EVENTUALLY, SOLVE OUR PROBLEM," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT HONG KONG MUST ADOPT SOME SELF-HELP MEASURES TO CLEAR ITSELF OF THE BURDEN, MR CHEUNG SUGGESTED THAT THE FIRST STEP WOULD BE TO REPATRIATE THOSE VIETNAMESE WHO HAD BEEN SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES.

/SINCE REPATRIATION

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SINCE REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WAS A MANDATORY INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, IT WAS PERFECTLY JUSTIFIED IF THE RECEPTION COUNTRIES DID NOT OPEN THEIR DOORS TO THOSE BOAT PEOPLE, HE SAID.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST PUT PRESSURE ON THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO STOP EXPORTING ITS PEOPLE.

IN THIS REGARD, CHINA COULD ALSO HELP BY BLOCKING THE ACCESS TO HONG KONG OF THOSE VIETNAMESE WHO HAD LANDED IN CHINESE TERRITORY.

MR CHEUNG SAID HAVING TAKEN THE FIRST STEP, HONG KONG SHOULD THEN FIND WAYS TO HAVE ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES STRANDED HERE RESETTLED ELSEWHERE.

"HMG MUST TAKE THE LEAD; SO MUST THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE. AFTER ALL, THEY HAVE HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THE PROBLEM WE ARE ALL FACING," HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG SAID THAT HONG KONG HAD SUFFERED ENOUGH FROM THE PROBLEMS OTHERS HAD CREATED.

"OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PATIENT AND GENEROUS ENOUGH. BUT THERE MUST BE A LIMIT AS TO HOW MUCH MORE WE CAN WITHSTAND THE PROBLEM WHICH IS BECOMING MORE GRIEVOUS," HE SAID.

HE SAID IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MEANT WHAT IT SAID IN THE JOINT DECLARATION -- THAT IT WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG WITH THE OBJECT OF MAINTAINING AND PRESERVING ITS ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY, IT HAD A RESPONSIBILITY AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MUST EXERT ITS INFLUENCE ON BOTH THE VIETNAM GOVERNMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ACCEPT AND IMPLEMENT MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF NON-REFUGEES, AND TO RESETTLE REFUGEES.

"IN THE MEANTIME, BRITAIN MUST ALSO SHARE WITH HONG KONG THE EXPENSES ON LOOKING AFTER THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE WHO ARE STILL HERE," HE ADDED.

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HK SHOULD PETITION BRITAIN OVER VBP ISSUE

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HONG KONG SHOULD SEND A PETITION TO BRITAIN TO EXPRESS ITS ANGER AND CONCERN OVER THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE, THE HON NELLIE FONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MRS FONG SAID SHE WAS NOT SURE IF BRITAIN WAS AWARE OF THE FEELINGS OF UNREST, FRUSTRATION AND ANGER THAT THE BOAT PEOPLE WERE CAUSING AMONG HONG KONG RESIDENTS.

SHE SAID THAT, THROUGH THE PETITION, HONG KONG MUST CONVEY TO THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT, AND TO THE WORLD DURING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE ENORMOUS UNREST AND DISCONTENT THAT HAD ARISEN HERE OVER THE ISSUE.

IF BRITAIN COULD NOT PERSUADE THE UNITED NATIONS TO HANDLE THE BOAT PEOPLE CRISIS, THEN IT MUST EXPLAIN TO ITS OWN PEOPLE AND TO THE WORLD THAT HONG KONG COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT CARRY THE BURDEN BY ITSELF, SHE SAID.

MRS FONG ALSO CALLED ON HONG KONG PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEIR OBJECTIONS BY SIGNING A PETITION.

"THE DISTRICT BOARDS WOULD BE THE IDEAL VEHICLE TO ORGANISE THE WRITTEN PETITIONS AS THEY HAVE BEEN FORMED AND ORGANISED TO COLLECT AND REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF RESIDENTS WITHIN THE DISTRICTS," SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO SAID THAT BRITAIN AND CHINA, WHICH BOTH PROFESSED THE DESIRE TO MAINTAIN A STABLE HONG KONG, MUST DEVELOP AN INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION.

"BRITAIN SHOULD TALK TO CHINA, ON A FOREIGN AFFAIRS BASIS, ON BEHALF OF HONG KONG, AND FIND A SUITABLE SITE FOR A DETENTION CENTRE ALONG THE COAST OF CHINA WHERE ALL THE BOAT PEOPLE THAT ARE IN OR ABOUT TO ARRIVE IN HONG KONG COULD BE HOUSED BEFORE REPATRIATION."

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD HELP SET UP AND FUND THIS DETENTION CENTRE WHERE ALL THE BOAT PEOPLE THAT WERE NOW STRANDED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA COULD BE HOUSED PENDING REPATRIATION, SHE ADDED.

"MEANWHILE, BRITAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD MUST EXERT PRESSURE ON VIETNAM, BY IMPOSING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS OR BY STOPPING INTERNATIONAL AID IF NECESSARY, UNTIL IT REALISES ITS INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND TAKES ITS PEOPLE BACK," MRS FONG SAID.

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HK HAS DONE MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE

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THE UK DELEGATION MUST TELL THE WORLD AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE THAT UNLESS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN SUCCESSFULLY PRESSURE VIETNAM INTO ACCEPTING MANDATORY REPATRIATION, HONG KONG WILL HAVE TO STOP BEING A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM.

THE HON PAUL CHENG SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE.

MR CHENG SAID THAT AFTER SERVING OVER 10 YEARS AS THE MAJOR CLEARING HOUSE FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE AND HAVING SPENT WELL OVER \$1.5 BILLION, HONG KONG HAD DONE MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE.

HE SAID THE TERRITORY NEED NO LONGER BE UNDULY WORRIED ABOUT ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND REPUTATION AND, INSTEAD, IT SHOULD BE RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO DATE.

HONG KONG MUST NOW TURN BACK TO CHINA AS IT DID TO CHINESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, ALL THE BOAT PEOPLE WHO HAD STOPPED OFF IN CHINA ON THEIR WAY HERE, EVEN IF THEY MERELY STOPPED OFF TO "REFUEL" OR TO AVOID BAD WEATHER ALONG THE WAY, HE SAID.

CHINA MUST PLAY ITS PART, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT HAD REPEATEDLY INDICATED THIS PROBLEM MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE 1997.

MR CHENG SAID HE FELT THAT LEGCO MEMBERS SHOULD NOT GET TOO INVOLVED WITH DISCUSSIONS ON WHERE AND HOW THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE HOUSED, BUT SHOULD CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS IN PRESSING THE UK GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE A TOUGHER STANCE.

"WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO SEND THESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BACK TO VIETNAM, SO THAT NOT ONLY THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT, BUT THOSE WHO ARE PLANNING TO SAIL FOR HONG KONG, KNOW THAT OUR DOOR IS CLOSED.

"THE IDEA OF CHARTERING SHIPS TO BRING THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BACK TO WITHIN 12 MILES OF VIETNAM'S SHORELINES, AND TRANSFERRING THEM ONTO SMALLER BOATS -- THEN POINTING THEM TOWARDS THEIR HOMELAND, IS A PRACTICAL SOLUTION THAT IS CERTAINLY WORTH FURTHER EXPLORATION.

"THIS METHOD ALSO HAS THE BENEFIT OF NOT HAVING TO WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE AGREES ON MANDATORY REPATRIATION," HE SAID.

MR CHENG SAID THAT WHILE HE APPRECIATED THAT THE HONG KONG ADMINISTRATION HAD A DIFFICULT ROLE TO PLAY, HE THOUGHT THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG MUST OUTWEIGH ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THOUGH MOST LEGCO MEMBERS WERE RELUCTANT TO STOP FURTHER FUNDING, THEY WERE FAST REACHING THE POINT WHEREBY THIS MIGHT WELL BE THE LAST RESORT WITHIN THEIR POWERS TO IMPRESS UPON THE WORLD THAT URGENT ACTIONS MUST NOW SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.

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BOAT PEOPLE PUT STRAIN ON MEDICAL SERVICES

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THE CONTINUING INFLUX OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE HAS UNDULY STRAINED ALREADY OVER-STRETCHED MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, AND A MAJOR DISRUPTION OF HONG KONG'S HEALTH RECORD MAY WELL LIE AHEAD, DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, DR LEONG SAID THE PRESENCE OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE AS A RESULT OF HONG KONG'S BEING A PORT OF FIRST ASYLUM HAD LED TO A CRISIS SITUATION.

DESPITE THE SUBSTANTIAL SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, DOCTORS HAD TO BE DEPLOYED TO REFUGEE CAMPS AND BOAT PEOPLE CENTRES WHILE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SANITARY AND HEALTH WITHIN THE CAMPS PLACED AN EXTRA BURDEN ON THE STAFF OF THE HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS.

AS THE UPSURGE IN ARRIVALS MEANT MORE VIETNAMESE WERE TRANSFERRED TO PUBLIC HOSPITALS FOR TREATMENT, MEDICAL SERVICES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS WERE JEOPARDISED AND DELAYED, HE SAID.

THE PROBLEM WAS AGGRAVATED THROUGH THE CROWDED CONDITIONS IN THE CAMPS BEING CONDUCTIVE TO THE RAPID SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

"WITH THESE CAMPS ONLY SEPARATED BY A FENCE FROM OUR ALREADY CROWDED ENVIRONMENT, I SHUDDER TO THINK WHAT IT WOULD BRING TO THE HEALTH OF THE POPULATION OF HONG KONG SHOULD AN EPIDEMIC OF SOME FORM DEVELOPED IN THE CAMPS," HE SAID.

HE REGRETTED THAT IN SPITE OF WHAT ITS PEOPLE HAD DONE FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE, HONG KONG WAS STILL BEING PINPOINTED BY HIGH-SOUNDING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS AS "RACISTS" AND "INHUMANE".

"THERE IS SOMETHING VERY WRONG IN OUR EXISTING VIETNAMESE REFUGEE POLICY WHICH IS TOTALLY OUT OF FOCUS AND FAILS TO BRING ABOUT PROPER SOLUTIONS," HE SAID.

MANY CONTROVERSIES, SUCH AS INCONSISTENCY IN IMMIGRATION CRITERIA, UNFAIR TREATMENT OF CHINESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND THE UNJUSTIFIED ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO THE REFUGEES AT THE EXPENSE OF LOCAL WELFARE SERVICES PREVAILED IN THE EXISTING POLICY, DR LEONG SAID.

AND IT WAS RATHER OBVIOUS NOW THAT THE SCREENING POLICY CUM VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION WOULD NOT WORK.

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"FIRST OF ALL, UNDER THE TIME LIMITS AND STAFF CONSTRAINTS, WE CAN NEVER GET ALL THE NEW ARRIVALS SCREENED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND UP TILL NOW, NO ONE CAN BE SURE HOW THE SCREENING PROCEDURES CAN POSSIBLY DETERMINE ONE'S REFUGEE'S STATUS.

"SECONDLY, GIVEN THE EXISTING POLITICAL SITUATION IN VIETNAM, THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES BEING REPATRIATED CAN NEVER COMPENSATE FOR THE NUMBER OF NEW ARRIVALS.

"AS FOR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, IT IS CLEAR FROM THE FACT THAT SO FAR ONLY ABOUT 150 BOAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY SENT BACK, NOT TO MENTION THE COST WE HAVE TO BEAR IN TRANSPORT AND OTHER SUPPORTING SERVICES," HE SAID.

DR LEONG UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN A POSSIBLE SOLUTION AND IN PARTICULAR THE ROLE THAT BRITAIN MUST TAKE IN SORTING OUT THE MESS WHICH, HE SAID, BRITAIN ITSELF HAD PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN BRINGING ABOUT.

"IT IS RIDICULOUS THAT HONG KONG SHOULD SUFFER BECAUSE OF THE FIRST ASYLUM POLICY - THE RESULT OF A PEG SIGNED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR US SOME 10 YEARS AGO.

"THE POLICY WAS ONCE SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL BACK-UP FROM THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES. THE SITUATION IS NOW DIFFERENT -- THE RESETTLEMENT FIGURES ARE SLOW WHILE THE INFUX IS ARRIVING AT JET SPEED," HE SAID.

DR LEONG SAID HE WAS GROSSLY UNHAPPY WITH THE SMALL NUMBER OF REFUGEES THAT BRITAIN HAD TAKEN IN FROM HONG KONG OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS COMPARED WITH WHAT OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES HAD ACCEPTED, AND THE SLIGHT INCREASE IN RESETTLEMENT NUMBERS PROMISED EARLIER WOULD ONLY BE GRANTED UNDER SPECIFIED CONDITIONS.

HE ALSO SAID BRITAIN HAD ONLY MADE A MINIMAL COMMITMENT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. ITS "MINUTE" MONETARY OFFERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS WERE OF LITTLE HELP TO HONG KONG.

"IF BRITAIN CANNOT AFFORD TO GRANT THE RIGHT OF ABODE TO THE 3.28 MILLION HONG KONG RESIDENTS FOR WHICH IT IS HELD RESPONSIBLE, HOW CAN IT EXPECT US - WITH ALL OUR CONSTRAINTS - TO GRANT THE VIETNAMESE ASYLUM SEEKERS THE RIGHT TO STAY?" HE ASKED.

DR LEONG LIKENED THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE TO A PATIENT IN CRITICAL CONDITION WHO NEEDED DEFINITIVE TREATMENT RIGHT AWAY. HIS PRESCRIPTION WAS :

- * SCRAP THE FIRST ASYLUM POLICY SO AS TO FREE HONG KONG FROM THE OBLIGATION OF HAVING TO ACCEPT ALL WHO COME IN, OR ELSE BRITAIN SHOULD SHOULDER MOST OF THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATION THAT HONG KONG WAS BEARING NOW;
- * FIGHT FOR COMPULSORY REPATRIATION DURING THE COMING GENEVA CONFERENCE TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL NEW ARRIVALS WILL BE SENT BACK;

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* AND HELP HONG KONG TO PRESS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT IN FINANCING THE FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

THE WHOLE ISSUE WAS A DIPLOMATIC ONE AND BRITAIN MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG AS LONG AS IT STILL HAD SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG, HE SAID.

HE HOPED HONG KONG WOULD NOT NEED TO RESORT TO HIRING OCEAN LINERS TO TAKE THESE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AS HAD BEEN SUGGESTED AND DROP THEM OFF WITH LIFE BOATS AT DOVER BEFORE BRITAIN WAS CONVINCED IT MUST TAKE SOME REAL ACTION.

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NO CHOICE BUT TO SHIP BACK BOAT PEOPLE SAFELY
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IT SEEMS THAT HONG KONG HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO DECLARE UNILATERALLY THAT IT WOULD SHIP THE BOAT PEOPLE SAFELY BACK TO VIETNAMESE WATERS, THE HON MRS ELSIE TU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS TU WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE MOTION DEBATE ON THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ISSUE.

SHE SAID THAT ANOTHER LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON JAMES TIEN, HAD REQUESTED HER TO SAY THAT HE STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF GIVING THE BOAT PEOPLE A SAFE JOURNEY BACK TO VIETNAMESE WATERS.

SHE SAID IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT THIS PROPOSAL TO TAKE THE BOAT PEOPLE BACK TO VIETNAMESE WATERS WOULD MEET WITH SOME CRITICISM.

"BUT THOSE WHO CRITICISE CAN EASILY PREVENT US FROM CARRYING OUT SUCH A PROPOSAL BY OFFERING TO ACCEPT THE BOAT PEOPLE THEMSELVES."

"IT IS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT US TO CUT DOWN ON OUR ALREADY OVER-STRAINED, UNDER-STAFFED, AND IN SOME CASES POOR QUALITY SERVICES, IN ORDER TO TAKE IN AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF PEOPLE -- PERHAPS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OR EVEN A MILLION -- WHO DECIDED THEY WOULD LIKE TO TRY THEIR LUCK IN A BOAT TO HONG KONG," SHE SAID.

MOREOVER, HONG KONG COULD NOT CONTINUE TO KEEP MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN FOREVER IN PRISON CONDITIONS WAITING FOR RESETTLEMENT THAT NEVER TRANSPIRED.

SHE SAID THAT NO MATTER WHAT TRANSPIRED THIS YEAR IN GENEVA, HONG KONG SIMPLY COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY MORE BOAT PEOPLE INVADING OUR SHORES, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM MUST FACE UP TO THIS FACT.

"AND UNTIL WE TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES SUCH AS I HAVE SUGGESTED, THE BOAT PEOPLE WILL KEEP ON COMING, AND OTHER NATIONS WILL KEEP ON IGNORING OUR PLIGHT," SHE SAID.

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SUGGESTION TO SHIP BACK VBP UNACCEPTABLE

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THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO THE "SOMEWHAT BIZARRE SUGGESTION" THAT THOUSANDS OF VIETNAMESE SHOULD BE TAKEN BACK TO THE COAST OF VIETNAM AND THERE COMMITTED TO THE SEAS TO ACCEPT WHATEVER FATE THE WEATHER AND THE WATER WOULD PROVIDE.

"I WANT TO SAY THAT I WILL NEVER BE PARTY TO ANY HONG KONG POLICY OR PROCEDURE WHICH MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS RISK OF THE LOSS OF LIFE ON THE HIGH SEAS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHOSE ONLY CRIME IS THAT THEY SEEK A BETTER LIFE," HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, MR MCGREGOR SAID IT DID NOT NEED A GREAT BRAIN TO SEE THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM AND THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DIFFICULTIES.

"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE ANSWER WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLUNTARY REPATRIATION BASED ON AGREEMENT BY VIETNAM, HOPEFULLY AT THE JUNE CONFERENCE, TO ACCEPT THEIR CITIZENS BACK.

"I DO NOT DOUBT EITHER THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS A DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINDING THE LONG TERM SOLUTION AND, IN THE MEANTIME, FOR MEETING THE HIGH COST TO THE HONG KONG AUTHORITIES OF MAINTAINING THE CAMPS," HE SAID.

MR MCGREGOR SAID THE PROBLEM HAD TO BE TACKLED WITHOUT HEAT OR RANCOUR AND CERTAINLY WITHOUT ENCOURAGING RACIAL TENSION AND DISCRIMINATION.

"WE ARE LEADERS, NOT RACISTS, AND WE SHOULD ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT LOGICALLY, NOT WITH A SENSE OF MOUNTING HYSTERIA," HE SAID.

MR MCGREGOR SAID HE HAD BEEN SADDENED MANY TIMES TO HEAR NORMALLY REASONABLE AND KINDLY PEOPLE SPOKE OF THE VIETNAMESE WITH MOUNTING ANGER AND VITUPERATION OFTEN WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT SOMEHOW THEY WERE ALL CRIMINALS TO BE KEPT VERY FAR AWAY FROM DECENT LAW ABIDING PEOPLE.

"THEY ARE NOT CRIMINALS," HE SAID. "THEIR COUNTRY HAD BEEN A WAR FOR HALF A CENTURY AND IS CLOSE TO ECONOMIC DEATH WITH HARDLY ENOUGH TO FEED TO POPULATION."

HOW DESPERATE THESE PEOPLE MUST BE TO SET SAIL AS THEY DID. HOW MANY OF US IN HONG KONG, ACCUSTOMED TO LEAVING IN THOUSANDS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES, WOULD YET SET OFF WITH THEIR CHILDREN, AS THE VIETNAMESE DID, INTO UNKNOWN WATERS, HE ASKED.

"THE INCREASING FRUSTRATION THAT WE FEEL AT THE CONTINUING INFLUX AND THE ANXIETY TO BRING IT TO A HALT SHOULD NOT, I THINK, BLIND US TO THE TERRIBLE BACKGROUND TO THIS ENORMOUS HUMAN TRAGEDY, THIS FLOOD OF HOPELESS HUMANITY SURGING ALONG A DANGEROUS CIRCUITOUS ROUTE LIKELY TO FINISH UP WHERE THEY STARTED," HE SAID.

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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SEX IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE A GOOD GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SEX AND AWARENESS OF THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR SEXUAL ACTIVITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ROSANNA TAM, MR CHAU SAID THAT ADEQUATE CHANNELS WERE OPEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE, IF NECESSARY, TO OBTAIN ADVICE AND HELP ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.

MR CHAU SAID THAT A 1981 STUDY ON "THE ATTITUDE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION TOWARDS MARRIAGE", UNDERTAKEN JOINTLY BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY WELFARE SECTOR, AND THE RECENT FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION STUDY, TO WHICH MRS TAM REFERRED, HAD BOTH REVEALED A COMPARATIVELY LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE.

HE SAID THAT THERE WERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOLESCENTS TO OBTAIN A GENERAL EDUCATION ON SEX IN SCHOOLS.

"ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE ADVISED TO SET ASIDE ABOUT SEVEN HOURS OF TEACHING PER YEAR FOR SEX EDUCATION.

"INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THEIR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IF THEY EXPERIENCE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS RELATING TO SEXUAL MATTERS," HE SAID.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT YOUNG PEOPLE, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR MARITAL STATUS, COULD OBTAIN MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING SERVICES AT THE FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE CENTRES UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES OPERATED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

"IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO DEVELOP THESE SERVICES FURTHER ACCORDING TO NEED.

"PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF AN ADDITIONAL EIGHT FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE CENTRES AND SIX FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

"APART FROM THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES INCLUDING THE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION ALSO OFFER SERVICES DIRECTED AT YOUNG PERSONS WITH SEX-RELATED PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

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SEWAGE BLAMED FOR BEACH POLLUTION

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THE BEACHES WHICH HAVE BEEN DECLARED UNSUITABLE FOR SWIMMING ARE POLLUTED BY FAECAL AND LIVESTOCK WASTES AND TO IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY IT IS NECESSARY TO TACKLE THE SEWAGE POLLUTION PROBLEM AT SOURCE.

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

MR BARNES NOTED THAT SIX OUT OF 42 GAZETTED BEACHES HAD BEEN DECLARED UNSUITABLE FOR SWIMMING, BASED ON THE WATER QUALITY DURING THE 1988 BATHING SEASON.

THEY WERE ANGLERS', SILVERMINE BAY, OLD CAFETERIA, CASTLE PEAK, TING KAU AND ROCKY BAY.

IN THE CASE OF ANGLERS' AND SILVERMINE BAY BEACHES WHICH WERE POLLUTED MAINLY BY PIG WASTES, MR BARNES SAID THE WATER QUALITY HAD RECENTLY IMPROVED SINCE CONTROLS ON THE DISPOSAL OF LIVESTOCK WASTES IN THE AREAS UNDER THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE BEGAN IN JUNE LAST YEAR.

ROCKY BAY AND TING KAU BEACHES WERE POLLUTED BY EFFLUENT FROM DOMESTIC SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS FROM SEPTIC TANKS.

IN THE LONG TERM, TACKLING THE POLLUTION PROBLEMS AT THESE BEACHES REQUIRED THE PROVISION OF PROPER SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM FOR THE SWIMMING AREAS, SO THAT EXISTING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS COULD CONNECT THEIR SEWAGE FACILITIES TO THE PUBLIC SEWERS.

MR BARNES SAID A SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN FOR THE SOUTH OF HONG KONG ISLAND WHICH WOULD INCLUDE PROPOSALS FOR THE SHEK O/ROCKY BAY AREA WAS BEING DEVELOPED UNDER A CONSULTANCY, SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION LATER THIS YEAR.

A SIMILAR STUDY FOR THE TSUEN WAN AREA WAS COMMISSIONED EARLY THIS YEAR AND THE COMPLETION OF WORKS DERIVING FROM THIS STUDY WOULD GENERALLY IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY IN THE TSUEN WAN AREA AND ALONG THE CASTLE PEAK ROAD BEACHES.

IN ADDITION, A \$5 MILLION SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SCHEME FOR TING KAU, INVOLVING INTERCEPTION AND DISINFECTION OF THE SEWAGE FROM THE HINTERLAND OF TING KAU BEACH, WAS PLANNED AS AN URGENT REMEDIAL MEASURE, HE ADDED.

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLOSING SCHOOLS BASED ON EXPERIENCE

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THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLOSING SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF BAD WEATHER AND FOR PARENTS TO EXERCISE DISCRETION IN SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL WHEN LOCAL WEATHER OR TRANSPORT CONDITIONS CAUSE DIFFICULTIES, ARE BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND MAKE SENSE.

UNDER THESE ARRANGEMENTS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED CIRCULARS TO ALL SCHOOLS, AND THROUGH SCHOOLS TO PARENTS, TELLING THEM WHAT THEY SHOULD DO WHEN THERE IS DANGER FROM BAD WEATHER.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER POON IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 2 RAINSTORM.

MR BRIDGE STRESSED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD AND SYMPATHISED WITH MEMBERS' CONCERN THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SHOULD BE DONE TO PROTECT SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM DANGER ARISING FROM SUDDEN UNEXPECTED RAINSTORMS SUCH AS HAD OCCURRED THAT DAY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDER PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS WHENEVER THE WEATHER WAS UNSETTLED THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE AN OFFICER ON DUTY ROUND-THE-CLOCK.

THE OFFICER KEPT IN TOUCH WITH THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE. IF THERE WERE GROUNDS FOR CLOSING SCHOOLS THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TOOK THE BEST DECISION HE COULD ON THE FACTS AVAILABLE.

"WHEN CONDITIONS JUSTIFY IT, AN ANNOUNCEMENT WHETHER OR NOT SCHOOLS WILL BE CLOSED IS MADE NO LATER THAN 6.15 AM FOR MORNING SESSION AND ALL-DAY SCHOOLS, AND NO LATER THAN 11 AM FOR THE AFTERNOON SESSION SO THAT PARENTS WILL KNOW THE POSITION BEFORE THEY ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO SET OFF FOR SCHOOL," HE SAID.

MR BRIDGE SAID PROBLEMS AROSE BECAUSE HEAVY RAIN WAS SOMETIMES EXTREMELY LOCALISED AND COULD NOT ALWAYS BE FORESEEN.

"THIS MEANS THAT IT MAY SOMETIMES BE NECESSARY FOR SCHOOL HEADS OR PARENTS TO USE THEIR OWN INITIATIVE TO TAKE WHATEVER SAFETY MEASURES LOCAL CONDITIONS MAY JUSTIFY," HE SAID.

TO HELP THEM, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ISSUED CIRCULARS TO ALL SCHOOLS AND THROUGH SCHOOLS TO PARENTS, TELLING THEM WHAT THEY SHOULD DO WHEN THERE WAS DANGER FROM BAD WEATHER.

"THE CIRCULARS EXPLAIN IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SCHOOLS MAY BE CLOSED; STRESS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL HEADS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THEIR STUDENTS; AND COVER SITUATIONS WHERE LOCAL WEATHER CONDITIONS MAY FORCE SOME SCHOOLS TO CLOSE; EVEN THOUGH A GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO CLOSE ALL SCHOOLS IS NOT JUSTIFIED," MR BRIDGE SAID.

/ "THE CIRCULARS

"THE CIRCULARS EMPHASISE THAT SCHOOLS SHOULD REMIND PARENTS TO USE DISCRETION IN SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL WHEN LOCAL WEATHER OR TRANSPORT CONDITIONS CAUSE DIFFICULTIES; AND SCHOOL HEADS ARE ASKED NOT TO PENALISE STUDENTS WHO ARE ABSENT OR LATE IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

"THESE ARRANGEMENTS ARE BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND SEEM TO ME TO MAKE SENSE."

MR BRIDGE SAID HE COULD NOT HIMSELF THINK OF ANY WAY THE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE IMPROVED. BUT HE WELCOMED ANY SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS.

REFERRING TO THE STORM ON MAY 2, MR BRIDGE SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BEGAN MONITORING WEATHER AND TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AS SOON AS THE HEAVY RAIN BEGAN AT AROUND 10 AM.

"BY 11 AM THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS OF ANY NEED TO CLOSE SCHOOLS," HE SAID.

ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE MADE OVER THE RADIO AND IN RESPONSE TO TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES ADVISING PARENTS THAT THEY SHOULD USE DISCRETION IN SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL IF LOCAL CONDITIONS WERE LIKELY TO MAKE THIS DIFFICULT, HE ADDED.

AT ABOUT NOON, THE RAIN OVER KOWLOON UNEXPECTEDLY BECAME MUCH HEAVIER.

BETWEEN NOON AND 1 PM, THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY RECORDED OVER 104 MILLIMETRES OF RAIN AT ITS HEADQUARTERS, ALTHOUGH SOME OTHER PARTS OF THE TERRITORY RECORDED ONLY LIGHT RAIN.

BY THAT TIME MANY AFTERNOON SESSION CHILDREN WERE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY TO SCHOOL, OR HAD ALREADY REACHED SCHOOL, MR BRIDGE SAID.

"THE DIRECTOR DECIDED AGAINST A CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT AT THAT STAGE, BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN THESE CHILDREN, AS WELL AS STUDENTS IN WHOLE DAY SCHOOLS, HAVING TO SET OFF HOME IN THE HEAVY RAIN.

"WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT THIS WOULD ONLY HAVE ADDED TO THE STRAIN ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INCREASED RISKS TO STUDENTS' SAFETY," HE SAID.

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PIGEON RAISING IN ESTATES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

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UNDER THE TERMS OF THEIR TENANCY AGREEMENTS WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, TENANTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO KEEP ANIMALS, BIRDS OR LIVESTOCK OF ANY KIND IN THEIR PREMISES WITH THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE AUTHORITY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RONALD CHOW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT FOR THOSE OLDER TYPES OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE TENANCY CARDS ISSUED BY THE FORMER RESETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT ALSO CONTAINED A SIMILAR CONDITION PROHIBITING THE KEEPING OF POULTRY, PIGEONS, RABBITS OR ANIMALS OF ANY KIND EXCEPT ONE CAT, WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT.

"IF ANY TENANTS ARE FOUND TO BE IN BREACH OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED TENANCY CONDITIONS, THEY ARE TOLD TO REMOVE THE ANIMALS. IN MOST CASES, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS ABLE TO SOLICIT THE CO-OPERATION OF THE TENANTS," MR LIAO SAID.

IN SOME CASES WHERE PET KEEPING WOULD NOT CAUSE NUISANCE TO OTHER TENANTS, SUCH AS KEEPING SMALL CAGE-BIRDS, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT WAS PREPARED TO TOLERATE IT.

"THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS, HOWEVER, NOT PREPARED TO ALLOW OR TOLERATE THE RAISING OF PIGEONS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE PARTICULAR CASE MENTIONED BY MR CHOW, MR LIAO SAID THE TENANT HAD DISPOSED OF ALL THE PIGEONS.

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INTEREST ON COMPENSATION FOR LAND RESUMPTION EXPLAINED

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED TO AMEND THE LAW TO PROVIDE FOR INTEREST TO BE PAID ON COMPENSATION FOR LAND RESUMPTION AS THIS IS ALREADY COVERED BY EXISTING LEGISLATION.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

HE SAID THAT SECTION 17(3) OF THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE SPECIFICALLY PROVIDED FOR INTEREST TO BE PAID ON ALL STATUTORY COMPENSATION COVERING THE PERIOD FROM REVERSION OF THE LAND TO CROWN TO THE ACTUAL PAYMENT, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER OR NOT THE COMPENSATION WAS DETERMINED BY THE LANDS TRIBUNAL.

"THIS COVERS ALSO COMPENSATION TO BE PAID UNDER THE ROADS (WORKS, USE AND COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE. THERE IS THEREFORE NO NEED TO AMEND THE ORDINANCES," MR BARNES ADDED.

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ADVISORY SIGNS TO BE ERECTED ON CYCLE TRACKS

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ROAD SIGNS GIVING ADVICE ON BASIC RULES OF SAFE CYCLING WILL BE ERECTED ON CYCLE TRACKS IN SHA TIN AND MA ON SHAN, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP, MR LEUNG SAID THE SIGNS WOULD ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON CYCLING ROUTES, REST KIOSKS, BICYCLE PARKING PLACES, TOILETS AND LOCAL LANDMARKS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD A SCHEME TO INSTALL SUCH ROAD SIGNS APART FROM ORDINARY TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKINGS TO CONTROL AND GUIDE CYCLISTS.

FIFTEEN LOCATIONS ALONG THE CYCLE TRACKS IN SHA TIN AND MA ON SHAN HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AND THE SIGNS WOULD BE INSTALLED BY OCTOBER THIS YEAR.

HE SAID THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WOULD REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHEME AFTER IMPLEMENTATION.

IF THE RESULTS WERE POSITIVE, THE SCHEME WOULD BE EXTENDED TO OTHER DISTRICTS.

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MEASURES TO CLEAR GRAVEL ON ROADS ADEQUATE

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ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ADEQUATE ROAD SWEEPING MEASURES, FLYING GRAVEL IN HIGH SPEED ROADS IS A DANGER TO WINDSCREENS WHICH CANNOT BE ENTIRELY ELIMINATED.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHAN YING-LUN.

MR BARNES SAID THAT ROAD SWEEPING WAS SHARED BETWEEN THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT AND THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WITH THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH SPEED ROADS AND THE COUNCILS THE REST.

"THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED BELIEVE THAT THESE MEASURES ARE GENERALLY ADEQUATE BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN GUARD COMPLETELY AGAINST FLYING GRAVEL, AS EVEN A SMALL PIECE FLYING UP AT A HIGH SPEED CAN BREAK A WINDSCREEN," HE SAID.

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SQUATTERS TO BE CLEARED FROM UNSAFE SLOPES

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ALL SQUATTERS WILL BE CLEARED FROM UNSAFE SLOPES BY THE EARLY 1990'S TO ELIMINATE ALL RISKS FROM LANDSLIPS DURING HEAVY RAINFALL.

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

MR BARNES REFERRED TO A CLEARANCE POLICY ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT SOME TIME AGO UNDER WHICH 38,000 SQUATTERS WERE CLEARED AND REHOUSED BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

"ALTHOUGH OVER 10,000 STILL REMAIN, IT IS HOPED THAT THEY WILL ALL BE CLEARED FROM UNSAFE SLOPES IN THE URBAN AREA BY THE EARLY 1990'S.

"MEANWHILE, A PRESCRIBED WARNING SYSTEM IS USED TO URGE SQUATTERS TO TAKE REFUGE IN RECEPTION CENTRES WHEN EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY RAINFALL CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO OCCUR," HE SAID.

CONCERNING THE FLOODING IN SOME AREAS ON MAY 2, MR BARNES SAID THE MAIN CAUSE WAS THE EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY RAINFALL OF ALMOST RECORD SHORT-TERM INTENSITIES, PARTICULARLY IN KWUN TONG.

/THE SITUATION

THE SITUATION WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE EXTENSIVE BLOCKAGE OF GULLIES BY REFUSE AND DEBRIS WASHED FROM ROADWORKS AND SMALL LANDSLIPS.

HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE RESPONSE OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN DEALING WITH THE FLOOD SITUATION WAS GOOD, HE HAD ASKED THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES TO UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH REVIEW OF EXISTING FLOOD EMERGENCY PROCEDURES TO SEE WHAT CHANGES COULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE THIS IMPORTANT SERVICE.

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HELPERS ALLOWED TO CHANGE JOBS BECAUSE OF ABUSE
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SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF REVISED CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS IN APRIL 1987, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT HAS APPROVED 40 APPLICATIONS FOR A CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT ON THE GROUND OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE BY THE EMPLOYERS.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ELSIE TU.

"THIS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IF AND WHEN THE EMPLOYERS NEXT SEEK TO EMPLOY A FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPER," HE SAID.

IT WAS NORMAL PROCEDURE FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT TO ADVISE ANY FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPER WHO SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION TO CHANGE HER EMPLOYER ON THE GROUNDS OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE TO REPORT HER CASE TO THE POLICE, HE NOTED.

MR ASPREY SAID THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT KEPT STATISTICS ON APPLICATIONS FOR A CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT BY FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS FOLLOWING PREMATURE TERMINATION OF THEIR ORIGINAL CONTRACT, BUT NOT ON THE OVERALL NUMBER OF CONTRACTS TERMINATED PREMATURELY.

"IT DOES NOT, THEREFORE, HAVE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF CASES WHERE PREMATURE TERMINATION WAS INITIATED BY THE EMPLOYER OR BY THE EMPLOYEE, NOR ON THE STAGE AT WHICH CONTRACTS ARE TERMINATED," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, I CAN SAY THAT IN 1988 THERE WERE 2,606 APPLICATIONS FROM FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS TO CHANGE EMPLOYMENT FOLLOWING PREMATURE TERMINATION OF THEIR CONTRACTS."

OF THESE, MR ASPREY SAID, 75 PER CENT GAVE ONE OR OTHER OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS FOR NOT COMPLETING THE ORIGINAL CONTRACTS:

- (A) TRANSFER OUT OF HONG KONG OR EMIGRATION OF THEIR EMPLOYER;
- (B) DEATH OF THEIR EMPLOYER; OR
- (C) FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY OF THEIR EMPLOYER.

ABOUT ONE PER CENT GAVE MALTREATMENT OR ABUSE BY THEIR EMPLOYER AS A REASON, MR ASPREY ADDED.

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THREE AO'S GRANTED BRITISH CITIZENSHIP

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IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, THREE LOCAL OFFICERS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE, AND NONE FROM THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE, HAVE BEEN GRANTED BRITISH CITIZENSHIP UNDER SECTION 4(5) OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT ON ACCOUNT OF CROWN SERVICE IN HONG KONG.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ELSIE TU.

"WE HAVE NO DETAILS CONCERNING THOSE WHO MAY HAVE ACQUIRED BRITISH CITIZENSHIP IN OTHER WAYS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS AN ATTRIBUTE OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP.

"THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS INFORMED OF ALL APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP ON ACCOUNT OF CROWN SERVICE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

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AFD REVIEWS SAFETY MEASURES

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THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS REVIEWED SAFETY MEASURES CURRENTLY IN OPERATION AND WILL SHORTLY BE ISSUING MORE DETAILED GUIDELINES TO SUPERVISORS AND STAFF INVOLVED IN OUTDOOR WORK.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR JACOBS SAID OTHER HEADS OF DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO BEEN REMINDED TO REVIEW AND, WHERE NECESSARY, UPDATE SUCH GUIDELINES AND BRING THESE TO THE ATTENTION OF SUPERVISORY AND OUTDOOR STAFF MORE FREQUENTLY.

MR JACOBS SAID THE DEATH OF A AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT WORKMAN DURING THE HEAVY RAIN ON MAY 2 WAS AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT, AND THE CAUSE OF DEATH HAD YET TO BE DETERMINED.

HE SAID PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AND GUIDELINES EXISTED IN DEPARTMENTS WHOSE STAFF WERE REQUIRED TO PERFORM OUTDOOR DUTIES TO ENSURE THAT THEY WERE NOT EXPOSED TO UNNECESSARY RISK.

THESE MEASURES AND GUIDELINES TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE OPERATIONAL NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT, AND MIGHT COVER :

/(A) TRAINING

- (A) TRAINING FOR STAFF IN THE USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND IN DEALING WITH EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, INCLUDING THE APPLICATION OF FIRST AID;
- (B) PROVISION OF PROTECTIVE CLOTHING WHERE APPROPRIATE;
- (C) SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS TO MEET DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES; AND
- (D) THE DISCRETION OF SUPERVISORY STAFF TO ADJUST THEIR WORK PROGRAMME IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHANGES IN WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TO RECALL STAFF ON OUTDOOR DUTIES WHERE NECESSARY.

"THE MEASURES AND GUIDELINES ARE REGULARLY REVIEWED AND UPDATED," MR JACOBS SAID.

"NEVERTHELESS, ACCIDENTS BY THEIR VERY NATURE DO OCCUR FROM TIME TO TIME, ALTHOUGH IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, APART FROM THE INCIDENT IN QUESTION, THERE HAVE BEEN NO FATALITIES ATTRIBUTABLE TO ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS," HE ADDED.

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CORRECT POLICY ON OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
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THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S VIEW ON THE IMMEDIATE USE OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL SPACE FOR OFFICE PURPOSES IS THAT CONVERSIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO OFFICE USES RELATED TO MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS IN THE SAME PREMISES AND SHOULD NOT NORMALLY EXCEED 30 PER CENT.

THIS VIEW REFLECTED THAT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, STATED IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES TIEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES SAID HE COULD APPRECIATE THE FRUSTRATION OF THOSE WHO OWNED FACTORY PREMISES WHICH COULD MORE PROFITABLY BE LET OUT AS OFFICES AND OF THOSE WHO WOULD HOPED TO PICK UP A CHEAPER RENT IN AN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING.

BUT HE SAID THEY MUST APPRECIATE THAT THROUGH ZONING AND USER RESTRICTIONS THE GOVERNMENT HAD IN PRACTICE SET THE LIMITS OF THE MARKETS BOTH IN INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PREMISES AND A MORE WHOLESALE UNRESTRICTED CONVERSION WOULD CERTAINLY UPSET THESE MARKETS UNFAIRLY.

AS REGARDS CHANGE OF PLANNING, MR BARNES SAID HE COULD OFFER LITTLE ADVANCE ON HIS STATEMENT TWO WEEKS AGO IN THE BUDGET DEBATE.

/THE LITTLE

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THE LITTLE HE COULD ADVANCE WAS THAT FROM 1986 TO LAST YEAR, THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD GAVE PERMISSION TO 29 APPLICATIONS TO OFFICE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN ADDITIONAL 400,000 SQUARE METRE OF COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE FROM FORMER INDUSTRIAL LAND.

"SO, EVEN WITHIN THE RESTRICTED GUIDELINES, QUITE A LOT IS BEING ACHIEVED," HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID IN HIS VIEW THIS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE GENERAL POLICY THAT ADDITIONAL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THROUGH NEW LAND AND CONVERSION OF LAND RATHER THAN BUILDINGS WAS A RIGHT ONE.

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LEGCO PASSES MOTION ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION CALLING ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO FULFIL ITS RESPONSIBILITY BY TAKING A LEADING ROLE IN PURSUING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPATRIATION OF BOAT PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG, AND IN ACCEPTING MORE REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT.

TWENTY-FOUR MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION, WHICH WAS MOVED BY THE SENIOR MEMBER, THE HON ALLEN LEE.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT, AND SUPPORTED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION READ:

"THAT THIS COUNCIL, CONSIDERING THAT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCREENING POLICY FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE DEPENDS UPON THE SUCCESSFUL REPATRIATION OF ALL THOSE SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES AND THE RESETTLEMENT OF ALL REFUGEES, URGES HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO FULFIL ITS RESPONSIBILITY BY TAKING A LEADING ROLE IN ACTIVELY PURSUING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPATRIATION, AND IN ACCEPTING FOR RESETTLEMENT MORE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG."

IN OTHER BUSINESS, THE COUNCIL PASSED SIX BILLS, ONE OF WHICH WAS THE APPROPRIATION BILL 1989.

THE OTHER BILLS WERE THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989; THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1989; AND THE ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

TWO MOTIONS CONCERNING CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS AND PENSIONS PAYABLE UNDER THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION SCHEME AND UNDER THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSION SCHEME WERE ALSO PASSED. THESE WERE MOVED BY THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS.

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CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS ADJUSTED

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ADJUSTMENTS IN CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS, IN LINE WITH MOVEMENTS IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A), WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE ADJUSTMENTS WERE MADE UNDER THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) ORDINANCE AND THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION (INCREASE) ORDINANCE, IN TWO MOTIONS MOVED BY THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS.

MR JACOBS EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED POLICY WAS TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL PURCHASING POWER OF CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS, INCLUDING PENSIONS PAYABLE UNDER THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION SCHEME AND UNDER THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSION SCHEME.

DURING THE LATEST REVIEW PERIOD FROM APRIL 1 LAST YEAR TO MARCH 31 THIS YEAR, THE MOVING ANNUAL AVERAGE OF THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) ROSE BY 9.1 POINTS OR 8.18 PER CENT, HE SAID.

"THE USUAL PRACTICE IS TO ROUND UP THE PERCENTAGE FIGURE TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER IF THE DECIMAL PLACE IS 0.5 PER CENT OR MORE, AND TO ROUND DOWN IF LESS.

"THE PENSION INCREASE PERCENTAGES WILL ALSO BE ADJUSTED, IF NECESSARY, TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF ROUNDING OFF OVER THE YEARS," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS SAID SINCE 1976, WHEN THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADJUSTING PENSIONS AGAINST MOVEMENTS IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) WERE INTRODUCED, THE PERCENTAGE INCREASES HAD BEEN ROUNDED DOWN IN NINE YEARS OUT OF 13.

THIS HAD RESULTED OVER THE YEARS IN A NET ARITHMETIC ROUNDING DOWN OF 0.62 PER CENT.

"TO ROUND DOWN AGAIN THIS YEAR AND ADJUST PENSIONS BY EIGHT PER CENT WOULD INCREASE THE SHORTFALL TO 0.8 PER CENT.

"IT IS THEREFORE CONSIDERED REASONABLE TO ROUND UP THIS YEAR'S ADJUSTMENT FROM 8.18 PER CENT TO NINE PER CENT, AND TO APPLY IT TO ALL PENSIONS IN PAYMENT ON APRIL 1, 1989," HE SAID.

THE TOTAL COST OF INCREASING ALL PENSIONS BY NINE PER CENT WAS ESTIMATED AT \$82.22 MILLION FOR A FULL YEAR, MR JACOBS ADDED.

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RELIEF TO CROSS HARBOUR CONGESTION IN SIGHT

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THE OPENING OF THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING IN A FEW MONTHS WOULD PROVIDE A WELCOME RELIEF TO THE CONGESTION AT THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL AND AT THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR JAMES SO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE DRIVE-THROUGH CEREMONY FOR THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, MR SO SAID THAT WITH THE DEDICATION AND EFFICIENCY OF BOTH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW HONG KONG TUNNEL COMPANY AND THE CONTRACTOR, THE CROSSING WAS LIKELY TO BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC WELL AHEAD OF SCHEDULE IN AUGUST.

THE NEW ROAD CROSSING IS EXPECTED TO ATTRACT ABOUT 35,000 TO 40,000 VEHICLES PER DAY IN 1989 WHILE THE TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE EXISTING CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL IS ESTIMATED TO DROP TO ABOUT 108,000 VEHICLES PER DAY.

"THIS WILL REMOVE THE LONG QUEUES WE NOW SEE EACH DAY AT THE APPROACHES TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HARBOUR," MR SO SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT AWARDED THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING PROJECT TO THE NEW HONG KONG TUNNEL COMPANY IN DECEMBER 1985 TO FINANCE, BUILD AND OPERATE THIS NEW FACILITY AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$3.4 BILLION.

MR SO NOTED THAT THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING COMPRISED A STANDARD DUAL TWO-LANE ROAD TUNNEL AND A RAILWAY TUNNEL FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY.

ON THE CHA KWO LING SIDE, THE TUNNEL APPROACH ROAD WILL BE CONNECTED TO LEI YUE MUN ROAD, AND ALSO TO THE FUTURE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL THROUGH THE KWUN TONG BYPASS.

ON THE HONG KONG SIDE, THE TUNNEL WILL LINK UP WITH THE ISLAND EASTERN CORRIDOR AND KORNHILL IN QUARRY BAY. THE CAPACITY OF THE ROAD TUNNEL IS AROUND 120,000 VEHICLES PER DAY.

MR SO ALSO NOTED THAT THE RAIL TUNNEL WOULD PROVIDE A SECOND CROSS HARBOUR LINE FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY JOINING KWUN TONG STATION, THROUGH A NEW STATION IN LAM TIN, WITH QUARRY BAY STATION ON HONG KONG SIDE.

"THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING WILL CERTAINLY AFFECT TRAFFIC PATTERNS BY BRINGING ABOUT A RE-DISTRIBUTION OF TRAFFIC, IN PARTICULAR IN EAST KOWLOON AND THE EASTERN PART OF HONG KONG ISLAND," MR SO ADDED.

"THIS SITUATION WILL NEED TO BE CLOSELY MONITORED AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES WILL HAVE TO BE INTRODUCED TO MEET THE CHANGING TRAFFIC PATTERNS IN THE AREAS AFFECTED."

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LADY WILSON VISITS SHELTERED HOUSING FOR ELDERLY

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LADY WILSON VISITED THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S SHELTERED HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY IN HENG ON ESTATE, SHA TIN, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AND SHOWED GREAT INTEREST IN THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE RESIDENTS THERE.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR ADOLF HSU, LADY WILSON ARRIVED AT HENG ON ESTATE IN THE AFTERNOON AND WAS MET BY SHA TIN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR VICTOR YUNG; CHIEF HOUSING MANAGER (NORTH), MR SIU CHE-WING; AND HOUSING MANAGER, MR YUEN HON-KEUNG.

AFTER A TOUR OF THE ESTATE'S FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE CHINESE GARDEN, THE COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, AND THE ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE PARTY WENT TO HENG FUNG HOUSE WHERE THE SHELTERED HOUSING IS SITUATED.

LADY WILSON WAS TOLD THAT THE SHELTERED HOUSING, WHICH IS MANAGED BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN HONG KONG.

IT WAS OPENED IN DECEMBER 1987, WITH A CAPACITY TO HOLD 145 ELDERLY PEOPLE. ITS PRESENT OCCUPANCY RATE IS ABOUT 94 PER CENT.

IN ONE OF THE THREE RECREATION ROOMS, THE PARTY WATCHED THE ELDERLY PLAY GAMES DESIGNED BY THE STAFF OF A VOLUNTARY AGENCY IN THE SHA KOK AREA.

LADY WILSON WAS PRESENTED WITH A HANDICRAFT SOUVENIR MADE BY THE RESIDENTS THERE.

THE PARTY THEN WENT TO ONE OF THE UNITS TO SEE THE DAILY LIFE OF RESIDENTS IN THE SHELTERED HOUSING.

THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS LIVE IN PRIVATE BEDROOMS, RANGING FROM 5.27 SQUARE METRES FOR ONE PERSON TO 10.35 SQUARE METRES FOR TWO. THE MONTHLY RENTAL VARIES FROM \$185 FOR A SINGLE ROOM, TO \$310 FOR A DOUBLE ROOM.

EACH ROOM IS FITTED WITH SEPARATE LIGHTING POINTS, METERED ELECTRICITY, GAS SUPPLY AND TELEVISION AERIAL, AS WELL AS AN ALARM SYSTEM CONNECTED TO THE WARDEN'S OFFICE AND QUARTERS SO THAT MEDICAL AND WELFARE SERVICES CAN BE ARRANGED VERY QUICKLY, IN AN EMERGENCY.

APART FROM PRIVATE BEDROOMS, EACH UNIT ALSO HAS A COMMON LIVING ROOM, A KITCHEN AND A BATHROOM, WITH FACILITIES ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE OF THE RESIDENTS.

LADY WILSON WAS TOLD THAT THE PRESENT SCHEME WAS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE OLD ONE. THE MAIN ADVANTAGES ARE A GREAT DEGREE OF PRIVACY, NICE ENVIRONMENT, GOOD MANAGEMENT AND MANY SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.

SHE WAS GLAD TO LEARN THAT THE SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME HAD BEEN FAVOURABLY RECEIVED BY DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND SHA TIN RESIDENTS, AND THAT SIMILAR PROJECTS IN KWONG YUEN ESTATE, SHA TIN, AND TAI WO ESTATE, TAI PO, WOULD COME INTO OPERATION LATER THIS YEAR.

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SOUTHERN DB TO DISCUSS PROPOSED BUS FARE RISE

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THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE PROPOSED FARE INCREASES FOR BUS SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

MEMBERS WILL ALSO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE SOUTHERN WATER CONTROL ZONE TO COVER INDUSTRIAL DISCHARGES.

A PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, DR MICHAEL CHIU, WILL BE PRESENT TO ANSWER MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

MEANWHILE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS, MR ARTHUR GARCIA, WILL BRIEF MEMBERS ON THE WORK OF HIS OFFICE.

IN ADDITION, TWO CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENTS WILL BE TABLED AT THE MEETING. THEY ARE THE "REPORT ON ANTI-SMOKING PROPOSALS" PREPARED BY THE COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH, AND THE "LOCAL CRAFT REVIEW" BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TO BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, MEI FUNG COURT, 7-11 NAM NING STREET, ABERDEEN CENTRE.

THE MEETING WILL START AT 2.30 PM.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS REPORT ON HOUSING IMPROVEMENT

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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY WELFARE COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS, AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY), A DRAFT REPORT BY A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE IMPROVEMENT OF ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE PERSONS AND TWO-PERSON FAMILIES IN THE DISTRICT.

THE WORKING GROUP WAS SET UP LAST JULY TO STUDY PROBLEMS RELATING TO SINGLE PERSONS AND TWO-PERSON FAMILIES LIVING IN BOTH PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND PRIVATE BUILDINGS AND THOSE OCCUPYING JUST BED SPACES.

/THE STUDY

THE STUDY ALSO COVERED STREET SLEEPERS.

ALSO ON THE AGENDA ARE THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF STUDY ROOM FACILITIES IN CHEUNG SHA WAN ESTATE AND THE SETTING UP OF A WORKING GROUP TO ORGANISE THE 1989-90 FESTIVAL FOR THE ELDERLY. THE LATTER WILL NEED A SUBSIDY OF ABOUT \$25,000 FROM THE COMMITTEE.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

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

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM.

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GOVT LOT TO LET BY TENDER
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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT TERM TENANCY OF A SITE AT TUNG LEI ROAD IN KOWLOON CITY.

MEASURING ABOUT 2,360 SQUARE METRES IN AREA, IT IS FOR A FEE-PAYING PARKING AREA FOR THE PARKING OF MOTOR VEHICLES (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES) CURRENTLY LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

THE TENANCY IS FOR THREE YEARS AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS IS NOON ON JUNE 2 THIS YEAR.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON EAST, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989

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ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN NORTH POINT TO BE CLOSED

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS TO SEEK THE CLOSURE OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS IN NORTH POINT, HONG KONG, SO THAT THEY CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS OR TO THE PUBLIC.

THE ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ARE ON THE FLAT ROOFS OF FLAT 1 ON THE 12TH, 13TH AND 14TH FLOORS OF PO LEE BUILDING, 993-997 KING'S ROAD.

THE CLOSURE IS PART OF AN EXERCISE TO ENFORCE ORDERS ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR REQUIRING THE DEMOLITION OF THESE UNAUTHORISED WORKS.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON JULY 26 WAS POSTED ON A CONSPICUOUS PART OF THE STRUCTURES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS INTENDED THAT DEMOLITION WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT ONCE THE CLOSURE ORDERS ARE OBTAINED.

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TEMPORARY URBAN CLEARWAYS ON HONG KONG ISLAND

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19), SEVERAL ROAD SECTIONS IN CENTRAL AND NORTH POINT WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS.

IN CENTRAL, THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF ICE HOUSE STREET FROM A POINT ABOUT 165 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL TO A POINT ABOUT 230 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR ANOTHER MONTH TO FACILITATE ROADWORKS.

IN NORTH POINT, KING'S ROAD WESTBOUND BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH OIL STREET AND COMFORT TERRACE WILL ALSO BE MADE A 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY FOR ABOUT FIVE MONTHS BECAUSE OF CABLE LAYING WORKS.

IN ADDITION, TWO SECTIONS OF TSING FUNG STREET WILL BECOME 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS FOR ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORKS.

THEY ARE: THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSING FUNG STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH ELECTRIC ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 50 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE FROM A POINT ABOUT 40 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH ELECTRIC ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 50 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

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

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ROAD CLOSURE IN MONG KOK

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT IN ORDER TO FACILITATE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORKS AT SHAM CHUN STREET IN MONG KOK, SHAM CHUN STREET ABOUT 30 METRES SOUTH FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH CHEUNG WONG ROAD WILL BE CLOSED FROM FRIDAY (MAY 19) FOR TWO MONTHS.

DURING THE CLOSURE, MOTORISTS ON MONG KOK ROAD HEADING FOR SHAM CHUN STREET ARE ADVISED TO USE PALM STREET AND ARGYLE STREET.

AT THE SAME TIME, MOTORISTS ON ARGYLE STREET HEADING FOR CHEUNG WONG ROAD ARE ADVISED TO USE RECLAMATION STREET AND MONG KOK ROAD.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN KWUN TONG

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KWUN TONG TOWN CENTRE AND INDUSTRIAL AREA TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19), THE RIGHT TURN FROM WAI YIP STREET EASTBOUND AND KWUN TONG ROAD EASTBOUND TO LAI YIP STREET SOUTHBOUND WILL BE BANNED.

AT THE SAME TIME, VEHICLES ON WAI YIP STREET EASTBOUND HEADING FOR LAI YIP STREET SOUTHBOUND WILL BE DIVERTED TO TRAVEL VIA HOW MING STREET NORTHBOUND AND HUNG TO ROAD WESTBOUND.

VEHICLES ON KWUN TONG ROAD EASTBOUND HEADING FOR LAI YIP STREET SOUTHBOUND WILL BE DIVERTED TO TRAVEL VIA HOI YUEN ROAD, HOW MING STREET WESTBOUND, CHONG YIP STREET AND HUNG TO ROAD WESTBOUND.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WONG TAI SIN

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT OF THE WESTERN ACCESS LINKING CHUK YUEN ROAD AND JUNCTION ROAD IN WONG TAI SIN, THE SECTION OF CHUK YUEN ROAD BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH KAM CHUK LANE AND LION ROCK PARK ROAD WILL BE CLOSED FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19) FOR ONE MONTH.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SECTION OF LION ROCK PARK ROAD BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH LUNG CHEUNG ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 70 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC.

MOTORISTS ON EASTBOUND LUNG CHEUNG ROAD HEADING FOR LION ROCK PARK ROAD ARE ADVISED TO TRAVEL VIA LUNG CHEUNG ROAD AND LION ROCK PARK ROAD.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989

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URBAN CLEARWAY IN SHAM SHUI PO

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19), THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF NAM CHEONG STREET BETWEEN TAI PO ROAD AND BERWICK STREET WILL BE DESIGNATED AN URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY.

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

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INSTALLATION OF PARKING METERS IN TWEED ROAD

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PARKING METERS WILL BE INSTALLED IN TWEED ROAD, KOWLOON CITY, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED.

THE PARKING METERS WILL GO INTO OPERATION FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19).

THE CHARGE FOR TWO-HOUR METERED PARKING SPACES FOR VEHICLES OTHER THAN MEDIUM AND HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES, BUSES, MOTOR CYCLES AND PEDAL CYCLES WILL BE ON THE BASIS OF \$2 FOR EACH 30 MINUTES.

THE CHARGE FOR ONE-HOUR METERED PARKING SPACES FOR BUSES WILL BE \$1 FOR EACH 30 MINUTES.

THE METERS WILL OPERATE FROM 8 AM TO MIDNIGHT DAILY, EXCEPT SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1989

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN SHEUNG SHUI

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 19), THE TIN PING ESTATE BUS TERMINUS IN SHEUNG SHUI WILL BE DESIGNATED A VEHICLES BAN ZONE.

ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES AND THOSE WITH PERMITS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THIS BUS TERMINUS 24 HOURS DAILY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SECTION OF FAN KAM ROAD BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH CASTLE PEAK ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 250 METRES SOUTH OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG GOLF CLUB CARPARK WILL BE SUBJECT TO A SPEED LIMIT OF 50 KILOMETRES PER HOUR.

MEANWHILE, THE EXISTING 70 KILOMETRES PER HOUR SPEED LIMIT RESTRICTED ZONE ON THIS SECTION OF FAN KAM ROAD WILL BE LIFTED.

IN ADDITION, SECTIONS OF CHOI YUEN ROAD (ROAD L10) IN SHEUNG SHUI WILL BE DESIGNATED 24-HOUR TAXI URBAN CLEARWAYS.

THEY ARE:

- * THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY BETWEEN THE ROUNDABOUT AT CHOI YUEN ROAD (ROAD L10) AND A POINT 185 METRES WEST OF THE SAID ROUNDABOUT, EXCLUDING A SECTION OF 10 METRES OF THE CARRIAGEWAY NEAR THE AMENITY AREA ADJACENT TO THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTBRIDGE;
- * THE GENERAL PURPOSE LOADING AREA ON THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF CHOI YUEN ROAD (ROAD L10) BETWEEN THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTBRIDGE AND A POINT 35 METRES WEST OF THE ROUNDABOUT AT CHOI YUEN ROAD (ROAD L10); AND
- * THE WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY BETWEEN THE ROUNDABOUT AT CHOI YUEN ROAD (ROAD L10) AND A POINT 315 METRES WEST OF THE SAID ROUNDABOUT.

WITHIN THE URBAN CLEARWAYS, ALL TAXIS WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM STOPPING FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

MOREOVER, SAN TSOI STREET AND TSUN FU STREET WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS ON THE SAME DAY FROM 10 AM.

THE OPERATING HOURS FOR THE URBAN CLEARWAY ON SAN TSOI STREET BETWEEN TSUN FU STREET AND SAN FAT STREET WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND FROM 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY; AND FOR THAT ON THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSUN FU STREET BETWEEN SAN FUNG AVENUE AND SAN TSOI STREET WILL BE FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY.

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

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