



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1990

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NEW AIRPORT VITAL TO HONG KONG'S FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH  
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THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF HONG KONG IS THE KEY FACTOR ENABLING THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY.

"WE WOULD NOT HAVE PROCEEDED WITH THIS PACKAGE IF WE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT DOING SO WAS CLEARLY WITHIN OUR FINANCIAL CAPACITY."

SIR PIERS, WHO WAS ONE OF FIVE SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO SPEAK ON THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (PADS) IN LEGCO TODAY, DETAILED THE STATE OF HONG KONG'S RESERVES, THE SAR GOVERNMENT LAND FUND, AND THE POTENTIAL LAND SALES REVENUES AS DEMONSTRATING THE STRENGTH OF THE TERRITORY'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

HE SAID THAT EVEN ON FAIRLY CONSERVATIVE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FUTURE LAND SALES AND INTEREST, THE LAND FUND SHOULD BE WELL OVER \$70 BILLION BY MARCH 1997. AT THE END OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, 1989-90 THE FUND STOOD AT OVER \$17 BILLION.

"OUR FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSUMES THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DRAW AT ALL ON THE LAND FUND.

"WHEN THE SAR GOVERNMENT COMES INTO BEING IT SHOULD HAVE AN AIRPORT WHICH WILL PRODUCE REVENUE - A GREATLY IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE MUCH OF IT ALSO REVENUE-PRODUCING - AND SOMEWHAT LARGER RESERVES THAN WE PRESENTLY ENJOY," SIR PIERS SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S RESERVES ALREADY TOTALLED MORE THAN \$70 BILLION - UP FROM \$24 BILLION FIVE YEARS AGO, AND THAT POTENTIAL LAND SALES REVENUE AMOUNTED TO SOME \$40 BILLION.

THESE THREE FACTORS - THE RESERVES, THE SAR GOVERNMENT LAND FUND AND THE POTENTIAL LAND SALES - DEMONSTRATED THE STRENGTH OF HONG KONG'S POSITION.

SIR PIERS ADDED: "INVESTMENT IN THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME IS INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE. WHEN COMPLETED THE AIRPORT AND RELATED FACILITIES WILL BRING TO HONG KONG LONG TERM ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS FAR GREATER THAN THE COST OF THE INVESTMENT, AND THESE BENEFITS WILL BE ENJOYED WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY."

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR ALBERT LAM, SAID THE DOOR TO PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING REMAINED WIDE OPEN.

THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CROSSING DID NOT PRECLUDE CONSIDERATION OF OFFERS OF FINANCE OR PLEDGES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AT THE TENDER STAGE. AND THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RETAINED THE OPTION OF CALLING FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS TO OPERATE THE FIXED CROSSING ONCE COMPLETED.

/MR LAM .....

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MR LAM SAID THE "PREQUALIFICATION" EXERCISE IN SELECTING TENDERERS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING WOULD BEGIN SHORTLY.

THE PROJECT WOULD BE SPLIT INTO A NUMBER OF SELF CONTAINED CONTRACTS SO THAT INTERESTED PARTIES, WHETHER LOCAL OR INTERNATIONAL, COULD TENDER FOR THE CONTRACTS IN THE FIELD BEST SUITED TO THEIR EXPERTISE AND ABILITY.

MR LAM DESCRIBED THE TRANSPORT LINKS IN PLACE FOR PADS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY TO MEET HONG KONG'S NEEDS IN THE NEXT 10 TO 20 YEARS.

HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTED TO RECEIVE THE CONSULTANTS FINAL REPORTS BY THE END OF THE YEAR ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE AIRPORT RAILWAY. THESE QUESTIONS INCLUDED WHAT IS THE BEST ALIGNMENT, HOW SOON THE RAILWAY IS REQUIRED, AND WHAT THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE.

THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG OF A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT.

"THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT A CONSTRAINED AIRPORT WOULD SEVERELY LIMIT OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND MAKE HONG KONG INCREASINGLY LESS ATTRACTIVE AS A MAJOR CENTRE FOR TRADE, FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

"KAI TAK IS ALREADY THE SIXTH BUSIEST AIRPORT IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS AND THE FOURTH BUSIEST IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT. IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY BUSIER THAN ANY AIRPORT ANYWHERE IN CHINA."

SHE SAID THAT IF DOUBLE DIGIT GROWTH CONTINUED IN PASSENGER AND AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS, CAPACITY AT KAI TAK WOULD BE REACHED AS EARLY AS 1993.

ON THE QUESTION OF COMPETITION FROM NEW AIRPORTS AT MACAU AND SHENZHEN, MRS CHAN SAID THAT MACAU WAS NOT EXPECTED TO ATTRACT ANY SIGNIFICANT VOLUME OF TRAFFIC FROM AN AVIATION HUB LIKE HONG KONG.

HOWEVER, SHENZHEN WOULD POTENTIALLY FULFIL A HELPFUL ROLE IN RELIEVING PRESSURE ON KAI TAK PRIOR TO CHEK LAP KOK COMING ON STREAM.

"IN THE LONGER TERM, WE SEE THE ROLES OF CHEK LAP KOK, MACAU AND SHENZHEN AIRPORTS AS LARGELY COMPLEMENTARY. ALL THREE ARE NEEDED TO SERVICE ADEQUATELY THE DYNAMIC AREA OF THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AND SOUTHERN CHINA GENERALLY," MRS CHAN SAID.

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, MENTIONED SOME OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

"ALMOST UNBELIEVABLY ON THAT DAY THERE WILL BE NO AIRCRAFT ROARING OVER KOWLOON TONG AND SHAM SHUI PO AND MUCH OF THE TRAFFIC ON CHATHAM ROAD FLYOVER AND AROUND THE KOWLOON CITY ROUNDABOUT WILL BE GONE.

/"THIS WILL .....

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"THIS WILL BE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RESTRUCTURING OF A SOMEWHAT QUIETER KOWLOON TO THE RELIEF OF OVERCROWDING AND FOR NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

"IT IS PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE FROM WHICH THE METROPLAN WILL BENEFIT," MR BARNES SAID.

IN SUMMING UP THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THERE WAS NOTHING "MAGIC" ABOUT THE 1997 TARGET DATE FOR BUILDING THE AIRPORT.

"THE VIEW THAT THE AIRPORT MUST BE BUILT IN THE PERIOD OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION FORMS NO PART OF GOVERNMENT'S THINKING."

THE TWO FACTORS WERE THE NEED TO BUILD THE AIRPORT AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE BECAUSE OF THE GROWING CONGESTION AT KAI TAK - AND ON THE THE BEST ADVICE AT THE TIME, SEVEN YEARS WAS THE SHORTEST PERIOD NECESSARY FOR COMPLETION OF THE CORE PROJECTS.

THE CORE PROJECTS INCLUDED ONE RUNWAY AT CHEK LAP KOK, THE NORTH LANTAU EXPRESSWAY, THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING AND THE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY.

SIR DAVID SAID THE DECISION TO BUILD THE AIRPORT WAS NOT A SUDDEN ONE AS THE LONG TERM NEED FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT WAS DEFINED IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES.

"OVER THE INTERVENING PERIOD, THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN EXHAUSTIVELY REVIEWED FROM EVERY ANGLE: FROM FORECAST OF DEMAND, THROUGH LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, TO COST AND THE DISBENEFITS OF DOING NOTHING. THE DECISION IN OCTOBER 1989 COULD HARDLY BE DESCRIBED AS A SURPRISE."

BRIEFINGS FOR MANY EMINENT VISITORS WERE ALSO GIVEN LONG BEFORE THE DECISION TO PROCEED WAS ANNOUNCED. THIS INCLUDED A GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM THE MAINLAND WHO WERE GIVEN A FULL PRESENTATION ON PADS IN MARCH 1989.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE TRADITIONAL HONG KONG STYLE OF CONSULTATION FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS HAD BEEN FOLLOWED.

THE ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF CONSULTATION FOLLOWED IN SOME OTHER PLACES WHICH INVOLVES FORMAL PUBLIC INQUIRIES COULD HAVE SEVERE PENALTIES IF APPLIED IN HONG KONG.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY CITED THE MUNICH AIRPORT, WHICH WAS STILL NOT FINISHED AFTER A DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN IN 1969 TO PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT; AND THE STANSTED AIRPORT IN THE UK WHICH HAD BEEN ARGUED ABOUT SINCE 1964 AND WAS NOT DUE TO OPEN UNTIL NEXT YEAR.

"SOMEHOW THAT STYLE OF DOING THINGS DOESN'T QUITE SEEM TO FIT INTO HONG KONG'S 'GET UP AND GO' IMAGE," SIR DAVID SAID.

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UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA IS IMPORTANT  
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THERE IS WIDE CONSENSUS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING AN UNDERSTANDING ON HONG KONG AND CHINA, NOT LEAST THROUGH GREATER CONTACTS - BETWEEN CIVIL SERVANTS, IN THE COMMERCIAL FIELD, AND BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND CHINA, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID SAID HE HOPED THAT THIS PROCESS COULD BE A TWO-WAY ONE.

"AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS A STRONG FEELING THAT AN INCREASING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND A BETTER DIALOGUE WITH CHINA SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS GIVING THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT A VETO OVER DECISIONS WHICH ARE PROPERLY FOR THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE HONG KONG SAR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THESE VIEWS COULD BE WELL APPLIED TO THE SPECIFIC CASE OF THE NEW PORT AND AIRPORT.

"WE WOULD LIKE THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH WHAT WE ARE PLANNING AND WOULD WELCOME EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FROM THEM FOR PROJECTS WHICH ARE TO THE LONG TERM BENEFIT OF HONG KONG.

"WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE WILLING TO KEEP THEM INFORMED AS OUR PLANS DEVELOP, EVEN THOUGH WE ARE NOT OF COURSE SEEKING FORMAL APPROVAL FROM THEM NOR DO WE INTEND THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD PLACE ANY BURDEN ON THE CHINESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT NOW OR IN THE FUTURE," HE SAID.

THE CHINESE EXPERT TEAM WHICH RECENTLY VISITED HONG KONG HELD CANDID AND CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS WITH US IN A FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE, SAID SIR DAVID ADDING THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT FOUND THE TALKS USEFUL.

"THE CHINESE TEAM WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE FINANCIAL POSITION WHICH THE SAR GOVERNMENT WILL INHERIT IN 1997. WE HOPE THAT THE INFORMATION WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN THEM WILL REASSURE THEM.

"OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE THE SAR IN 1997 NOT ONLY WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY FOR ITS CONTINUED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT ALSO WITH STRONG FINANCES.

"WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN DO BOTH. WE LOOK FORWARD TO FURTHER TALKS ON THE MATTER WITH THE CHINESE SIDE," SIR DAVID SAID.

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HONG KONG WELL SERVED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE  
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HONG KONG COMMUNITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN WELL SERVED BY ITS PUBLIC SERVICE, NOTWITHSTANDING OCCASIONAL DRAMATIC HEADLINES AND STORIES ABOUT INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL MINORITIES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCLUDING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID SAID AT A TIME WHEN IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE IMAGE OF THE SERVICE AS A WHOLE HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY THE FEW, IT WAS AS WELL TO REMEMBER AND TO GIVE CREDIT TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS WHO DAY AFTER DAY CONTINUED TO PROVE THAT OUR PUBLIC SERVICE WAS LOYAL, DEDICATED AND EFFICIENT.

"AND IN SAYING THIS I AM NOT SIMPLY RELYING ON MY OWN OPINION BUT DRAWING ON THE MANY PERSONAL COMMENTS WE RECEIVE FROM OVERSEAS POLITICIANS, ACADEMICS AND BUSINESSMEN," SIR DAVID SAID.

AT THIS TIME OF TRANSITION, SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT ADDITIONAL DEMANDS WERE PLACED ON OUR PUBLIC SERVICE.

"IN MANY WAYS, SURROUNDED AS WE ARE BY CHANGE, WE LOOK INCREASINGLY TO THE CIVIL SERVICE TO PROVIDE THE CONTINUITY WHICH WILL PROVE ESSENTIAL AS WE MOVE THROUGH THE NINETIES AND BEYOND," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID HE AGREED WITH THE SUGGESTION MADE BY A NUMBER OF MEMBERS THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TO REDUCE BUREAUCRACY AND INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE SERVICE.

"WITH A WORKFORCE OF SOME 190,000, MORE THAN 400 GRADES AND SOME 60 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL.

"IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE - IF IT EVER WERE - FOR MANAGEMENT TO BE THOUGHT OF AS A RESPONSIBILITY EXERCISED EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE CENTRE.

"IN ITS WIDEST SENSE, SIR DAVID SAID, MANAGEMENT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THOSE WHO PLAY A SUPERVISORY ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION: IN THE GOVERNMENT, OUR FOCAL POINT MUST BE THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL.

"WE ARE THEREFORE IN THE PROCESS OF DEVOLVING MORE RESPONSIBILITIES TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENT. IN TURN THIS MEANS THAT THEY WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR OWN RESOURCES," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY, FOR INSTANCE, DELEGATED TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENT OR HEADS OF GRADE THE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS TO ALL POSTS BELOW DIRECTORATE LEVEL, SUBJECT ONLY TO THE ADVICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

"THIS COVERS 99 PER CENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"A START HAS ALSO BEEN MADE IN DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENT TO GRANT VARIOUS PAYMENTS AND ALLOWANCES PROVIDED FOR UNDER CIVIL SERVICE REGULATIONS.

"WE ARE ALSO DELEGATING TO DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARRANGING THEIR OWN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.

"I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS WE DO NOT ALLOW THE GRASS TO GROW UNDER OUR FEET AS FAR AS THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IS CONCERNED AND WE ARE PREPARED TO ADAPT TO KEEP PACE WITH MODERN DEVELOPMENTS AND PRACTICES," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT AT THE SAME TIME AS THE ADMINISTRATION WAS GIVING MORE RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGERS, IT WAS TAKING STEPS TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS THROUGH MANAGEMENT TRAINING.

"TRAINING OF STAFF AT SUPERVISORY LEVELS GIVES MANAGERS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLE AND HELPS THEM TO MOTIVATE THEIR STAFF AND SET HIGHER STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT," HE SAID.

POINTING OUT THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS WAS A CONTINUOUS AND EXPANDING PROGRAMME, SIR DAVID SAID: "IN 1987/88, SOME 9,500 STAFF WERE SENT ON A WIDE RANGE OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSES, THE TOTAL IN 1989/90, HAS RISEN TO AROUND 10,300."

ON THE COMMENTS BY MEMBERS ABOUT THE NEED FOR PUBLIC SECTOR WAGE RESTRAINT, SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM AND CLEAR POLICY THAT CIVIL SERVICE PAY SHOULD FOLLOW, AND NOT LEAD, THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

"CIVIL SERVICE PAY IS ADJUSTED ANNUALLY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PAY TRENDS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OVER THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND OUR BUDGETARY POSITION.

"WE LOOK, IN THE FIRST PLACE, AT WHAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS DOING BY WAY OF PAY INCREASES," HE EXPLAINED.

THE ANNUAL PAY TREND SURVEY, WHICH FORMED THE BASIS FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE PAY ADJUSTMENT, WAS THE METHOD THE GOVERNMENT USED TO FIND OUT WHAT THESE INCREASES HAD BEEN, HE SAID.

"BUT WE ALSO PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS WHETHER A PARTICULAR LEVEL OF PAY ADJUSTMENT WOULD ADD UNDULY TO THE INFLATIONARY PRESSURE, AND OF COURSE THE EXCHEQUER'S ABILITY TO PAY.

"WHERE THESE CONSIDERATIONS WARRANT, A SMALLER PAY INCREASE IS MADE," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT WAS THE SITUATION EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHEN THE CIVIL SERVICE PAY ADJUSTMENT WAS ON AVERAGE 2 PER CENT LESS THAN THE PAY TREND SURVEY RESULTS.

"IT IS PERHAPS TOO EARLY TO DISCUSS CURRENT PAY TRENDS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, BUT OUR ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY POSITION DICTATES THAT WE SHALL CERTAINLY HAVE TO BE PRUDENT ON PAY ADJUSTMENTS NEXT YEAR," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY NOTED THAT SOME MEMBERS, REFLECTING PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE MATTER, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT GET ITSELF LOCKED INTO AN ENDLESS ROUND OF SALARY REVIEWS FOR DIFFERENT GRADES.

"REFERENCES IN THE MEDIA, AND INDEED BY SOME OF THE AFFECTED GRADES THEMSELVES, MAY HAVE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS A NON-STOP PROCESS OF SALARY AWARDS TO LUCKY CIVIL SERVANTS.

"IT IS IMPORTANT THEREFORE TO SET THE RECENT AWARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SALARY STRUCTURE, WHICH BEGAN ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO AND WAS INITIATED AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF INCREASING DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING STAFF," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ONE EXERCISE; BUT BECAUSE OF ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS AND THE NUMBERS INVOLVED, THAT WAS SOME 400 GRADES, IT HAD TO BE SPREAD OUT OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

"THE REVIEW IS NOW DRAWING TO A CLOSE. THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE WILL COMPLETE THE FINAL STAGE OF ITS REVIEW OF NON-DIRECTORATE SALARY STRUCTURE IN DECEMBER, BY WHICH TIME THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINED SERVICES SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE WILL ALSO HAVE MADE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SALARY OF DISCIPLINED SERVICE OFFICERS.

"THE END IS THEREFORE IN SIGHT, AND I DO NOT FORESEE ANOTHER OVERALL SALARY STRUCTURE REVIEW FOR MANY YEARS TO COME," HE SAID.

ON CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT CONDITIONS OF SERVICE REMAINED APPROPRIATE IN PRESENT DAY CIRCUMSTANCES.

"THIS DOES NOT MEAN THROWING MORE MONEY INTO THE PACKAGE OF CIVIL SERVICE BENEFITS, WHICH IS ALREADY GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE GOOD - AND WHICH BEFITS A GOOD EMPLOYER.

"THE MAIN AIM IS TO ENSURE THAT RESOURCES ARE USED MORE COST-EFFECTIVELY, AND THAT CIVIL SERVICE BENEFITS ARE STRUCTURED IN A WAY THAT BEST MEET THE CHANGING ASPIRATIONS OF STAFF," HE SAID.

"THE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED NEW CIVIL SERVICE HOUSING PACKAGE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE: WHILE MEETING THE STAFF'S WISH FOR GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOME OWNERSHIP, THE SCHEME WILL ALSO RESULT IN LONG TERM SAVINGS OF ABOUT \$3 BILLION.

"ITS POPULARITY IS ATTESTED BY THE FACT THAT, FROM ITS IMPLEMENTATION ON OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR TO THE END OF LAST WEEK, SOME 5,500 CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE APPLIED UNDER THE PACKAGE TO ACQUIRE THEIR OWN HOMES," SIR DAVID SAID.

/HE ALSO .....

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT CIVIL SERVICE BENEFITS, SOME OF WHICH WERE UNDOUBTEDLY OUTDATED, WERE MODERNIZED TO KEEP UP WITH CHANGING ASPIRATIONS.

"THE GOVERNMENT'S ADVISORY BODIES ON PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE WOULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE HERE," SIR DAVID SAID.

ON THE CONCERN OVER SECURITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS' PENSIONS, SIR DAVID SAID HE MUST REPEAT THE POINT MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS ADDRESS THAT CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS WERE SECURE.

"THEY ARE BOTH A STATUTORY RIGHT AND A STATUTORY CHARGE ON THE GENERAL REVENUE OF HONG KONG WHICH INCLUDES THE FISCAL RESERVES.

"THERE ARE ALSO FIRM COMMITMENTS TO THEIR PAYMENT IN BOTH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW," HE SAID.

DESPITE THIS AND RECOGNISING THE CONTINUING WORRIES OF THE SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS SEEING IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER MEASURES WHICH IT COULD TAKE TO EASE STAFF CONCERNS.

"I HOPE IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT ANY CHANGES MUST BE SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES," HE ADDED.

ON CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID: "WE WOULD ALL LIKE TO SEE A TOTALLY CONTENTED CIVIL SERVICE; NONE OF US CAN FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH REPORTS OF DISAFFECTION AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS GIVEN SUCH PUBLIC EXPRESSION.

"BUT THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE SEEN IN PERSPECTIVE," HE SAID.

ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF MANAGING A CIVIL SERVICE LIKE OURS, SAID SIR DAVID, WAS ITS SIZE: THE GOVERNMENT WAS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN HONG KONG, WITH ALMOST 190,000 PEOPLE ON THE PAYROLL.

"IN MY VIEW WE SHOULD NOT BE TOO SURPRISED IF, IN SUCH A LARGE ORGANIZATION, THERE IS AT ANY ONE TIME ONE GROUP OR OTHER WITH A COMPLAINT OR A CONCERN WHICH THEY ARE PREPARED TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY.

"THIS IS PERHAPS ESPECIALLY UNDERSTANDABLE AT A TIME WHEN THEIR PAY IS UNDER REVIEW," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO CONCLUDE FROM THIS, THAT THE WHOLE OF THE HONG KONG CIVIL SERVICE IS SEETHING WITH DISCONTENT.

"THE VAST MAJORITY, AS RECOGNIZED BY SOME MEMBERS, ARE STILL PUTTING IN A HARD AND HONEST DAY'S WORK.

"WE STILL HAVE AN EFFICIENT CIVIL SERVICE. INDEED, THIS IS OFTEN SEEN AS ONE OF HONG KONG'S ATTRACTIONS AS A PLACE TO INVEST AND DO BUSINESS," HE SAID.

IN CASES WHERE DISPUTES DID OCCUR, SIR DAVID SAID THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED IN RESOLVING THEM THROUGH FRANK AND DIRECT DIALOGUE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF.

"AS I SAID EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE SUCCESS OF OUR SYSTEM SHOULD BE MEASURED BY THE QUIET CONSENSUS WHICH ENDS THE MAJORITY OF DISAGREEMENTS; NOT BY THE NOISY AND UNREPRESENTATIVE FEW," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID SINCE THE GOVERNMENT DID EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION, IT WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT THAT ITS SYSTEM OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WAS EFFECTIVE.

"THE PRESENT CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY IS AN ELABORATE ONE.

"THERE ARE PLENTY OF AVENUES OPEN TO STAFF TO AIR THEIR GRIEVANCES, OR SIMPLY TO EXPRESS A VIEW.

"THIS THEY CAN DO EITHER INDIVIDUALLY THROUGH ONE-TO-ONE CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT; OR COLLECTIVELY THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE 88 DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE, AS WELL AS THE FOUR CENTRAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS," SIR DAVID SAID ADDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CURRENTLY FINALISING SOME PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE PRESENT MACHINERY FURTHER.

NOTING THAT THE RANGE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT HAD GROWN, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID IT FELL ON THE ADMINISTRATION TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES AND RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO NEW DEMANDS.

"A DEDICATED AND EFFICIENT CIVIL SERVICE IS THE KEY TO THE CONTINUANCE OF SOUND ADMINISTRATION.

"WE NEED PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE VISION TO SET NEW GOALS FOR THE COMMUNITY; AND THE INTEGRITY, COURAGE AND COMMITMENT TO SEE THEM THROUGH," HE SAID.

HE RECOGNISED THAT THE CHALLENGES OF BOTH THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE MIGHT WELL PUT ADDITIONAL STRAIN ON THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"WE NEED TO REASSURE THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE UP THAT SERVICE, THAT MANAGEMENT IS ALIVE TO THEIR CONCERNS AND IS ADDRESSING THOSE CONCERNS CONSTRUCTIVELY; IS GIVING THEM BOTH THE TOOLS TO DO THE JOB AND APPROPRIATE PAY FOR THE JOB; AND IS GIVING THEM EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY THEIR PART IN SHAPING THE HONG KONG OF THE FUTURE.

"IN THIS, I AM SURE THEY CAN LOOK TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THIS COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE," SIR DAVID SAID.

PADS TO BRING BENEFITS FAR GREATER THAN COST

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THE NEW AIRPORT AND RELATED FACILITIES WHEN COMPLETED WILL BRING TO HONG KONG LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS FAR GREATER THAN THE COST OF INVESTMENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, SIR PIERS SAID THESE BENEFITS WILL BE ENJOYED WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

CLEARLY, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPLACEMENT AIRPORT AND THE RELATED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DOES INVOLVE A VERY SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT. "BUT I WISH TO UNDERLINE THE FACT THAT INVESTMENT IN THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME IS INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE," HE SAID

SIR PIERS SAID THE KEY FACTOR ENABLING THE GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE ON PROCEEDING WITH THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME WAS HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL STRENGTH.

"I HAVE IN MIND, FIRST, THE VERY SUBSTANTIAL RESERVES OF OVER \$70 BILLION WHICH WE HAVE BUILT UP IN RECENT YEARS THROUGH PRUDENT MANAGEMENT. THIS COMPARES WITH RESERVES OF ONLY \$24 BILLION FIVE YEARS AGO.

"SECONDLY, I HAVE IN MIND THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION GOVERNMENT LAND FUND," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID WHILE THE SAR GOVERNMENT LAND FUND WOULD NOT BE PART OF THE RESERVES UNTIL JULY 1997, IT CONSISTED OF INCOME FROM LAND SALE PREMIA WHICH PREVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE GONE INTO THE RESERVES.

"THE LAND FUND IS CLEARLY OF RELEVANCE WHEN ASSESSING THE LONG-TERM STRENGTH OF HONG KONG'S FINANCES, AND PARTICULARLY THE STRENGTH OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION WHICH THE SAR GOVERNMENT WILL INHERIT ON ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1997," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE BALANCE TRANSFERRED TO THE SAR GOVERNMENT LAND FUND ALREADY STOOD AT OVER \$17 BILLION AT THE END OF FISCAL YEAR 1989-90.

"EVEN ON FAIRLY CONSERVATIVE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FUTURE LAND SALES AND INTEREST, THE LAND FUND SHOULD BE WELL OVER \$70 BILLION BY MARCH 1997 - THAT IS TO SAY, MORE THAN OUR EXISTING RESERVES.

"OUR FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSUMES THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DRAW AT ALL ON THE LAND FUND UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE RELEVANT SECTION OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION," HE SAID.

THUS, WHEN THE SAR GOVERNMENT CAME INTO BEING, IT SHOULD HAVE AN AIRPORT WHICH WOULD PRODUCE REVENUE, A GREATLY IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE, MUCH OF WHICH WOULD ALSO BE REVENUE-PRODUCING, AND SOMEWHAT LARGER RESERVES THAN WE PRESENTLY ENJOY.

SIR PIERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT HAVE PROCEEDED WITH THIS PACKAGE OF PROJECTS IF IT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT DOING SO WAS CLEARLY WITHIN HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL CAPACITY.

"I HOPE THE FIGURES I HAVE JUST REFERRED TO, THAT IS, OUR RESERVES, THE SAR GOVERNMENT LAND FUND TOGETHER WITH THE POTENTIAL LAND SALES REVENUE WHICH THE GOVERNOR HAD INDICATED IN HIS ADDRESS TO BE SOME \$40 BILLION AT PRESENT DAY PRICES, WILL DEMONSTRATE THE STRENGTH OF OUR POSITION," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, SIR PIERS SAID THERE WERE OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME AND THE FIRST WAS THE NEED TO CONTROL THE OVERALL COST OF THE PROGRAMME EFFECTIVELY.

THE SECOND RELATED TO THE NEED TO KEEP PUBLIC SECTOR COSTS TO THE MINIMUM BY ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION WHERE THIS MADE FINANCIAL SENSE, HE SAID.

"THIS STRATEGY IS FOUNDED ON HONG KONG'S SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE IN FUNDING PROJECTS LIKE THE CONTAINER TERMINALS AND VARIOUS MAJOR TUNNELS, WHOLLY OR PARTLY FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION NOT ONLY WOULD REDUCED THE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC FUNDS, IT ALSO INTRODUCED THE COMMERCIAL DISCIPLINES AND EFFICIENCIES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

"THE EXACT MIX OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING WILL EMERGE GRADUALLY AS REFINED COST ESTIMATES, REVENUE PROJECTIONS AND FINANCIAL ANALYSES OF THE VARIOUS PROJECTS BECOME AVAILABLE IN THE COMING MONTHS.

"THIS MIX MUST ENSURE THAT WE OBTAIN THE BEST OVERALL RESULTS FOR HONG KONG IN THE LONGER TERM.

"I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE THAT SOME 40 PER CENT TO 60 PER CENT OF THE PACKAGE OF PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY CAN BE FINANCED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR REMAINS TRUE," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THAT SOME HAD ARGUED THAT THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME WAS CROWDING OUT OTHER DESIRABLE PROJECTS, AND HAD TENDED TO BLAME ALL TIGHTENING OF CONTROL ON PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE ON THE AIRPORT PROGRAMME.

HE SAID THIS VIEW WAS MISGUIDED FOR TWO PRINCIPAL REASONS.

"FIRST, EVEN WITHOUT A DECISION TO BUILD THE NEW AIRPORT, LOWER GROWTH IN THE ECONOMY AND A HIGH LEVEL OF INFLATION WOULD IN ANY EVENT REQUIRE US TO CONTAIN THE INCREASE IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MORE TIGHTLY.

"SECONDLY, WE MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN RECURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE PRIME NEED, EVEN WITHOUT THE DECISION TO BUILD THE AIRPORT, WAS TO KEEP RECURRENT EXPENDITURE GROWTH TO A REASONABLE LEVEL.

"THIS MEANS CONTROLLING THE SIZE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, AND INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY.

"TO PROVIDE A LITTLE REASSURANCE I SHOULD ADD THAT IT WILL NEVERTHELESS STILL BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE SOME PROVISION FOR NEW OR IMPROVED SERVICES, PARTLY BY CARRYING OUT SOME EXISTING ACTIVITIES MORE COST-EFFECTIVELY," HE SAID.

ON THE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FRONT, SIR PIERS SAID IT WAS TRUE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS GIVING PRIORITY TO AIRPORT CORE PROJECTS, AND THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE PARTICULARLY PRUDENT OVER NEW PROGRAMMES WITH SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IMPLICATIONS.

"BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP THIS IN PERSPECTIVE. WE HAVE ALLOWED FOR COMMITMENTS IN OTHER AREAS TOO, SUCH AS EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER SUPPLY AND NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT.

"CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON NON-AIRPORT PROGRAMME AREAS IS PROJECTED TO BE A MASSIVE \$140 BILLION AT 1990 PRICES IN THE PERIOD UP TO 1997," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID CLEARLY HONG KONG WOULD FACE A FEW YEARS OF BUDGETARY DEFICITS AS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUILT UP AND PEAKED OVER THIS PERIOD.

"THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED, AND IS PRECISELY ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE HAVE BUILT UP SUCH CONSIDERABLE RESERVES.

"DRAWING ON THESE RESERVES TO PAY FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL INVESTMENTS WHICH WILL ALLOW THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY AND THE CONTINUED PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG IS TO SOME EXTENT INEVITABLE," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, SIR PIERS SAID, THERE IS ANOTHER OPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NEED TO CONSIDER FURTHER, AND THAT IS BORROWING.

"BORROWING BY STATUTORY CORPORATIONS SUCH AS THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION IS ALREADY A WELL-ESTABLISHED WAY OF FUNDING, AND CLEARLY ONE OF THE METHODS THAT THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY IS LIKELY TO USE.

"ALSO, WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF JUDICIOUS BORROWING BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ITSELF, A WELL-TRIED METHOD ELSEWHERE FOR FINANCING MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS AND SMOOTHING PUBLIC SECTOR CASHFLOW.

"I HAVE MADE NO DECISION YET AS TO WHETHER THIS IS AN OPTION WE SHOULD ACTUALLY PURSUE, BUT I WILL REVERT TO THE ISSUE IN MY BUDGET SPEECH NEXT YEAR," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID HONG KONG'S LONGER TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH COULD ONLY BE SECURED BY ENSURING THAT ITS PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS ADEQUATE TO FACILITATE THE EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS IN AND OUT OF HONG KONG.

"THIS IS CRUCIAL TO MAINTAINING OUR POSITION AS A MAJOR FINANCE, TRADE AND SERVICES CENTRE FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION. THE NEW AIRPORT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THAT INFRASTRUCTURE.

"AS THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES HAS ALREADY POINTED OUT, KAI TAK IS EXPECTED TO REACH SATURATION AS EARLY AS 1993. THEREAFTER, GROWTH WILL BE CONSTRAINED BECAUSE OF LIMITED CAPACITY, AND THIS COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH," HE SAID.

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GREAT DEAL OF CONSULTATION ON PADS: CS  
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF CONSULTATION ON THE PADS PROJECT AND THE DECISION TO BUILD THE NEW AIRPORT WAS NOT A SUDDEN ONE.

"TRUE WE DID NOT ISSUE A "PADS GREEN PAPER" COVERING THE WHOLE OF THE PROJECT. BUT WE HAVE MADE NO SECRET OF WHAT WE ARE DOING, THE MEDIA HAS BEEN FULL OF IT FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW AND THE VARIOUS PROJECTS HAVE ALL BEEN PUT TO THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES FOR CONSIDERATION, SIR DAVID SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID SAID THROUGHOUT ALL THE YEARS THIS PROJECT'S GESTATION, THE AVIATION ADVISORY BOARD HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL HAD SERVED ON THAT BOARD.

"ON THE TRANSPORT FRONT, THERE HAS BEEN FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND WITH THE DISTRICT BOARDS. THEIR COMMENTS ON THE GREEN PAPER "MOVING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY" WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE WHITE PAPER ISSUED IN JANUARY THIS YEAR.

"AND, OF COURSE, SERIOUS CONSIDERATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN GIVEN TO THE VIEWS AND ADVICE VOLUNTEERED BY INDIVIDUALS AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ATTENDED NUMEROUS PUBLIC SEMINARS AND WERE PREPARED TO DO MORE AND THERE WERE PLANS FOR TELEVISION PROGRAMMES WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN ALL ASPECTS OF THE PADS TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

SIR DAVID POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE ABOUT ITS STYLE OF CONSULTATION FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS, EITHER IT CONTINUED TO DO THINGS THE WAY WE HAD DONE SO FAR, THE TRADITIONAL HONG KONG WAY OR WE MADE A DRASTIC CHANGE AND ACCEPTED THE CONSEQUENCES.

"THE HONG KONG STYLE OF CONSULTATION FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS IS TO TAKE THE BEST ADVICE AVAILABLE, MAKE A DECISION BASED ON THAT ADVICE AND THEN ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO IS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE DECISION IS FULLY CONSULTED," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY CITED THE EXAMPLE THAT THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD WHICH HAD A KEEN INTEREST IN THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION WAS ALREADY DISCUSSING THE ALIGNMENT AND IMPACT OF THE ROAD ON THE COMMUNITY THERE.

"MANY MORE DISTRICT BOARDS WILL BE INVOLVED AS TIME GOES ON. AND OF COURSE THE PLANNING PROCESS IS SUBJECT TO THE SCRUTINY OF THIS COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAVE TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE FUNDING," THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF CONSULTATION WHICH WAS ADOPTED IN SOME OTHER PLACES AROUND THE WORLD.

"IT IS TO HAVE A SERIES OF FORMAL PUBLIC ENQUIRIES OPEN TO THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC AT WHICH EVERY ELEMENT OF THE PROJECT IS OPEN FOR PUBLIC DEBATE.

"THAT MAY BE A PERFECTLY SUITABLE COURSE TO FOLLOW IN SOME COUNTRIES BUT EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE LEADS US TO BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE SEVERE PENALTIES IF WE APPLIED THE SAME APPROACH IN HONG KONG," HE NOTED.

SIR DAVID SAID A DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH MUNICH AIRPORT, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS MADE IN 1969 AND IT WAS STILL NOT FINISHED LARGELY BECAUSE OF DELAYS CAUSED BY PUBLIC ENQUIRIES WHICH TOGETHER TOOK OVER EIGHT YEARS TO COMPLETE AND STANSTED AIRPORT IN THE UK HAD BEEN ARGUED ABOUT SINCE 1964 AND WAS DUE TO OPEN NEXT YEAR.

"SOMEHOW THAT STYLE OF DOING THINGS DOESN'T QUITE SEEM TO FIT INTO HONG KONG'S 'GET UP AND GO' IMAGE," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY STRESSED THAT AS A GOVERNMENT, IT DID NOT TAKE RASH DECISIONS ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE VITAL FOR HONG KONG'S CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

"AS YOU'VE HEARD OUR PLANNING FOR HONG KONG'S TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY BEGAN IN 1972.

"THE LONG TERM NEED FOR PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT WAS DEFINED IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, AND CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, THE SORT OF SOLUTION EVEN THEN PROPOSED WAS BROADLY SIMILAR TO THAT WE ADOPTED LAST YEAR," HE REMARKED.

OVER THE INTERVENING PERIOD, SIR DAVID SAID THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN EXHAUSTIVELY REVIEWED FROM EVERY ANGLE: FROM FORECAST OF DEMAND, THROUGH LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, TO COST AND THE DISBENEFITS OF DOING NOTHING.

THE DECISION IN OCTOBER 1989 COULD HARDLY BE DESCRIBED AS A SURPRISE AS THE GOVERNOR DEVOTED NINE PARAGRAPHS TO PADS IN HIS 1988 SPEECH, ALMOST AS MUCH AS THIS YEAR.

AT THAT TIME THE GOVERNOR GAVE A CLEAR INDICATION OF GOVERNMENT'S THINKING ON THE PROJECT AND SIGNALLED A FIRM DECISION IN 1989, SIR DAVID SAID.

"WE FULLY BRIEFED MANY EMINENT VISITORS TO HONG KONG ON THE PROJECT LONG BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO GO AHEAD WAS MADE LAST YEAR.

"INCIDENTALLY THESE VISITORS INCLUDED A GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM THE MAINLAND WHO WERE GIVEN A FULL PRESENTATION ON PADS BY ME AND POLICY SECRETARIES IN MARCH 1989," SIR DAVID SAID.

ON QUESTION OF THE TIMETABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AIRPORT, SIR DAVID SAID THERE WAS NOTHING MAGIC ABOUT THE 1997 TARGET DATE FOR BUILDING THE AIRPORT AND IT HAD NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

"THE VIEW THAT THE AIRPORT MUST BE BUILT IN THE PERIOD OF THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION FORMS NO PART OF GOVERNMENT'S THINKING. TWO FACTORS LED US TO THE TARGET DATE," SAID SIR DAVID.

"FIRST WE NEEDED TO BUILD THE AIRPORT AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE BEARING IN MIND THE GROWING CONGESTION AT KAI TAK.

"SECONDLY OUR BEST ADVICE AT THE TIME WAS THAT SEVEN YEARS WAS THE SHORTEST PERIOD NECESSARY FOR COMPLETION OF THE CORE PROJECTS. THAT BROUGHT US TO 1997," HE SAID.

EXPLAINING WHAT HE MEANT BY THE CORE PROJECTS, SIR DAVID SAID THESE WERE THE PROJECTS WHICH WERE ESSENTIAL TO THE OPENING OF THE AIRPORT BY THE TARGET DATE.

"THEY INCLUDE ONE RUNWAY OF THE CHEK LAP KOK AIRPORT, THE NORTH LANTAU EXPRESSWAY, THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING, AND THE WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE FIRST RUNWAY AT CHEK LAP KOK OPERATING 24 HOURS A DAY, AND WITHOUT THE CONSTRAINT OF THE CURFEW AT KAI TAK, WOULD PROVIDE AMPLE CAPACITY TO MEET OUR AIR TRAFFIC DEMAND BY THE MID-1990S.

"IT FOLLOWS THAT THE COMPLETION DATE FOR THE SECOND RUNWAY IS FLEXIBLE. AS THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT HAS EXPLAINED, WHILE THE DESIGN OF THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING AND THE EXPRESSWAYS WILL PROVIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY, WE DO NOT NEED TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE TIMING OF THAT RAILWAY FOR A FEW MONTHS YET," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PORT ON LANTAU WOULD OF COURSE CONTINUE TO BE BASED ON DEMAND, IT WOULD THEREFORE BE INCREMENTAL AND IT WOULD ALSO BE LARGELY FINANCED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

SIR DAVID STRESSED THAT WHILST WE HAD A PROGRAMME FOR COMPLETION OF THE CORE PROJECTS IT WAS NOT SET IN STONE.

"AS MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE THE PROGRAMME IS REVIEWED AND REFINED TO REFLECT THE OPTIMUM TIME FRAME WITHIN WHICH EACH PROJECT CAN BE COMPLETED AT A REASONABLE COST.

"I USE THE WORD OPTIMUM ADVISEDLY," HE ADDED.

NOTING THAT BECAUSE TIME EQUALED MONEY IN TWO WAYS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID SPEEDY COMPLETION COULD SAVE MONEY BY AVOIDING THE INFLATIONARY IMPACT ON COSTS, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND AN UNREALISTIC TARGET DATE WOULD RESULT IN CONTRACTORS BIDDING HIGHER PRICES TO COVER THE RISKS INVOLVED IN A TIGHT SCHEDULE.

"OUR PRIME CONCERN IN COMING TO A CONCLUSION ON PROGRAMMING THEREFORE IS TO ENSURE SPEEDY COMPLETION WITH OPTIMUM VALUE FOR MONEY," HE SAID.

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WE SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN OUR ABILITY: CS  
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT IS VITAL THAT WE DO NOT CREATE CRISIS WHERE NONE EXISTS BY LOSING FAITH IN OUR OWN WELL ESTABLISHED ABILITY NOT ONLY TO SURVIVE BUT TO PROSPER.

"AS SEVERAL MEMBERS HAVE POINTED OUT THIS COMMUNITY HAS A PROVEN TRACK RECORD OF BEING ABLE TO OVERCOME ANY PROBLEM WHICH CONFRONTS IT.

"THOSE OF US WHO LIVED THROUGH THE DARK DAYS OF 1967, AND THE OIL CRISIS OF THE 1970'S CAN TESTIFY TO HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK," SAID SIR DAVID SUMMING UP THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS A SAD REFLECTION OF THE TIMES THAT THE INTERNATIONAL VIEW OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE WAS SOMETIMES MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN THAT OF OUR PEOPLE HERE.

"THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE DANGERS IN THAT, BECAUSE THE CONFIDENCE OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS WILL BE AFFECTED BY OUR OWN VIEW OF HONG KONG'S FUTURE PROSPECTS.

"AND INDEED HONG KONG NEEDS LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INVESTMENT IF IT IS TO CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND MANUFACTURING CENTRE," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THERE COULD BE FEW GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAD MANAGED TO MAINTAIN SUCH CONSISTENT POLICY DIRECTION OVER WIDE AREAS OF ADMINISTRATION AND FOR SUCH LONG PERIODS OF TIME AND HAD SUCH A SUCCESSFUL RECORD OF DELIVERING THE GOODS ON ITS LONG TERM PROMISES AND PLANS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WE SOMETIMES TOOK FOR GRANTED OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN SUCH FIELDS AS HOUSING, EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND IT TOOK VISITORS TO REMIND US THAT NO TERRITORY IN THE WORLD HAD TACKLED, WHAT ONE OF THE FORMER CHIEF SECRETARY CALLED, "THE PROBLEM OF PEOPLE", WITH SUCH DETERMINATION, IMAGINATION AND SUCCESS.

"JUST LOOK AROUND THE TERRITORY. WE HAVE OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS EMBARKED ON ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMAGINATIVE AND SUCCESSFUL NEW TOWN BUILDING PROGRAMMES.

"WE HAVE MOVED TWO MILLION PEOPLE INTO MODERN COMMUNITIES COMPLETE WITH SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, CLINICS AND COMPREHENSIVE WELFARE, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

"IN ADDITION AND AT THE SAME TIME WE HAVE BUILT TWO NEW RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEMS, A SECOND TUNNEL UNDER THE HARBOUR AND SEVERAL OTHERS UNDER OUR MOUNTAINS," HE SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT ALL THESE WERE WITHIN BUDGET AND AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

"IN EDUCATION, WE HAVE ACHIEVED FREE EDUCATION FOR NINE YEARS. IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH WE HAVE ERADICATED PREVIOUSLY ENDEMIC DISEASES.

"WE HAVE REDUCED INFANT MORTALITY RATES TO BELOW THE LEVELS OF EVERYWHERE APART FROM JAPAN AND SCANDINAVIA, AND OUR PEOPLE LIVE LONGER ON AVERAGE THAN THOSE IN EITHER THE UNITED KINGDOM OR THE UNITED STATES.

"AND ALL THIS WITH NO FOREIGN AID PROGRAMMES TO HELP US AND WHILE KEEPING PUBLIC EXPENDITURE BELOW 20 PER CENT OF GDP.

"NOTHING 'LAME DUCKISH' ABOUT THAT RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT I THINK," HE SAID.

AS TO THE FUTURE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID IT WOULD INDEED HAD BEEN MUCH EASIER TO TAKE THE LOW ROAD, TO FORGET ABOUT PADS, POLLUTION, EDUCATION AND POLICY PLANNING.

"OUR LIVES WOULD MUCH MORE SIMPLE AND YOU AND I, SIR, MIGHT HAVE HAD FEWER GREY HAIRS AND THE OCCASIONAL WEEKEND TO CALL OUR OWN.

"BUT ALL OF US IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE COMMITTED TO STRIVE TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG REGARDLESS OF THE STRESSES AND STRAINS THAT MAY IMPOSE ON US PERSONALLY AND INDEED ON THE ADMINISTRATION AS A WHOLE," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO REST ON ITS LAURELS AND TAKE THE EASY ROAD TO 1997 BY DOING THE MINIMUM NEEDED TO KEEP HONG KONG TICKING OVER.

"WE ARE FIRM BELIEVERS IN THE CHINESE SAYING 'UNLESS WE CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS WE LAG BEHIND' BAT JUN JAK TUI.

"SO WE HAVE LIFTED OUR HORIZON WELL BEYOND 1997 AND ARE MAKING PLANS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION TO BUILDING A NEW AIRPORT, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW FIRMLY ON TRACK IN EXPANDING THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR ON A MASSIVE SCALE BY MORE THAN DOUBLING THE PROVISION OF FIRST DEGREE PLACES BY 1995 AMONG OTHER THINGS.

"OUR THIRD UNIVERSITY IS NEAR COMPLETION. OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT BY IMPLEMENTING THE WIDE-RANGING AND DETAILED PROPOSALS IN THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR FRUITS IN THE COMING DECADE.

"AND WE PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR A DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990S AND BEYOND," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT AS FAR AS THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNING DECISIONS WERE CONCERNED, WHICH COVERED SUCH AREAS AS SOCIAL SERVICES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, 1997 WAS NOT A SIGNIFICANT DATE.

"WHEN I SIT DOWN WITH THE POLICY SECRETARIES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS I AM OFTEN STRUCK BY HOW MUCH IS GOING ON IN EACH OF THEIR AREAS OF ACTIVITY.

"THERE IS NOT ONE OF THEM WHO DOES NOT HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE LONG TERM PLAN FOR THE FUTURE STRETCHING WELL BEYOND THE END OF THIS CENTURY. AND THEY ARE ENTHUSIASTICALLY DETERMINED TO SEE THEM THROUGH," SIR DAVID SAID.

"THIS CONSISTENCY AND DETERMINATION IS IMPORTANT FOR HONG KONG BECAUSE IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WE MUST NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE DISTRACTED BY IMMEDIATE OR SHORT-TERM WORRIES, SUCH AS THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH 1997," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNOR IN HIS QUIET AND DETERMINED WAY HAD SET DOWN FAR SIGHTED PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS WHICH WOULD DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG IN THE NEXT CENTURY.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD GIVEN THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG A VISION OF THE FUTURE BASED ON A CONFIDENT BUT REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WHAT WAS POSSIBLE IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

HOWEVER, THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID TO MAKE THAT VISION A REALITY THE GOVERNMENT MUST CARRY THROUGH THE PLANS WITH DETERMINATION AND ENTHUSIASM.

"THERE IS NO LACK OF EITHER OF THESE QUALITIES AMONGST MY COLLEAGUES. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT GIVEN THE SUPPORT OF THIS COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY WE CAN, IN THE TIME HONOURED HONG KONG WAY, DELIVER THE GOODS ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET," SIR DAVID SAID.

GOVERNMENT HAS CLEAR STRATEGY TO PROMOTE HK OVERSEAS

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES HAVE A CLEAR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED BY COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE HONG KONG OVERSEAS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID SAID THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME COVERED SPONSORED VISITS BY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE FROM ABROAD, JOINT HONG KONG INC. PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES, OVERSEAS VISITS BY SENIOR OFFICIALS AND SPONSORED SPEAKING TOURS IN WHICH MEMBERS OF OMELCO, AMONGST OTHERS, HAD PLAYED AN ACTIVE PART.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY SAID IT MIGHT BE TIMELY TO MENTION THE WELL-KNOWN AND WIDELY ACCEPTED CONVENTION THAT MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE TRAVELLING ABROAD DID NOT RUN DOWN HONG KONG.

"I KNOW MANY MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WILL SHARE MY REGRET THAT THIS CONVENTION IS OFTEN FLOUTED BY A FEW OF THEIR COLLEAGUES.

"HARSH CRITICISM AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS CAN ALWAYS BE ASSURED OF BIG NEWSPAPER HEADLINES INTERNATIONALLY BUT IT RUNS TOTALLY AGAINST THE CONTINUING NEED, MENTIONED BY MANY MEMBERS, TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF HONG KONG OVERSEAS," SIR DAVID SAID.

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HK LOOKS FORWARD TO A SUCCESSFUL LEGCO ELECTION

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THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY LOOKS FORWARD TO THE SUCCESS OF THE TERRITORY'S FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE, AND EXPECTS THAT THESE WILL SERVE AS A FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

CONCLUDING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR DAVID SAID IN MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE ELECTIONS, IT WOULD BE EASY TO FALL INTO THE TRAP OF RESTRICTING OURSELVES TO SUCH STERILE REFERENCES TO THE VOTER REGISTRATION RATE AND VOTER TURN-OUT.

"I HESITATE TO USE THE WORD PRIZE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST PRIZE, IS FOR THIS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY AND EFFICIENTLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT SOME DOUBTS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED AS TO WHETHER THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN A TRULY DEMOCRATIC MANNER, SIR DAVID SAID HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF ELECTORAL LAWS AND PRACTICES WAS IN LINE WITH THOSE ADOPTED IN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES AND THEY WOULD ENSURE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS.

"THE SYSTEM WE HAVE PROPOSED FOR THE 1991 DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS NOT NEW.

"IT IS MODELED ON THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK WHICH HAS BEEN USED SINCE 1982 FOR THE DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE SYSTEM HAS SERVED US WELL AND THE PUBLIC WAS FAMILIAR WITH IT.

"WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE OF US TO CAST ITS AWAY AND EXPERIMENT WITH AN UNTRIED NEW SYSTEM AT THIS STAGE OF HONG KONG'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID HE TOTALLY REJECTED ANY ACCUSATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN GERRYMANDERING OVER ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES.

"IN REACHING DECISIONS ON BOUNDARIES, THE GOVERNMENT TOOK ACCOUNT OF THE NUMBER OF DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS AVAILABLE IN 1991, PRESENT AND FUTURE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE EXISTING ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES.

"PARTY POLITICS WAS NO PART OF OUR THINKING AND INDEED IT TAKES A MACHIAVELLIAN MIND TO CONGER UP A CONSPIRACY THEORY OVER THE WAY WE HAVE DRAWN UP THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES," HE SAID.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT VOTER REGISTRATION SHOULD BE MADE AUTOMATIC, BASED ON THE RECORDS OF THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS OFFICE, SIR DAVID SAID THE PROPOSAL DID HAVE ITS ATTRACTIONS AND FOR THIS REASON IT HAD BEEN CAREFULLY EXAMINED.

"HOWEVER, THERE ARE MAJOR PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES. THESE RECORDS WOULD NOT AND DO NOT ESTABLISH WHETHER A PERSON WAS QUALIFIED TO REGISTER AS A ELECTOR.

"IT IS ALSO UNLIKELY THAT ADDRESSES WOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, GIVEN THE MOBILITY OF THE POPULATION WITHIN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON MEMBERS SUGGESTED CHANGES IN THE WAY IN WHICH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OPERATED, SIR DAVID SAID THE CHANGES TO BE INTRODUCED IN 1991 WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORKINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

"WE ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING THESE BROAD QUESTIONS BUT WE ALSO NEED TO LOOK AGAIN AT SOME OF OUR RULES AND PROCEDURES.

"A PARTICULAR ISSUE IS THE PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS. TWO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE: THAT MEMBERS SHOULD BE REGARDED AS FULL TIME POLITICIANS AND PAID ACCORDINGLY, AND THAT RESOURCES SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ENABLE MEMBERS TO EMPLOY THEIR OWN ASSISTANTS.

"THESE SUGGESTIONS AND OTHERS ARE WELCOMED AND WILL BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND DECIDED WELL BEFORE THE 1991 ELECTIONS," SIR DAVID SAID.

MORE FOREIGN BANKS SHOW CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL SECTOR  
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REFLECTING CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL SECTOR, THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN BANKS SETTING UP OR UPGRADING THEIR OPERATIONS IN HONG KONG CONTINUED TO INCREASE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, SIR PIERS SAID IN THE 12 MONTHS AFTER JUNE LAST YEAR, MORE MAJOR BANKS ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES IN THE TERRITORY THAN IN ANY COMPARABLE PERIOD SINCE 1980.

"IN ADDITION, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS SECURITIES COMPANIES AND NEW REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED DURING THIS SAME PERIOD," HE SAID.

OVERALL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID, HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PROSPECTS IN THE MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM REMAIN GOOD, BUT THE GULF CRISIS HAD INJECTED NEW UNCERTAINTIES, AND THESE UNCERTAINTIES COULD WELL HAVE SOME IMPACT ON HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE.

SIR PIERS SAID THAT RECENTLY, THERE HAD BEEN SOME ENCOURAGING SIGNS IN THE RE-EXPORTS, DOMESTIC DEMAND AND RETAINED IMPORTS OF CAPITAL GOODS.

"OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, WE HAVE WITNESSED STRONG GROWTH IN OUR RE-EXPORTS. THIS, TO AN EXTENT, HAS COMPENSATED FOR THE SOMEWHAT SLACK PERFORMANCE OF OUR DOMESTIC EXPORTS.

"WE HAVE ALSO WITNESSED SOME RECOVERY IN RELATION TO DOMESTIC DEMAND. RETAIL SALES RECORDED INCREASES IN BOTH JUNE AND JULY, AND WE HAVE ALSO SEEN AN INCREASING NUMBER OF VISITORS TO HONG KONG.

"I AM HAPPY TO ADD THAT IN RELATION TO RETAINED IMPORTS OF CAPITAL GOODS, THERE WERE MODERATE INCREASES IN BOTH JULY AND AUGUST FOLLOWING ZERO GROWTH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR." HE SAID.

ON THE LABOUR FRONT, SIR PIERS SAID HONG KONG CONTINUED TO EXPERIENCE A TIGHT MARKET, ALTHOUGH SOME SLIGHT EASING WAS EVIDENT IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES FOR JUNE TO AUGUST.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, WAGES AND EARNINGS CONTINUED TO SHOW RAPID INCREASES.

"IN OUR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS MUST EXERCISE RESTRAINT TO AVOID THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF RISING COSTS AND PRICES ON THE OVERALL WELL-BEING OF OUR COMMUNITY.

"THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE TIGHT CONTROL OVER THE GROWTH IN PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE TO ENSURE THAT IT DOES NOT COMPETE FOR SCARCE RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITIES AND THUS FURTHER FUEL INFLATION.

/"THE RECENT .....

"THE RECENT SCHEMES FOR IMPORTATION OF LABOUR SHOULD HELP TO RELIEVE LABOUR SHORTAGES AND REDUCE WAGE PRESSURE IN CERTAIN CRITICAL AREAS IN THE LABOUR MARKET.

SIR PIERS SAID ONE DARK CLOUD ON THE HORIZON WAS INFLATION. BUT THERE WERE TWO POSITIVE FACTORS WHICH HE WOULD LIKE TO MENTION.

"FIRST, WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A CYCLICAL SLOWDOWN FOLLOWING STRONG GROWTH FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1986 TO 1988.

"AS A CONSEQUENCE, OUR LARGELY DOMESTICALLY-GENERATED INFLATION HAD BEEN EDGING DOWNWARDS SINCE THE LATTER PART OF LAST YEAR, AND THIS TREND WOULD HAVE CONTINUED BUT FOR THE SURGE IN OIL PRICES THAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED RECENTLY.

"SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH THE RECENT DEPRECIATION OF THE US DOLLAR MAY WELL ADD PRESSURES ON IMPORT PRICES IN DUE COURSE, THERE COULD WELL BE SOME RELIEF FLOWING FROM THE SLOWDOWN IN THE RATE OF INFLATION IN CHINA AND THE PRESENT RELATIVELY STABLE WORLD COMMODITY PRICES FOR NON-OIL PRODUCTS.

"I CANNOT, THIS AFTERNOON, OFFER TOO MUCH BY WAY OF COMFORT ON THE INFLATIONARY FRONT BEYOND SAYING THAT IF WE ARE NOT HIT BY FURTHER ADVERSE DEVELOPMENTS, IT IS LIKELY, IN MY VIEW, THAT THE DOWNWARD TREND IN INFLATION WILL BE RESUMED NEXT YEAR." SIR PIERS SAID.

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GOVT SHOULD NOT DETERMINE DIRECTION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: FS  
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THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PHILOSOPHY IS TO LEAVE THE PRIVATE SECTOR FREE TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISIONS ABOUT MARKETS, PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, SIR PIERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW WAS THAT CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD NOT DETERMINE THE DIRECTION WHICH INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD TAKE.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WAS RESPONDING TO SUGGESTIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FORMULATE A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO GUIDE HONG KONG'S FUTURE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. SOME HAD ARGUED IN PARTICULAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN PROMOTING TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

"THAT IS PROPERLY A MATTER FOR BUSINESSMEN," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID, THE GOVERNMENT DID ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FACILITATING THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF BUSINESS IN HONG KONG.

/ "OVER THE .....

"OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE A RANGE OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES WHICH AIM TO REMOVE OBSTACLES TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND TO HELP COMPANIES IN THEIR DRIVE TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE, MORE INNOVATIVE AND MORE QUALITY-CONSCIOUS - IN SHORT, MORE COMPETITIVE.

"AND IN DRAWING UP EACH ELEMENT IN THE OVERALL PICTURE, WE HAVE HAD FULL REGARD TO THE ROLE TECHNOLOGY HAS TO PLAY IN DETERMINING COMPETITIVE STRENGTH," HE SAID.

ILLUSTRATING THE POINT WITH A FEW EXAMPLES, SIR PIERS SAID, THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES AT TAI PO AND YUEN LONG AIMED TO ATTRACT NEW INDUSTRIES AND IMPROVED TECHNOLOGIES TO HONG KONG.

A THIRD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AT TSEUNG KWAN O WILL COME ON STREAM IN 1993, HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING FOR A DRAMATIC EXPANSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION, WITH MANY MORE PLACES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUBJECTS.

"WE INTEND ALSO TO STRENGTHEN THE RESEARCH BASE IN THE UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS." HE SAID.

THROUGH THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, WE PROVIDE A HOST OF SERVICES TO ASSIST MANUFACTURERS TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND ADOPT USEFUL TECHNOLOGIES.

"INTENSIVE PLANNING IS NOW UNDER WAY FOR THE INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, WHICH WILL ENCOURAGE TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION. AND OUR INWARD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME SEEKS TO UPGRADE HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THIS APPROACH HAD SERVED HONG KONG WELL, AND THE ALL TOO COMMON PERCEPTION THAT HONG KONG WAS "LAGGING BEHIND" ITS NEIGHBORING ECONOMIES DID NOT STAND UP TO CLOSE INSPECTION.

"LOOK AT OVERALL PROSPERITY: OUR PER CAPITA GDP IS THE HIGHEST IN ASIA OUTSIDE JAPAN.

"LOOK AT TECHNOLOGY: MANY HONG KONG COMPANIES CAN AND DO EXPLOIT STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY.

"LOOK AT INVESTMENT: WHETHER IN MANUFACTURING, FINANCIAL SERVICES, REAL ESTATE OR RETAILING, INVESTMENT IS CONTINUING TO FLOW INTO HONG KONG FROM A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES," HE SAID.

NEVERTHELESS, SIR PIERS SAID HE DID PAY HEED TO WHAT SOME LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS HAD SAID IN THE DEBATE IN RELATION TO UPGRADING HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY AND ITS APPROACH TO TECHNOLOGY.

"WHILE I BELIEVE THAT OUR APPROACH IS FUNDAMENTALLY ON THE RIGHT LINES, I WOULD STRESS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS IN NO WAY COMPLACENT.

"WE RECOGNISE THAT WE MUST BE RESPONSIVE TO INDUSTRY'S CHANGING NEEDS," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD KEPT ITS INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW, AND IT WAS ENGAGED IN ONE SUCH REVIEW AT THIS TIME.

"A PARTICULAR CONCERN IS HOW THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES CAN BE BETTER COORDINATED. THE REVIEW IS BEING CARRIED OUT IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD," HE SAID.

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GOVT ACTIVELY REGULATES SECURITIES MARKET

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PLACE A HIGH PRIORITY ON ENHANCING THE FAIRNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY OF HONG KONG'S SECURITIES MARKET, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, SIR PIERS SAID ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF OVER-REGULATION, IT HAD EXPERIENCED THE EFFECTS OF INADEQUATE REGULATORY CONTROL OVER THE PURSUIT OF SELF-INTEREST IN THE MARKET.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PROGRESS AND BALANCE IN THIS FIELD IS NO LESS NOW THAN IT WAS IN 1987.

SIR PIERS SAID THERE WERE THOSE WHO HAD SUGGESTED THAT, AS HONG KONG MANAGED WELL IN THE PAST WITH FEW REGULATORY DISCIPLINES, IT COULD CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

HE SAID THIS VIEW WAS OUT OF STEP WITH THE CURRENT REALITIES OF THE SECURITIES MARKET.

"WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, WE ARE PART OF AN INCREASINGLY INTER-DEPENDENT WORLD MARKET IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS PLAY A KEY ROLE. BOTH THEY AND OUR OWN INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY EXPECT APPROPRIATE STANDARDS OF BUSINESS CONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

"THE HONG KONG MARKET, MORE THAN MOST, DEPENDS FOR ITS FUTURE GROWTH ON DEVELOPING ITS INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION.

"ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PLACE A HIGH PRIORITY ON ENHANCING THE FAIRNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY OF OUR MARKETS," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO BALANCE THE INTERESTS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS OF MARKET PLAYERS AND IN DOING SO, IT WOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE OVERALL INTEREST OF THE MARKET AND THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY.

"WE SHALL PLAY THIS ROLE WITH SENSITIVITY AND GOOD COMMON SENSE," HE SAID.

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RIGHTS PROTECTED THROUGH COURTS, AG SAYS  
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THE HONG KONG BILL OF RIGHTS BILL 1990 INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN JULY WAS NOT ONLY A STATEMENT OF RIGHTS, IT ALSO ENSURED THAT THESE RIGHTS WERE CAPABLE OF BEING PROTECTED AND ENFORCED THROUGH ACTION IN THE COURTS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON A DEBATE ON A MOTION OF THANKS FOR THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL, AS PRESENTLY DRAFTED, WAS EXPRESSED TO BIND THE GOVERNMENT AND ALL AUTHORITIES AND PERSONS.

HE SAID IT WAS, THEREFORE, A MATTER FOR SURPRISE THAT IN THE COURSE OF THIS DEBATE MR MARTIN LEE HAD CONTENDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD WATERED DOWN THE PROPOSED BILL "ALMOST TO THE POINT OF IRRELEVANCY".

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW A BILL WHICH CONSTITUTES AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND JUSTICIABLE STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CAN BE DESCRIBED AS IRRELEVANT," SAID MR MATHEWS.

HE SAID MR LEE TOUCHED UPON THREE PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE BILL.

"I AM AWARE THAT THE IDEA OF A FREEZE HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY, AND THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALREADY RESPONDED TO UNEASE IN THIS REGARD BY PROPOSING TO REDUCE THE BLANKET FREEZE TO EXISTING LEGISLATION FROM TWO YEARS TO ONE YEAR, ALTHOUGH ALLOWING FOR FURTHER TIME IN RELATION TO IDENTIFIED ORDINANCES, IF ANY.

"IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE FREEZE WILL CRIPPLE THE BILL. THAT, TOO, IS A SUGGESTION THE LOGIC OF WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW.

"THE FREEZE IS INTENDED TO BE A PRUDENT AND PRACTICAL MEASURE, THE IDEA OF WHICH IN THE CONTEXT OF BILLS OF RIGHTS IS NOT NEW IN THE COMMON LAW WORLD. THERE IS PRECEDENT FOR IT IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS, AND THE PERIODS ELSEWHERE HAVE BEEN LONGER.

"IN ANY EVENT, IF THE FREEZE PROVISION IS ENACTED FOR OUR BILL OF RIGHTS, THE PROVISION'S LIFE SPAN WILL BE LIMITED, AND THE BILL WILL OTHERWISE HAVE IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

"I SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT TO SEE THE BILL AS CRIPPLED BY THE FREEZE PROPOSAL IS TO TAKE A SOMEWHAT SHORT-TERM AND NARROW VIEW OF ITS IMPACT," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

HE SAID MR LEE SUGGESTED THAT THE CROWN PROCEEDINGS ORDINANCE SHOULD BE AMENDED TO PERMIT CITIZENS TO OBTAIN INTERIM RELIEF AGAINST THE CROWN.

/MR MATHEWS .....

MR MATHEWS SAID IT WAS THE INTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONSIDER THE CROWN PROCEEDINGS ORDINANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME OF ADAPTATION AND MODIFICATION OF LEGISLATION WHICH COULD NOT SURVIVE 1997 WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

MR LEE'S POINT CONCERNING INTERIM RELIEF WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THAT CONTEXT, HE SAID.

"FINALLY, MR LEE SUGGESTED THAT THE LETTERS PATENT SHOULD BE AMENDED SO THAT ANY HONG KONG LAW - PRESENT OR FUTURE - WILL BE STRUCK DOWN IF INCONSISTENT WITH OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.

"THE BILL OF RIGHTS ITSELF WILL, AFTER THE FREEZE PERIOD, HAVE THAT EFFECT IN RELATION TO EXISTING LEGISLATION.

"THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO AMEND THE LETTERS PATENT TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG LAWS MADE AFTER THAT AMENDMENT, WHICH ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT AS APPLIED TO HONG KONG, WILL BE INVALID. THIS PROVISION WILL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT AS ARTICLE 39 OF THE BASIC LAW," MR MATHEWS SAID.

IN THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE, MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN OVER OTHER ASPECTS OF THE DRAFT BILL OF RIGHTS, IN PARTICULAR URGING THAT THE PROTECTION OF CITIZENS AGAINST CRIMINAL ELEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE JEOPARDISED.

MR MATHEWS SAID THESE POINTS WERE FULLY NOTED AND HE ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS EVER WILLING TO DISCUSS POINTS OF CONCERN RELATING TO THE BILL.

HE NOTED THAT THERE WOULD BE SEVERAL SUCH DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBERS IN THE COMING WEEKS AND THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY ALL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

ON REFERENCE MADE IN THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE TO THE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FIRST ADDRESSED A POINT OF GENERAL AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.

"WE MUST, I BELIEVE, BEWARE NOT TO DENIGRATE OUR PROSECUTION SERVICE WHENEVER A DEFENDANT IS ACQUITTED.

"IT IS AS WRONG TO LABEL THE PROSECUTOR AS VICTOR WHEN THERE IS A CONVICTION, AS IT IS TO SUGGEST THAT HE IS INEPT IF THERE IS AN ACQUITTAL," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE SAID THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVED OTHERWISE IGNORED TWO CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.

"FIRST, THAT THE ROLE OF THE PROSECUTOR IS FAIRLY TO PRESENT THE FACTS.

"SECOND, THAT ANY DEFENDANT WHO ENTERS A COURT TO FACE TRIAL IS DEEMED INNOCENT UNTIL THE CONTRARY IS SHOWN."

/THE ATTORNEY .....

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID HE AGREED WITH A STATEMENT MADE IN A RECENT ARTICLE BY MISS MARGARET NG IN THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST THAT : "IT IS A SERIOUS MISUNDERSTANDING TO SEE THE DUTY OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AS SECURING CONVICTIONS, AND TO JUDGE ITS ABILITY BY THE NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS IT MANAGES TO SECURE."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID MR MARTIN LEE, IN THE COURSE OF HIS VARIOUS CRITICISMS, TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR PUBLIC FAITH IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

"I AM SURE THAT HE AND I ARE AT ONE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH FAITH.

"NO ONE SHOULD SEEK TO DETRACT FROM THE PARTICULAR STIGMA WHICH MUST ATTACH TO THOSE IN RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS WITHIN THE LEGAL SYSTEM WHO ABUSE THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO THEM," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HOWEVER, MR MATHEWS SAID: "FAITH IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IS NOT ENHANCED BY EXAGGERATED AND INACCURATE ATTACKS MADE ON IT, AND IN FAIRNESS TO THAT PRINCIPLE I CANNOT ALLOW TO PASS THE ATTACKS MADE BY MR LEE."

"FIRST, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT HAS, FOR REASONS OF FACE, ADHERED TO THE PROSECUTIONS POLICY OF SEEKING 15-MONTH JAIL SENTENCES FOR CERTAIN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

"THAT IS A REMARKABLE STATEMENT. IT IS ALSO INACCURATE.

"IT IS THIS COUNCIL WHICH DETERMINES THE SENTENCING BOUNDARIES FOR OFFENCES.

"IT IS THE COURTS WHICH APPLY THE LAW.

"IT WAS THE COURTS WHICH SET DOWN SENTENCING GUIDELINES FOR THESE OFFENCES, AND IT IS THE CROWN WHOSE DUTY, AND I EMPHASISE THE WORD DUTY, IT IS TO SEEK REVIEW WHEN GUIDELINES SET BY THE COURTS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED, IN OTHER WORDS WHERE SENTENCES ARE MANIFESTLY INADEQUATE OR WRONG IN PRINCIPLE.

"WHETHER A SENTENCE IS IN FACT INADEQUATE OR WRONG IN PRINCIPLE IS A MATTER FOR THE COURTS AND THE COURTS ALONE. I AM SURE THAT MR LEE WOULD NOT WISH IT OTHERWISE," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

HE REJECTED THE SUGGESTION NEXT MADE, THAT THE GOVERNMENT ABUSED ITS PROSECUTORIAL DISCRETION FOR POLITICAL REASONS IN PROSECUTING CERTAIN PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS FOR BREACHES OF THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE.

MR MATHEWS SAID THE CASE WAS UNDER APPEAL AND HE FOR ONE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON IT.

"BUT I WILL SAY THIS. THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE A PROSECUTORIAL DISCRETION. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DOES. THE DECISION TO PROSECUTE OR NOT IS A MATTER FOR HIS DISCRETION AND HIS ALONE.

/"THAT IS .....

"THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR SYSTEM. THE SUGGESTION THAT I WOULD EVER PROSECUTE FOR POLITICAL REASONS IS UNWORTHY AND IS A SUGGESTION WHICH I REFUTE IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS.

"I REFUTE IT BECAUSE IT IS NOT THE WAY WE OPERATE IN HONG KONG, AND BECAUSE IT IS UNTRUE.

"INDEED, THE RULE OF LAW ON WHICH MR LEE PLACES SUCH A PREMIUM, AND RIGHTLY SO, MEANS THAT THE LAW MUST BE APPLIED TO ALL, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PROMINENCE IN SOCIETY."

AS TO THE TROUBLES WHICH MR LEE SAID WERE PLAGUING THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT, MR MATHEWS SAID THERE HAD INDEED BEEN TROUBLES.

"BUT THE POINT BEARS REPETITION THAT SUCH TROUBLES MUST BE PUT IN PERSPECTIVE.

"THE DEPARTMENT HAS 250 LAWYERS, WHOSE WORK COVERS MANY AND DIVERSE FIELDS OF EXPERTISE, VITAL TO THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THIS GOVERNMENT.

"IT WOULD BE A TRAVESTY OF FAIRNESS TO SULLY THEIR REPUTATIONS, THEIR HIGH INTEGRITY AND THEIR HARD WORK WITH THE MISBEHAVIOR, HOWEVER BAD, OF A FEW. I KNOW THAT MR LEE WOULD NOT WISH TO DO SO," HE SAID.

ON HONG KONG'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MAINLAND, MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH HAD MADE SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATUS OF HONG KONG AND WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE AN IMPLIED POWER FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO BE KEPT INFORMED OF, CONSULTED ON, AND TO EXERCISE A VETO POWER OVER MAJOR QUESTIONS AFFECTING HONG KONG.

HE SAID MR TAI ALSO SEEMED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM'S RIGHT TO ADMINISTER HONG KONG WAS DERIVED FROM THE JOINT DECLARATION.

"SO FAR AS MR TAI'S HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS ARE CONCERNED, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE UNITED KINGDOM'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG IS WELL-KNOWN AND I DO NOT NEED TO REPEAT IT. THIS COUNCIL WILL NOT BE SURPRISED TO HEAR ME SAY, HOWEVER, THAT I DO NOT ACCEPT MR TAI'S VIEW OF THE POSITION," SAID MR MATHEWS.

TURNING TO MR TAI'S SUGGESTION THAT SOME KIND OF FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIP EXISTED BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THAT CHINA HAD A RIGHT TO VETO DECISIONS ON MAJOR QUESTIONS, MR MATHEWS SAID THE POSITION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

"IN PARAGRAPH 1 OF THE JOINT DECLARATION THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA DECLARES THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO RESUME THE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JULY, 1997.

"IN PARAGRAPH 2 THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DECLARES THAT IT WILL RESTORE HONG KONG TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JULY 1997.

"IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, IT IS DECLARED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS THAT, DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN THE DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND 30 JUNE 1997, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG WITH THE OBJECT OF MAINTAINING AND PRESERVING ITS ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY AND THAT THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA WILL GIVE ITS COOPERATION IN THIS CONNECTION."

MR MATHEWS SAID THE POSITION COULD NOT BE CLEARER.

"IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL, UNTIL 30 JUNE 1997, CONTINUE TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG AND REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS ADMINISTRATION.

"IN THE MEANTIME, THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED UNDER ANNEX II TO THE JOINT DECLARATION TO CONDUCT CONSULTATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO THE SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT IN 1997," HE SAID.

"NOTIONS OF FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIPS AND VETO POWERS THEREFORE GO WELL BEYOND THE PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND ARE NEITHER RELEVANT NOR HELPFUL.

"CONSULTATIONS, HOWEVER, TO ENSURE THE PROPER WORKING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE SMOOTH TRANSFER OF GOVERNMENT ARE PROVIDED FOR IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND IT IS PRIMARILY THE TASK OF THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP TO CONDUCT THOSE CONSULTATIONS.

"AS MEMBERS ARE AWARE, CONSULTATIONS ARE BEING CARRIED OUT ON A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS," MR MATHEWS SAID.

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HK NEEDS NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK, SAYS SES

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THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ANSON CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT DECISIONS ON THE AIRPORT PROJECT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTED BY THE COMMUNITY AS BEING IN THE OVERALL INTEREST OF HONG KONG AND THE FUTURE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS CHAN STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TAKEN UPON ITSELF AN EASY TASK BUT IT HAD TO BE DONE, AND DONE WELL, IF HONG KONG WAS TO CONTINUE TO PROSPER.

/GIVING THE .....

GIVING THE RATIONALE TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT, MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEM WAS THAT ACCORDING TO MODEST RATES OF GROWTH, BOTH THE PORT AND THE AIRPORT WOULD REACH CAPACITY WITHIN THE NEXT SIX YEARS OR SOONER, UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT TOOK STEPS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR EXPANSION.

"OF THE FORTY OR SO DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES CONSIDERED, IT WAS THAT BASED ON AN AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK AND PORT EXPANSION ON LANTAU WHICH PERFORMED BEST AGAINST FIVE KEY TESTS," MRS CHAN SAID.

THE FIVE KEY TESTS WERE:

- (1) ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. THAT IS: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG'S LONG-TERM AND CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH;
- (2) ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT. THAT IS: ITS EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL, LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT;
- (3) PROGRAMMING. THAT IS: ITS AMENABILITY TO IMPLEMENTATION IN INCREMENTAL STAGES ACCORDING TO DEMAND;
- (4) FLEXIBILITY AND ROBUSTNESS. THAT IS: ITS ABILITY TO COPE WITH VARIATIONS IN FUTURE DEMANDS; AND
- (5) FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE. THAT IS: ITS ABILITY TO PROVIDE AN OPTIMAL BALANCE OF PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS AND THE OPTIMAL IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKS IN VIEW OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS.

RECALLING THE DECISION ON CHEK LAP KOK, MRS CHAN SAID: "WELL BEFORE THE PROBLEM WAS REDEFINED TO INCLUDE THE PORT, WE HAD, SINCE THE EARLY 1970'S, BEEN SEEKING TO IDENTIFY THE BEST SITE FOR A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT."

IN 1973, THE ORIGINAL AIR TRANSPORT SYSTEM LONG-TERM PLANNING INVESTIGATION HAD STUDIED AN INITIAL LIST OF 30 SITES, WHICH HAD BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY REDUCED, BY STAGES, TO A SHORTLIST OF SIX.

THE SIX PROPOSED SITES WERE:

- \* TOLO CHANNEL AT THE ENTRANCE TO TOLO HARBOUR IN THE EASTERN NEW TERRITORIES;
- \* A RECLAMATION SITE TO THE WEST OF LAMMA ISLAND;
- \* A RECLAMATION SITE TO THE EAST OF CHEUNG CHAU;
- \* A RECLAMATION SITE OF NIM WAN IN DEEP BAY, OFFSHORE AND TO THE NORTH OF BLACK POINT;
- \* A RECLAMATION SITE IN THE SHAM CHUN RIVER DELTA, ADJACENT TO THE BORDER; AND, LASTLY,
- \* CHEK LAP KOK.

"THE CHEK LAP KOK SITE WAS SELECTED AS THE PREFERRED OPTION AND A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF IT WAS UNDERTAKEN IN 1979 FOLLOWED BY A FULL MASTER PLAN STUDY IN 1982," MRS CHAN EXPLAINED.

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TOLO CHANNEL SITE WHICH WAS REJECTED IN 1973 BECAUSE OF ITS POOR OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON WATER QUALITY IN TOLO HARBOUR, THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT ALL THE OTHER SITES HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REVIEWED AGAIN.

"THE WESTERN HARBOUR SITES IN THE AREA OF LAMMA AND CHEUNG CHAU ISLANDS WERE RECONSIDERED IN THE ALTERNATIVE REPLACEMENT AIRPORT SITES STUDY IN 1989.

"THE BEST SITE IN THAT AREA WAS THEN COMPARED WITH THE CHEK LAP KOK SITE DURING THE PADS STUDY WHICH COMPLETED ITS WORK LATER THAT YEAR.

"IN 1981 - 83, WHILE A MASTER PLAN FOR CHEK LAP KOK WAS BEING PREPARED, THE DEEP BAY SITES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE MORE ATTRACTIVE SITE OF NIM WAN WERE ALSO RE-EXAMINED BUT FOUND TO BE LESS DESIRABLE THAN CHEK LAP KOK," MRS CHAN SAID.

AS THE NIM WAN SITE WAS ALSO RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNMENT IN A REPORT PREPARED BY A GROUP OF HONG KONG ACADEMICS THIS YEAR, MRS CHAN SAID THIS PROMPTED THE GOVERNMENT TO LOOK YET AGAIN AT THAT SITE.

"BUT THIS REPORT AND THE SUBSEQUENT REVIEW ONLY RECONFIRMED OUR BELIEF THAT CHEK LAP KOK WAS THE CORRECT CHOICE," SHE STRESSED.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEMS WITH NIM WAN WERE MANY AND SERIOUS AND THOSE RECOMMENDING THE SITE HAD NOT SUGGESTED HOW THEY MIGHT BE OVERCOME.

THE SITE WAS SO CLOSE TO THE NEW SHENZHEN AIRPORT UNDER DEVELOPMENT THAT AIRSPACE COORDINATION WOULD BE VERY COMPLEX; AN AIRPORT AT NIM WAN WOULD CREATE SERIOUS CONFLICTS WITH A VERY IMPORTANT SHIPPING CHANNEL SERVING THE PEARL RIVER; AIRCRAFT NOISE FROM SUCH AN AIRPORT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN SHENZHEN AND TIN SHUI WAI; THE PROXIMITY OF THE MAI PO MARSHES WOULD CAUSE A SERIOUS RISK OF BIRD STRIKE FOR AIRCRAFT; THE SITE WOULD NOT ALLOW FOR PORT EXPANSION TO SHARE THE NEW TRANSPORT LINKS REQUIRED FOR THE AIRPORT; AND THE DELICATE ECOLOGY OF DEEP BAY COULD ALSO BE SERIOUSLY HARMED, SHE ADDED.

ON THIS, MRS CHAN EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID LISTEN TO SUGGESTIONS AND CONSIDER THEM THOROUGHLY, BUT HAD YET TO HEAR ANY PROPOSAL WHICH WAS A SERIOUS AND WELL RESEARCHED ALTERNATIVE TO CHEK LAP KOK.

"WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CHEK LAP KOK MAY NOT BE THE BEST SITE AERONAUTICALLY TAKING SOUTH CHINA AS A WHOLE, BUT IT IS, NEVERTHELESS, THE BEST SITE IN TERMS OF RESOLVING THE COMPLEX PROBLEM WE ARE FACING," SHE STRESSED.

OUR PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE SIMPLY OF AIR TRAFFIC GROWTH AND DIFFICULT TERRAIN, MRS CHAN SAID.

THIS OVER-SIMPLIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM HAD LED SOME TO SUGGEST HONG KONG SHOULD THINK SOLELY IN TERMS OF SITING AN AIRPORT SOMEWHERE ON THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER WHERE TERRAIN CONSTRAINTS WERE LESS PROBLEMATIC TO SERVE THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AS A WHOLE.

"THIS SUGGESTION MISSES THE POINT THAT THE AIRPORT IS NEEDED PRIMARILY TO SERVE HONG KONG AND THE FUTURE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WHICH WILL COME INTO BEING IN 1997.

"THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW REQUIRE US TO 'TAKE MEASURES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS OF HONG KONG AS A CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AVIATION'.

"WE SHALL HAVE OUR OWN AIR SERVICE AGREEMENTS AND BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE OUR OWN AIR TRAFFIC RIGHTS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES WITHIN THE LIMITS LAID DOWN IN THE JOINT DECLARATION," SHE NOTED.

IF WE FAILED TO HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS OF HONG KONG WHICH WAS CAPABLE OF MEETING DEMAND, MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT WE WOULD IN EFFECT BE GIVING UP THIS AUTONOMY IN CIVIL AVIATION WHICH HAS BEEN GUARANTEED FOR US IN THIS WAY.

"KAI TAK IS ALREADY THE SIXTH BUSIEST AIRPORT IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS AND THE FOURTH BUSIEST IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT.

"IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY BUSIER THAN ANY AIRPORT ANYWHERE IN CHINA.

"ANY SUGGESTION THAT A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT OF SUCH WORLD AND REGIONAL IMPORTANCE WOULD BE BETTER SITED OVER THE BORDER IN SOUTHERN CHINA OR THAT WE SHOULD RELY ON SHENZHEN AIRPORT TO ABSORB HONG KONG'S FORECAST AIR TRAFFIC GROWTH IGNORE ALL OF THESE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN ALSO DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY OF SIMPLY STRUGGLING ON USING KAI TAK.

"INDEED, WE ARE ALREADY DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF KAI TAK, BUT THAT CAPACITY IS ULTIMATELY CONSTRAINED BY THE FACT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE RUNWAY, WHICH, BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION, CANNOT EVEN BE USED 24 HOURS A DAY," THE SECRETARY NOTED.

ALTHOUGH KAI TAK HAD SERVED HONG KONG WELL THESE PAST DECADES, ITS LOCATION WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT.

"SOME 350,000 PEOPLE LIVE UNDER THE FLIGHT PATH AND THE NOISE IMPACT OF AIRCRAFT EXCEEDS INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS.

"SAFETY STANDARDS IMPOSED BY THE PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE SITE ARE ALSO LESS THAN IDEAL," MRS CHAN SAID.

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OVER THE YEARS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD IMPLEMENTED A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF KAI TAK. THESE WORKS CONTINUED AND WOULD PROVIDE MORE PARKING BAYS FOR AIRCRAFT, IMPROVED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND IMPROVED ROAD ACCESS TO KAI TAK.

"EVEN ONCE ALL THIS HAS BEEN DONE, KAI TAK WILL BE OPERATING AT CAPACITY WELL BEFORE THE NEW AIRPORT CAN OPEN.

"IN THE 12 MONTHS ENDING SEPTEMBER, BOTH PASSENGER AND AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS HAD GROWN BY 12 PER CENT.

"IF DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH CONTINUES, CAPACITY AT KAI TAK WILL BE REACHED AS EARLY AS 1993," SHE EXPLAINED.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN.

"IT WILL NOT MEAN THAT AN AIRCRAFT WILL BE LANDING AND TAKING OFF EVERY MINUTE OF ALL THE HOURS OF OPERATION OF THE AIRPORT.

"IT MEANS THAT THE TIME-SLOTS REMAINING FOR SCHEDULING AIRCRAFT WILL BE SO UNATTRACTIVE TO COMMERCIAL AIRLINES THAT THEY WILL BE EITHER UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO EXPAND THEIR SERVICES TO MEET DEMAND.

"THEY WILL THEN TURN TO OTHER AIRPORTS WHICH CAN OFFER MORE ATTRACTIVE TIME SLOTS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO MAKE OPTIMUM USE OF THEIR AIRCRAFT AND PROVIDE A BETTER INTERFACE WITH THEIR ROUTE NETWORK," THE SECRETARY SAID.

THUS WHEN KAI TAK REACHED CAPACITY MRS CHAN FORESAW THAT WE WOULD LOSE POTENTIALLY NEW PASSENGER TRAFFIC AND EXPERIENCE GROWTH ONLY IN CHARTER FLIGHTS AND CARGO OPERATORS WILLING TO USE NON SOCIAL TIME SLOTS.

"THE IMPACT ON OUR ECONOMY WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE," SHE EMPHASISED.

MRS CHAN SAID MOST EXPERTS AGREED THAT THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION WOULD EXPERIENCE HIGHER LEVELS OF GROWTH IN AIR TRAFFIC THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD IN THE COMING DECADE. OUR NEIGHBOURS AND COMPETITORS WERE WELL AWARE OF THIS; THE SECOND TERMINAL AT CHANGI AIRPORT IN SINGAPORE WAS ABOUT TO OPEN NEXT MONTH AND THE AUTHORITIES WERE ALREADY PLANNING FOR A THIRD RUNWAY, A NEW AIRPORT WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT OSAKA, A MASSIVE NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON AN EVEN LARGER SCALE THAN CHEK LAP KOK WAS BEING PLANNED TO SERVE SEOUL, EXTENSIVE EXPANSION OF BANGKOK AIRPORT WAS BEING PLANNED AND A SECOND PASSENGER TERMINAL WAS TO BE COMPLETED IN JAKARTA BY 1991.

"WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LEAVE KAI TAK CONGESTED AND OPERATING AT ITS ULTIMATE CAPACITY, BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EFFICIENT AIRPORT TO OUR ECONOMY," SHE STRESSED.

IN 1989, 730,000 TONNES OF AIR CARGO PASSED THROUGH KAI TAK; THAT MADE UP JUST UNDER 30 PER CENT OF OUR DOMESTIC EXPORTS, 20 PER CENT OF OUR IMPORTS AND OVER 16 PER CENT OF OUR RE-EXPORTS BY VALUE. ABOUT 85 PER CENT OF TOURISTS IN HONG KONG ARRIVED BY AIR.

IN 1989, RECEIPTS FROM TOURISM AMOUNTED TO NEARLY \$37 BILLION, AN INCREASE OF 11 PER CENT OVER 1988. HONG KONG WAS THE MOST POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION IN ASIA, MRS CHAN SAID.

THE INVESTMENT MADE BY THE HOTEL SECTOR ALONE IN THIS FIELD WAS HUGE, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 3,000 HOTEL ROOMS PROVIDED IN 1989, AND A FURTHER 6,500 ROOMS EXPECTED BY THE END OF 1992.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT MORE DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY WERE THE BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THE EASE WITH WHICH BUSINESSMEN COULD COME AND GO.

"THERE IS NO DOUBT HOWEVER THAT A CONSTRAINED AIRPORT WOULD SEVERELY LIMIT OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND MAKE HONG KONG INCREASINGLY LESS ATTRACTIVE AS A MAJOR CENTRE FOR TRADE, FINANCE AND COMMERCE," SHE SAID.

AS TO THE SUGGESTIONS THAT NEW AIRPORTS IN MACAU AND SHENZHEN WOULD SOMEHOW MEAN THE NEED OF CHEK LAP KOK WOULD NOT BE AS URGENT AS WE CLAIM, MRS CHAN SAID FIRST, WE DID NOT SEE HOW MACAU WOULD, IN THE LONG TERM, DRAW AWAY ANY SIGNIFICANT TRAFFIC FROM HONG KONG.

"IT WILL HAVE A SEPARATE COMPLEMENTARY ROLE IN THE REGION OF SERVING MACAU AND ITS ADJACENT PEARL RIVER DELTA HINTERLAND.

"IT CANNOT POSSIBLY BE EXPECTED TO ATTRACT TRAFFIC IN ANY SIGNIFICANT VOLUME FROM AN AVIATION HUB THE SIZE OF HONG KONG, WITH THE CONVENIENCE IT OFFERS IN PROVIDING CONNECTIONS TO A VAST NETWORK OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ROUTES.

"THE RESISTANCE TO ROUTING PASSENGERS TO HONG KONG THROUGH MACAU WOULD BE VERY HIGH," SHE SAID.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MRS CHAN NOTED THAT HUANGTIAN AIRPORT IN SHENZHEN WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SOME EFFECT ON HONG KONG.

"IT WILL POTENTIALLY FULFIL A HELPFUL ROLE IN RELIEVING PRESSURE ON KAI TAK WHEN CAPACITY HAS BEEN REACHED THERE AND UNTIL CHEK LAP KOK OPENS.

"ONCE KAI TAK BECOMES SEVERELY CONGESTED, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT MAINLAND TRAFFIC COMING TO HONG KONG MAY FIND IT MORE CONVENIENT TO FLY TO SHENZHEN IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AND TO TRAVEL ON INTO HONG KONG BY ROAD.

"THIS IS, OF COURSE, ASSUMING THAT AN EFFICIENT ROAD LINK CAN BE INTRODUCED IN TIME TO PROVIDE FOR THIS," MRS CHAN NOTED.

IN THE MOST OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO OF ALL MAINLAND AIR CARRIERS OPTING TO DO THIS, MRS CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT THOUGHT KAI TAK WOULD BE RELIEVED OF 10 PER CENT OF ITS PASSENGERS AND 17 PER CENT OF ITS AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS. THIS WOULD HELP HONG KONG BY DELAYING CAPACITY AT KAI TAK BY 12 TO 18 MONTHS, THAT WAS UNTIL 1995, ON THE BASIS OF CURRENT FORECASTS, SHE ADDED.

"ANOTHER OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO, WHICH MIGHT ALSO PROVIDE KAI TAK WITH SOME RELIEF, WOULD BE THE COMMENCEMENT OF DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN.

"THIS WOULD RELIEVE KAI TAK OF POSSIBLY ANOTHER FIVE PER CENT OF ITS TOTAL PASSENGER TRAFFIC," MRS CHAN NOTED.

TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE POTENTIAL RELIEF PROVIDED BY SHENZHEN, MRS CHAN ESTIMATED THAT THE TIMING FOR KAI TAK TO REACH CAPACITY COULD BE DELAYED THROUGH TO THE END OF 1995.

"IN OTHER WORDS, EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THESE MOST OPTIMISTIC OF ASSUMPTIONS, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT WE SHOULD BE MAKING EVERY EFFORT, AS WE ARE DOING, TO WORK TOWARDS THE OPENING OF CHEK LAP KOK AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

"1997 REPRESENTS THE EARLIEST FEASIBLE TARGET DATE," SHE SAID.

IN THE LONGER TERM, MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE ROLES OF CHEK LAP KOK, MACAU AND SHENZHEN AIRPORTS WERE SEEN AS LARGELY COMPLEMENTARY.

"ALL THREE ARE NEEDED TO SERVICE ADEQUATELY THE DYNAMIC AREA OF THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AND SOUTHERN CHINA GENERALLY.

"EACH HAS ITS OWN PARTICULAR FUNCTION," SHE SAID.

NOTING THAT IT WAS NOT A UNIQUE SITUATION, MRS CHAN SAID THE ONLY TECHNICAL PROBLEM WHICH WAS, IN HONG KONG'S CASE, CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION, WAS THE NEED FOR AIRPORTS IN SUCH CLOSE PROXIMITY TO CO-ORDINATE THE MANAGEMENT OF THE USE OF AIRSPACE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE TO OPTIMISE THE CAPACITY OF ALL THE AIRPORTS CONCERNED.

AGAINST THESE BACKGROUND, MRS CHAN STRESSED THAT HONG KONG'S ACHIEVEMENT AS THE WORLD'S 11TH LARGEST TRADING ENTITY HAD NOT COME ABOUT BY ACCIDENT.

"ONE CRUCIAL ELEMENT CONTRIBUTING TO OUR SUCCESS HAS BEEN THE FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPED OVER MANY YEARS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ENSURING THAT OUR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS REMAIN ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

"WE HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND OUR RECORD IS SECOND TO NONE," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT WE DID NOT HAVE A REPUTATION OF TYING UP SCARCE RESOURCES IN FACILITIES THAT LAID IDLE BECAUSE THE DEMAND WAS NOT THERE. IF ANYTHING WE HAD SOMETIMES BEEN CRITICISED FOR LAGGING BEHIND DEMAND.

"THE AIRPORT PROJECT HAD BEEN WELL RESEARCHED OVER MANY YEARS.

"WE MUST NOT ALLOW INDECISION OR FURTHER STUDIES TO BECOME PART OF THE PROBLEM RATHER THAN HELP TO BRING ABOUT ACTION.

"WE HAVE MADE A DECISION THAT HONG KONG NEEDS A NEW AIRPORT AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE BUILT AT CHEK LAP KOK," MRS CHAN SAID.

## GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR LANTAU FIXED CROSSING BEST FOR HONG KONG

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THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PUBLICLY FUND THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING WAS BASED ON THE CERTAINTY OF PROJECT COMPLETION TIME AND IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A BETTER OVERALL DEAL FOR HONG KONG TAXPAYERS, ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON. ALBERT LAM CHI-CHIU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS, MR LAM SAID THE ADOPTION OF THE "DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT" APPROACH WOULD ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH TENDERERS WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE NECESSARY IF THE PRIVATE SECTOR WERE TO FINANCE THE PROJECT UNDER THE "BUILD-OPERATE-AND-TRANSFER" ARRANGEMENTS.

THE OTHER ADVANTAGE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION WAS THAT BY TAKING OUT THE RISK FACTOR, THE COST FOR CONSTRUCTING THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING WOULD BE GREATLY REDUCED GIVEN THAT THE COMMERCIAL WORLD OPERATES ON THE PRINCIPLE OF HIGHER THE RISK, HIGHER THE REWARD, MR LAM SAID.

"THE DECISION TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE GOVERNMENT FROM CONSIDERING OFFERS OF FINANCE OR PLEDGES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AT THE TENDER STAGE," MR LAM ADDED.

MR LAM ALSO EMPHASISED THAT UPON COMPLETION OF THE CROSSING, THE GOVERNMENT COULD CONSIDER THE OPTION TO CALL FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO OPERATE IT UNDER A FRANCHISE AGREEMENT.

HE SAID A PREQUALIFICATION EXERCISE WOULD BE CALLED SHORTLY TO SCREEN IN THOSE TENDERERS JUDGED TO HAVE THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND FINANCIAL BACKING TO UNDERTAKE A PROJECT OF THIS MAGNITUDE.

"WE INTEND TO SPLIT UP THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING PROJECT INTO A NUMBER OF SELF-CONTAINED CONTRACTS, SO THAT INTERESTED PARTIES, WHETHER THEY BE LOCALLY BASED OR INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIA, WILL FEEL ABLE TO TENDER FOR THOSE CONTRACTS IN THE FIELD BEST SUITED TO THEIR EXPERTISE AND ABILITY," MR LAM SAID.

"AT THE TENDER EVALUATION STAGE, COST CONSIDERATION, OR THE TENDERED QUOTATION, WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT FACTOR TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT," HE SAID.

EARLIER, MR LAM REFUTED SUGGESTIONS THAT THE DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CROSSING WAS MADE SUDDENLY.

"THE TIMING WAS IN FACT ENVISAGED WHEN WE CALLED FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR.

/"OVER 1,000 .....

"OVER 1,000 COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS DESCRIBING THE PROJECT AND STATING QUITE CLEARLY THAT WE WOULD CALL FOR TENDERS IN SEPTEMBER WAS DISTRIBUTED TO INTERESTED PARTIES," HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON OTHER TRANSPORT LINKS, MR LAM POINTED OUT THAT THE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES SET IN PLACE FOR THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT ALSO FORMED AN INTEGRAL PART OF AN OVERALL TRANSPORT STRATEGY MAPPED OUT FOR THE TERRITORIAL NEEDS OF HONG KONG IN THE NEXT DECADE.

THE MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH ROAD SYSTEM PLANNED IS THE ROUTE 3 -- A 30-KILOMETRE LONG EXPRESSWAY LINKING SAI YING PUN ON HONG KONG ISLAND WITH THE LOK MA CHAU BRIDGE VIA THE WESTERN PART OF THE TERRITORY.

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ROUTE 3, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF MEETING THE TRAFFIC DEMANDS OF HONG KONG, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS ACROSS THE CHINA-HONG KONG BORDER.

"IT IS A VITAL LINK FOR THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF HONG KONG AS WELL AS SOUTHERN CHINA, PARTICULARLY BEARING IN MIND THAT SOME TWO MILLION CHINESE WORKERS ARE HELPING HONG KONG MANUFACTURERS WITH OUTWARD PROCESSING ACTIVITIES IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA REGION," MR LAM SAID.

THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING PROVIDES THE ONLY LAND ACCESS TO LANTAU ISLAND TO SERVE THE NEW AIRPORT AS WELL AS THE NEW PORT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS ON LANTAU.

THE CENTREPIECE OF THE LINK IS THE TSING MA BRIDGE, A 1,377-METER SUSPENSION BRIDGE WHICH CONNECTS TO ANOTHER SMALLER BRIDGE ACROSS THE KAP SHUI MUN CHANNEL, TO LINK MA WAN ISLAND WITH THE NORTH LANTAU EXPRESSWAY AND THEN TO THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

OTHER THAN ROAD INFRASTRUCTURES TO SERVE THE NEW AIRPORT AT LANTAU, AN AIRPORT-RAILWAY WAS NEEDED IN THE LONG TERM TO LINK UP WITH THE CITY CENTRES, MR LAM STRESSED.

HE SAID THE QUESTION OF TIMING, THE ALIGNMENT AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE MATTERS NOW BEING STUDIED BY CONSULTANTS. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE A DECISION AFTER STUDYING THEIR REPORTS AND AFTER CONSIDERING ALL THE RELEVANT FACTORS, MR LAM ADDED.

POLICE NEED COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE TO FIGHT CRIME

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THE POLICE FORCE IS VERY WELL EQUIPPED TO TACKLE CRIME, BUT IT CAN DO SO SUCCESSFULLY ONLY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE OVERALL CRIME RATE WAS LOWER NOW THAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1980S, IT HAD INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

"AND OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS THE RECENT INCREASE IN VIOLENT CRIME," HE SAID.

ON THE SUGGESTIONS THAT MUCH CRIME WENT UNREPORTED, MR ASPREY SAID IT WAS INEVITABLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN RELIABLE INFORMATION ON UNREPORTED CRIME, WHICH WAS BY NO MEANS UNIQUE TO HONG KONG.

"NEVERTHELESS, WE DO HAVE AN INDICATION OF THE EXTENT OF UNREPORTED CRIME, FROM THE FINDINGS OF CRIME VICTIMISATION SURVEYS CARRIED OUT REGULARLY EVERY FEW YEARS.

"THE LATEST SURVEY, WHICH IS TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT MONTH, SHOWS THAT THE PROPORTION OF PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD CRIME REPORTED TO THE POLICE, ALTHOUGH STILL LOW, IS INCREASING STEADILY," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THIS WAS AN ENCOURAGING TREND, ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO BUILD THE FORTHCOMING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC COOPERATION WITH THE POLICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME.

HE SAID PARTICULAR CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT THE RELUCTANCE OF PEOPLE TO REPORT, AND GIVE EVIDENCE RELATING TO, CRIMES WITH TRIAD INVOLVEMENT, BECAUSE OF A FEAR OF VICTIMISATION.

MR ASPREY SAID ALTHOUGH THE CRIME VICTIMISATION SURVEYS DID NOT SPECIFICALLY COVER TRIAD-RELATED CRIME, THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS OF INCREASING RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THE PUBLIC TO REPORT SUCH CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

"INDEED, THIS YEAR HAD SEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRIAD-RELATED CRIMES REPORTED TO THE POLICE, PARTICULARLY WOUNDING AND SERIOUS ASSAULTS, CRIMINAL INTIMIDATION AND BLACKMAIL, AND ROBBERIES," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE THE INCREASING REPORTING OF CRIMES INVOLVING TRIADS.

"FUNDS HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR THREE ADDITIONAL ONE-WAY MIRROR FACILITIES FOR USE IN IDENTIFICATION PARADES FOR THE PROTECTION OF WITNESSES, AND ALL NEW DISTRICT POLICE STATIONS WILL INCLUDE SUCH FACILITIES.

/"THE POLICE .....

"THE POLICE WILL ALSO REVIEW REPORTING PROCEDURES WITH A VIEW TO SIMPLIFYING THEM, AND THUS REDUCING THE TIME TAKEN TO REPORT CRIME," HE SAID.

ON CALLS FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE FORMER TRIAD SOCIETY BUREAU, MR ASPREY SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THESE WERE BASED ON A MISUNDERSTANDING.

"THERE HAS BEEN NO REDUCTION IN THE POLICE EFFORT AGAINST TRIADS, INDEED THE POLICE HAVE IN RECENT YEARS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT TERRITORIAL, REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS TO COMBAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TRIADS AND OTHER ORGANISED CRIME SYNDICATES.

"THESE POLICE RESOURCES ARE NOW BETTER ORGANISED AND MORE EFFICIENTLY DEPLOYED TO COUNTER THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND SOPHISTICATION OF PRESENT-DAY ORGANISED CRIME," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT THE RECENT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CRIMES INVOLVING THE USE OF FIREARMS, MANY IMPORTED FROM CHINA, HAD HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AGAINST CRIME.

"WE SHARE A COMMON INTEREST WITH GUANGDONG IN PREVENTING THE ILLEGAL IMPORT OF FIREARMS INTO HONG KONG.

"THE POLICE AND THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT MAINTAIN CLOSE LIAISON AND GOOD COOPERATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN CHINA.

"MANY SUCCESSFUL SEIZURES OF ILLEGALLY IMPORTED WEAPONS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE POLICE, AMOUNTING TO ALMOST 250 WEAPONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PREVENTING CRIME REMAINS AN ADEQUATE POLICE PRESENCE ON THE STREETS.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN A TIGHT LABOUR MARKET WHICH THE POLICE FACED EARLIER THIS YEAR WERE BEING ADDRESSED THROUGH A REVIEW OF SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, ALREADY COMPLETED FOR THE JUNIOR POLICE OFFICERS.

OTHER MEASURES TO IMPROVE DEPLOYMENT WERE BEING PURSUED, INCLUDING WHERE POSSIBLE CIVILIANISATION OF CERTAIN POSTS IN THE POLICE FORCE, AND INCREASED USE OF THE AUXILIARY POLICE, MR ASPREY SAID.

"SOME 800 AUXILIARY POLICEMEN ARE NOW ON DUTY EVERY DAY, MOST OF THEM ON BEAT PATROL. THEY PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE POLICING OF HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME, SAID MR ASPREY, MUST ALSO BE PURSUED THROUGH THE PENAL AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES.

"ONE OF THE MORE ENCOURAGING CONCLUSIONS FROM RECENT CRIME STATISTICS IS THE GRADUAL DECREASE IN CRIME BY JUVENILES.

"THE EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES AGAINST JUVENILE CRIME UNDERTAKEN IN RECENT YEARS BY THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE WILL, I BELIEVE, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SUCCESS. SO ALSO WILL OUR REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF JUVENILE AND YOUNG OFFENDERS WHO WERE GIVEN CUSTODIAL SENTENCES WERE SENT TO TRAINING CENTRES WHERE THE EMPHASIS WAS ON EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND REHABILITATION.

"FOLLOWING THEIR RELEASE, ALL JUVENILE AND YOUNG OFFENDERS ARE SUBJECT TO AFTERCARE SUPERVISION TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO REINTEGRATE INTO THE COMMUNITY AS USEFUL, LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOW WORKING ON PROPOSALS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A MORE GENERAL STATUTORY POST RELEASE SUPERVISION SCHEME FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF ADULT OFFENDER," MR ASPREY SAID.

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#### MORE GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT SERVICES TO BE PRIVATISED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS ACTIVELY LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATISING MORE SERVICES OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALBERT LAM CHI-CHIU, SAID THIS AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF THANKS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LAM SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO CONTRACT OUT THE MANAGEMENT OF THE KOWLOON BAY VEHICLE EXAMINATION CENTRE AND FROM THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL.

HE SAID: "THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE SUCCESSFUL TENDERER IS PROVIDED WITH THE RIGHT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO DEVELOP HIS COMMERCIAL INITIATIVES, AND THAT, IN RETURN, HE PROVIDES A HIGH STANDARD OF MANAGEMENT SERVICE."

HE ADDED THAT IN EARLY 1992, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONDUCT A REVIEW BASED ON THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL EXPERIENCE TO SEE IF PRIVATISING THE MANAGEMENT OF OTHER GOVERNMENT TUNNELS SHOULD BE PURSUED.

MR LAM STRESSED THAT THE TOLL LEVELS FOR ALL TUNNELS WOULD REMAIN UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

OTHER PRIVATISATION POSSIBILITIES BEING CONSIDERED INCLUDED PARKING METERS AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE THIRD CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL KNOWN AS THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING, AND PART OF ROUTE 3 IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

TURNING TO THE PROPER ALLOCATION OF ROAD SPACE, MR LAM SAID THAT THE RAPID GROWTH IN PRIVATE CAR OWNERSHIP WAS MORE WORRYING.

"AFTER A PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION BETWEEN 1982 AND 1987, THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE CARS HAS GROWN AT THE RATE OF ABOUT NINE PER CENT PER ANNUM OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS FROM 143,000 IN SEPTEMBER 1987, TO 194,000 IN SEPTEMBER 1990.

"I SHALL BE MONITORING THE SITUATION VERY CLOSELY, TO SEE WHAT MEASURES ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE ROAD SPACE CONTINUES TO BE AVAILABLE FOR THE 90 PER CENT OF OUR DAILY COMMUTERS WHO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT, AND WHO, BETWEEN THEM, MAKE 10 MILLION TRIPS A DAY," HE SAID.

MR LAM SAID THE GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF MASS CARRIERS, ESPECIALLY THE OFF-STREET MODES SUCH AS RAILWAY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY AND THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY.

"MODERN TRAINS ARE NOT ONLY ENERGY EFFICIENT, BUT ALSO ENVIRONMENTALLY MORE ACCEPTABLE."

HE SAID PUBLIC BUSES STILL MOVED A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AROUND - 3.4 MILLION PASSENGER TRIPS A DAY - AND OCCUPIED THE LEAST AMOUNT OF ROAD SPACE.

"THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY IN ROAD USE THROUGH BUS - ONLY LANES AND BUS - PRIORITY SCHEMES, AS A MATTER OF POLICY."

ON TAXIS, MR LAM SAID THEIR NUMBER WOULD CONTINUE TO BE REGULATED BY QUOTAS SET BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ON THE ADVICE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

TURNING TO PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES, HE SAID THAT SINCE 1976, THEIR NUMBER HAD BEEN STABILISED AT 4,350, INCLUDING A SIZEABLE FLEET OF "GREEN MINIBUSES" WHICH ENJOYED POPULAR SUPPORT AND GOOD PATRONAGE.

MR LAM SAID HE PROPOSED NO CHANGE TO THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH WERE WORKING SATISFACTORILY.

GOVERNMENT AIMS TO REACH TERTIARY EDUCATION EXPANSION TARGET ON TIME  
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THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THE TARGETS ON EXPANSION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION CAN BE REACHED ON TIME, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR YEUNG SAID FOR THE PAST 12 MONTHS, A STEERING GROUP INCLUDING THE CHAIRMEN OF THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE (UPGC) AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (VTC), THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND HIMSELF HAD BEEN WORKING ON VARIOUS PLANS TO ENSURE THAT THE VTC AND THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS GOT THE ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL CAPACITY AND THE FUNDS THEY NEEDED FOR EXPANSION.

"THESE PLANS HAVE BEEN FINALISED AND AWAIT RESOURCE ALLOCATION," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS HUMAN RESOURCES, MR YEUNG SAID THE UPGC ESTIMATED THAT THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS NEEDED TO RECRUIT AN ADDITIONAL 3,000 TEACHERS TO MEET THE GROWTH AND TO CATER FOR NATURAL WASTAGE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN ITS RECENT REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE COMMITTEE WAS SATISFIED THAT, GIVEN THEIR COMPETITIVE WAGE PACKAGE, THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS STOOD A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING ABLE TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN UP THIS NUMBER.

"THIS TASK CAN BE ACHIEVED MORE READILY IF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH ARE INCREASED AND FRINGE BENEFITS ARE IMPROVED.

"I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE COMMITTEE'S LEADING RECOMMENDATION, NAMELY, A SUBSTANTIAL ENHANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, HAS ALREADY BEEN ENDORSED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. ITS IMPLEMENTATION NOW AWAITS RESOURCE ALLOCATION," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG NOTED THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS WERE CONCERNED ON WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH SECONDARY 7 LEAVERS TO FILL THE ADDITIONAL CAPACITY THAT WOULD BE CREATED AT FIRST DEGREE LEVEL, AND WHETHER THE QUALITY OF THE MATRICULANTS COULD BE MAINTAINED.

ON THE FIRST POINT, MR YEUNG SAID THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION HAD ADVISED HIM THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT'S EXISTING POLICY WAS TO PROVIDE ONE SUBSIDISED SECONDARY 6 PLACE FOR EVERY THREE SUBSIDISED SECONDARY 4 PLACES TWO YEARS AGO, THE PULL-THROUGH RATE INTO SECONDARY 6 WAS ACTUALLY LOWER THAN THIS.

"WITH MY AGREEMENT, THE DIRECTOR IS NOW CONSULTING THE SCHOOLS COUNCILS AND THE EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY ON A NUMBER OF MEASURES DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER PULL-THROUGH RATE.

"THESE INCLUDE A SLIGHT BUT JUSTIFIABLE LOWERING OF THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR A-LEVEL EXAMINATIONS, AND PERSUADING SCHOOLS TO FILL ALL AVAILABLE SECONDARY 6 PLACES, WITH PRIORITY GIVEN TO THEIR OWN SECONDARY 5 STUDENTS," MR YEUNG SAID.

AS REGARDS THE SECOND POINT, MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM HAD RECENTLY BEEN REFORMED ON THE ADVICE OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

"THE NEW A-LEVEL AND AS-LEVEL SYSTEM HAS BEEN FULLY ACCEPTED BY THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS. WE SHOULD THEREFORE BE CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW SYSTEM WILL PRODUCE SCHOOL LEAVERS WHO ARE NOT ONLY MORE ADEQUATELY PREPARED FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION BUT ALSO BETTER EDUCATED," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID THAT OVER TIME, AS THE NUMBER OF FIRST DEGREE PLACES GREW, HE ENVISAGED THAT INCREASING USE WOULD BE MADE BY THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF CREDIT UNIT SYSTEMS, NOT ONLY FOR DETERMINING INITIAL ENTRY INTO TERTIARY EDUCATION BUT ALSO TO FACILITATE TRANSFER BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS.

"ALTHOUGH THE BENEFITS OF A CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM ARE MANY, THIS FEATURE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION MUST BE GIVEN TIME TO DEVELOP AND WE MUST AVOID PUSHING IT TOO FAR TOO FAST," HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT.

"THE HONG KONG COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION RECENTLY HOSTED A SEMINAR AT WHICH THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS HAVE HAD A FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IDEAS, PRACTICALITIES AND MODALITIES," HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON REMARKS BY SOME LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS ON THE BASIC EDUCATION PROVIDED IN SCHOOLS, MR YEUNG SAID THE ANSWERS WOULD BE FOUND IN THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION (ECR4) WHICH WOULD BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON NOVEMBER 22.

"THE REPORT CONTAINS A REVIEW OF THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM, DEALS WITH RELATED CURRICULAR ISSUES, ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT BOTH ENDS OF THE ABILITY RANGE, LOOKS AT THE NEED FOR COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS, TRIES TO RESOLVE THE LONG-STANDING ISSUE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION, AND PLANS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF WHOLE DAY SCHOOLING AT SENIOR PRIMARY LEVEL," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMISSION HAD SPENT OVER A YEAR DEBATING THESE ISSUES, NONE OF WHICH LED ITSELF TO EASY RESOLUTION, AND DURING THE LATTER PART OF ITS DELIBERATIONS IT MET SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK.

MR YEUNG THANKED THOSE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS WHO HAD WORKED ON ECR4 FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT THEY HAD SPENT ON IT, AND PAID TRIBUTE TO MRS RITA FAN FOR HER LEADERSHIP AND PATIENCE IN MANY HOURS OF LIVELY DEBATE.

HE SAID THE COMMISSION WAS NOT TAKING A BREAK, WELL DESERVED THOUGH THIS MIGHT BE.

"PRELIMINARY WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN ON ITS FIFTH REPORT, WHICH WILL DEAL WITH THE FUTURE DEMAND FOR AND SUPPLY OF TEACHERS, THE DELIVERY OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES, AND THE FUTURE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

"IN THE COURSE OF ITS DELIBERATIONS, THE COMMISSION WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POINTS THAT HONOURABLE MEMBERS HAVE MADE IN THIS DEBATE FOR IMPROVING TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND FOR RAISING THE MORALE OF OUR TEACHERS," MR YEUNG SAID.

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GOVERNMENT TARGETS AT RESPONSIVE AND FLEXIBLE  
VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN RECENT YEARS APPOINTED TO THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (VTC) AND ALL ITS TRAINING BOARDS WORKER REPRESENTATIVES FROM HONG KONG'S LEADING INDUSTRIES.

THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE VTC'S TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES ARE SUFFICIENTLY RESPONSIVE AND FLEXIBLE TO MEET ANY RE-TRAINING NEEDS THAT MAY ARISE FROM SECTORAL UNEMPLOYMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, SAID.

HE WAS SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR YEUNG SAID THE PRESENT SCHEME FOR RE-TRAINING IVORY WORKERS, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS SET UP IN THREE MONTHS, AND WAS WORKING WELL.

NOTING THAT A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER, IN HIS SPEECH, SAID THE GOVERNMENT APPEARED DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO CREATING A SYSTEM THAT WAS OVERLY BIASED TOWARDS TERTIARY EDUCATION, AT THE EXPENSE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING, MR YEUNG SAID:

"I AM AFRAID I CANNOT AGREE. WE ARE NOT PUTTING ALL OUR EGGS IN THE TERTIARY EDUCATION BASKET."

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN RECENT YEARS, THE NEED TO UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF HONG KONG'S VOCATIONAL TRAINING HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AND THIS NEED WOULD BE MET IN THREE WAYS.

"FIRST, THE TRANSFER OF HIGHER DIPLOMA WORK FROM THE POLYTECHNICS TO THE VTC WILL NOT ONLY CREATE ADDITIONAL DEGREE CAPACITY IN THE POLYTECHNICS BUT, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, WILL ENABLE THE VTC TO TRAIN SENIOR TECHNICIANS.

"THIS WILL ACCOUNT FOR 40 PER CENT OF TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON EXPANDING TERTIARY EDUCATION," HE SAID.

SECONDLY, MR YEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CREATING NEW UNITS IN THE VTC THAT WOULD PROVIDE TRAINING IN USEFUL RECENT TECHNOLOGIES.

"FOR EXAMPLE, THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED PRECISION SHEET METAL TRAINING CENTRE AND THE DESIGN CENTRE FOR APPLICATIONS SPECIFIC INTEGRATED CIRCUITS MEET THE NEEDS OF A MANUFACTURING SECTOR THAT IS INCREASINGLY GOING UP-MARKET IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND IN THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS END-PRODUCTS," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT OTHER TRAINING AUTHORITIES HAD NOT BEEN SLOW TO REACT.

"WITH OUR HELP AND THAT OF THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY HAS SET UP A CLOTHING TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION CENTRE TO PROMOTE THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORK FLOWS," HE SAID.

THIRDLY, MR YEUNG SAID HE WAS PURSUING THE INITIATIVE THE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN OCTOBER 1989, BY PLANNING THE CREATION OF A NEW TECHNOLOGIES TRAINING FUND.

"THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION FOR THIS SCHEME IS BEING DRAFTED. WHEN IT COMES INTO OPERATION IT WILL ENABLE VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO BE RAISED TO AN EVEN HIGHER LEVEL.

"THE FUND WILL BE USED TO HELP MANAGERS AND TECHNOLOGISTS LEARN - THROUGH PURPOSE-DESIGNED SHORT COURSES AND OVERSEAS WORKING ATTACHMENTS - THOSE TECHNOLOGIES THAT HONG KONG NEEDS BUT DOES NOT YET POSSESS," HE ADDED.

COMMENTING ON POINTS RAISED BY MEMBERS ON THE NEEDS FOR MORE GRADUATES AND ON THE "BRAIN DRAIN" PROBLEM, MR YEUNG REITERATED THAT IF WE WERE TO MAINTAIN THE GROWTH MOMENTUM OF OUR ECONOMY, HONG KONG WOULD NEED MANY MORE GRADUATES.

HE SAID THAT IF THE MANPOWER FORECASTS WERE RIGHT, IN 1996, DEMAND IN THE LABOUR MARKET FOR GRADUATES WOULD ONLY BE PARTIALLY SATISFIED BY WHAT WAS LEFT OF OUR EXISTING STOCK OF GRADUATE MANPOWER AND THE EXPANDED OUTPUT OF OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS.

"WE ESTIMATE THAT, IN 1996, SOMETHING LIKE 34 PER CENT OF FORECAST DEMAND WILL HAVE TO BE MET BY OVERSEAS SUPPLIES OF GRADUATES.

"THIS MEANS THAT HONG KONG WILL STILL BE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON OVERSEAS SUPPLIES. THE GOVERNMENT IS THEREFORE DOING ALL IT CAN TO RETAIN, PRODUCE AND ATTRACT EDUCATED AND QUALIFIED MANPOWER," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS RETENTION, MR YEUNG SAID THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SCHEME, AND SIMILAR SCHEMES THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED TO SECURE FOR US, SHOULD BE VERY USEFUL.

THEY WERE DESIGNED TO GIVE THOSE WHO ARE MOST PRONE TO EMIGRATE THE DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE THEY NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING AND LIVING IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

AS REGARDS PRODUCTION, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOUBLING THE FIRST DEGREE OUTPUT OF OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS.

"AND, FINALLY, WE ARE ATTRACTING THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN RETURNING OR COMING HERE, PARTLY BY WAY OF PROMOTING HONG KONG, PARTLY BY RELAXING OUR IMMIGRATION RULES, AND PARTLY BY PROVIDING SUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR FAMILIES," HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION TO ABANDON LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEMES  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING THE SCHEMES ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

EQUALLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION OF REVISING OR EXTENDING THESE SCHEMES AT THE PRESENT TIME, MR YEUNG SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR YEUNG SAID DESPITE SOME SOFTENING IN CERTAIN SECTORS, COMPETITION IN THE LABOUR MARKET WAS STILL INTENSE.

"THE SCHEMES FOR IMPORTING TECHNICIANS AND EXPERIENCED OPERATIVES HAVE BEEN OVER-SUBSCRIBED BY SIX TIMES AND FOUR TIMES RESPECTIVELY.

"THE STEERING GROUP ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR UNDER MY CHAIRMANSHIP HAS SPENT THE PAST TWO MONTHS VETTING APPLICATIONS FROM OVER 4,500 COMPANIES FOR 57,000 JOBS.

"IT HAS FINISHED ITS TASK AND I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW READY TO ALLOCATE QUOTA," MR YEUNG SAID, ADDING THAT HE WOULD GIVE A MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT IN A STATEMENT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AT ITS NEXT SITTING.

HE ASSURED THAT NO APPLICATION INVOLVING WAGES BELOW THE PUBLISHED MEDIAN HAD BEEN ACCEPTED.

"INDEED A GOOD PROPORTION, REPRESENTING SOME 55 PER CENT OF ALL SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS, OFFER WAGES ABOVE THE MEDIAN," HE SAID.

POINTING OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF REVISING OR EXTENDING THESE SCHEMES AT THE PRESENT TIME, MR YEUNG SAID THE STEERING GROUP WOULD BE KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON THE SCHEMES AS THEY WERE IMPLEMENTED.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY REVISION UNTIL IT HAD GAINED SOME EXPERIENCE OF QUOTA UTILISATION, THE INCIDENCE OF ABUSE AND THE EFFECT OF IMPORTATION ON THE BUSINESSES INVOLVED.

AS REGARDS THE SUGGESTION THAT PLANS SHOULD BE MADE FOR IMPORTING LABOUR FOR LARGE-SCALE CAPITAL PROJECTS IN THE 1990S, MR YEUNG SAID QUOTA HAD IN FACT BEEN SET ASIDE UNDER A SEPARATE SCHEME SPECIFICALLY INTENDED FOR AIRPORT-RELATED WORKS.

"APPLICATIONS UNDER THIS THIRD SCHEME WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO COMPETE WITH THE TWO GENERAL SCHEMES THAT I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED," HE SAID.

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THREE-PRONGED APPROACH TO REFORM MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICE  
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THE GOVERNMENT IS IN PURSUIT OF MAJOR REFORMS TO MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES BY A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HELEN YU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, MRS YU SAID THE REFORMS WOULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, THROUGH PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND THROUGH THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

MRS YU SAID THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PROVIDING HOSPITAL SERVICES, AND THE FINAL PREPARATIONS ARE NOW IN HAND FOR ITS FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE YEAR.

ITS PRINCIPAL OFFICERS WILL ALL BE IN POST NEXT MONTH, SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THIS WAS A MAJOR STEP TOWARD HEALTH SERVICES REFORM.

"WE ARE FIRM IN OUR RESOLVE TO FACILITATE THE AUTHORITY IN INTEGRATING PUBLIC HOSPITALS, MAXIMISING VALUE FOR MONEY AND, ABOVE ALL, IMPROVING PATIENT CARE.

"IN ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES, THE AUTHORITY WILL HAVE ADVICE FROM A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

"IT WILL HAVE DUE FLEXIBILITY AND AUTONOMY IN OPERATION," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION ALONE WOULD NOT SUFFICE.

"WE NEED THE SAME DEDICATION AND DILIGENCE FROM OUR MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

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"IN THIS CONTEXT, I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE DOCTORS IN SHARING OUR VISION FOR REFORM. I HAVE FAITH THAT OUR OTHER HEALTH CARE COLLEAGUES ARE EQUALLY COMMITTED," SHE SAID.

WITH CONVICTION AND COOPERATION FROM ALL, MRS YU SAID, A MUCH IMPROVED PUBLIC HOSPITAL SYSTEM WITH HIGHER STANDARDS OF SERVICE WILL SOON BE A REALITY.

MRS YU SAID AS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AS THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE WHO'S OBJECTIVE OF "HEALTH FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000", HEALTH EDUCATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION WOULD REMAIN OUR PRIORITIES.

"THE WORKING PARTY ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IS MAPPING OUT A BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. IT WILL REPORT IN TWO MONTHS," SHE SAID.

WITH THE INAUGURATION OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE NEXT YEAR, MRS YU SAID, HONG KONG CAN BOAST ITS OWN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SPECIALISATION IN MEDICAL TRAINING.

THE THIRD COMPONENT OF OUR STRATEGY FOR HEALTH SERVICES REFORM WILL THEN BE IN PLACE, SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THESE MAJOR INITIATIVES TOGETHER WOULD SET A NEW SCENE FOR HEALTH CARE IN HONG KONG AND WE MUST GIVE THE ACTORS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM.

"NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO REWRITE THE SCRIPT THROUGH A WHITE PAPER. IT IS TIME FOR ACTION," SHE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT SEEKS WAYS TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND QUANTITY  
OF HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICE  
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES AND TO OFFER GREATER CHOICE, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HELEN YU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, MRS YU SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SET ITS SIGHTS HIGH AND CAST ITS VISION FAR IN RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE FOR BETTER SERVICE.

"WE WILL IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDING. WE WILL ADJUST OUR SERVICES TO MEET CHANGING COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS. IN SO DOING, WE WILL BEAR IN MIND THE NEEDS OF ALL, BE THEY RICH OR POOR, OR FROM 'SANDWICH CLASS'," SHE SAID.

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MRS YU SAID THAT MUCH HAS BEEN SAID OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE POLICY ON HOSPITAL FEES AND CHARGES.

"THE CONCEPT OF 'A WIDER CHOICE OF HIGHER QUALITY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AT PRICES THEY CAN AFFORD' HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY MANY MEMBERS. BUT SOME HAVE SOUNDED A NOTE OF CAUTION ON IMPLEMENTATION AND ASKED FOR RETENTION OF THE SAFETY NET FOR THE POOR AND THE NEEDY," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THE SAFEGUARD FOR THOSE IN NEED WAS SECURE.

"NO ONE WILL BE PREVENTED, THROUGH LACK OF MEANS, FROM OBTAINING ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT. THIS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IS ENSHRINED IN THE LAW.

"MOREOVER, THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE TO FEE POLICY UNTIL DISCERNIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICES AND A SATISFACTORY WAIVER SYSTEM ARE IN PLACE," SHE SAID.

AS REGARDS MEDICAL INSURANCE, SHE SAID THAT A RECENT TERRITORY-WIDE SURVEY HAD SHOWN THAT ONE IN SEVEN RESPONDENTS HAD HEALTH INSURANCE.

OF THESE, HALF HAD THEIR PREMIUM PAID FOR BY EMPLOYERS.

"THERE ARE SIGNS OF A GROWING TREND FOR HEALTH INSURANCE," SHE SAID.

BY ENCOURAGING HEALTH INSURANCE, MRS YU SAID, ONE CAN REDISTRIBUTE THE COST OF MEDICAL CARE MORE EQUITABLY AMONG OUR COMMUNITY AND ALLOW THE INDIVIDUAL A GREATER CHOICE OF CARE.

"WE WILL EXPLORE VARIOUS OPTIONS. POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE COMPULSORY OR VOLUNTARY SCHEMES, INSURER-BASED OR CENTRALLY MANAGED.

"WE WANT TO INCREASE PUBLIC COST EFFICIENCY, MAXIMISE VALUE FOR TAX-PAYERS' MONEY AND MAKE FOR MORE RATIONAL RATIONING OF LIMITED PUBLIC RESOURCES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE AIM TO MAINTAIN ACCESSIBILITY TO ADEQUATE CARE AND ENHANCE BOTH THE QUALITY AND CHOICE OF SERVICES," SHE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1990

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GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT IN WELFARE SERVICE  
IS BEYOND QUESTION

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THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT IN PROVIDING WELFARE SERVICES IS BEYOND QUESTION, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HELEN YU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, MRS YU SAID THE TREND IN EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE HAD BEEN RISING STEADILY, BOTH IN REAL TERMS AND AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE OVER THE PAST DECADE.

"IN THE PERIOD 1989/90 - 1991/92, TOTAL GOVERNMENT RECURRENT EXPENDITURE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY 21 PER CENT.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE WILL RISE BY 25 PER CENT.

"THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE CAPITAL ITEMS, ALLOCATIONS FROM LOTTERIES FUND AND SERVICES BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID A NUMBER OF MEMBERS HAD SPOKEN AT LENGTH ON WELFARE SERVICES, PARTICULARLY FAMILY SERVICES, AND THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY FOR THEIR PROVISION, AND MOST OF THEIR SUGGESTIONS WERE REFLECTED IN THE DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE.

"WE ARE CONSULTING THE PUBLIC NOW ON THE DRAFT WHITE PAPER AND THERE WILL BE A MOTION DEBATE NEXT WEEK," SHE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE GOVERNOR'S ASSURANCE IN HIS POLICY SPEECH THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SUPPORT THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD IMPROVE STANDARDS, UPGRADE SERVICES, INCREASE THEIR SCOPE AND GENERALLY ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE ORDINARY HONG KONG FAMILY, MRS YU SAID: "THE SAFETY NET STAYS FIRMLY IN PLACE."

"PROTECTION OF THE VULNERABLE AND THE DISADVANTAGED WILL REMAIN GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY; NO ONE WILL BE DENIED THROUGH LACK OF MEANS," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT SHIFTING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE TO THE FAMILY ITSELF AND SHE EMPHASISED THAT THE FEAR WAS UNFOUNDED.

"WE HAVE NO SUCH INTENTION WHATSOEVER. ON THE CONTRARY, WE WILL BE IMPROVING THESE SERVICES, IN QUALITY AND QUANTITY, TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID AS MANY OF US WERE LOCAL BORN, LOCAL BRED AND HAD LIVED AND THRIVED ON THE FINE TRADITION OF THE FAMILY PROVIDING MUTUAL CARE AND SECURITY, THE FAMILY HAD BEEN THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

/"FAMILIES WHICH .....

"FAMILIES WHICH CAN DO SO WILL WISH TO CONTINUE TO PLAY THEIR PART IN GIVING ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS. WE IN HONG KONG APPRECIATE WELFARE SERVICES BUT WE MUST NEVER EVER FORSAKE OUR PROUD TRADITION OF THE FAMILY," SHE SAID.

AS REGARDS REHABILITATION, MRS YU SAID THERE HAD BEEN SUGGESTIONS FOR A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR ADMISSION OF THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED TO SHELTERED WORKSHOP. SHE SAID THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION.

"A WORKING PARTY WILL BE SET UP EARLY NEXT YEAR WITH A VIEW TO ISSUING A GREEN PAPER IN 1992 FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION," SHE SAID.

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TOWN PLANNING LEGISLATION ESSENTIAL FOR PROPER RURAL PLANNING: BARNES  
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THE PURPOSE OF TOWN PLANNING LEGISLATION IS TO INTRODUCE PROPER PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS BY EXTENDING STATUTORY PLANNING JURISDICTION TO COVER THE WHOLE TERRITORY, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ON THE MEMBERS' MOTION OF THANKS, MR BARNES SAID ANY RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT HAD TO TRY TO PROVIDE SOME RATIONAL MEANS OF CONTROL, AND "THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 IS ABOUT JUST THAT".

THE BILL WAS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL NEXT WEDNESDAY.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALREADY CARRYING OUT AN OVERALL REVISION OF THE EXISTING TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE AND A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT WOULD BE PUBLISHED EARLY NEXT YEAR FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

THE REVISED ORDINANCE WAS NOT EXPECTED TO BE ENACTED BEFORE 1992, AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 WOULD BE SUBSUMED IN OR REPLACED BY THE REVISED ORDINANCE.

AFTER ITS GAZETTAL IN JULY THIS YEAR, THE AMENDMENT BILL HAD AROUSED SUPPORT IN SOME SECTORS AND OPPOSITION IN OTHERS, MR BARNES ADDED, AND IT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE TO ATTEMPT TO ANSWER SOME OF THE MAIN QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT IT.

THE SITUATION IN NORTHWESTERN NEW TERRITORIES HAD BECOME SUCH THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT MOVE FASTER TO INSTITUTE PLANNING CONTROLS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES THAN IT WAS IN A POSITION TO MOVE IN RESPECT OF THE REVISION OF THE WHOLE ORDINANCE, "THE MIXED PATTERN OF LAND USES IN MANY AREAS OF THE RURAL NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE VIRTUALLY INCAPABLE OF FUTURE PLANNING AND ORDER".

A RECENT SURVEY SHOWED THAT SOME 380 HECTARES OF LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAD BEEN CONVERTED TO OPEN STORAGE USES, OF WHICH 45 PER CENT WERE FOR STORAGE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT, 23 PER CENT FOR MOTOR VEHICLES AND 13 PER CENT FOR CONTAINERS.

MR BARNES SAID DURING 1986-87, THE RATE OF CHANGE WAS SUCH THAT IT SHOWED TO THE ADMINISTRATION THAT LEGAL POWERS OF CONTROL WERE NECESSARY, AND IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR THERE WAS AN ADDITION OF SOME 82 HECTARES OF NEWLY CONVERTED OPEN STORAGE IN NORTHWESTERN NEW TERRITORIES ALONE.

AN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL SYSTEM AS CONTROL WOULD NOT HAVE WORKED, MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID: "IN MAKING A CHANGE OF USE IN THEIR LAND, OWNERS ARE EXERCISING RIGHTS WHICH HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE COURTS. SO, THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH THESE RIGHTS CAN BE PROPERLY RESTRAINED, WHETHER IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST OR NOT, IS BY AGREEMENT OR BY ORDINANCE, AND THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NO REASON TO EXPECT LAND OWNERS TO AGREE TO VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS AGAINST THEIR OWN IMMEDIATE INTERESTS."

A STATUTORY LICENSING SYSTEM WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE, MR BARNES SAID.

CONTROLS TO ACCOMMODATE THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT HAD TO BE DEALT WITH ON THEIR OWN MERITS AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT LOCAL ENVIRONMENT, HE SAID.

ON COMPENSATION, MR BARNES SAID THE PRESENT TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE CONTAINED NO PROVISION FOR COMPENSATION EXCEPT WHEN A RESUMPTION MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED.

HE SAID: "COMPENSATION IN PLANNING LAW IS A VERY COMPLICATED ISSUE INVOLVING A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND THE NEED TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY INTERESTS.

"MY INTENTION IS TO SET UP AN EXPERT GROUP, WITH PARTICIPATION ALSO FROM THE NON-GOVERNMENT SECTOR, TO DELIBERATE ON THE ISSUES CONCERNED AS A PART OF THE CONSULTATION IN THE FULL REVIEW OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE."

COMMENTING ON THE NEED FOR INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREAS, MR BARNES SAID GOVERNMENTS NORMALLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION DEEMED TO ANTICIPATE THE DATE OF ENACTMENT WHEN THEY FORESAW THAT PUBLICATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE LEGISLATION WOULD ITSELF ENCOURAGE THE VERY ACTION WHICH THE LEGISLATION WAS INTENDED TO CONTROL.

"THIS IS FAIRLY COMMON IN TAX LAW IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND WE HAVE A PRECEDENT IN HONG KONG OF A BUILDING MORATORIUM IN THE POKFULAM AND IN MID-LEVELS UNDER THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTION ON BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (POKFULAM AND MID-LEVELS) ORDINANCE 1973 WHICH GAVE COVERAGE TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IN REFUSING BUILDING PLANS IN THE SPECIFIED AREAS BEFORE ENACTMENT OF THE ORDINANCE.

THESE POWERS INVOLVED NO INFRINGEMENT OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, MR BARNES SAID.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF APPEALS, MR BARNES SAID THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE HAD BEEN CRITICISED BECAUSE IT PROVIDED FOR THE BOARD TO HEAR OBJECTIONS TO ITS OWN PLANS AND TO CONDUCT ITS OWN REVIEWS OF ITS REFUSALS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

THESE CRITICISMS HAD ALSO BEEN APPLIED TO THE BOARD'S FUNCTIONS AS EXTENDED UNDER THE AMENDING ORDINANCE, AND ALSO TO THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING'S POWERS TO REFUSE APPROVALS UNDER THE INTERIM DEVELOPMENT PERMISSION AREA (IDPA) SYSTEM AND HIS MORE PERMANENT POWERS TO ATTACH CONDITIONS TO NOTICES OF REINSTATEMENT.

THE QUESTION OF THE BOARD'S FUNCTION HAD TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE OVERALL REVIEW, MR BARNES SAID.

"AN APPEAL AGAINST THE DIRECTOR'S POWERS TO ATTACH CONDITIONS TO NOTICES UNDER THIS BILL COULD, HOWEVER, BE CONSIDERED, BUT HIS POWERS TO APPROVE OR REFUSE PERMISSION UNDER THE IDPA SYSTEM WILL DISAPPEAR WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF ENACTMENT OF THE BILL, AND IN ANY CASE HIS DECISIONS, TO BECOME EFFECTIVE AND ENFORCEABLE, WILL HAVE TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE BOARD. SO IT MAY BE UNNECESSARY TO CONSIDER APPEAL PROCEDURES AGAINST THESE POWERS WHICH WILL BE IN FORCE FOR SO SHORT A TIME".

TURNING TO THE MATTER OF OLDER PRIVATE BUILDINGS, WHOSE CONDITION BECAME A MATTER OF CONCERN FOLLOWING TWO RECENT INCIDENTS, MR BARNES SAID THESE INCIDENTS APPEARED TO SHOW THAT THERE WERE SERIOUS PROBLEMS RESULTING BOTH FROM LACK OF MAINTENANCE AND FROM ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION.

"WE HAVE VERY LITTLE TRADITION OF PROPER AND SUSTAINED BUILDING MAINTENANCE IN HONG KONG, AND THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE'S INITIAL SURVEY HAS SHOWN JUST HOW LARGE A TASK OF REMEDIAL ACTION AWAITS US."

THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS PROGRAMME OF INSPECTIONS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF DANGER AND BRING THEM TO THE ATTENTION OF THEIR OWNERS FOR URGENT REMEDIAL ACTION.

"PRIVATE BUILDING OWNERS MUST NOW FACE UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THAT THEIR BUILDINGS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED AND REPAIRED.

"UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORK MUST CEASE AND ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS MUST NOT BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT PROPER PLANNING AND APPROVAL.

"PRIVATE ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS AND SURVEYORS SHOULD BE EMPLOYED ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO MINIMISE RISKS AND TO CARRY OUT REGULAR INSPECTIONS."

/THE DIRECTOR .....

THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS HAD BEEN ASKED TO CONSULT WIDELY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, WITH INTERESTED PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND REPORT TO HIM BY EARLY NEXT YEAR ON HOW PRESENT EFFORTS COULD BE STRENGTHENED, MR BARNES SAID.

ON RURAL PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY, MR BARNES SAID THE PROGRAMME, ESTIMATED LAST YEAR AT AROUND \$4 BILLION, OVER 10 YEARS, WAS FUNDED TO THE EXTENT OF ABOUT \$1.5 BILLION ON FLOOD PREVENTION WORKS AND \$390 MILLION ON OTHER INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS IN THE RURAL AREAS.

HE WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE WITH THE HEUNG YEE KUK AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES THE EXTENT TO WHICH DEVELOPERS MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING NEW SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, MR BARNES ADDED.

TURNING TO THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (PADS), MR BARNES SAID PLANNING FOR THE AIRPORT AND PORT HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF EACH OTHER'S DEMANDS.

THE PADS STUDY, WHICH BEGAN IN 1987 AND WAS COMPLETED LAST YEAR, FIRST BUILT UP A MORE DETAILED PICTURE OF THE LIKELY DEMAND FOR PORT FACILITIES AS A BASIS FOR PORT PLANNING. IT THEN APPLIED THE RESULTS TO THE MAIN OPTIONS FOR THE AIRPORT.

THE GROWTH OF NEW FACTORIES, HOWEVER, HAD CONTINUED TO SLOW DOWN SINCE 1986 AND THIS WAS REFLECTED IN A LOWER DEMAND FOR CONVENTIONAL FACTORY LAND, THE TERMS OF SALE OF WHICH PRESUPPOSED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FLATTED FACTORY BUILDING, MR BARNES SAID.

EXPANSION OF PORT SERVICES HELPED TO COMPENSATE FOR THE REDUCED EXPANSION OF LOCAL MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, AND WAS IN A WIDER SENSE CRITICAL TO THE EXPANSION OF THE MANUFACTURING CAPACITY OF THE REGION.

THE OTHER TREND WAS PRESSURE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH AND WEST OF THE TERRITORY.

MR BARNES SAID: "THERE IS MUCH EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT FOR MANY YEARS OUR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL WILL DEPEND ON THE PORT AND OTHER SERVICES WHICH CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGION IN WHICH WE OPERATE AND THE PADS POLICY SHOULD BE SEEN IN THIS LIGHT."

HK MUST ACHIEVE STEADY REDUCTION IN VBP POPULATION

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HONG KONG NEEDS TO ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN A MUCH GREATER FLOW OF PEOPLE RETURNING TO VIETNAM IN THE FUTURE IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE A STEADY REDUCTION IN THE OVERALL BOAT PEOPLE POPULATION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE SHALL DO ALL WE CAN TO THAT END BY WORKING WITH THE UNHCR ACTIVELY TO PROMOTE REPATRIATION, AND TO REINFORCE THE MESSAGE THAT THOSE WHO ARE NOT REFUGEES HAVE NO PROSPECT OF RESETTLEMENT," MR ASPREY SAID WHEN SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS YEAR'S RATE OF REPATRIATION OF 400 PER MONTH WAS NEARLY FIVE TIMES LAST YEAR'S RATE.

MR ASPREY SAID AT THE END OF OCTOBER LAST YEAR, THE TOTAL POPULATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG PEAKED AT NEARLY 57,000, THE HIGHEST NUMBER SINCE 1979 AND THE NUMBER WAS JUST UNDER 53,500, 12 MONTHS LATER.

"THIS IS A MODEST ACHIEVEMENT, GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM WE FACE; BUT IT IS ALSO AN ENCOURAGING REVERSAL A TREND WHICH HAD SEEN HONG KONG'S BOAT PEOPLE POPULATION INCREASE BY NEARLY 50,000 IN THE PREVIOUS TWO AND A HALF YEARS, AND BY OVER 30,000 IN 1989 ALONE," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL COMPONENTS TO THE EQUATION OF THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE POPULATION - ARRIVALS AND BIRTHS ON THE ONE HAND, RESETTLEMENT AND REPATRIATION ON THE OTHER.

"THE RESULT IS THAT WE HAVE TO RUN HARD EVEN TO STAND STILL. A NET REDUCTION IN POPULATION OF 3,500 OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AS A RESULT OF SOME 12,000 DEPARTURES OVER THE SAME PERIOD," HE SAID.

PROGRESS ON RESETTLEMENT, MR ASPREY SAID, HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING WITH SOME 6,000 HAVING LEFT FOR RESETTLEMENT THIS YEAR, AND THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES REMAINING IN HONG KONG HAD DROPPED FROM 12,000 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR TO SOME 8,500 TODAY.

"I EXPECT THIS TREND TO CONTINUE. WE HAVE MADE LESS PROGRESS ON REPATRIATION. ALTHOUGH SOME 4,000 PERSONS HAVE RETURNED TO VIETNAM SO FAR THIS YEAR, OUR TOTAL POPULATION OF UNSCREENED OR SCREENED-OUT BOAT PEOPLE HAS INCREASED SLIGHTLY OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

NOTING THAT VIETNAM WAS SEEKING TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AT LARGE, MR ASPREY SAID:

"WE MUST HOPE THAT THE BENEFITS OF TRADE, INVESTMENT AND AID WHICH ARE LIKELY TO FLOW FROM A NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS WILL TRANSLATE INTO IMPROVED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM; AND THAT THIS IN TURN WILL HELP TO STEM ILLEGAL DEPARTURES FROM VIETNAM, AND ENCOURAGE THOSE NOW IN THE DETENTION CENTRES TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND AND PICK UP THE THREADS OF THEIR LIVES ONCE MORE."

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BILL SEEKS TO EXTEND CONTROL TO ALL PESTICIDES  
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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO AMEND THE AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES ORDINANCE AND APPLY THE EXISTING CONTROL SYSTEM TO ALL PESTICIDES, FOR AGRICULTURAL, DOMESTIC AND OTHER PURPOSES, ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS HELEN YU, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS YU SAID THIS IS FOR THE PROTECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, MRS YU EXPLAINED THAT THE AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES ORDINANCE, ENACTED IN 1977, PROVIDED FOR THE CONTROL OF PESTICIDES FOR AGRICULTURAL APPLICATIONS ONLY.

HOWEVER, MRS YU POINTED OUT THAT ALL PESTICIDES CONTAINED TOXIC CHEMICALS WHICH, IF MISUSED, POSED A HEALTH OR ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD.

MRS YU STRESSED THAT THIS APPROACH WAS IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION THAT A PESTICIDE CONTROL SCHEME SHOULD BE COMPREHENSIVE AND SHOULD CONTROL PESTICIDES USED IN ALL SITUATIONS INCLUDING AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, FORESTRY, HOME GARDENING, PUBLIC HEALTH, HOUSEHOLD AND WAREHOUSE PEST CONTROL.

ON THE AMENDMENT BILL, MRS YU SAID THAT CONTROL WOULD BE IN THE FORM OF REGISTRATION AND A SYSTEM OF LICENSES AND PERMITS.

"A NEW REGISTER OF PESTICIDES WILL BE INTRODUCED," MRS YU SAID.

PART I OF THE REGISTER WOULD CONTAIN READY-FOR-USE DOMESTIC PESTICIDES AND PART II WOULD CONTAIN ALL OTHER PESTICIDES.

SUCH A CLASSIFICATION WOULD GIVE A CLEARER INDICATION OF THE POTENTIAL HAZARD TO USERS OF A CERTAIN PESTICIDE, FACILITATE ENFORCEMENT CONTROL AND PROVIDE A BASIS FOR DIFFERENT FEES FOR PROCESSING DIFFERENT LICENCES, SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO CONTROL THE MANUFACTURE, IMPORT, SALE AND SUPPLY OF REGISTERED PESTICIDES COLLECTIVELY BY MEANS OF LICENCES AND TO CONTROL THE MANUFACTURE, IMPORT, SALE, SUPPLY AND POSSESSION OF UNREGISTERED PESTICIDES INDIVIDUALLY BY MEANS OF PERMITS.

"TO CATER FOR CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT IS NEITHER PRACTICAL NOR NECESSARY TO IMPOSE A REQUIREMENT FOR A PERMIT, A PERSON WHO HAS POSSESSION OF UNREGISTERED PESTICIDES WILL BE EXEMPTED FROM SUCH REQUIREMENT IF HE OBTAINED POSSESSION OF THE PESTICIDES FROM A PERMIT HOLDER WHO PASSED THE PESTICIDES TO HIM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERMIT CONDITIONS," SHE SAID.

IN ADDITION TO THE ACTIVE INGREDIENTS WHICH KILLED THE PESTS, MRS YU POINTED OUT THAT PESTICIDES MIGHT CONTAIN INERT INGREDIENTS SUCH AS SOLVENTS AND ADDITIVES.

/"SOME CAN .....

"SOME CAN BE QUITE TOXIC IN THEMSELVES AND MAY HAVE LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

"A PROVISION IN THE BILL THEREFORE ENABLES THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES TO PROHIBIT OR CONTROL THE USE OF SUCH INERT INGREDIENTS IN THE MANUFACTURE OF PESTICIDES AND THE IMPORT, SALE AND SUPPLY OF PESTICIDES CONTAINING SUCH INERT INGREDIENTS.

"THE MANUFACTURE, IMPORT, SALE OR SUPPLY OF PESTICIDES CONTAINING PROHIBITED OR CONTROLLED INERT INGREDIENTS IN CONTRAVENTION OF ANY PROHIBITION OR THE IMPOSED CONDITIONS WILL BE OFFENCES PUNISHABLE UNDER THE ORDINANCE," SHE SAID.

TO FACILITATE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, MRS YU EXPLAINED THAT ANYONE WHO DEALT IN A PESTICIDE WOULD HAVE A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS WITHIN WHICH TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW PROVISIONS.

"FURTHERMORE, A LICENCE OR A PERMIT FOR AN AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE WHICH WAS GRANTED BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT DATE WILL REMAIN VALID FOR THE REMAINDER OF ITS UNEXPIRED PERIOD," SHE SAID.

MRS YU SAID THE BILL ALSO CONTAINED OTHER AMENDMENTS OF A TECHNICAL NATURE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO BRING IN CATERING TRADE INTO SAFETY NET FOR WORKERS

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IN VIEW OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF WORK ACCIDENTS INVOLVING THE CATERING TRADE, THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD HAS ADVISED THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO THIS TRADE, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON K.Y. YEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990, MR YEUNG SAID THE BILL SEEKS TO EXTEND THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO THE CATERING TRADE BY INCLUDING CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF AN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING.

THE ORDINANCE, WHICH PROTECTS THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF WORKERS, NOW COVERS FACTORIES AND CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY BUT NOT RESTAURANTS AND OTHER CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS.

MR YEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE MORE WORK ACCIDENTS IN THE CATERING TRADE THAN IN ANY OTHER CLASS OF BUSINESS NOT AT PRESENT COVERED BY THE ORDINANCE.

IN 1989, THE CATERING TRADE WAS INVOLVED IN 14,800 ACCIDENTS, REPRESENTING 32 PER CENT OF ALL ACCIDENTS IN THE NON-INDUSTRIAL SECTOR.

"AT 91 ACCIDENTS FOR EVERY THOUSAND WORKERS, THE ACCIDENT RATE IN THE TRADE IN 1989 WAS NOT ONLY THE HIGHEST IN THE NON-INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, BUT WAS ALSO MUCH HIGHER THAN THAT FOUND IN MANUFACTURING AT 30 ACCIDENTS PER THOUSAND WORKERS.

"MOREOVER, BOTH THE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS AND THE ACCIDENT RATE IN THE CATERING TRADE HAVE BEEN INCREASING STEADILY OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS," MR YEUNG ADDED.

THE ORDINANCE NOW COVERS ABOUT ONE MILLION WORKERS, OR ABOUT 36 PER CENT OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

"THE PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE ORDINANCE TO THE CATERING TRADE WILL BRING ANOTHER 162,000 EMPLOYEES, OR A FURTHER SIX PER CENT OF THE LABOUR FORCE, UNDER ITS PROTECTION," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT BY BRINGING CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, THE BILL WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF PROHIBITING THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN ALL AREAS OF A CATERING ESTABLISHMENT.

"THIS IS NOT OUR INTENTION," MR YEUNG SAID.

AT PRESENT, THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE PROHIBITED THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN AGED 13 AND 14 IN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS AND IN THE KITCHEN OF A CATERING ESTABLISHMENT.

THEY WERE PERMITTED TO WORK, HOWEVER, IN OTHER AREAS OF A CATERING ESTABLISHMENT AND IN ANY NON-INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

"APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN REGULATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE, THEREFORE, TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN COULD CONTINUE TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE NON-KITCHEN AREAS OF CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS.

"SUBJECT TO THIS COUNCIL APPROVING THE BILL, THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL WILL BE INVITED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY AMENDING REGULATIONS," MR YEUNG SAID.

BOTH THE BILL AND THE AMENDING REGULATIONS PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE.

"WE INTEND TO BRING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS INTO EFFECT 12 MONTHS AFTER THEIR ENACTMENT, SO AS TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE CATERING TRADE TO PREPARE FOR COMPLIANCE," MR YEUNG SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE CATERING TRADE WILL BE ADVISED AND ASSISTED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IN THIS PROCESS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL INTRODUCED

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THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEERING GROUP ON THE HONG KONG REGISTER OF SHIPPING WERE ADOPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER IN JUNE.

"THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (REGISTRATION) BILL 1990 INTRODUCED TO THIS COUNCIL ON JULY 4 PROVIDES FOR THE NEW REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS BUT A NUMBER OF OTHER LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS ARE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE REMAINDER OF THE STEERING GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

"SOME OF THESE AMENDMENTS ARE CONTAINED IN THIS BILL AND OTHERS WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION TO BE LAID BEFORE THIS COUNCIL SHORTLY.

"ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STEERING GROUP WAS THAT FOREIGN SEAFARERS SHOULD BE LICENSED TO SERVE IN SENIOR POSTS ON SHIPS REGISTERED ON THE NEW SHIPPING REGISTER," MRS ANSON CHAN SAID.

MRS CHAN ALSO SAID AT PRESENT, AS A GENERAL RULE, NO ALIEN MIGHT BE EMPLOYED AS MASTER, CHIEF OFFICER OR CHIEF ENGINEER OF A SHIP REGISTERED IN HONG KONG.

"IN OTHER WORDS, THE MASTER AND HIS SENIOR OFFICERS MUST BE OF BRITISH NATIONALITY.

"THE NEED TO ALLOW FOREIGN SEAFARERS TO SERVE IN THESE POSTS ON HONG KONG SHIPS WAS IDENTIFIED AS LONG AGO AS 1986 WHEN THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE NEW SHIPPING REGISTER WERE PUBLISHED.

"IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONALITY RESTRICTION WOULD SERIOUSLY LIMIT THE GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE NEW REGISTER AND THAT THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT HONG KONG SEAFARERS TO FILL THESE POSTS.

"THIS REMAINS THE POSITION," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL THEREFORE ENABLED THE MAKING OF REGULATIONS PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUE OF LICENCES TO HOLDERS OF FOREIGN CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY TO ENABLE THEM TO SERVE ON HONG KONG REGISTERED SHIPS.

"IT WILL CLEARLY BE IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPETENCE OF FOREIGN SEAFARERS ALLOWED TO MAN HONG KONG SHIPS IS UP TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD.

"ACCORDINGLY, A VALIDATION PANEL HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE TO EVALUATE THE STANDARD OF THE CERTIFICATES HELD BY FOREIGN SEAFARERS.

"THOSE WHO HOLD CERTIFICATES WHICH HAVE BEEN VALIDATED IN TERMS OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE AS BEING BROADLY EQUIVALENT TO THOSE ISSUED IN HONG KONG WILL, ON APPLICATION, BE LICENSED TO SERVE IN OFFICER POSTS ON HONG KONG SHIPS," SHE SAID.

TO ENSURE THAT STANDARDS ARE MAINTAINED, MRS CHAN SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM TO HANDLE ALLEGATIONS OF SERIOUS NEGLIGENCE, MISCONDUCT AND INCOMPETENCE AGAINST AN OFFICER, WHETHER HE WAS A LICENSEE OR A HOLDER OF A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY OBTAINED IN HONG KONG.

"AT PRESENT, SUCH INQUIRIES CAN BE CONDUCTED ONLY IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF A SHIPPING CASUALTY. THIS IS UNDULY RESTRICTIVE.

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROVIDES FOR SUCH INQUIRIES TO BE HELD AT ANY TIME AND FOR THE OFFICER'S LICENCE OR CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY, AS THE CASE MAY BE, TO BE SUSPENDED OR CANCELLED IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SO WARRANT," SHE EXPLAINED.

THIS PROPOSAL WAS BASED ON SIMILAR PROVISIONS IN THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT 1970 OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, MRS CHAN ADDED.

SHE SAID THAT THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW SHIPPING REGISTER WAS WELL ADVANCED AND, SUBJECT TO ENACTMENT OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (REGISTRATION) BILL BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS ON NOVEMBER 7, THE NEW REGISTER WILL BE LAUNCHED ON SCHEDULE ON DECEMBER 3.

"WITH REGARD TO THE MATTERS IN THIS BILL, THE VALIDATION PANEL HAS ALREADY CONVENED TO LAY THE GROUND WORK FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ISSUE OF LICENCES TO SUITABLY QUALIFIED FOREIGN SEAFARERS TO COINCIDE WITH THE INCEPTION OF THE NEW REGISTER," MRS CHAN SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL SEEKS TO CLEAR CLOUDS OVER APPARATUS  
FOR VEHICLE SPEED ASCERTAINING  
\* \* \* \* \*

THE EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 SEEKS TO CLARIFY THAT THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 28 OF THE EVIDENCE ORDINANCE APPLY TO ANY APPARATUS DESIGNED AND USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASCERTAINING THE SPEED OR WEIGHT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ASPREY SAID THE EXISTING SECTION 28 OF THE ORDINANCE PROVIDED FOR THE ADMISSION AS EVIDENCE IN COURT OF A CERTIFICATE OF THE ACCURACY OF A RADAR DEVICE OR APPARATUS DESIGNED AND USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASCERTAINING THE SPEED OF A MOTOR VEHICLE.

/"IT IS .....

"IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE EXPRESSION 'APPARATUS' IN THE SECTION AS PRESENTLY DRAFTED WOULD INCLUDE NON-RADAR APPARATUS NOW BEING USED BY THE POLICE TO MEASURE THE SPEED OF VEHICLES.

"THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE EXPRESSION DOES INCLUDE SPEED DETECTION EQUIPMENT WHICH OPERATE OTHER THAN BY RADAR," MR ASPREY SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LEGCO PASSED MOTION OF THANKS FOR GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS  
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AFTER THREE DAYS OF DEBATE, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PASSED A MOTION TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNOR BE THANKED FOR HIS ANNUAL POLICY ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL THIS MONTH.

MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION FOR TWO DAYS LAST WEEK, AND OFFICIAL MEMBERS REPLIED TODAY TO THE POINTS THEY HAD RAISED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL LED THE REPLIES, AND THE CLOSING SPEECH FOR THE OFFICIALS WAS MADE BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

MEANWHILE, FOUR BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

THEY WERE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990; MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990; AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990 AND EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990.

DEBATES ON THESE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

TWO OTHER BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW AFTER GOING THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING.

THEY WERE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (REPEAL) BILL 1990 AND PUBLIC ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL 1990.

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S DECISION ON SATELLITE TELEVISION

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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AFTER RECEIVING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY, HAS APPROVED THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR LICENSING SATELLITE MASTER ANTENNA TELEVISION (SMATV) SYSTEMS WHEREBY SIGNALS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN ONE TELEVISION SET AND SATELLITE TELEVISION UPLINKING FROM HONG KONG.

IN ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE REGIMES, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE DEGREE OF COMPETITION CONSIDERED DESIRABLE BETWEEN SATELLITE TELEVISION AND EXISTING OR PLANNED TELEVISION SERVICES IN HONG KONG INCLUDING CABLE TELEVISION.

THE COUNCIL WAS ALIVE TO THE NEED FOR THE REGIMES TO BE EQUITABLE WITH REGARD TO THE INTERESTS OF THOSE TELEVISION SERVICES.

"THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT IT WILL BE ILLEGAL FOR SMATV SYSTEMS TO BE INSTALLED IN HONG KONG OTHER THAN BY SMATV OPERATORS WHO HAVE BEEN LICENSED BY THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY (TA)," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"SMATV OPERATORS WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY TO PROVIDE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE ONCE OF THE EQUIPMENT. THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PROVIDE PROGRAMMES."

THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN STATED THAT BEFORE BEING GRANTED A LICENCE, SMATV OPERATORS WILL HAVE TO MEET STANDARDS OF TECHNICAL COMPETENCE LAID DOWN BY THE TA AND TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PROOF OF GOOD FINANCIAL STANDING.

PRINCIPAL CONDITIONS OF LICENCE WILL BE THAT THE LICENSEE SHOULD:

- NOT TAKE CABLE ACROSS UNLEASED CROWN LAND OR PUBLIC STREETS;
- NOT CHARGE A SUBSCRIPTION FEE OR COLLECT A SUBSCRIPTION FEE FOR A PROGRAMME PROVIDER (ALTHOUGH HE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO CHARGE FOR PROVIDING INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING SMATV EQUIPMENT);
- NOT PROVIDE OR PACKAGE PROGRAMMES FOR DISTRIBUTION;
- DISTRIBUTE ONLY SIGNALS INTENDED FOR GENERAL RECEPTION;
- INSTALL ONLY EQUIPMENT COMPATIBLE WITH GOOD QUALITY RECEPTION OF THE LICENSED TERRESTRIAL BROADCASTERS' SIGNALS; AND
- COMPLY WITH ANY DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL NOT TO DISTRIBUTE THROUGH THE SYSTEMS HE HAS INSTALLED PROSCRIBED PROGRAMME SERVICES.

/WHEN THE .....

WHEN THE SMATV LICENSING REGIME IS BROUGHT INTO EFFECT, SMATV SYSTEMS IN EXISTENCE BEFORE AUGUST 1, 1990 AND REGISTERED WITH THE TA WILL HAVE TO "COME ONTO THE BOOKS" OF LICENSED OPERATORS.

"IT REMAINS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO SUBMIT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AN AMENDMENT TO THE TELECOMMUNICATION REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THE FORM OF LICENCE TO BE ISSUED BY THE TA BASED ON THE CONDITIONS NOW LAID DOWN BY THE COUNCIL," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

TURNING TO SATELLITE TELEVISION UPLINKING, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FAVOURED DEVELOPING HONG KONG AS A BASE FOR UPLINKING SATELLITE TELEVISION PROGRAMMING FOR AN AUDIENCE PRINCIPALLY OUTSIDE HONG KONG. THIS WOULD ENHANCE HONG KONG'S GLOBAL AND REGIONAL IMAGE.

HAVING REGARD FOR EQUITABILITY AS REGARDS THE INTERESTS OF EXISTING AND PLANNED TELEVISION BROADCASTERS IN HONG KONG, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DECIDED THAT AS CONDITIONS OF LICENCE, THE LICENSEES SHOULD:

- NOT FINANCE THEIR BUSINESS THROUGH SUBSCRIPTION IN HONG KONG DURING THE PERIOD OF HONG KONG CABLE COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED (HKCC)'S LICENCE EXCLUSIVITY;
- NOT RELY PRINCIPALLY ON HONG KONG'S LOCAL ADVERTISING MARKET IF THEY FINANCE THEIR BUSINESS THROUGH ADVERTISING REVENUES;
- (SO AS TO BE EQUITABLE TO EXISTING AND PROPOSED BROADCASTERS) NOT BROADCAST CANTONESE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING. EXCEPT THAT AFTER THREE YEARS, PROGRAMMES IN CANTONESE PREVIOUSLY BROADCAST IN HONG KONG COULD BE BROADCAST AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD AT THAT TIME REVIEW WHETHER NEWLY PRODUCED CANTONESE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES COULD ALSO BE BROADCAST;
- BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT MATERIAL BROADCAST BY THEM DID NOT INFRINGE OTHERS' COPYRIGHT AND FOR TAKING ALL REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THEIR PROGRAMMES IN RECIPIENT COUNTRIES;
- OBSERVE PROVISIONS IN THE EXISTING CODE OF PRACTICE ON TELEVISION PROGRAMME STANDARDS EXCEPT THOSE RELATED TO TIME OF BROADCAST;
- NOT BROADCAST TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENTS; AND
- COMPLY WITH EXISTING ADVERTISING STANDARDS OTHER THAN THOSE NOT APPROPRIATE TO A PROGRAMMING SERVICE INTENDED TO SPAN SEVERAL TIME ZONES AND CONTAINING ADVERTISEMENTS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN.

IN ADDITION, LICENSEES WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPANIES INCORPORATED AND REGISTERED IN HONG KONG AND NOT BE SUBSIDIARIES OF ANY OTHER COMPANY.

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MAJORITY OWNERSHIP WOULD HAVE TO BE IN THE HANDS OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS.

LICENSEES WOULD ALSO NEED TO MAKE PAYMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENT CALCULATED ON A PERCENTAGE OF THAT PORTION OF THEIR REVENUE DEEMED TO BE DERIVED FROM HONG KONG.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ALSO AGREED THAT PROSPECTIVE LICENSEES SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO APPLY FOR UPLINK FACILITIES INDEPENDENT OF HONG KONG TELECOM INTERNATIONAL AND THAT EACH CASE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS. ANY LICENCES GRANTED FOR SATELLITE UPLINKING WOULD BE UNDER THE TELECOMMUNICATION ORDINANCE.

DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WILL NOW BE HELD WITH PROSPECTIVE LICENSEES.

IN APPROVING THE LICENSING REGIMES FOR BOTH SMATV SYSTEMS AND SATELLITE TELEVISION UPLINKING FROM HONG KONG, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD CONSIDERED THE DESIRABILITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE HAVING AS MUCH ACCESS AS POSSIBLE TO INFORMATION AND OF HONG KONG KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

THE COUNCIL HAD SOUGHT TO BALANCE THIS AGAINST THE DESIRABILITY OF MAINTAINING A CONSISTENT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR BROADCASTING WHICH IS FAIR TO ALL PARTIES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL THE INFORMATION UNIT OF THE RECREATION AND CULTURE BRANCH ON TEL. 574 7832 OR 573 5045.

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FS TO VISIT SHANGHAI  
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, WILL VISIT SHANGHAI FOR THREE DAYS FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE INVITATION OF THE MAYOR OF SHANGHAI, MR ZHU RONGJI.

HE WILL RETURN ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 4).

DURING HIS VISIT, SIR PIERS WILL MEET MR ZHU AND THE ADVISER ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR THE SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY, MR LI CHUWEN.

HE WILL ALSO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT WORKING COMMITTEE, THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION, THE PUDONG DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND THE SHANGHAI BRANCH OF THE BANK OF CHINA.

/BESIDES .....

BESIDES, SIR PIERS WILL TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE UNITED WOOL TEXTILE CORPORATION, A JOINT HONG KONG-SHANGHAI VENTURE.

ACCOMPANYING SIR PIERS WILL BE LADY JACOBS; HIS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, MR JOHN TSANG, AND THE DEPUTY POLITICAL ADVISER, MR STEPHEN BRADLEY.

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GUIDE TO NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME  
AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC FROM TOMORROW  
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COPIES OF AN INFORMATION BOOKLET -- A GENERAL GUIDE TO THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME -- WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FROM MORE THAN 200 GOVERNMENT OUTLETS FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THIS FOLLOWS THE PASSAGE OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY (HONG KONG) (SELECTION SCHEME) ORDER 1990 YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

A HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY IT WAS VERY ENCOURAGING THAT BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT HAD NOW APPROVED THE ORDER, WHICH SET OUT THE MECHANISM FOR SELECTING 50,000 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS TO BE REGISTERED AS BRITISH CITIZENS UNDER THE BRITISH NATIONALITY (HONG KONG) ACT.

"THE ORDER WILL GO TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 20, AND, IF MADE, WILL COME INTO FORCE ON DECEMBER 1 THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

"PENDING THE DECISION OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, WE AIM TO START ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP UNDER THE SCHEME FROM DECEMBER 1, 1990 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1991," HE SAID.

MEANWHILE, ONE MILLION COPIES OF THE GENERAL GUIDE TO THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME IN ENGLISH, AND ANOTHER MILLION COPIES IN CHINESE, HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED TO ENABLE THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN APPLYING UNDER THE SCHEME TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE SELECTION MECHANISM.

"THE GENERAL GUIDE GIVES DETAILS OF VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS INCLUDED IN THE SCHEME, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, THE POINTS SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING APPLICATIONS ETC," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THOSE INTERESTED IN APPLYING UNDER THE SCHEME WILL HAVE A FEW WEEKS TO STUDY THE SELECTION MECHANISM BEFORE THE SCHEME IS LAUNCHED ON DECEMBER 1."

"THE GENERAL GUIDE WILL BE AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE FROM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) ONWARDS FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE, ALL DISTRICT OFFICES, POST OFFICES AND IMMIGRATION OFFICES," HE SAID.

ALSO STARTING FROM TOMORROW, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT WILL SET UP A SPECIAL HOTLINE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON THE POINTS SYSTEM UNDER THE SCHEME.

THE HOTLINE WILL BE MANNED BY SENIOR IMMIGRATION OFFICERS AND WILL OPERATE DURING NORMAL OFFICE HOURS. ITS NUMBER IS 802 3300.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT APPLICATION FORMS FOR BRITISH CITIZENSHIP UNDER THE SELECTION SCHEME, WHICH WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FROM DECEMBER 1 THIS YEAR, HAVE BEEN METICULOUSLY DESIGNED TO MAKE THEM AS SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT FORWARD AS POSSIBLE.

"MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THESE FORMS WITHOUT HIRING IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS OR LAWYERS TO HELP THEM," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD CARRIED OUT TWO TRIAL RUNS IN WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS HAD BEEN INVITED TO FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORMS.

"ALL OF THEM FOUND NO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN COMPLETING THE FORMS," HE SAID.

"ALL INFORMATION ON APPLICATION PROCEDURES, NUMBERS OF PLACES AVAILABLE IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS, COMPUTER CODES ETC WILL BE READILY AND EQUALLY AVAILABLE TO ALL, AND THE HIRING OF CONSULTANTS WILL NOT BRING ANY MATERIAL BENEFIT TO AN APPLICANT," HE STRESSED.

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PROCEEDINGS RULES FOR THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES APPEALS PANEL

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THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL HAS APPROVED RULES TO REGULATE THE PROCEDURE AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES APPEALS PANEL (SFAP) UNDER THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION (SFC) ORDINANCE.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE SFAP WAS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE SFC ORDINANCE TO HEAR APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS MADE BY THE SFC IN RELATION TO APPLICATION FOR, OR SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF REGISTRATION, AND AGAINST THE EXERCISE OF INTERVENTION POWERS BY THE SFC ON THE BUSINESS OF A REGISTERED PERSON.

THE SFAP PROCEEDINGS RULES 1990 ARE BASED LARGELY ON THE RULES GOVERNING THE FORMER SECURITIES COMMISSION DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE UNDER THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE.

"THE RULES MAKE IT CLEAR THAT EVERY QUESTION BEFORE THE PANEL SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE MAJORITY AND THAT AN APPELLANT MAY APPLY TO THE PANEL FOR A RE-HEARING OR FOR A REVIEW OF THE PANEL'S DECISION TO DISMISS HIS APPEAL AFTER HE HAS FAILED TO APPEAR AT A HEARING," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

/"THE RULES .....

"THE RULES ALSO ENABLE THE PANEL TO ORDER PARTIES TO AN APPEAL TO PAY FOR THE COSTS INCURRED BY THE PANEL IN THE COURSE OF HEARING AN APPEAL," HE ADDED.

THE RULES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE ON NOVEMBER 9, 1990.

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REGISTRATION OF DEPOSIT-TAKING CO REVOKED

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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE, THE REGISTRATION OF CREDIT COMMERCIAL DE FRANCE FINANCE (HONG KONG) LIMITED AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED AS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON OCTOBER 31, 1990.

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CHANGES OF PERMITTED RENTS FOR PRE-WAR/POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES

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ONE OF THE CHANGES MADE BY THE RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON JULY 18, 1990 UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE WILL COME INTO OPERATION TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT EXPLAINED THAT THE PERMITTED RENT OF PRE-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES UNDER PART I OF THE ORDINANCE WOULD BE RAISED FROM 43 TO 48 TIMES THE STANDARD RENT OF THE PREMISES.

WHERE THE CURRENT RENT IS LESS THAN THE PERMITTED RENT, THE LANDLORD MAY SERVE A NOTICE IN THE SPECIFIED FORM ON THE TENANT INCREASING THE RENT TO THE PERMITTED LEVEL.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE OTHER CHANGE MADE BY THE RESOLUTION IN RAISING THE MINIMUM RENT OF POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES UNDER PART II OF THE ORDINANCE, FROM 65 PER CENT TO 70 PER CENT OF THE PREVAILING MARKET RENT WOULD NOT BECOME OPERATIVE UNTIL DECEMBER 19.

ANYONE HAVING ENQUIRIES ON THESE CHANGES COULD OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FROM RENT OFFICERS OF THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT (TEL. NO. 805 7888) OR THE STAFF OF THE DISTRICT OFFICES.

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GOVERNMENT ADVISED OF PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HANG LUNG BANK  
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THE GOVERNMENT WAS ADVISED THAT PROCEEDINGS HAD BEEN ISSUED BY PNC INTERNATIONAL FINANCE (ASIA) LTD AND THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA AGAINST THE HANG LUNG BANK ("HLB") (NOW KNOWN AS DAO HENG BANK) IN USA TO RECOVER LOSSES INCURRED IN LOANS TO DOLLAR CREDIT AND FINANCING LTD ("DOLLAR CREDIT") AS A RESULT OF AN ALLEGED CONSPIRACY BETWEEN HLB AND DOLLAR CREDIT BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER HLB IN 1983.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE SALE OF HLB IN SEPTEMBER 1989, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY INCORPORATED HAS GIVEN AN INDEMNITY AGAINST ANY ACTUAL LOSSES OR COSTS INCURRED BY HLB (NOW DAO HENG BANK) AS A RESULT OF THE PROCEEDINGS. PURSUANT TO THIS INDEMNITY, THE GOVERNMENT IS ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE ACTION WITH THE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF HLB (NOW DAO HENG BANK). IT IS INTENDED THAT THE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE VIGOROUSLY CONTESTED.

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205 VBP RETURNED  
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A GROUP OF 205 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 79 MEN, 52 WOMEN, 41 BOYS AND 33 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 37TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

SO FAR, A TOTAL OF 4,899 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY.

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UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS TO BE CLOSED  
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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE AN UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS AT THE UPPER ROOF OF 14 CHUNG WO LANE IN CENTRAL SO THAT THEY CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND THE PUBLIC.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON JANUARY 17, 1991 WAS POSTED ON THE STRUCTURES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE BUILDING ORDINANCE, A CLOSURE ORDER IS REQUIRED BEFORE THE DEMOLITION CAN BE CARRIED OUT.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT DEMOLITION WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT ONCE THE CLOSURE ORDER IS OBTAINED.

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UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES TO BE CLOSED

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SEEKING TO CLOSE A NUMBER OF UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES IN WESTERN DISTRICT SO THAT THEY CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPIERS AND TO THE PUBLIC.

THE STRUCTURES WERE LOCATED AT THE REAR LANE OF NO. 554 TO 560, QUEEN'S ROAD WEST.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDERS FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON JANUARY 30, 1991 WAS POSTED ON THE STRUCTURES TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, A CLOSURE ORDER IS REQUIRED BEFORE DEMOLITION COULD BE CARRIED OUT.

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CIVIC EDUCATION SEMINAR FOR HAWKERS

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THE EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD WILL HOLD A SEMINAR ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 2) FOR HAWKERS ON HOW TO UNDERSTAND MORE OF HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS.

A SENIOR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG, MR CHAN YUK-CHEUNG, WILL ADDRESS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, WHILE ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER (EASTERN), MISS LINDA SO, WILL REVIEW THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME.

THE TWO-AND-A-HALF-HOUR SEMINAR WILL START AT 8 PM AT THE CITYPLAZA PALACE RESTAURANT, TAIKOO SHING.

THE EVENT IS PART OF A SERIES OF CIVIC EDUCATION ACTIVITIES TO BE ORGANISED IN THE DISTRICT TO ENHANCE RESIDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS.

OTHER ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WOULD INCLUDE AN OUTSTANDING YOUTH AWARD SCHEME AND A CIVIC EDUCATION GALA NIGHT.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SEMINAR WHICH WILL START AT 8 PM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 2) AT THE CITYPLAZA PALACE RESTAURANT, THIRD FLOOR, CITYPLAZA, TAIKOO SHING.

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