



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONSENSUS VITAL TO STABILITY - DUNN
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THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS IS AS ESSENTIAL AS EVER TO THE SUCCESSFUL GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG, THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON LYDIA DUNN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WHEN STRONG DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ARE NOT RESOLVED IN A FREE SOCIETY, SHE SAID, +THERE CAN BE NO MOVEMENT, NO SOLUTION, NO ADVANCE.+

MISS DUNN WAS LEADING THE DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

SHE NOTED THAT THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ABOUT HOW PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE APPLIED IN PRACTICE.

+BUT ARGUMENTS ABOUT PRACTICAL APPLICATION MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO OBSCURE THE PRINCIPLES THEMSELVES, NOR TO BECOME SO HEATED OR SO PERSONALISED THAT COMPROMISE BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE AND THE FUNDAMENTAL FRAMEWORK IS PUT AT RISK,+ SHE SAID.

+THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS THROUGH DEBATE AND REASONED COMPROMISE IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH WE CAN IN THE LONG RUN PRESERVE OUR STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

+ON THE WAY TO THAT CONSENSUS THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ARGUING DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW.+

MISS DUNN SAID DEBATE WAS HEALTHY AS IT TENDED TO EXPOSE THE WEAKNESSES AND THE STRENGTHS OF DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW AND REVEAL THE COMMON GROUND.

CONSENSUS WAS NEVER IMPOSED, SHE STRESSED. +IT REPRESENTS AGREEMENT FREELY ENTERED INTO FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY ON THE BEST AVAILABLE WAY FORWARD.+

HONG KONG ALREADY HAD BASIC CONSENSUS ABOUT THOSE FUNDAMENTALS ESSENTIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF ITS FREE SOCIETY AND OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF THAT SOCIETY, SHE SAID, ADDING +WE CALL IN TO QUESTION THE ELEMENTS OF THAT CONSENSUS AT OUR PERIL.+

MISS DUNN NOTED THAT IN HONG KONG'S MORE OPEN, MORE LIVELY, MORE ARGUMENTATIVE, MORE DISPUTATIOUS SOCIETY IT MIGHT WELL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE CONSENSUS.

EACH COUNCIL MEMBER WAS ENTITLED TO HAVE HIS OWN VIEW AND TO ARGUE HIS CASE AS STRONGLY AS HE LIKED, SHE SAID. +BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST RECOGNISE THAT WHEN STRONG DIFFERENCES OF VIEWS ARE NOT RESOLVED IN A FREE SOCIETY THERE CAN BE NO MOVEMENT, NO SOLUTION, NO ADVANCE.+

COUNCILLORS REPRESENTED A WIDE VARIETY OF INTERESTS AND THOSE INTERESTS MUST INEVITABLY CONFLICT AT TIMES, SHE SAID.

/+WE SHALL

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+WE SHALL CONTINUE TO SUCCEED ONLY SO LONG AS WE ARE WILLING TO RESOLVE THOSE CONFLICTS IN OUR EFFORTS TO SERVE THE WIDER INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY,+ SHE ADDED.

+IN DOING SO THE PUBLIC MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT DELEGATES REQUIRED TO SPEAK AND VOTE AS DIRECTED BY THOSE THEY REPRESENT.

+EACH ONE OF US MUST BE PREPARED TO SAY, IF NECESSARY, TO THOSE TO WHOM WE OWE OUR PLACE IN THIS COUNCIL THAT WE CANNOT PURSUE A PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE COMMON GOOD,+ SAID MISS DUNN.

SHE SAID CHANGES IN THE MAKE-UP OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD NOT LED TO THE ABANDONMENT OF THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS, THOUGH PERHAPS THE RECENT DEBATE ON DAYA BAY HAD DIVERTED ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE COUNCIL'S SUCCESSES IN FINDING CONSENSUS ON MANY ISSUES AND IN GETTING COUNCIL BUSINESS DONE FROM WEEK TO WEEK.

MISS DUNN WAS CONFIDENT THAT ELECTED AND APPOINTED COLLEAGUES ALIKE WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE SAME SPIRIT AS IN THE LAST SESSION WHEN THEY HAMMERED OUT AGREEMENT ON THE AMENDED FORM OF MANY BILLS BEFORE PASSING THEM INTO LAW.

MISS DUNN NOTED THAT CONSENSUS ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES HAD EXISTED IN HONG KONG FOR MANY YEARS. EVEN THEN, THERE HAD BEEN ISSUES FROM TIME TO TIME ON WHICH COUNCIL MEMBERS SAW IT AS THEIR DUTY TO OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT THAT HAD APPOINTED THEM TO THE COUNCIL.

IN THE OLD DAYS, SHE SAID, MEMBERS DID MOST OF THEIR PROTESTING IN PRIVATE WHILE AT PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETINGS THEY WERE HEARD TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS WHICH BY THEN HAD OFTEN BEEN MODIFIED TO MEET THEIR CRITICISMS.

+IT WAS NEVER UNTHINKING ACQUIESCENCE; IT WAS A WILLING ACCEPTANCE OF THE OUTCOME OF PRACTICAL POLITICS, THE BEST THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN A REAL WORLD,+ MISS DUNN SAID.

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DIRECT ELECTIONS IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL
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IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL PEOPLE IN HONG KONG THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS ARE INTRODUCED IN 1988, THE HON MARTIN LEE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

+FOR THE SOONER WE START THE TRULY DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, THE BETTER OUR CHANCES OF EVOLVING A SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL SYSTEM FOR 50 YEARS BEYOND 1997,+ HE SAID.

/MR LEE

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MR LEE EXPRESSED HIS WORRY THAT THE TIDE OF EMIGRATION IN HONG KONG HAD NOT SUBSIDED ALMOST TWO YEARS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND NOTED WITH CONCERN THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOWING GREAT PROMISE IN THEIR CAREER WERE NOW JOINING THE QUEUES FOR EMIGRATION.

HE SAID THIS WOULD CONTINUE SO LONG AS PEOPLE HERE DID NOT SEE ANY POSSIBILITY OF THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT BEING ABLE TO PRESERVE THEIR FREEDOM, UNLESS THEY COULD BE CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS A FUTURE FOR THEM HERE AND THAT THEIR FREEDOM COULD AND WOULD BE PRESERVED.

+IN PRACTICAL TERMS, IT MEANS WE MUST ENSURE THAT WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED TO US IN THE JOINT DECLARATION WILL NOT BE TAKEN BACK FROM US IN THE BASIC LAW- WE MUST ENSURE THAT ALL THE IMPORTANT OUTSTANDING ISSUES WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN AGREED UPON IN THE JOINT DECLARATION WILL BE RESOLVED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE FINAL VERSION OF THE BASIC LAW WILL NOT FALL BELOW WHAT MOST PEOPLE CONSIDER TO BE ALREADY THE BOTTOM LINE AS CONTAINED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG MUST SEE THAT THIS GOVERNMENT HAD THE WILL AND THE ABILITY TO GOVERN WITHOUT INTERVENTION FROM PEKING, HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE CHINESE AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS MUST LEARN TO TRUST EACH OTHER MORE, AND THERE WERE ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT THIS WAS HAPPENING.

LIKEWISE, HE SAID, THERE SHOULD BE MORE TRUST BETWEEN CHINA AND HONG KONG.

AS FOR HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LEE CALLED ON THEM TO LEARN TO FEEL AS THE PEOPLE FEEL, TO THINK AS THE PEOPLE THINK, AND TO SAY WHAT THE PEOPLE DARE NOT SAY.

+FOR IF WE CANNOT PUT THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE ABOVE OUR OWN, WE DO NOT DESERVE TO BE ON THIS COUNCIL, WHETHER ELECTED OR APPOINTED,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO URGED COUNCILLORS TO CULTIVATE A SENSE OF BELONGING WHICH HE SAID WAS SO FAR LACKING, AND WITHOUT WHICH THERE COULD BE NO DEDICATION AND NO FUTURE FOR HONG KONG.

MR LEE CRITICISED THE GROUP OF PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WHOM HE SAID DID NOT BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY AND CLAIMED UNJUSTIFIABLY THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS WOULD LEAD TO SOCIAL UNREST WHICH WOULD IN TURN RUIN THE ECONOMY.

-+THEY INSISTED THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG ARE NOT POLITICALLY MATURE ENOUGH TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR LEGISLATOR.,+ HE SAID.

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/HE REMINDED

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HE REMINDED THE COUNCIL THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WERE BROUGHT UP IN A SYSTEM OF THE RULE OF LAW WHICH MEANT THAT EVERY PERSON WAS EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LAW.

+A VERY NATURAL APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IS TO GIVE ONE VOTE TO EVERY ADULT CITIZEN OF HONG KONG, WHETHER RICH OR POOR,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT FREEDOMS ENJOYED IN HONG KONG WERE SAFEGUARDED BY A VERY DEMOCRATIC BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND HE QUESTIONED WHETHER THE SAME FREEDOMS COULD BE GUARANTEED IN 1997.

HE SAID HE REFUTED THE ARGUMENT THAT HONG KONG DID NOT NEED A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE THESE FREEDOMS AS LONG AS THE RULE OF LAW AND AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY WERE ENSURED.

+IF THE RULE OF LAW AND OUR INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY ARE TO REMAIN WITH US IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THEN WE MUST HAVE AN EXECUTIVE BODY THAT IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE, SO THAT THOSE IN POWER HAVE TO ABIDE BY THE LAW, KNOWING THAT THEY ARE THERE BY THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE EXPRESSED THROUGH A DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL PROCESS,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT SOME PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, INCLUDING SOME COUNCILLORS, HAD BEEN CASTING DOUBT ON THE VALUE OF DEMOCRACY, ALTHOUGH BOTH THE CHINESE AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS HAD ACKNOWLEDGED ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE JOINT DECLARATION.

+FOR BOTH CHINA AND GREAT BRITAIN REALISE THAT WE NEED A DEMOCRATIC AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THE SAR, SO THAT IT CAN EXERCISE THAT HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR CAPITALIST SYSTEM SEPARATE FROM THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE ARGUED THAT DEMOCRACY WAS NOT THE ANTITHESIS OF PROSPERITY AS WAS SUGGESTED.

HE SAID THAT THESE WHO WERE OPPOSED TO DEMOCRACY HAD PROPOSED A FUTURE POLITICAL STRUCTURE FOR HONG KONG WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THEIR VESTED INTERESTS, BY MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG TO HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND BY MAKING SURE THAT THE SELECTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF LEGISLATORS WOULD REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF THE RICH.

HE SAID THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING INHERENTLY DANGEROUS ABOUT A POLITICAL SYSTEM WHICH ENSURED THAT THE RICH WOULD CONTROL THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY BECAUSE THOSE IN POWER WOULD THEN GOVERN FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT.

HE SAID SUCH A GOVERNMENT WAS BOUND TO BE CORRUPT WHICH WOULD KILL HONG KONG'S IMAGE AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE AND RESULT IN A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE SYSTEM BY OVERSEAS INVESTORS.

/MR LEE

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MR LEE SAID THAT SUCH A SYSTEM SIMPLY WOULD NOT DO BECAUSE IT DID NOT ENABLE THOSE IN POWER TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE VIS-A-VIS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

+FOR A GOVERNMENT THAT HAS THE SUPPORT OF SUCH A SMALL MINORITY OF THE PEOPLE IT GOVERNS IS BOUND TO SEEK SUPPORT FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND WILL THUS BECOME A MERE PUPPET GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS NOT AGAINST RICH PEOPLE ENTERING POLITICS BUT FELT THAT THEY SHOULD, LIKE THEIR RICH COUNTERPARTS IN THE REST OF THE FREE WORLD, BE ELECTED BY THEIR PEOPLE AND WORK FOR IT.

IN NOT WANTING TO COMPETE IN AN EQUAL ELECTION AND INSISTING THAT THEY BE ALLOCATED CERTAIN PLACES IN THE LEGISLATURE, THEY WERE DEMANDING WHAT HAD BEEN CALLED A +POLITICAL FREE LUNCH+, HE SAID.

MR LEE CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988, STARTING WITH A PROPORTION OF 25 PER CENT, WHILE KEEPING THE PRESENT THREE TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP FROM FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, ELECTORAL COLLEGES AND APPOINTMENTS TO 25 PER CENT EACH.

HE SUGGESTED THAT AFTER THE 1988 ELECTION, A REVIEW SHOULD BE MADE IN EITHER 1989 OR 1990 TO SEE HOW WELL DIRECT ELECTIONS WERE RECEIVED BY HONG KONG PEOPLE TO DECIDE ON THE PERCENTAGES FOR THE VARIOUS MODES OF ELECTION IN 1991.

AFTER THAT, ANOTHER REVIEW WOULD BE NEEDED TO SEE WHAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE BY 1994, HE ADDED.

HE SAID SUCH A GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE AND IT WAS ONLY FAIR THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES THE TYPES OF ELECTION THEY WANTED TO HAVE AND TO WHAT EXTENT.

+DEMOCRACY IS OUR GOAL. LET NO ONE COMPROMISE IT WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT ONCE THE PEOPLE HAD SEEN HOW DIRECT ELECTIONS REALLY WORKED, THEY WOULD BE PERSUADED THAT THEY WERE A GOOD THING, LEADING TO A PEACEFUL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRESENT COLONIAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT INTO +A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS FAIR, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG+.

+MANY WILL SEE THAT THERE IS HOPE IN OUR FUTURE, BECAUSE THEY SEE SOME REASONABLE PROSPECTS OF THE FUTURE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BEING REALLY ABLE TO EXERCISE A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY, AND THUS SAFEGUARD OUR FREEDOMS, AND DEFEND OUR INTERESTS.

+THEY MAY THEN CHOOSE TO STAY IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

DEVELOP FAIR, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVT
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A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT MUST BE FAIR, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE, THE HON SZETO WAH TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR SZETO SAID IT WAS ONLY BY DEVELOPING A FAIR, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT THAT WE COULD MAINTAIN SOCIAL STABILITY AND PROSPERITY; A STRONG, CARING AND COHESIVE SOCIETY; AND A SOCIETY CONFIDENT IN ITSELF AND ITS INSTITUTIONS.

HE SAID ONLY SUCH A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND SUCH A KIND OF SOCIETY COULD GROUP TOGETHER THE INTERNAL STRENGTH, UNITY AND COHESION REQUIRED TO OVERCOME THE UNFAVOURABLE EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED BY OURSELVES.

+THE KEY ISSUE NOW IS WHETHER THERE WILL BE ANY DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY 1988,+ HE SAID.

MR SZETO SAID THE 1984 WHITE PAPER HAD MADE SOME DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS, BUT THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS THIS YEAR STATED THAT +AT THIS POINT IN TIME, THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF OPINION AND NO CLEAR CONSENSUS ON MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES.+

IN ONLY TWO YEARS' TIME, THERE HAD BEEN AN OBVIOUS CHANGE AND SIGNS OF WITHDRAWAL IN THE STANCE OF THE ADMINISTRATION, MR SZETO SAID.

HE SAID A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A FIRM STANCE, A GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD NOT +PUT INTO PRACTICE WHAT IT SAYS AND SEE TO IT THAT RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED+, AS WELL AS A GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS INCOHERENT IN ITS WORDS, WOULD CERTAINLY DEAL A SERIOUS BLOW AT THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

MR SZETO ALSO DISAGREED WITH THE GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT THAT +THE DRAMATIC PROGRESS WHICH HONG KONG HAS MADE OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES WAS NOT BUILT ON CONFLICT AND TURBULENCE, BUT ON A CONSTANT SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS.+

HE SAID THE 1967 RIOTS, THE ENERGY CRISIS, THE STOCK MARKET CRAZE AND THE 1997 ISSUES WERE ALL EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED BY OURSELVES.

HE SAID HE FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT HAD ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE TO REFLECT MORE TRUTHFULLY THE VARIOUS VIEWS WHICH ACTUALLY EXISTED IN SOCIETY, WITHOUT AFFECTING STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN ANY WAY OR BRINGING ABOUT ANY CONFLICTS AND UNREST.

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LONG-TERM LABOUR POLICY NEEDED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE FORMULATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE LABOUR POLICY, THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, HE SAID THE POLICY SHOULD INCLUDE THE BETTERMENT OF LABOUR-EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS, AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, IMPROVEMENTS IN LABOUR SAFETY AND PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES AFTER RETIREMENT.

+A GOOD LABOUR-EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE CONCRETELY REFLECTED IN SUFFICIENT DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, WHO SHOULD ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL CONCESSION,+ HE SAID.

+COMMUNICATING ON AN EQUAL BASIS AFFIRMING THE STATUS OF LABOUR UNIONS AND THE RIGHT OF COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATION WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO PROMOTE A SOUND LABOUR-EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP,+ HE SAID.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WHICH HAD BEEN ENACTED ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO, HE SAID SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS COULD NO LONGER MEET CURRENT PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS AND AN OVERALL REVIEW WAS NECESSARY.

MR TAM ALSO CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF LEGISLATION ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

ON THE SUBJECT OF SAFEGUARDING THE LIVELIHOOD OF EMPLOYEES AFTER RETIREMENT, MR TAM CALLED FOR THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

HE REQUESTED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE PUBLIC THE RESEARCH DOCUMENT ON THE FUND COMPLETED RECENTLY AND TO CARRY OUT EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS.

TURNING TO ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MR TAM SAID DURING THIS TRANSITIONAL PERIOD THERE WERE STILL MANY AREAS IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND IN SOCIAL PROGRAMMES WHICH REQUIRED IMPROVEMENT.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ATTACH DUE IMPORTANCE TO THESE AREAS.

HE FELT THAT IN RECENT YEARS THE GOVERNMENT HAD PLACED MORE EMPHASIS ON THE FINANCIAL SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY WHILE ITS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN LESS ACTIVE.

HE REQUESTED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER SETTING UP A CO-ORDINATING BODY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FORMULATING AND ENFORCING LONG-TERM, COMPREHENSIVE AND BALANCED POLICIES ON INDUSTRY AND TRADE.

/MR TAM

LONG-TERM LABOUR POLICY NEEDED

MR TAM ALSO SAID THAT KAI TAK AIRPORT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO HANDLE EVER-GROWING DEMANDS IN ABOUT FIVE YEARS' TIME.

+I THINK IT IS ABOUT TIME TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THE PROBLEM OF CONSTRUCTING A SECOND AIRPORT,+ HE SAID.

+THIS IS BECAUSE IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE TO TAKE REMEDIAL ACTION WHEN THE AIRPORT BECOMES OVER-BURDENED,+ HE SAID.

ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, MR TAM MADE FOUR OBSERVATIONS.

HE SAID: +IN POLITICAL REFORMS WE MUST FIRST CONSIDER WHETHER IT IS IN LINE WITH THE PART ON THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN THE BASIC LAW.

+SECOND, POLITICAL REFORMS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED PROGRESSIVELY SO THAT THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE SOCIETY WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED.

+THIRD, THE MERITS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM SHOULD BE RETAINED.

+FOURTH, DEMOCRACY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE HOPE OF THE GRASS ROOTS, BUT IT COULD NOT BE REALISED UNDER THE EXISTING SYSTEM. THUS, WHILE REALISING THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY, WE SHOULD ALSO BEAR IN MIND THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ON DEMOCRACY.+

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ON THE SUBJECT OF SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF EMPLOYEES
A CENTRAL POSITIVE ACTION TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT NEEDED

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO REMOVE UNNECESSARY DOUBTS ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG BY TAKING POSITIVE ACTION IN CONJUNCTION WITH LOCAL INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS BODIES, THE HON WONG PO-YAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOCUSSING ON HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY AND TRADE IN HIS DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR WONG SAID SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE WOULD HEAVILY INFLUENCE INDUSTRIALISTS IN THEIR INVESTMENT DECISIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE RUNNING MEDIUM AND SMALL-SIZED FACTORIES.

+THE RESULT IS THAT EVEN UNDER THE FAIRLY FAVOURABLE SITUATION AT PRESENT, THEY ARE STILL HESITANT TO COMMIT FURTHER INVESTMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG DESCRIBED THE PHENOMENON AS WORRYING AND SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE POSITIVE ACTION.

+APART FROM REMOVING THESE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORRIES, INVESTORS SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT,+ HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE INDUSTRY ON CREDIT OR OVERDRAFT WERE SELDOM GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION, MR WONG SAID THE SETTING UP OF AN INDUSTRIAL BANK WAS THE BEST SOLUTION.

+HOWEVER, SINCE GOVERNMENT HAS YET NO INTENTION TO SET UP AN INDUSTRIAL BANK, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT CERTAIN BANKS IN HONG KONG HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THEIR INTENTIONS TO ESTABLISH INDUSTRIAL GROUPS TO HANDLE SUCH MATTERS,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID HE HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD PROVIDE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS AREA.

NOTING THAT THE PRODUCTS OF SOME OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES HAD ACHIEVED A SLOWER GROWTH IN COMPARISON WITH THOSE OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, HE SAID WHAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO WAS TO STRENGTHEN THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL AS WELL AS OTHER RELATED BODIES AND FACILITIES AND TO ALLOCATE MORE RESOURCES TO ENABLE THEM TO IMPLEMENT LARGE-SCALE AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES.

ALTHOUGH EXPENDITURE MIGHT HAVE TO BE INCREASED CONSIDERABLY, THE GOVERNMENT COULD ALWAYS TREAT THEM AS URGENT AND SPECIAL CASES, MR WONG SAID.

ON THE SUBJECT OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, HE SAID HE HOPED THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE COULD IDENTIFY PROFESSIONAL TALENTS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT WHAT THEY LEARNED INTO PRACTICE.

MR WONG ALSO ATTRIBUTED THE GOOD EXPORT GROWTH RATE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LINKED EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM.

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SOUND AND EXPANDING ECONOMY CRUCIAL TO SUCCESS
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HONG KONG'S CONTINUING SUCCESS MUST BE BUILT ON THE BASIS OF A SOUND AND EXPANDING ECONOMY, THE HON DAVID LI STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LI SAID HE AGREED WITH THE GOVERNOR THAT THE FIRST AND FOREMOST OBJECTIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG REMAINED PROSPEROUS AND STABLE.

MR LI WAS COMMENTING ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SITUATION IN HIS SPEECH.

/HE SAID

HE SAID HE WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION NOT TO CHANGE THE PREVAILING LINKED EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM THOUGH HE OBSERVED THE MECHANICS OF THE PRESENT SCHEME DID NOT SEEM TO BE WORKING AS WELL AS WAS FIRST ENVISAGED.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER HOW THE LINKED EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM COULD BE FURTHER REFINED SO THAT THE ARBITRAGE PROCESS COULD FUNCTION MORE EFFICIENTLY.

NOTING THAT THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG GENERALLY WELCOMED THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE BANKING ORDINANCE 1986, MR LI POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW LEGISLATION NEVERTHELESS IMPOSED CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE OPERATION OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CALLED FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CERTAIN ISSUES, ONE OF WHICH WAS THE CAPITAL TO RISK ASSETS RATIO.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE STATUTORY RATIO HAD FORCED A NUMBER OF FOREIGN DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES TO SHIFT SOME OF THEIR FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES TO OTHER CENTRES DUE TO THEIR DIFFICULTIES IN COMPLYING WITH IT AND HAD RESULTED IN A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON HONG KONG AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE CATERING FOR ALL FINANCIAL SERVICES.

+ I BELIEVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW BANKING ORDINANCE SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE SO AS NOT TO DISCOURAGE OR DRIVE AWAY REPUTABLE FOREIGN INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE ADDED STRENGTH TO OUR FINANCIAL COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

HE THEREFORE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS WERE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S ATTRACTIVENESS AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE, INCLUDING MORE FLEXIBILITY IN BANKING REGULATIONS, SUCH AS HAVING RESTRICTED LICENCES FOR INSTITUTIONS WITH RESTRICTED FUNCTIONS.

MR LI ALSO SAID GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER COMBINING ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MONEY LENDERS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH AND TO REVIEW THE EXISTING ORDINANCE BECAUSE THE CURRENT FRAGMENTARY ARRANGEMENT FOR LICENSING AND SUPERVISING MONEY LENDERS WAS FAR FROM SATISFACTORY.

HE SAID HE AGREED THAT A SECOND PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISORY PRACTICE WAS GOOD FOR ALL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS BUT CAUTIONED THAT REGULATORS SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN AS SUBSTITUTES FOR BANKERS, WHO ULTIMATELY BORE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING SOUND COMMERCIAL DECISIONS.

+ I BELIEVE OVER-RESTRICTIVE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND CUMBERSOME REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WILL EVENTUALLY WEAKEN THE POSITION OF OUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AND AT THE SAME TIME, UNREALISTICALLY RESTRICT THEIR NORMAL ACTIVITIES,+ HE SAID.

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MR LI SAID HE CONSIDERED THE RECENT INCREASE IN THE SIZE CRITERION FOR FOREIGN BANKS APPLYING FOR BANKING LICENCES IN HONG KONG A RETROGRADE STEP AND WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE DECISION WAS MADE WITHOUT FORMAL CONSULTATION WITH THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

HE SAID HE FELT THE TOTAL ASSETS OF A BANK SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A HURDLE TO HALT THE INFLUX OF THE LARGEST BANKS OF SMALL COUNTRIES AND SAID THAT BY DENYING THESE INSTITUTIONS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH THEMSELVES HERE, HONG KONG'S BEST INTERESTS WERE NOT SERVED.

MR LI SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO NOTE THAT HIS LONG ADVOCACY FOR PUTTING THE OFFICES OF THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES JOINTLY UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH WAS ANSWERED FROM LAST SEPTEMBER AS HE FELT BETTER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN AND CO-ORDINATION OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS WERE A MATTER OF PRIORITY.

HE ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A SINGLE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY THINK-TANK TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON HOW BEST TO KEEP ABREAST OF THE RAPIDLY CHANGING FINANCIAL ARENA AND TO CO-ORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NUMEROUS EXISTING ADVISORY BODIES.

MR LI NOTED THAT DESPITE THE INCREASE IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS, THE LONG-TERM OUTLOOK FOR HONG KONG'S ECONOMY REMAINED CLOUDED AND THERE WAS MOUNTING CONCERN OVER THE SLUGGISHNESS OF FIXED CAPITAL FORMATION IN HONG KONG DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

HE SAID IT APPEARED THAT HONG KONG'S EXISTING LOW TAX ENVIRONMENT ALONE WAS INSUFFICIENT TO INDUCE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS AND BELIEVED THAT HONG KONG SHOULD LOOK AT WAYS AND MEANS TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER FISCAL INCENTIVES TO STIMULATE LONG-TERM CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION OF A MORE LIBERAL DEPRECIATION AND INVESTMENT ALLOWANCE SCHEME FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING REAL INVESTMENT IN PLANT AND NEW MACHINERY.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE MUCH IMPROVED STATE OF HONG KONG'S PUBLIC FINANCES SHOULD NOW ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER A TAX REDUCTION ACROSS THE BOARD SINCE THE INCREASE OF A TWO PER CENT RATE IN STANDARD AND PROFITS TAX IN 1984-85 FOR BUDGETARY REASONS.

MR LI SAID HE STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPLOIT EVERY POSSIBILITY TO PROMOTE MORE INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT.

+ I AM IN FAVOUR OF MORE HIGH-LEVEL AND WIDELY-REPRESENTATIVE ECONOMIC MISSIONS TO GENERATE MORE DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENT FOR HONG KONG.

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+WE SHOULD AIM TO UPGRADE AND ENHANCE OUR ECONOMIC PROFILE IN THIS AREA, SO AS TO BETTER PROMOTE HONG KONG INTERNATIONALLY,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF INDUSTRIAL LAND, MR LI CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE INDUSTRIAL LAND POLICY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MANUFACTURERS AND FOREIGN INVESTORS WITH A SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVE TO INVEST AND PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT.

MR LI THEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EQUIPPING HONG KONG'S LABOUR FORCE TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES.

+OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ESSENTIALLY ON THE CAPABILITY AND SKILLS OF OUR LABOUR FORCE WHOSE PERFORMANCE CAN ONLY BE IMPROVED THROUGH CONTINUED EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITHIN THEIR WORKING ENVIRONMENT,+ HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPAND EXISTING PROGRAMMES OF DAY-RELEASE AND EVENING COURSES AT THE TWO POLYTECHNICS, TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND OTHER SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS, SO AS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES POSED BY HONG KONG'S COMPETITORS IN THE WORLD MARKET.

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COMMON LAW SHOULD PROTECT PRESS FREEDOM

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THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS MUST BE FIRMLY ANCHORED ONTO THE COMMON LAW AND PROTECTED BY IT, THE HON MARIA TAM SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LIKEWISE THE DISCIPLINES OF COMMON LAW COULD ALSO BE USED TO +CONTROL+ PRESS FREEDOM RATHER THAN BY COMPLICATED STATUTORY LEGISLATION.

SHE MADE THESE REMARKS WHEN COMMENTING ON THE CONTROL OF PUBLICATIONS ORDINANCE AT THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MISS TAM DESCRIBED THE ORDINANCE AS +A PRODUCT OF THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL REALITIES OF THE 50'S +AND SAID THE DRAFTING OF IT WAS +HOPELESSLY OUTDATED+.

/SHE SAID

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SHE SAID SHE BELIEVED THE ESSENCE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS CONSISTED MAINLY OF TWO PRINCIPLES - NO PREVIOUS HINDRANCE BEFORE PUBLICATION; AND ANY SANCTION BY THE AUTHORITY MUST BE THROUGH A COURT OF LAW.

SHE EXAMINED TWO SECTIONS OF THE ORDINANCE WHICH WERE THE MAIN CHARGING PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

+SINCE THIS ORDINANCE HAS NO COUNTERPART LEGISLATION IN OTHER COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT THE ORDINANCE WAS RARELY ENFORCED IN THE PAST, THE SCOPE OF THESE PROVISIONS IS NOT CLEAR.

+NEVERTHELESS, THE ENGLISH POSITION IN THE COMMON LAW OFFENCE OF SEDITION MAY PROVIDE A BASIS FOR CONSIDERATION,+ SHE EXPLAINED.

MISS TAM THEN WENT ON TO ANALYSE THE VARIOUS OFFENCES UNDER THE ORDINANCE WHICH SHE FOUND COULD BE ADEQUATELY COVERED UNDER THE COMMON LAW OFFENCE OF SEDITION AND THE CRIMES ORDINANCE.

HOWEVER SOME NEEDED REDRAFTING AND FURTHER DISCUSSION WHILE OTHERS COULD BE DELETED.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT, MISS TAM GAVE A WARNING THAT OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS HAD COME TO DOMINATE THE SCENE IN THE CIVIL ENGINEERING FIELD.

QUOTING FACTS AND FIGURES, MISS TAM TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS' SHARE IN MAJOR LOCAL BUILDING WORK WAS GROWING.

+FIGURES FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1986 SHOW THAT OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS HAVE SECURED 54 PER CENT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CONTRACTS AND ARE CLEARLY INTENDING TO MAKE A STRONG BID TO DOMINATE THE FIELD.

+IT WAS IN CIVIL ENGINEERING THAT LOCAL EXPERTISE WAS LACKING WHEN WORK WAS STARTED ON THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (MTR) BUT LOW-COST HOUSING IS NOT AN AREA WHERE LOCAL CONTRACTORS ARE DEFICIENT,+ SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT LOCAL CONTRACTORS HAD TOLD HER THAT OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS WERE BRINGING IN THEIR OWN ENGINEERS ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SUCH TALENTS IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING FROM PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, MISS TAM SAID SHE FELT THAT THE ADMIMISTRATION HAD NOT ADHERED TO THE IMMIGRATION POLICY IN ISSUING +WORK VISAS+.

+AS A RESULT OF THIS, OUR LOCAL ENGINEERS MAY BE DEPRIVED OF THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN LARGE PROJECTS AND THE BENEFIT OF OUR POLICY IN THE CONTROL ON WORK PERMITS.

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+IF WE INSIST ON A FREE TRADE POLICY FOR INVESTMENT, WE SHOULD ALSO INSIST ON OUR IMMIGRATION POLICY SO THAT WE CAN ENJOY THE BEST OF BOTH POLICIES,+ SHE SAID.

ON THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPING OF NEW TOWNS, MISS TAM SAID THE +SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITY+ CONCEPT MAY NOT BE AS REALISTIC AS HAD BEEN HOPED.

SHE SUGGESTED THAT HONG KONG SHOULD BE THINKING OF DEVELOPING NEW TOWNS AS AN EXTENSION OF THE URBAN AREA AND MAKING THEM ACCESSIBLE BY MASS TRANSPORT OR FIXED TRACK SYSTEMS FOR THE REGULAR COMMUTERS.

MISS TAM SAID SHE WELCOMED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO CONSTRUCT BOTH TUBES OF THE EAST KOWLOON TUNNEL, AS WELL AS THE KCRC AND THE MTR STUDIES ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A RAIL LINK BETWEEN THE WESTERN TERRITORIES AND TSUEN WAN.

SHE SAID THAT WITH A TWO-TUBE TUNNEL TO JUNK BAY, THE ECONOMIC COST TO THE COMMUNITY IN TERMS OF TRAVELLING TIME WOULD BE AFFORDABLE, BUT TO TIN SHUI WAI, +WE MUST ENSURE THAT TRAVELLING TIME FOR COMMUTERS MUST NOT BE UNREASONABLE, OR THE PROJECT MAY FAIL.+

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PROPER TRANSPORT PLAN REQUIRED FOR NT
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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PRODUCE A FULL-SCALE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT SERVICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON LAU WONG-FAT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR LAU SAID THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) SYSTEM WAS AN INTERNAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE NORTHWESTERN NEW TERRITORIES, BUT APPARENTLY IT COULD NOT SATISFY PUBLIC NEEDS AS IT LINKED NEITHER WITH THE URBAN AREA NOR THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

HE SUGGESTED THAT TO LINK THE NORTHWESTERN NEW TERRITORIES WITH THE URBAN AREAS AND THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES, THE LRT COULD BE EXTENDED SOUTHWARDS TO JOIN THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (MTR) AT TSUEN WAN OR EASTWARDS TO CONNECT WITH THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY (KCR).

ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE WAS FOR THE MTR AND KCR CORPORATIONS TO EXTEND THEIR SERVICE AREA TO LINK WITH THE LRT, MR LAU SAID.

/+IN THIS

+IN THIS WAY, PEOPLE LIVING IN THE NORTHWESTERN NEW TERRITORIES CAN TRAVEL CONVENIENTLY AND THE WHOLE TRANSPORT NETWORK IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WILL BE MORE COMPLETE WHEN IT LINKS UP EVERY PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WITH ALL OTHER AREAS,+ HE SAID.

ON NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT IN JUNK BAY AND THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AT TIN SHUI WAI, MR LAU URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

HE ALSO HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN AREAS AND VILLAGES OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER OF THE NEW TOWNS.

TURNING TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, MR LAU SAID PEOPLE MUST SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE MAJOR CHANGES TO THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE IF IT ALREADY FUNCTIONED PROPERLY AND HAD PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

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'WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD' SAYS CHEONG
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THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPEALED TO ALL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS TO LISTEN TO THEIR CONSCIENCE AND WORK FOR THE COMMON INTEREST OF HONG KONG.

+HONG KONG WILL NOT SURVIVE ECONOMICALLY IF MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL ONLY KNOW HOW TO PLAY TO THE GALLERY AND TO APPEASE THE ACTIVISTS AND IDEALISTS,+ HE SAID DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG HAD COME A LONG WAY TO BECOME WHAT IT IS TODAY AND SAID +WE MUST NEVER ALLOW IDEALISM TO BLIND US INTO THREATENING THE VERY REASON FOR THE SURVIVAL OF HONG KONG.+

WHETHER APPOINTED OR ELECTED, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS MUST ALWAYS WORK FOR THE COMMON INTEREST OF HONG KONG AND NOT FOR THE NEXT TENURE OF OFFICE.

MR CHEONG SAID THE GOVERNOR HAD TRIED IN HIS ADDRESS TO STEER HONG KONG PEOPLE TO A SOUL-SEARCHING THOUGHT PROCESS ON THE REASONS WHY HONG KONG WAS SO SUCCESSFUL AND THE NEED TO DRAW LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE WHEN PONDERING THE FUTURE.

HE WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE SEEMED TO HAVE FALLEN GENERALLY ON DEAF EARS IN THE CURRENT CRAZE FOR POLITICAL REFORM AND SAID IT WAS INDEED SAD FOR HONG KONG THAT SOME COMMENTATORS SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN BLINDED BY IDEALS TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY CONTINUOUSLY FAILED TO COMPREHEND THOSE ELEMENTS THAT WERE ESSENTIAL TO FUTURE SURVIVAL.

+NOT ONLY WAS THE WORD CONSENSUS IN YOUR ADDRESS TAKEN COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTEXT, IT ALSO SEEMS THAT IN THEIR PUSH FOR A FUTURE STRUCTURE THAT WILL BE MADE UP OF LARGELY ELECTED MEMBERS IN THIS COUNCIL, QUITE A NUMBER OF SUCH IDEALISTS AND INTELLECTUALS HAVE SEEN THE NEED TO BLATANTLY MAKE UNFAIR ATTACKS ON THE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

+THEY TRY TO PROPAGATE THE MESSAGE THAT BECAUSE APPOINTED MEMBERS SERVE THIS COUNCIL AT THE WISH OF THE GOVERNOR AND THAT IN ORDER TO RETAIN THE CHANCE OF BEING APPOINTED AGAIN, THEY WILL ALL TOE THE GOVERNMENT LINE WITHOUT REGARD TO THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE,+ HE SAID.

SUCH ATTACKS BORDERED ON A WHOLESALE QUESTIONING OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE APPOINTED MEMBERS.

+ARE THESE ATTACKS NECESSARY? MUST HONG KONG BE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN TO SUIT JUST IDEALS? ARE THESE CONSTANT UNFAIR CRITICISMS AIMED AT DIVIDING THE COMMUNITY REALLY GOOD FOR THE STABILITY OF HONG KONG? MUST THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG BE LED DOWN A PATH OF CONFRONTATIONAL TURMOIL IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE IDEALISTIC THIRST OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO, DESPITE THE CAMOUFLAGE, ARE BASICALLY CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE OF 'DEMOCRACY AGAINST COMMUNISM'?+ HE ASKED.

MR CHEONG REFERRED TO THE SUCCESS HONG KONG HAD ENJOYED AS AN ENVIED CITY OF THE WORLD PRIOR TO THE 1985 SESSION WHEN THERE WAS NO ELECTED ELEMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND SAID THE AMOUNT OF FREEDOM AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN HONG KONG RANKED SECOND TO NONE IN ASIA.

ALL THESE WERE ACHIEVED WHILE ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY HAD BEEN PHENOMENAL, HE NOTED.

+SUCH ACHIEVEMENTS ARE NOT JUST THE EFFORTS OF AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION, THEY ARE ALSO THE FRUITS OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS WORK PUT IN BY APPOINTED MEMBERS IN THE LEGISLATURE, IN BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, IN DISTRICT BOARDS AND URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS, AS WELL AS IN A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER BODIES,+ HE SAID.

RECOGNISING THAT MEMBERS OPERATED UNDER TRUE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, MR CHEONG RECALLED THAT ANY DIFFERENCES IN VIEW WERE GIVEN A GOOD THRASHING OUT WITH THE MINORITY ACCEPTING THE MAJORITY VIEW WITH GRACE IN THE END BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WISH TO CREATE ANY TURMOIL OR TO FOSTER ANY REBELLIOUS SPIRIT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

+NOW, EVER SINCE 'HONG KONG PEOPLE RULING HONG KONG' HAS BEEN PROMISED, IT IS SAD TO HEAR AND READ THAT THE INTEGRITY OF APPOINTED MEMBERS HAS BEEN SO UNFAIRLY PUSHED TO THE GUTTER BY PEOPLE WHO ONLY HAVE THEIR BLINKERS ON IDEALS AND USE SUCH PRESSURISING TACTICS TO DEMORALISE THE SPIRIT OF THE APPOINTED MEMBERS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN VERSION OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY,+ HE OBSERVED.

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+THESE CRITICS JUST CONVENIENTLY SHUT THEIR MINDS OFF TO THE PROGRESS HONG KONG HAS MADE FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS AND HAVE CONVENIENTLY IN THEIR PUSH FOR THEIR IDEALISM, DISCOUNTED THE SOLID WORK NOT ONLY OF THIS COUNCIL, BUT ALSO OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS DEDICATED CIVIL SERVANTS, AND OF THE WORK OF HUNDREDS OF HONG KONG CITIZENS WHO GIVE THEIR TIME AND EFFORT WILLINGLY WITHOUT SEEKING PUBLICITY OR PUBLIC RECOGNITION,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG SAID THE SILENT MAJORITY IN HONG KONG RECOGNISED THAT THE GOVERNING OF THE TERRITORY HAD BEEN IN GOOD HANDS.

THEY ALSO RECOGNISED THAT AN ADVERSARIAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT BRED INSTABILITY WHICH WAS CERTAINLY NOT CONDUCTIVE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF AN ENVIRONMENT FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS, WITHOUT WHICH THERE WAS NO FUTURE FOR HONG KONG, HE ADDED.

HE NOTED THAT UP TO NOW APPOINTED MEMBERS HAD GENERALLY SWALLOWED WHATEVER HAD BEEN THROWN AT THEM AND MIGHT HAVE BECOME VICTIMS OF THEIR OWN DECENCY AND THEIR INSTINCTIVE DISLIKE OF ADVERSARIAL POLITICS.

+YET, IF THE PRESENT TREND OF UNJUSTIFIED AND UNFAIR DIRT SLINGING CONTINUES UNABATED AND UNCHALLENGED, I FEAR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE ON PUBLIC BODIES IN FUTURE WILL BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED,+ HE SAID.

+THIS WOULD DEFINITELY BE DETRIMENTAL TO ALL IN HONG KONG FOR THEIR QUIET DEDICATION, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE ARE MORE CRUCIALLY NEEDED THAN EVER BEFORE IN GUIDING HONG KONG THROUGH THE YEARS OF TRANSITION,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG CALLED ON ALL HIS APPOINTED COLLEAGUES TO CONSIDER SHAKING OFF THE SHACKLES OF BEING GAGGED OR DEMORALISED BY THE +PSEUDO NON-REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE+ THE IDEALIST TRIED TO CHAIN ON TO THEM AND TO CONTINUE TO BRAVE UNFAIR CRITICISM AND WORK WITH THEIR USUAL DEDICATION FOR THE GOOD OF HONG KONG AS THEY HAD DONE IN THE PAST ACCORDING TO THEIR CONSCIENCE.

+YOUR STRENGTH OF NOT BEING PUPPETS OF IDEALISTS AND ACTIVISTS MUST NOT BE LOST IN HELPING TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE DIFFICULT YEARS AHEAD,+ MR CHEONG SAID.

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POLITICAL CHANGE MUST BE COMPATIBLE

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POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, NO MATTER HOW HIGH SOUNDING AND ATTRACTIVE, MUST BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY, WHICH REMAIN THE COMMON AIM OF THE PEOPLE, THE HON RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MRS FAN SAID HONG KONG HAD ACHIEVED AN OUTSTANDING TRACK RECORD IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH CONVINCED OTHERS THAT ITS SYSTEMS, WAY OF LIFE, AND FREEDOM WERE WORTH PRESERVING.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WAS BY FAR THE BEST GUARANTEE FOR CONTINUING THE TERRITORY'S WAY OF LIFE.

REFERRING TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MRS FAN FELT IT WAS ONLY FAIR THAT CITIZENS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE ESSENCE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION BEFORE THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO DECIDE WHAT CHANGES AND WHICH FORMAT WERE BETTER AND MORE SUITABLE.

+IT IS NECESSARY THAT THE PEOPLE, IN PARTICULAR, THE SILENT MAJORITY, SHOULD BE INFORMED ABOUT THE PROS AND CONS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM, THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY, AND OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES, IN A BALANCED AND OBJECTIVE MANNER,+ SHE SAID.

ON DIRECT ELECTION, MRS FAN SAID IF THE PEOPLE DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF THIS FOR 1988, THEY SHOULD DO SO IN FULL APPRECIATION OF THE PITFALLS SO THAT THEY WERE PREPARED AND COULD TRY TO AVOID THEM.

IF THE PEOPLE DECIDED AGAINST DIRECT ELECTION FOR 1988, THEY SHOULD ALSO DO SO WITH FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPLICATIONS.

MRS FAN CAUTIONED THAT ANY CHANGES MUST SUIT THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

+WHAT WE MUST ENSURE IS THAT CHANGES ARE FOR THE BETTER AND THAT THEY WILL STRENGTHEN PROSPERITY AND STABILITY,+ SHE SAID.

SHE BELIEVED THAT CHANGES SHOULD SATISFY TWO BASIC CRITERIA - THAT THE NEXT STAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT MUST HAVE THE RIGHT MIX OF INGREDIENTS TO MAINTAIN THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THE PEOPLE MUST SUPPORT THE CHANGES AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEM.

MRS FAN FELT THAT ON ANY ISSUE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE THE PEOPLE ADEQUATE INFORMATION, STIMULATE THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE ISSUE AND GIVE EXPLANATIONS WHENEVER NECESSARY.

/+HOWEVER, IT

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+HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CONSULT AND GATHER THE OPINION OF THE SILENT MAJORITY,+ SHE SAID. THESE PEOPLE HAD A RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS CONSIDERED AND TO KNOW HOW TO USE VARIOUS CHANNELS TO PRESS HOME THEIR OPINIONS.

TURNING TO EDUCATION, MRS FAN SAID THE EDUCATION COMMISSION WAS CORRECT IN ITS AIM TO DESIGN THE SIXTH FORM AS A SELF-CONTAINED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD BE OF SPECIAL BENEFIT TO THOSE WHO DID NOT PROCEED TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

SHE NOTED THAT DOUBTS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT THE PRACTICABILITY OF THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF MANY STUDENTS' ASPIRATIONS TO ENTER HIGHER EDUCATION.

HOWEVER, SHE QUESTIONED WHETHER A DEGREE COURSE WAS THE BEST OPTION FOR EVERY SIXTH-FORM STUDENT AT THAT POINT IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

SHE CONSIDERED THERE WAS A CASE FOR MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO ASSIST EVERY STUDENT TO LEARN ABOUT ALL POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES AND CHOOSE THE OPTION THAT WAS MOST SUITABLE.

STUDENTS NEEDED INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO ASSIST THEM TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE AND TO FEEL SATISFIED AND CONFIDENT ABOUT IT.

MRS FAN SUGGESTED THAT IN THIS RESPECT THREE INTER-RELATED SYSTEMS NOW BEING DEVELOPED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE HONG KONG CONTEXT.

USING THE LATEST INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, THESE SYSTEMS WOULD GIVE STUDENTS ACCESS TO ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION.

+IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE THE RELEVANT INFORMATION IN A SYSTEMATIC MANNER IF THEY ARE TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION, BE IT POLITICS OR EDUCATION,+ SHE SAID.

MRS FAN ALSO DISCUSSED THE ISSUE OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

SHE SAID THAT PROSPECTS FOR RESETTLING THE 8 300 REFUGEES IN HONG KONG WAS DISMAL UNLESS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER REOPENING ITS DOORS TO SOME OF THEM, AND THUS ENCOURAGE OTHER MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES TO CONTINUE THEIR INTAKE.

+AFTER ALL, BRITAIN, BY ITS OWN ACCLAIM, HAS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS HONG KONG, AND ITS LEADERS HAVE REPEATEDLY ASSURED HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT THEY WILL DISCHARGE THIS RESPONSIBILITY,+ SHE SAID.

/SHE UNDERSTOOD

SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS VERY LIKELY TO COME TO A DECISION THIS MONTH AND THEREFORE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPRESS UPON IT IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS THE IMPLICATIONS OF ITS DECISION AND HOW IT WOULD BE VIEWED BY HONG KONG PEOPLE.

MRS FAN ALSO SAID SHE SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL TO REPATRIATE THOSE WHO COULD NOT SATISFY THE REFUGEE CRITERIA.

+IT IS INDEFENSIBLE FOR THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TO RETURN THE ILLEGAL TRAVELLERS TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, ABOUT 50 PER DAY ACROSS THE CHINESE BORDER, ON THE ONE HAND AND ACCEPT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON THE OTHER HAND, KNOWING FULLY WELL THAT THEY ARE BOTH DRIVEN BY THE SAME INCENTIVE - DESIRE FOR A BETTER LIFE-STYLE,+ SHE SAID.

SHE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION.

+IF NO SOLUTION IS FORTHCOMING TO THE ROOT OF THIS PROBLEM, THEN THE EXISTING POLICY SHOULD BE REVIEWED WITH A VIEW TO CONTAINING THE PROBLEM WITH OUR OWN MEANS,+ SHE SAID.

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PARTIAL DIRECT ELECTION ADVOCATED
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A SYSTEM OF PARTIAL DIRECT ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATURE WAS ADVOCATED BY THE HON HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID HE WAS IN FAVOUR OF HAVING 12 DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS TO THE COUNCIL IN 1988 FROM FOUR MULTI-MEMBER REGIONAL CONSTITUENCIES - THREE EACH FROM HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON EAST, KOWLOON WEST AND THE NEW TERRITORIES.

HE EXPLAINED THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD GIVE THE SMALL MAN, THE AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL, THE MAN-IN-THE-STREET, THE OPPORTUNITY TO FEEL AND BELIEVE THAT HIS VIEWS WERE LISTED TO AND WOULD BE REFLECTED WITHIN THE COUNCIL.

+HE MUST BE CONVINCED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS HIS COUNCIL AND THAT HE CAN HAVE SOME SAY - EVEN THOUGH VERY LIMITED - IN WHAT IS HAPPENING BY ELECTING HIS REPRESENTATIVE TO THIS COUNCIL TO SPEAK UP FOR HIM,+ HE SAID.

/+A SYSTEM OF

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+A SYSTEM OF PARTIAL DIRECT ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATURE WILL GIVE HIM A GREATER SENSE OF COMMITMENT TO AND MORE CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE, AND IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION UNDER THE +ONE COUNTRY-TWO SYSTEMS+ PRINCIPLE,+ HE ADDED.

COMMENTING ON FEARS THAT DIRECT ELECTION WOULD AFFECT HONG KONG'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY, MR CHEONG-LEEN BELIEVED THAT IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997 AND BEYOND, SO LONG AS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS DID NOT EXCEED ONE-THIRD BY 1997, HONG KONG WOULD HAVE MUCH TO GAIN IN THE LONG TERM BY THUS CREATING ITS OWN UNIQUE SYSTEM OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED AND BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE SAR GOVERNMENT SUITED TO THE HONG KONG ENVIRONMENT.

HE ALSO STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNOR SHOULD WITHDRAW AS PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1988 AND THAT THE PRESIDING OFFICER SHOULD BE ELECTED FROM AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID IT WAS VITAL THAT THE RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH WITHIN THE LAW AS ALREADY EXISTED SHOULD BE ENSHRINED IN THE FUTURE BASIC LAW.

FURTHERMORE, THE RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA WITHIN THE LAW SHOULD EQUALLY BE ENSHRINED IN THE BASIC LAW, HE ADDED.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS A POSITIVE SIGN FOR THE FUTURE THAT THERE WAS INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND RESTRAINT NOW BEING SHOWN BY THE LEADERS OF CHINA TOWARDS THE MORE VISIBLE POLITICAL AWARENESS DEVELOPING IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID: +AS WE ENTER THE SECOND YEAR OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD, WE WILL HAVE TO FOCUS OUR THOUGHTS AND ENERGIES ON KEEPING HONG KONG POLITICALLY STABLE AND ECONOMICALLY PROSPEROUS, ON STRENGTHENING WHATEVER PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WE ALREADY ENJOY, AND ON BUILDING A STRONG AND BINDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL STAND THE HONG KONG PEOPLE IN GOOD STEAD BY 1997 AND THEREAFTER.+

ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, MR CHEONG-LEEN URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO STEP UP ITS PROMOTION EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE MORE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT, WHETHER INDUSTRIAL, HIGH-TECH, OR IN THE SERVICE OR OTHER TYPES OF INDUSTRIES, IN HONG KONG.

HE ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO EMBARK ON A PROGRAMME TO REACH OUT TO HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO HAD EMIGRATED, IN PARTICULAR TO NORTH AMERICA, AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO RETURN TO HONG KONG IN SEARCH OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID MANY OF THESE FORMER RESIDENTS WERE PROFESSIONALS, MIDDLE-CLASS ENTREPRENEURS AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE INDIVIDUALS, WHO COULD CONTRIBUTE TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.

ON HONG KONG'S REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID: +WE IN HONG KONG SHOULD AVOID BEING OVER-COMPLACENT, AND I SHALL BE GLAD TO TAKE THIS MATTER UP FURTHER WITHIN GOVERNMENT.+

HE FELT THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH TO MONITOR TOURISM MORE EXHAUSTIVELY AND TO LOOK AHEAD FOR THE INDUSTRY, AND IF CALLED ON TO DO SO, TO CO-ORDINATE AND GIVE SUPPORT WHEREVER WAS NECESSARY FOR FURTHER EXPANSION, AND IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITATIVE TERMS.

TURNING TO RECREATION AND SPORTS, MR CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DURING THE COMING YEAR ENCOURAGE AND CO-ORDINATE RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES FOR +SPECIAL GROUPS+, PARTICULARLY THE DISABLED, THE ELDERLY AND THE UNDERPRIVILEGED.

IT SHOULD ALSO IDENTIFY AND GIVE TALENTED YOUNG SPORTSMEN AND SPORTSWOMEN SUITABLE TRAINING TO ACHIEVE OUTSTANDING RESULTS LOCALLY, REGIONALLY AND EVEN INTERNATIONALLY.

ON CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A STRONGER TREND TOWARDS CULTURE IN HONG KONG BECOMING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED BODIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE COMPANIES AND PRIVATE CITIZENS.

+THERE IS ROOM FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF MATCHING GRANT PROGRAMMES WHEREBY FUNDS FROM GOVERNMENT OR SEMI-GOVERNMENT SOURCES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE ARTS OR SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROVIDING SIMILAR SUMS ARE MADE AVAILABLE FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR,+ HE SAID.

+PERHAPS SOME CO-ORDINATED EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE WHEREBY EVERY COMPANY LISTED ON THE HONG KONG STOCK EXCHANGE IS APPROACHED FOR SUPPORT OF THE ARTS AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT,+ HE SUGGESTED.

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THUMBS DOWN TO RADICAL POLITICAL REFORMS
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IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO INTRODUCE ANY RADICAL POLITICAL REFORMS IN THE 1987 REVIEW IN VIEW OF THE SHORT OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF HONG KONG'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN ITS PRESENT FORMAT, THE HON HO SAI-CHU SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR HO SAID HONG KONG SHOULD NOT AT THIS STAGE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT HAVE ANY MAJOR POLITICAL OVERHAUL OF ITS SYSTEM BUT SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE NUMBERS OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENT SEATS IN THE COUNCIL AND ON REFINING THE METHOD OF ELECTING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGES.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE SYSTEM SHOULD REMAIN VERY MUCH THE SAME AT PRESENT, BUT WITH CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL EXCEPTIONS.

+I CANNOT HELP BUT POINT OUT THAT ALTHOUGH HONG KONG HAS NO REAL DEMOCRACY, WE CERTAINLY HAVE FREEDOM WITHIN THE LAW AND THE SYSTEM WORKS,+ MR HO SAID.

IN THE PURSUIT OF LOCALISATION, MR HO FELT THAT HONG KONG SHOULD NEITHER DISCRIMINATE AGAINST SERVING OVERSEAS OFFICERS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIAL NOR PUT THE FUTURE AT RISK BY PUSHING THE MATTER TOO FAR.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION, THERE WAS A PLACE FOR EXPATRIATE OFFICERS NOT ONLY DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BUT ALSO AFTER 1997, HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG SHOULD CONTINUE TO WELCOME ANYONE WHO WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT ITS SYSTEM AND TO WORK WITHIN IT AND TO OPEN THE DOOR TO ALL WHO HAD MADE THE TERRITORY THEIR HOME.

TURNING TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, MR HO SAID HE NOTED WITH PLEASURE THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO INVEST HEAVILY IN CAPITAL WORKS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

HOWEVER, HE DREW THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF THIS INDUSTRY AS A RESULT OF THE POLICY OF ALLOWING OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS TO ENGAGE IN WORK REQUIRING TECHNIQUES READILY AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

+IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT CANNOT BE GOOD FOR THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG TO ALLOW A SITUATION TO EVOLVE IN WHICH THE LOCAL CONTRACTING INDUSTRY DISAPPEARS,+ MR HO SAID.

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DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS MORE ACCEPTABLE
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DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS, UNDER WHICH PEOPLE EXERCISE THEIR FREE CHOICE, ARE NOT A PERFECT SYSTEM AND YET THEY ARE MORE ACCEPTABLE AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT, THE HON DESMOND LEE SAID DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SECTION OF THE ADDRESS ON THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT WAS EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS, HIGHLY QUALIFIED, NON-COMMITTAL AND COMPLETELY OPEN, IN CONTRAST TO THE GREEN PAPER AND THE WHITE PAPER OF 1984 WHICH SHOWED CLEAR INDICATIONS OF THE WAY AHEAD AND CONTAINED A MUCH STRONGER NOTE OF COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION.

MR LEE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THE WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED IN 1984, THE NEXT STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WAS A DIRECTLY ELECTED ELEMENT BY 1988 AND THIS WAS THE COMMITMENT THE GOVERNMENT MADE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

HE SAID HE FELT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SEEK CONFIRMATION OF THE STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF DIRECT ELECTIONS AS MENTIONED IN THE WHITE PAPER, IN THE POLITICAL REVIEW NEXT YEAR.

NOTING THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT BE AN ABRUPT PROCESS BUT A GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRESENT STRUCTURE, MR LEE LIKENED THE PROCESS TO THE METAMORPHOSIS GROWTH OF AN INSECT WHICH COMPRISED OF FOUR STAGES—THE EGG, THE LARVA, THE PUPA AND THE ADULT.

+THE EGG OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN HATCHED AND IT IS NOW A LARVA,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT IT MUST GO THROUGH FURTHER TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUPA STAGE BEFORE BECOMING AN ADULT.

+DIRECT ELECTION IS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION AND SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IF THE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IS TO BECOME MATURE,+ HE STATED.

MR LEE SUGGESTED A +QUARTER SYSTEM+ FOR THE FORMATION OF THE LEGISLATURE BY 1988.

HE SAID A QUARTER OF THE SEATS SHOULD BE FILLED BY DIRECT ELECTION WHILE THE REMAINDER EQUALLY SHARED AMONG THE THREE EXISTING CATEGORIES—APPOINTMENTS, FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTORAL COLLEGES.

/+THIS SYSTEM

+THIS SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUNDS IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS COUNCIL, AND YET MAINTAIN A SUITABLE BALANCE OF VIEWS,+ HE SAID.

THE TOTAL SIZE OF THE LEGISLATURE, HE ADDED, MIGHT HAVE TO BE SOMEWHAT ENLARGED TO ACCOMMODATE THIS DIVERSITY OF MEMBERSHIP.

MR LEE ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE GREEN PAPER CONTAINED AN OPTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS ON A TERRITORY-WIDE LIST.

+I WOULD THINK THAT, IF CONSTITUENCIES ARE ADOPTED FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS, A SYSTEM OF MULTIPLE-SEAT CONSTITUENCIES WITH EXTENSIVE BOUNDARIES MAY YIELD CANDIDATES WITH MORE OBJECTIVE VIEWS AND A MACRO-VISION,+ HE COMMENTED.

MR LEE ALSO REFERRED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN HONG KONG AND THE MINORITIES ISSUE IN HIS SPEECH.

ON EDUCATION, HE NOTED THAT BOTH THE THIRD UNIVERSITY AND THE COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS WOULD COME INTO OPERATION WITHIN THE NEXT 11 YEARS.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE NEW UNIVERSITY SHOULD PLACE AN EMPHASIS ON SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMMES SUCH AS PART-TIME DEGREES AND OPEN EDUCATION.

MR LEE SAID HE FELT IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO EXCLUDE THE TWO POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES, NAMELY LINGNAN AND SHUE YAN, FROM VALIDATION AND ASSESSMENT BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS AND SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF THESE TWO COLLEGES.

ON THE MINORITIES ISSUE, MR LEE OBSERVED THAT THE PRESENCE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES WAS A DISTINCT FEATURE CHARACTERISING THE COSMOPOLITAN NATURE OF HONG KONG.

+WHETHER THEY ARE GOING TO STAY IN HONG KONG OR NOT WILL BE OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE TO PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS MOST CONCERNED THAT WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THE SUBJECT MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO LAPSE FROM MEMORY, HE SAID HE FEARED THAT THE LACK OF FURTHER TALK AND ACTION MIGHT CAST DOUBTS ON THE SINCERITY AND INTENTION BEHIND THE ORIGINAL MOTION BY THE COUNCIL WHICH INCLUDED A PLEDGE OF SUPPORT FOR THE CLAIM OF MINORITIES FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP.

MR LEE SAID HE KNEW FOR CERTAIN THAT THE MINORITIES WANTED TO STAY IN HONG KONG AND CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROSPERITY OF THE TERRITORY AFTER 1997.

+BUT IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO DO SO WITH CONFIDENCE, THEY NEED SECURE AND CREDIBLE NATIONAL STATUS,+ HE SAID.

+I THINK BRITAIN HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE THIS STATUS, AND I HOPE A FUTURE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL RE-CONSIDER THEIR CASE,+ HE ADDED.

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UNNECESSARY CHANGE MUST BE AVOIDED
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ALL REFORMS SHOULD AVOID CHANGE THAT IS UNPREDICTABLE IN ITS CONSEQUENCES, OR CAN DAMAGE HONG KONG'S PROVEN STRENGTH WHICH LIES FIRST AND FOREMOST IN ITS POSITION AS A COMMERCIAL CENTRE OF GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE.

UNNECESSARY CHANGE COULD HARM THE TERRITORY'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY, THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

+WHEN HE CAN NO LONGER PERFORM IN ECONOMIC TERMS AS WELL AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST HONG KONG WILL NOT MAKE IT, NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFUL WE MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN IN PRACTISING DEMOCRACY AND REPLACING THE MERCHANT CLASS WITH QUALIFIED STATESMEN,+ HE SAID.

MR SOHMEN SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ALL REFORMS WERE ANATHEMA OR SUSPECT. MUCH CHANGE WOULD NEED TO COME ABOUT IN IMPLEMENTING THE JOINT DECLARATION AND IN ENSURING CONTINUED PROGRESS, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HONG KONG HAD DONE VERY WELL IN THE LAST 30 YEARS AND ITS ECONOMIC SUCCESS HAD EARNED IT, IN THE WORDS OF THE QUEEN, +RESPECT AND GOODWILL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.+

HE REFERRED TO THE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE, AND SAID THAT WITHOUT ITS ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND COMMERCIAL LEADERSHIP, HONG KONG PROBABLY WOULD NOT WARRANT PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION AND BE GIVEN THE STATUS OF A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY.

HONG KONG, WITH A BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT BY CONSENSUS, HAD PRODUCED A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH HAS BECOME THE ENVY OF MANY LARGER NATIONS, HE EMPHASISED.

+THIS SYSTEM HAS ALSO MANAGED TO GENERATE A SENSE OF UNITY AND DETERMINATION IN THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WHICH FINDS FEW PARALLELS IN MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETIES WITH SUCH A SHORT HISTORY ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD,+ HE SAID.

MR SOHMEN SAID THAT WHETHER THE PERCEIVED NEED IN 1984 FOR REFORM WAS JUSTIFIED OR NOT WAS NOW NO LONGER THE ISSUE.

BUT THE POLITICAL REALITY OF TODAY HAD TO BE ADDRESSED AND IT CENTRED ON THE CALL FOR GREATER DEMOCRACY BY WAY OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM 1988 ONWARDS.

HE SAID THERE APPEARED TO BE CONFLICTING VIEWS AS TO WHAT DEMOCRACY ACTUALLY MEANT IN THE HONG KONG CONTEXT.

DEMOCRACY WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD BE COPIED FROM OR APPLIED TO ANYWHERE, NOR LIKE A SHIRT COULD BE PUT ON AND TAKEN OFF ACCORDING TO THE TEMPERATURE.

+DEMOCRACY HAS TO BE FIRMLY EMBEDDED IN THE PUBLIC MIND AND ANCHORED IN INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO EVOLVE NATURALLY AND BE TESTED OVER TIME,+ HE SAID.

+EVEN MANY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES HAVE DISCOVERED THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT THE PANACEA FOR ALL EVILS OF MODERN EXISTENCE NOR THE GUARANTEE FOR HAPPIER AND MORE PROSPEROUS LIVES.

+INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS IN HONG KONG ARE BETTER PROTECTED THAN IN MANY SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES.

+THERE ALREADY EXIST A WIDE RANGE OF AVENUES FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.+

NOTING THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION SUCCINCTLY PRESCRIBED THAT THE LEGISLATURE +SHALL BE CONSTITUTED BY ELECTIONS+, MR SOHMEN STRESSED THAT HONG KONG HAD TO GET ITS PRIORITIES IN ORDER WHEN DECIDING WHAT SYSTEM OF ELECTIONS IT FAVOURED.

HE SAID THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAD YET TO BE CONVINCED THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS AS AT PRESENT ADVOCATED WOULD DO MORE, RATHER THAN DO LESS, FOR THE CAUSE OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

HE BELIEVED THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS WOULD MEAN PARTY POLITICS, WITH THE ATTENDANT PANOPLY OF PLATFORMS, CAMPAIGNS, FINANCE SCHEMES, MEMBERSHIP DRIVES AND PATRONAGE.

+IT IS IN THE VERY NATURE OF POLITICAL PARTIES THAT THEY TRY TO PRODUCE SEPARATE IDENTITIES AND A TREND TOWARDS POLARISATION, THEREBY OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISSENT AT HOME AS WELL AS FOR MANIPULATION FROM ABROAD.

+SUCH A DEVELOPMENT COULD WELL LEAD US AWAY FROM THE GOAL OF A SOCIALLY COHESIVE AND ECONOMICALLY STRONGER HONG KONG WITH A BETTER CHANCE TO EXPLAIN AND DEFEND ITS AUTONOMY.

+INSTEAD, IT COULD VERY QUICKLY INCREASE THE PERCEPTION OF POLITICAL RISK AMONG LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INVESTORS, REDUCE THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE TERRITORY AND INCREASE THE PRESSURE FOR EMIGRATION,+ HE SAID.

MR SOHMEN ALSO SAID THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES EXISTED TO ATTAIN AND MAINTAIN POLITICAL POWER AND IT WAS NAIVE AND VERY DANGEROUS TO ASSUME THAT POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN HONG KONG WOULD SOMEHOW BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY OR COULD SHIELD THEMSELVES MORE EFFECTIVELY FROM OUTSIDE INFLUENCES.

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+THE LOGIC OF ARGUING FOR A SYSTEM THAT WILL TEND TO FACILITATE INTERFERENCES, AS A MEANS OF PROTECTION AGAINST THAT VERY INTERFERENCE TOTALLY ESCAPES ME,+ HE SAID.

MR SOHMEN DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT MATTERED WHETHER THERE WERE DIRECT ELECTIONS FOR PART OR FOR THE WHOLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF A CHANGE THAT TOUCHES THE ESSENCE OF OUR TRADITIONAL SYSTEM AND THE FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY, AND WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY BE IRREVERSIBLE EVEN IF WE LATER DISCOVERED THAT IT WAS ALL A BAD MISTAKE, WILL BE THE SAME WHETHER WE ELECT TWO, 20 OR ALL OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE ORGANISED ON A GEOGRAPHIC CONSTITUENCY BASIS,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SETTING UP OF AN AUTONOMOUS SHIPPING REGISTER IN HONG KONG, MR SOHMEN SAID THAT A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE OF OPINION STILL EXISTED BETWEEN THE SHIPOWNERS AND THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE QUESTION OF TAXATION.

HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS HAD PROPOSED THAT INSTEAD OF TAXING PROFITS, REVENUE SHOULD BE COLLECTED BY THE IMPOSITION OF INITIAL REGISTRATION FEES AND ANNUAL TONNAGE DUES ON EACH SHIP REGISTERED IN HONG KONG.

MR SOHMEN EXPLAINED THAT THIS APPROACH HAD THE BENEFIT OF CERTAINTY AND PREDICTABILITY FOR BOTH SHIPOWNERS AND INLAND REVENUE, AND PROVIDED FOR EFFICIENT AND ECONOMIC TAX COLLECTION AND FOR GREAT FAIRNESS.

+IT IS THE SYSTEM ADOPTED IN THE LARGEST FLAG COUNTRIES AND THUS KNOWN TO MANY OF THE SHIPOWNERS WHOM THE NEW HONG KONG REGISTER WOULD WISH TO ATTRACT.

+DEPENDING ON THE TOTAL SIZE OF THE FLEET THE REVENUE GENERATED FROM TAXATION ON THE SHIPS THEMSELVES CAN BE QUITE SUBSTANTIAL.

+AND THE SIMPLER THE TAX TREATMENT THE MORE ACCEPTABLE THE REGISTER WILL BE TO THE USERS,+ HE SAID.

HE RECOMMENDED THAT THIS SUBJECT BE FURTHER REVIEWED.

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THREE-TIER GOVT STRUCTURE SHOULD BE REVIEWED

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IT IS OPTIMISTIC AND PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PRESENT THREE-TIER STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IS SERVING HONG KONG WELL, THE HON ANDREW WONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, HE SAID THE QUESTION OF REFORMING THE THREE-TIER STRUCTURE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE 1987 REVIEW.

MR WONG SAID HIS WORRIES CONCERNED THE MIDDLE TIER - THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL LEVEL.

HE SAID THE REGIONAL COUNCIL MIGHT SUFFER FROM THE SAME FAILURES AS ITS COUNTERPART IN THE URBAN AREA DID.

+THE SITUATION IS EXACERBATED BY THE VERY EXISTENCE OF TWO COUNCILS GOVERNING TWO MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE YET CONTIGUOUS AREAS EACH HAVING THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS ON MATTERS SOME OF WHICH OUGHT TO BE APPLIED UNIFORMLY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE TERRITORY,+ HE SAID.

HE RECALLED THAT WHEN THE DECISION TO SET UP THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WAS ANNOUNCED IN 1984 HE LIKENED THE PROPOSED THREE-TIER STRUCTURE TO A MONSTER.

HE BELIEVED A BETTER SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND IN THE 1966 DICKINSON REPORT ON LOCAL ADMINISTRATION WHICH ADVOCATED A SYSTEM OF SEPARATE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WITH NOTHING BETWEEN THIS AND THE CENTRAL LEVEL.

HE THEN LISTED THREE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THIS PROPOSED SYSTEM.

FOR THOSE FUNCTIONS WHICH WERE NOW ENTRUSTED TO THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS BUT WHICH REQUIRED UNIFORM STANDARDS AND APPLICATION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE TERRITORY, MR WONG BELIEVED THEY OUGHT TO BE ENTRUSTED TO A FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY OR A NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITIES AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL, RATHER LIKE THE PRESENT HOUSING AUTHORITY.

THE EXISTING URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS COULD BE AMALGAMATED TO FORM THIS OVERALL FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY OR AMALGAMATED AND EXPANDED TO FORM A NUMBER OF AUTHORITIES SUCH AS CULTURE, SANITATION, AND AMENITIES, HE SUGGESTED.

+SECOND, FOR THOSE FUNCTIONS OF THE TWO COUNCILS WHICH CAN BE DEVOLVED AND WHICH SHOULD BE DEVOLVED TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS, THEY SHOULD BE ENTRUSTED TO THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS WHICH WILL BECOME LOCAL AUTHORITIES WHICH ARE BODIES CORPORATE AND IN CHARGE OF MAKING DECISIONS, AS FAR AS SUCH FUNCTIONS ARE CONCERNED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS,+ HE SAID.

/IF IT WAS

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IF IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT A SYSTEM OF 19 LOCAL AUTHORITIES WAS TOO UNWIELDY, THE BOARDS COULD BE AMALGAMATED TO FORM 10 BOARDS, HE SAID.

+THIRD, TO FINANCE THE ACTIVITIES OF SUCH A CENTRAL FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY OR AUTHORITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, A MORE EQUITABLE REVENUE SHARING SCHEME SHOULD BE ADOPTED,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE 1987 REVIEW, MR WONG SAID HE REGARDED DIRECT ELECTIONS AND DIRECT-INDIRECT ELECTIONS ON A GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY BASIS TO BE SUPERIOR AND A FIRST STEP OUGHT TO BE TAKEN IN 1988.

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SOUND ECONOMY THE KEY TO STABILITY
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THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING THE STRIDE TO IMPROVE HONG KONG'S ECONOMY IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE TWIN OBJECTIVES OF A PROSPEROUS AND STABLE SOCIETY WAS EMPHASISED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE HON ALLEN LEE.

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR LEE SAID IT WAS NATURAL THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, BUT +WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT WHAT MAKES HONG KONG TICK IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE OUR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE.+

+ONLY THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS OF OUR ECONOMY WILL WE BE ABLE TO HAVE A STABLE SOCIETY.... AND WITHOUT A SOUND ECONOMY WE CERTAINLY HAVE NO FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

CONCENTRATING ON THE ECONOMY, IN HIS SPEECH, MR LEE CALLED FOR VIGOROUS DEFENCE OF HONG KONG'S TRADING INTERESTS OVERSEAS AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY IN ORDER TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY.

MR LEE SAID IF THE INDUSTRY, WHICH PROVIDED BY FAR THE GREATEST EMPLOYMENT, WAS UNABLE TO COMPETE WITH PRODUCERS IN THE REGION, THE SNOWBALL EFFECT ON OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS TRADE, FINANCE AND SERVICES WOULD BE DEVASTATING.

TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY, MR LEE MADE TWO OBSERVATIONS.

FIRST, HE REPEATED HIS PLEA FOR GREATER FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS WHOSE RESEARCH BUDGETS WERE +PATHETIC+.

/+WE SHOULD

+WE SHOULD NOT LOOK AT THESE INSTITUTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AS A DIRECT ASSISTANCE OR INPUT TO INDUSTRY, BUT THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO TEACH AND TRAIN GOOD TALENT WHICH WILL COME OUT OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS TO SERVE INDUSTRY.

+OUR ONLY NATURAL RESOURCES IS THE TALENTS OF OUR CITIZENS. WE MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT,+ HE SAID.

SECONDLY, MR LEE PUSHED FOR THE VIGOROUS PURSUIT OF OVERSEAS INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION.

RATHER THAN HAVING A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE IN A FEW OFFICES AROUND THE WORLD, MR LEE SUGGESTED THE TASK OF INVESTMENT PROMOTION BE OFFERED TO THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN ORDER TO UTILISE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY.

BESIDES HAVING 24 OFFICES AROUND THE WORLD WITH WIDE COVERAGE OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S PAST PERFORMANCE RECORD IS WELL KNOWN, MR LEE NOTED.

+WE MUST LOOK FORWARD IN THE DIFFICULT YEARS AHEAD TO CORRECT OUR SHORTCOMINGS WHENEVER WE CAN,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG, MR LEE APPEALED TO THE COUNCIL TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE PRAGMATIC SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS FACING HONG KONG AND TO HELP LAY A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE TERRITORY'S FUTURE.

HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE AND THE NEED FOR COHESIVENESS IN THE COUNCIL AS THERE WERE MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES TO BE TACKLED IN THE COMING YEAR.

HE SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT THERE WOULD BE DIFFERENCES IN OPINIONS AMONG MEMBERS ON ISSUES +BUT AFTER DUE DEBATE AND FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY MUST PREVAIL AND THAT IS THE MAJORITY MUST BE ALLOWED TO CARRY THE DAY.+

+IN SERVING THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THERE REALLY SHOULD NOT BE A DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE APPOINTED AND ELECTED MEMBERS.

+THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THE DESIRE TO SERVE NOT FOR FAME OR FORTUNE, BUT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF HONG KONG WE DEARLY LOVE,+ MR LEE STRESSED.

HE WARNED THAT PUTTING A DIVIDER BETWEEN APPOINTED AND ELECTED MEMBERS WAS DANGEROUS AND NON-CONSTRUCTIVE FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

HE SAID THAT WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE 1987 REVIEW AND THE FUTURE BASIC LAW FOR HONG KONG, PERCEIVED POLITICAL STABILITY WAS NEEDED IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG.

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'DON'T DRIVE PROFESSIONALS, BUSINESSMEN AWAY'

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY IS VITAL TO PRESERVE THE CONFIDENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS WHO PROVIDE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND HONG KONG'S ECONOMY, THE HON PETER POON SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SPEAKING AT THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, HE WARNED THAT +EVEN IF ONLY A FEW THOUSAND OF THEM WERE TO LEAVE EVERY YEAR, THE EFFECT ON OUR ECONOMY, THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT, AND ON CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE.+

ALTHOUGH SMALL IN NUMBER, THE ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS SHOULDER MOST OF THE REVENUE RAISED, MR POON POINTED OUT.

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS FOR WELL-QUALIFIED PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG WERE IMPROVING, AND IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA WERE BECOMING LESS RESTRICTIVE. TAXES IN THESE COUNTRIES WERE ALSO BEING CUT, HE ADDED.

TO KEEP THESE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, ANY CHANGES, PARTICULARLY CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, SHOULD BE EVOLUTIONARY AND NOT REVOLUTIONARY, MR POON SAID.

TURNING TO TRADE MATTERS, MR POON URGED GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN THE LINKED EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM WHICH HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN HONG KONG EXPORTS IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.

HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT PROTECTIONIST SENTIMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES WERE STILL STRONG. IT WAS NECESSARY ON THE ONE HAND TO CONTINUE FIGHTING AGAINST UNJUSTIFIED PROTECTIONISM, BUT ON THE OTHER TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH HIGHER QUALITY AND BETTER TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCTIVITY.

ALTHOUGH INVESTMENT IN CAPITAL GOODS WAS RECOVERING GRADUALLY IN HONG KONG, MR POON SAID THERE WAS A NEED TO BUILD UP THE CONFIDENCE OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIALISTS SO THAT THEY COULD UPGRADE OR EXPAND THEIR OPERATIONS.

TO DO THIS, HE ADVISED GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES BY REDUCING THE TAX RATE. +OTHERWISE WE SHALL SOON LOSE OUT TO TAIWAN, KOREA AND SINGAPORE.+

ON CONTROLLING GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE, MR POON URGED THAT THE +VALUE-FOR-MONEY+ STUDIES SHOULD CONTINUE AND TRY TO MAXIMISE COST-EFFECTIVENESS.

+IN AREAS WHERE PRIVATISATION IS DESIRABLE, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HIVE OFF SUCH OPERATIONS, WITHOUT AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF SERVICE,+ MR POON SAID.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED A PERIODICAL REVIEW OF THE TOTAL PAY PACKAGE FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE TO SEE WHETHER IT WAS IN LINE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE PATTERN OF INFLATION.

LIBERAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM ESSENTIAL

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THE MAINTENANCE OF A LIBERAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM SHOULD BE MADE A PRE-REQUISITE WHEN EXAMINING ANY POSSIBLE CHANGES TO HONG KONG'S POLITICAL SYSTEM, THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A PRUDENT APPROACH TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARIOUS FACTORS OF HONG KONG'S SUCCESS SHOULD BE ADOPTED IN THE POLITICAL REVIEW NEXT YEAR, HE ADDED WHEN SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

HONG KONG'S PROGRESS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY HAD BEEN BUILT ON ITS HIGH DEGREE OF LIBERTY AND NOT DEMOCRACY, HE SAID.

+IN THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES, THE EXISTING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS HAVE PROVED TO BE OPERATING WELL AND VERY SUITABLE TO THE STRUCTURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES OF HONG KONG'S COMMUNITY,+ MR NGAI SAID.

WHETHER HONG KONG COULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY PROSPERITY AND STABILITY IN THE FUTURE DEPENDED TOTALLY ON WHETHER THE BASIS OF LIBERTY COULD BE RETAINED.

THE URGENT TASK WAS TO STUDY HOW HONG KONG COULD SECURE ITS ECONOMIC BASE, PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT, INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS. IT WAS DESIRABLE NOT TO PROCEED NOW WITH ANY RISKY POLITICAL EXPERIMENTS THAT WOULD LAY A HEAVY BLOW ON INVESTMENT CONFIDENCE IN INDUSTRY AND TRADE.

MR NGAI FELT THE INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS WOULD BRING ABOUT RADICAL CHANGES TO GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND WOULD DEFINITELY AFFECT LONG-TERM INVESTMENT CONFIDENCE.

HE CONSIDERED IT WAS INAPPROPRIATE AT THE PRESENT STAGE TO ADOPT ANOTHER FORM OF ELECTION IN PLACE OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM.

+WE SHOULD WAIT UNTIL THE PROMULGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC LAW, WHEN THE MODE OF CONSTITUTION IN HONG KONG IS CONFIRMED, AND ACT ACCORDING TO THE BASIC LAW,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF SETTING UP A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, MR NGAI SAID THE SCHEME, IF ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WOULD HAVE NO LESS IMPLICATION THAN DIRECT ELECTIONS.

HE SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES HAD ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY AS WORKERS WOULD HAVE LESS MONEY TO SPEND AND EMPLOYERS LESS FUNDS TO INVEST.

+IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO TAKE UP THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGING THIS FUND WHICH WOULD GROW ANNUALLY AND IT WOULD SURELY BE A PAINSTAKING TASK TO HANDLE THE MATTER,+ HE SAID.

MOREOVER, GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE WOULD DEFINITELY BE REDUCED SUBSEQUENT TO THE SETTING UP OF THE FUND, HE ADDED.

HE THEREFORE SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSULT BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ON THEIR VIEWS WHEN THEY CONSIDERED SUCH A PROPOSAL.

MEANWHILE, MR NGAI SAID HE SUPPORTED A PROPOSAL BY THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTOR ON REDUCING THE COMPANY PROFITS TAX RATE WITH A VIEW TO ATTRACTING MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

IT SHOULD BE REASONABLE AND TIMELY TO BRING THE TAX RATE BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL LEVEL SINCE THE GOVERNMENT ONCE MORE HAD A BALANCED BUDGET, HE SAID.

MR NGAI CONSIDERED REDUCING THE COMPANY PROFITS TAX RATE BY TWO PER CENT WOULD BRING POSITIVE EFFECTS AS HONG KONG WAS FACING KEEN COMPETITION FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THAT THE LOCAL TAXATION SYSTEM DID NOT PROVIDE THE PRIVILEGE OF A TAX EXEMPTION PERIOD FOR NEW INVESTMENT.

+IF HONG KONG SHOULD BE ABLE TO ATTRACT MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT, IT WILL IN THE LONG RUN CONVINCED PEOPLE TO PLACE MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

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ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FLOW EFFECTIVELY STEMMED
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CONTINUED VIGILANCE ON THE BORDER AND AN EFFECTIVE IDENTITY CARD SYSTEM WOULD DETER THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR DAVID JEAFFRESON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN HE VISITED MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG REGIMENT (THE VOLUNTEERS) PERFORMING ANTI-II DUTIES AT THE BORDER.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS DURING THE VISIT, MR JEAFFRESON SAID +THE SOLUTION IS GOOD BORDER PATROL, AND OF COURSE, CRUCIAL, THE IDENTITY CARD SYSTEM.

+SO PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN HONG KONG ARE EASILY RECOGNISABLE BY THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE AN ID CARD, AND THOSE HAVEN'T GOT THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN HONG KONG HAVE NOT GOT A CARD SO THEY TOO CAN READILY BE IDENTIFIED.

+IN THE END, ALL THESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WILL BE FOUND OUT AND WILL BE RETURNED TO CHINA. SO THEY ARE HIDING FOR NOTHING.+

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE POLICE WERE CARRYING OUT REGULAR IDENTITY CARD CHECKS AND NO ONE WAS ALLOWED TO EMPLOY A PERSON WITHOUT AN IDENTITY CARD.

+SO THESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARE GOING TO BE FOUND OUT SOONER OR LATER,+ HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON PRAISED THE HONG KONG REGIMENT FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE IN ANTI-II OPERATIONS, SAYING THAT THEY WERE +DOING VERY WELL+.

ASKED IF THE REGIMENT WERE DOING JUST AS GOOD AS THE REGULAR TROOPS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID: +THEY COULD EVEN DO BETTER BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE COUNTRY, THEY KNOW THE LANGUAGE. LEAST WHEN SOME OF THE ILLEGALS COME OVER THEY PROBABLY SPOT AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT MORE READILY THAN THE BRITISH GARRISON SOLDIERS, MOST OF THEM ARE NOT FROM HONG KONG AT ALL.+

MEMBERS OF THE REGIMENT ARE CARRYING OUT ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT OPERATIONS ON THE BORDER DURING THEIR ANNUAL CAMP FROM THE FIRST TO THE NINTH OF THIS MONTH.

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PROMOTION OF PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH VITAL
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THE PROMOTION OF PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH - THROUGH APPROPRIATE MANPOWER TRAINING, THROUGH THE FACILITATION OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN INWARD INVESTMENT PROMOTION, AND THROUGH THE PROVISION OF PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCING INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT SERVICES, IS AN IMPERATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INDUSTRIAL STRATEGIES, THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR K.Y. YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ADDRESSING A SYMPOSIUM ON INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG SECTION OF THE INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS, MR YEUNG SAID THE NEED FOR HONG KONG TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY WAS UNDERLINED BY THE FACT THAT IT HAD TO COMPETE IN THE SAME FOREIGN MARKETS AS THE ASIAN NEWLY INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES.

+MOREOVER, AS THE MODERNISATION AND INDUSTRIALISATION OF SOUTH CHINA GATHERS PACE, THOSE INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES THAT ARE RELATIVELY LABOUR-INTENSIVE AND INEFFICIENT WILL COME UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE EITHER TO CEASE OPERATING OR TO SHIFT ACROSS THE BORDER.+

WHILE POINTING OUT THAT INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION WAS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ACHIEVING GROWTH IN PRODUCTIVITY, MR YEUNG SAID IT WAS GRATIFYING TO NOTE THAT HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURERS HAD IN RECENT MONTHS, INVESTED SUBSTANTIALLY IN PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY.

+IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 1986, RETAINED IMPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY GREW BY 51.3 PER CENT IN MONEY TERMS, OR ABOUT 14 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS, OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 1985,+ HE SAID.

NONETHELESS, INVESTMENT IN PRODUCTION PLANT AND EQUIPMENT ALONE WOULD NOT ENABLE THE MANUFACTURER TO REALISE THE FULL POTENTIAL FROM HIS INVESTMENT.

+GIVEN THAT MOST OF OUR INDUSTRIES ARE ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF CONSUMER GOODS AND THE PREVALENCE OF INCREASINGLY SHORT PRODUCTION RUNS, MANUFACTURERS ARE INCREASINGLY FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY, BECAUSE OF THE TIME REQUIRED TO COME UP WITH DIFFERENT DESIGNS AND TO MOUNT DIFFERENT PRODUCTION LINES,+ HE SAID.

+THUS THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE BECOMES IMPORTANT, AND THE GOVERNMENT, ON THE ADVICE OF THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD, HAS PROVIDED FUNDS FOR THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL TO PRODUCE LOW-COST CAD/CAM SYSTEMS FOR GARMENT PATTERN GRADING AND MARKER MAKING AND FOR THE DESIGN OF PCB LAYOUTS.

+THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO PROVIDED FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT WORK BY THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC AND THE TWO UNIVERSITIES.+

/MR YEUNG

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MR YEUNG ADDED THAT THE CAD/CAM SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD HAS RECENTLY BEEN CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL BY THE TWO UNIVERSITIES TO TAKE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT WORK A STEP FURTHER BY MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR CAD SYSTEMS TO BE INTEGRATED WITH COMPUTER-AIDED MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS.

+THE PROPOSALS FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ARE BEING EXAMINED BY THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND WILL BE PUT TO THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD IN DUE COURSE,+ HE SAID.

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COLOURFUL LAUNCHING OF CENTRAL-WESTERN DISTRICT FESTIVAL
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A SPECTACULAR DRAGON AND LION DANCE AND A COLOURFUL VARIETY SHOW LAUNCHED THE SECOND CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT FESTIVAL THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING.

THE USUAL QUIET EDINBURGH PLACE LIVED UP WHEN A 50-METRE-LONG DRAGON CAME TO LIFE AFTER AN EYE-DOTTING CEREMONY BY THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, MR DONALD LIAO.

MR LIAO THEN ANNOUNCED THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL AT THE CITY HALL CONCERT HALL WHERE AUDIENCE WERE ALSO TREATED TO A VARIETY SHOW FEATURING A STRINGS ORCHESTRA, BALLET AND ORIENTAL FOLK DANCE PERFORMANCES AND SINGING PERFORMED BY A CHOIR AS WELL AS POPULAR SINGERS.

IN HIS ADDRESS, MR LIAO SAID THAT APART FROM RETAINING CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMES, THE SECOND FESTIVAL SOUGHT TO OFFER NEW PROGRAMMES TINTED WITH LOCAL COLOURS AND TO PROMOTE THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME WITH FUNCTIONS ON CIVIC EDUCATION.

+ALL IN ALL, THE WHOLE DISTRICT FESTIVAL HAS ORGANISED MORE THAN 30 EXUBERANT PROGRAMMES TO CATER FOR THE VARIED INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC,+ HE SAID.

MR LIAO ALSO EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO ORGANISERS AND SPONSORS OF THE FESTIVAL.

THE FESTIVAL WILL LAST FOR THREE WEEKS AND A WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN ARRANGED TO SUIT THE INTERESTS OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS IN THE DISTRICT.

/THEY INCLUDE

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THEY INCLUDE A CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT CARNIVAL, A BANQUET AND CANTONESE OPERA SHOW FOR THE ELDERLY, A DISTRICT CHILDREN'S DRAWING COMPETITION, A CIVIC EDUCATION CARNIVAL, AN OUTSTANDING STUDENTS COMPETITION, A CIVIC EDUCATION GAMES DAY AND A PROJECT TO SURVEY THE PASTIME OF WHITE COLLAR WORKERS.

LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EVENTS. ADMISSION TO MOST WILL BE FREE AND THE PUBLIC CAN OBTAIN A PROGRAMME LEAFLET AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND ITS SUB-OFFICES.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY AT CENOTAPH
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THE REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT THE CENOTAPH IN STATUE SQUARE THIS SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 9) IN HONOUR OF THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

WREATHS WILL BE LAID BY THE GOVERNOR, SIR EDWARD YOUDE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE, SIR DENYS ROBERTS, THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES, MAJOR-GENERAL ANTHONY BOAM, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS, COMMONWEALTH COMMISSIONERS, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR RAYMON ANNING, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR GERRY FORSGATE, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG.

WREATHS WILL ALSO BE LAID BY SERVICE COMMANDERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, SERVICE UNITS, TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES AND OTHER BODIES.

THE CEREMONY WILL START AT 11 AM AND WILL END ABOUT 11.30 AM.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

A PRESS POSITION FOR COVERING THE CEREMONY HAS BEEN RESERVED ON THE NORTHERN BALCONY ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING IN CHATER ROAD. SPECIAL BADGES FOR ADMISSION TO THE CEREMONY MAY BE COLLECTED FROM THE DUTY OFFICER, GIS NEWSROOM ON THE SIXTH FLOOR OF BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, FROM 9 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 8).

PRESS SHOULD ASSEMBLE OUTSIDE THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING FACING THE CENOTAPH BY 10.30 AM. GIS OFFICERS WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST.

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FOUR NT SITES FOR LEASE
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FOUR SITES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE BEING OFFERED FOR TENDERS ON SHORT-TERM TENANCIES BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

THE FIRST LOT, IN TUEN MUN ADJACENT TO WU KING ESTATE, MEASURES 2 700 SQUARE METRES. IT WILL BE FOR OPEN STORAGE, EXCLUDING CONTAINERS.

THE SECOND LOT, MEASURING 1 306 SQUARE METRES AT TING KOK ROAD, TAI PO, WILL BE FOR REPAIR OR MAINTENANCE OF MOTOR VEHICLES, INCLUDING PAINT SPRAYING.

INITIAL TENANCIES FOR THESE SITES ARE FOR TWO YEARS AND ARE RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

LOCATED AT MA TIN ROAD IN YUEN LONG, THE THIRD SITE OF 1 792 SQUARE METRES WILL ONLY BE USED AS A FEE PAYING PUBLIC CAR PARK FOR PRIVATE CARS AND LIGHT GOODS VEHICLES.

THE INITIAL TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE LAST SITE IS AT TSUEN WAN MARKET STREET, TSUEN WAN. MEASURING 2 675 SQUARE METRES, IT IS ALSO FOR USE AS A FEE PAYING PUBLIC CAR PARK FOR GOODS VEHICLES, EXCLUDING CONTAINER TRUCKS, TRACTORS AND TRAILERS.

TENANCY IS FOR SIX MONTHS, RENEWABLE MONTHLY AFTERWARDS.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING TENDERS FOR ALL FOUR SITES IS NOON ON NOVEMBER 21.

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NEW SERIES OF SPECIAL NEW YEAR STAMPS
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THE POST OFFICE WILL ISSUE A SECOND LUNAR NEW YEAR SPECIAL STAMPS SERIES ON JANUARY 21 NEXT YEAR.

THIS SERIES, BEGINNING WITH THE YEAR OF THE RABBIT, WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1998, THE YEAR OF TIGER.

THE NEW STAMPS WILL BE IN DENOMINATIONS OF 50 CENTS, \$1.30, \$1.70 AND \$5.

/A POST

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A POST OFFICE SPOKESMAN SAID THE DESIGN OF THIS SET OF STAMPS DEPICTS THE RABBIT IN AN EMBROIDERY STYLE AND A SOUVENIR SHEET CONTAINING A SET OF THE FOUR STAMPS WILL ALSO BE ISSUED.

THE FIRST LUNAR NEW YEAR SPECIAL STAMPS SERIES WAS ISSUED BETWEEN 1967 AND 1978.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT OTHER STAMP ISSUES IN 1987 WILL COMPRISE: HISTORICAL SCENES OF HONG KONG IN APRIL; NEW DEFINITIVE SERIES IN JULY; 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALICE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (NETHERSOLE HOSPITAL) AND THE MEDICAL FACULTY OF HONG KONG UNIVERSITY IN SEPTEMBER, AND HISTORICAL CHINESE COSTUMES IN NOVEMBER.

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KWUN TONG DB MEMBERS VISIT ROYAL OBSERVATORY
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MEMBERS OF THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ITS OPERATION.

THE VISIT WAS PART OF AN ON-GOING PROGRAMME FOR MEMBERS TO FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE WORK AND OPERATIONS OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

LED BY DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR LAM HANG-FAI, AND THE TWO KWUN TONG ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER, MR STANLEY YING AND MR EDDIE YU, THE PARTY WAS MET BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROYAL OBSERVATORY, MR PATRICK SHAM, AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, DR PETER LI AND MR ROBERT LAU.

FOLLOWING A BRIEFING THE GROUP TOURED THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS AND SECTIONS OF THE OBSERVATORY, INCLUDING THE CENTRAL FORECASTING OFFICE, TELECOMMUNICATIONS CENTRE AND DATA ACQUISITION SECTION, THE COMPUTER DIVISION, THE RESEARCH AND RECORDS DIVISION, AIR POLLUTION METEOROLOGY RESEARCH DIVISION, SPECIAL PROJECT DIVISION, SEISMOLOGY, ASTRONOMY AND TIME SERVICES SECTION, AND RADIATION MONITORING DIVISION.

BEFORE ENDING THE VISIT, MEMBERS ALSO ATTENDED A DISCUSSION AT THE CONFERENCE HALL.

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MONG KOK DB TO DISCUSS EDUCATION REPORTS
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THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS THE NEWLY RELEASED PUBLIC CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT SYSTEM.

THE PAPER PROPOSES A NEW MEANS OF PLACEMENT FOR FORM 3 LEAVERS TO BE INTRODUCED IN SEPTEMBER 1987. THE SYSTEM DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY PUBLIC SCALING TEST.

THE BOARD WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE SECOND REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION WHICH COVERS THE MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION, PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIXTH FORM EDUCATION, TEACHER PREPARATION, OPEN EDUCATION AND THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION.

MEMBERS' VIEWS WILL BE SOUGHT ON A REPORT WHICH EXPLORES WAYS TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN MONG KOK.

THE REPORT FOLLOWS A SURVEY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR BY THE DISTRICT BOARD WHICH CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO INSTALL FLOODLIGHTS TO ILLUMINATE THE DISTRICT BOARD LANDMARK AT THE JUNCTION OF NATHAN ROAD AND LAI CHI KOK ROAD.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TO BEGIN AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF MONG KOK DISTRICT OFFICE, FIRST FLOOR, 157 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

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TV PROGRAMME PUTS FOCUS ON WONG TAI SIN
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THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS LIMITED WILL JOINTLY PRESENT A TWO-HOUR TELEVISION PROGRAMME, +GOOD MORNING WONG TAI SIN+, WHICH PORTRAYS THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTRICT.

A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMME WILL BE HELD AT 3 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE.

/TAKING PART

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TAKING PART WILL BE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR NICHOLAS YEK; DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR MICHAEL CHENG; PRODUCTION MANAGER OF TVB, MR P.K. LEE; AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF THE +GOOD MORNING HONG KONG+ PROGRAMME, MR JOHNNY WONG.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD TOMORROW AT 3 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE AT FOURTH FLOOR, SAN PO KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, KING FUK STREET, SAN PO KONG.

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BRIEFING ON TSING YI OPEN SPACE
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A PRESS BRIEFING, ARRANGED BY THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICE, ON THE PROVISION OF TEMPORARY OPEN SPACE ON TSING YI WILL BE HELD AT 11 AM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

THE BRIEFING WILL BE GIVEN BY THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE TSUEN WAN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, MR THOMAS KU, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 10TH FLOOR, KWAI HING GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 166-174, HING FONG ROAD, KWAI CHUNG.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE BRIEFING WILL BE THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, MR JOHNATHAN YUNG.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PRESS BRIEFING ON FRIDAY.

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DETAILS OF EASTERN ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN
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A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF THE 1986 EASTERN DISTRICT ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN AND TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT SURVEYS WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE INCLUDE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE, MR YUE HUI-KWONG; CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN, MR STEPHEN CHENG; CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT SURVEYS, MR AU-YEUNG YING-CHEONG; SENIOR TRANSPORT OFFICER OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, MR TSANG WING-HANG; EASTERN DISTRICT, OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE, MR PAU SHIU-PING; AND THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION, MR PAUL W.C. HO.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT 11.30 AM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT OFFICE AT 880-886 KING'S ROAD.

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NEW CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN STRATEGY
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A FAR-REACHING OPERATIONAL AND PUBLICITY STRATEGY FOR A MAJOR NEW CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN MUST PASS ITS SECOND HURDLE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) WHEN THE JOINT URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCIL KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING WHICH BEGINS AT 2.30 PM IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, FOURTH FLOOR, URBAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, EDINBURGH PLACE.

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PLB RESTRICTED ZONE ON GARDEN ROAD
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PART OF GARDEN ROAD WILL BE DESIGNATED A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTED ZONE FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 8).

THE SECTION AFFECTED IS THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE ON GARDEN ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 90 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH THE SLIP ROAD TO THE WEST OF ST JOHN'S BUILDING, LEADING FROM GARDEN ROAD TO COTTON TREE DRIVE, TO A POINT ABOUT 45 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

THE MEASURE WILL BE EFFECTIVE DAILY FROM 7 AM TO MIDNIGHT.

WITHIN THE RESTRICTED ZONE, NO PUBLIC LIGHT BUS WILL BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP OR SET DOWN PASSENGERS.

THE EXISTING 24-HOUR RESTRICTED ZONE AT THE SAME SECTION OF GARDEN ROAD WILL BE LIFTED.

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PLB RESTRICTED ZONE IN TUEN MUN
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THE SECTION OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD SOUTHBOUND IN TUEN MUN WILL BE DESIGNATED A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTED ZONE FROM 7 AM TO MIDNIGHT DAILY STARTING 10 AM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

THE AFFECTED SECTION IS FROM A POINT ABOUT 290 METRES NORTH OF CASTLE PEAK POLICE STATION TO A POINT 430 METRES NORTH OF KADOORIE BEACH CAR PARK.

WITHIN THE RESTRICTED ZONE, ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1986

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URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTIONS IN WAN CHAI

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FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 7), TWO ROAD SECTIONS IN WAN CHAI WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS.

THE ROAD SECTIONS ARE:

- * EASTBOUND HENNESSY ROAD BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 15 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH FENWICK STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION. THE RESTRICTION WILL BE IN FORCE 24 HOURS DAILY.
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TONNOCHY ROAD BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH INNER GLOUCESTER ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 25 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION. THE RESTRICTION WILL BE IMPOSED DURING PEAK-HOURS (7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM) DAILY.

WITHIN THE ABOVE ROAD SECTIONS, NO VEHICLE OTHER THAN FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR GOODS OR PASSENGERS.

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RESTRICTED ZONE IN KWAI CHUNG

THE SECTION OF WO TONG TSUI STREET IN KWAI CHUNG BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH KIN CHUEN STREET AND A POINT 10 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH ON KEI STREET WILL BE DESIGNATED A RESTRICTED ZONE FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY STARTING 10 AM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

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

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NO FLUSHING WATER

SALT WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICTS WILL BE TURNED OFF FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 8) TO 10 AM ON NOVEMBER 10 FOR MAINS WORK.

THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY PEDDER STREET, WYNDHAM STREET, GLENEALY, CAINE ROAD, BONHAM ROAD, POK FU LAM ROAD, SANDS STREET AND HOK SZ TERRACE, INCLUDING CONNAUGHT PLACE.

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