



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING :

WHITE PAPER OUT IN FEBRUARY	1
GOVERNMENT MOVES TO GUARD AGAINST VEGETABLE CONTAMINATION	1
MTR FULLY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES	2
FIRE PREVENTION CODE FOR BEDSPACE APARTMENTS PLANNED ...	4
REVIEW OF TRAINING NEEDS FOR SECURITIES COMMODITIES STAFF	5
NEW POSTS TO COPE WITH INCREASED WORKLOAD	6
HOTLINE SERVICES OUTLINED	7
TRAINING FOR OFFICIALS FOR DB MEETINGS PLANNED	7
CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES BILL AMENDMENTS EXPLAINED	8
COUNCILLOR SUPPORTS ANTI-NAME DROPPING BILL	9
ELECTION LAW BILL AMENDMENT	11
LDC TO BE GIVEN FLEXIBILITY IN CARRYING OUT REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES	12
LDC PROCEDURE SIMPLIFICATION URGED	13
ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN URBAN IMPROVEMENT STRESSED ...	15
SET UP LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION QUICKLY PLEA	16
LDC BILL ANOTHER BILINGUAL LAW PROJECT	16

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 1 -

WHITE PAPER OUT IN FEBRUARY

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THE WHITE PAPER ON THE REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN EARLY FEBRUARY 1988, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, MR FORD SAID PREPARATIONS WERE WELL ADVANCED FOR THE NEXT DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON MARCH 10, 1988.

MR FORD ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED CHANGES TO CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES SOME TIME AGO.

"OTHER ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF ELECTED SEATS TO BE FILLED, WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN GOOD TIME BEFORE NOMINATIONS ARE OPENED EARLY NEXT MONTH," HE ADDED.

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GOVERNMENT MOVES TO GUARD AGAINST VEGETABLE CONTAMINATION

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, HAS ASSURED THAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AGAINST THE DANGER OF CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES IMPORTED INTO HONG KONG.

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON CONRAD LAM, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE RECENT OUTBREAK OF FOOD POISONING CASES WAS CAUSED BY VEGETABLES CONTAMINATED WITH A PESTICIDE CALLED METHAMIDOPHOS.

THE IMPORT, POSSESSION AND USE OF METHAMIDOPHOS WAS NOT ALLOWED IN HONG KONG, SAID MR CHAMBERS.

FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HE SAID, THE FOOD SECTION OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH IMPLEMENTED A CONTINUOUS FOOD SAFETY SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMME WHEREBY FOOD, BOTH LOCALLY PRODUCED AND IMPORTED, WAS CHECKED FOR COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY STANDARDS TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS SAFE AND WHOLESOME.

HE SAID: "THE FOOD SECTION HAS THEREFORE STEPPED UP ITS MONITORING WORK AT THE BORDER WITH A VIEW TO STOPPING IMPORT OF CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES INTO HONG KONG.

/"CONSIGNMENTS OF

"CONSIGNMENTS OF VEGETABLES FROM THE SUSPECTED SOURCE ARE NOW DETAINED FOR EXAMINATION OF PESTICIDE RESIDUES AND ARE NOT RELEASED TO THE MARKET UNLESS THE RESULTS OF SAMPLES TAKEN ARE SATISFACTORY.

"IN ADDITION, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, THROUGH THE FEDERATION OF VEGETABLE MARKETING CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, HAD ASKED VEGETABLE IMPORTERS WHO WERE SUSPECTED TO HAVE IMPORTED CONTAMINATED VEGETABLE TO WITHHOLD SUPPLIES TEMPORARILY.

"THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANSATION IS ALSO TAKING PARALLEL ACTION BY REFUSING TO HANDLE THESE VEGETABLES AT THE CHEUNG SHA WAN VEGETABLE WHOLESALE MARKET."

MR CHAMBERS STRESSED THAT THESE MESAURES WOULD BE CONTINUED UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT VEGETABLES IMPORTED FROM CHINA WERE SAFE.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIAISE WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING THEIR ASSISTANCE TO STOP THE SUPPLY OF CONTAMINATED VEGETABLES AT SOURCE.

IN ADDITION, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAD STEPPED UP ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN RESPECT OF AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE CONTROLS AND HAD STRENGTHENED ITS ADVISORY SERVICE TO LOCAL FARMERS ON THE SAFE USE OF REGISTERED PESTICIDES, MR CHAMBERS SAID.

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MTR FULLY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

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THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (MTR) IS FULLY CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO EVACUATE PASSENGERS QUICKLY AND SAFELY IN EMERGENCIES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG, MR LEUNG SAID THAT FROM THE PLANNING AND DESIGN STAGE OF ALL MTR STATIONS AND TRAINS, MAJOR DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AND INCORPORATED.

MR LEUNG SAID: "THERE ARE AT PRESENT WELL ESTABLISHED STANDING INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES AGREED WITH BOTH THE FIRE SERVICES AND THE POLICE TO DEAL WITH ALL THE EMERGENCIES. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A SEPARATE EMERGENCY PLAN FOR EACH STATION.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 3 -

"FURTHERMORE, ALL SUCH PLANS AND PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN INDEPENDENTLY CHECKED AND ENDORSED BY THE CHIEF INSPECTING OFFICER OF RAILWAYS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. HE IS THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S APPOINTED AGENT ON RAILWAY SAFETY AND REPORTS DIRECT TO GOVERNMENT."

ON EVACUATION OF PASSENGERS FROM TRAINS, HE SAID, PASSENGERS MIGHT USE A SPECIALLY DESIGNED EMERGENCY DOOR AT EITHER END OF A TRAIN. THIS DOOR COULD BE USED AS A RAMP LEADING DOWN TO THE TRACK.

IN EMERGENCIES WHEN FIRE WAS NOT PRESENT, STATION STAFF WERE SENT TO ASSIST PASSENGERS TO LEAVE THE TRAIN.

IN THE CASE OF A FIRE ON A TRAIN, THE TRAIN OPERATOR WOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO LEAD PASSENGERS OUT OF THE TRAIN TO THE NEAREST STATION.

THE SPACE BETWEEN RAILS AT TRACK LEVEL WAS FREE OF OBSTRUCTIONS TO ALLOW PASSENGERS TO WALK TO THE NEXT STATION.

THERE WERE FANS AT THE END OF EACH STATION WHICH COULD EITHER BLOW OR SUCK SMOKE FROM A FIRE IN A TUNNEL THROUGH THE VENTILATION SHAFTS TO OPEN AIR AT GROUND LEVEL. THIS PREVENTED SMOKE ENTERING THE PUBLIC AREAS AT STATIONS.

HE SAID: "THE STATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO ALLOW EVACUATION OF ALL PASSENGERS FROM ONE LEVEL TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITHIN A MINIMUM OF 4.5 MINUTES. THIS INCLUDES EVACUATION OF A FULLY LOADED TRAIN AND OF ALL WAITING PASSENGERS AT A PLATFORM.

"EXTRACT FANS WITHIN THE STATION CAN BE USED FOR REMOVING SMOKE, AND THE DIRECTION OF ESCALATOR RUNNING CAN BE REVERSED TO ASSIST IN EVACUATION," HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT ALL MTR STAFF ON STATIONS AND TRAINS WERE TRAINED IN EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, AND REFRESHER TRAINING WAS REGULARLY PROVIDED.

"AT LEAST THESE EMERGENCY DRILLS ARE CARRIED OUT EACH YEAR TO PRACTISE THESE PROCEDURES, IN EACH CASE INVOLVING BOTH THE FIRE SERVICES AND THE POLICE," MR LEUNG SAID.

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FIRE PREVENTION CODE FOR BEDSPACE APARTMENTS PLANNED

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AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP CHAIRED BY THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH IS NOW PREPARING A CODE OF PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF FIRE PREVENTION AND HYGIENE STANDARDS IN BEDSPACE APARTMENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS ROSANNA TAM, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT IN GENERAL, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WOULD ENSURE THAT ALL NEW BUILDINGS WERE EQUIPPED WITH APPROPRIATE FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS, SANITARY FITTINGS, PLUMBING, DRAINAGE WORKS, LATRINES AND REFUSE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL FACILITIES.

"THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WILL ISSUE AN OCCUPATION PERMIT FOR THE BUILDING CONCERNED ONLY AFTER THESE AND OTHER STANDARDS HAVE BEEN MET," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS MUST BE PROPERLY MAINTAINED AND CERTIFIED TO BE IN GOOD WORKING CONDITION BY A REGISTERED FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATION CONTRACTOR ONCE A YEAR.

"IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PROVISIONS IN THE FIRE SERVICES ORDINANCE TO ABATE FIRE HAZARDS.

"THERE ARE ALSO PROVISIONS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE TO ENSURE THAT ALL PREMISES MAINTAIN A REASONABLE STANDARD OF HEALTH AND HYGIENE," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON NOTED THAT APARTMENTS USED AS BOARDING HOUSES, GUEST HOUSES, BEDSPACE APARTMENTS, INNS AND MOTELS WERE INSPECTED BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND HEALTH INSPECTORS.

SINCE 1985, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAD INSPECTED 641 SUCH APARTMENTS AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BEDSPACE APARTMENTS, THE DEPARTMENT WAS SATISFIED WITH THE CONDITION OF THE PREMISES AND OF THE FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS IN THEM, HE SAID.

"IN RESPECT OF THE 171 KNOWN BEDSPACE APARTMENTS INSPECTED, THE FIRE RISKS IN SOME WERE HIGHER THAN IN NORMAL RESIDENTIAL PREMISES.

"THE DEPARTMENT HAS GIVEN ADVICE ON FIRE PREVENTION TO THE OPERATORS. ALL EXCEPT NINE OF THEM HAVE IMPROVED THE CONDITIONS IN THEIR PREMISES.

"THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING TAKING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO HAVE NOT DONE SO," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT HEALTH INSPECTORS ALSO VISITED BEDSPACE APARTMENTS ON A QUARTERLY BASIS AND OTHER APARTMENTS USED AS BOARDING HOUSES, GUEST HOUSES, INNS AND MOTELS ON AN AD HOC BASIS, USUALLY IN CONNECTION WITH COMPLAINTS.

/"IF ANY

"IF ANY SUCH APARTMENT IS NOT UP TO THE HEALTH AND HYGIENE STANDARDS REQUIRED, THEY WOULD WARN THE OPERATOR ORALLY, OR ISSUE HIM WITH A LETTER ADVISING HIM OF THE IMPROVEMENTS HE SHOULD INTRODUCE OR WITH A NUISANCE ABATEMENT NOTICE, DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF THE CASE.

"FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH A WARNING, LETTERS OR NOTICES MAY LEAD TO LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE OPERATOR," HE SAID.

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REVIEW OF TRAINING NEEDS FOR SECURITIES COMMODITIES STAFF

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AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE TRAINING NEEDS OF STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES AND COMMODITIES TRADING AND THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING WOULD BE CONDUCTED, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI, MR JACOBS SAID THE REVIEW WOULD BE CARRIED OUT WHEN THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECURITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE TWO OFFICES WERE AVAILABLE.

"I DO NOT, HOWEVER, SEE THESE MEASURES AS OBTAINING THE NEED FOR RECOURSE TO OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS FROM TIME TO TIME TO PROVIDE SPECIALIST ADVICE," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS SAID HE BELIEVED IT WAS RIGHT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO EMPLOY OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS IF THE NEED AROSE, AND "IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO HAVE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL SPECIALIST ADVICE IN A PARTICULAR CASE."

"IT WOULD BE EXTRAVAGANT TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN WITHIN GOVERNMENT SERVICE PEOPLE WITH THE HIGHLY SPECIALISED SKILLS REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE ONE-OFF TASKS, QUITE APART FROM THE FACT THAT SUCH PEOPLE COULD NOT BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN EXISTING GOVERNMENT PAY SCALES," HE ADDED.

MR JACOBS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND ITS OWN EXPERTISE IN THE SUPERVISION OF FINANCIAL MARKETS.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF OF THE TWO OFFICES, TRAINING PROGRAMMES, BOTH IN-HOUSE AND OVERSEAS HAD BEEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ORGANISED, HE SAID.

"EARLIER THIS YEAR, A CERTIFICATE COURSE IN INVESTIGATIVE ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING WAS ORGANISED FOR STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES AND COMMODITIES TRADING," MR JACOBS SAID.

"IN ADDITION, SENIOR STAFF OF BOTH OFFICES ATTENDED VARIOUS SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES WITH OVERSEAS REGULATORY AUTHORITIES."

IN ORDER TO ENHANCE SKILLS WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION, MR JACOBS SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN ACCOUNTANT EXPERIENCED IN AUDITING BANKS TO BE SECONDED FROM AN AUDITING FIRM TO THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.

HE SAID, "IT IS OUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE IN SOME FORM IN THE FUTURE."

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NEW POSTS TO COPE WITH INCREASED WORKLOAD

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THE GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE BACKLOG OF WORK FACED BY THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HELMUT SOHMEN, MR JACOBS SAID 21 NEW POSTS WERE BEING CREATED FOR THE OFFICE IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR TO ENABLE IT TO COPE WITH THE PRESENT WORKLOAD.

"THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE IN ITS ESTABLISHMENT OF 21 PER CENT, WHICH IS WAY ABOVE THE 2.5 PER CENT ANNUAL GROWTH RATE INTENDED FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AS A WHOLE," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS ALSO SAID THE FUTURE STAFFING REQUIREMENTS OF THE OFFICE WOULD BE REVIEWED AGAIN WHEN THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECURITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE ON ITS STRUCTURE AND OPERATION WERE AVAILABLE.

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HOTLINE SERVICES OUTLINED

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THERE ARE THREE SECRETARIAT BRANCHES AND 19 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OPERATING ABOUT 50 TELEPHONE HOTLINES MOST OF WHICH ARE MANNED ROUND THE CLOCK, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DR HENRIETTA IP ON EXISTING HOTLINE SERVICES OFFERED BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR, MR LIAO SAID, "THROUGH THE HOTLINES, INFORMATION COVERING THE WEATHER, IMMIGRATION MATTERS, SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, HEALTH EDUCATION, LABOUR MATTERS, AIDS, NARCOTICS, ETC. IS PROVIDED AND "COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT, CORRUPTION AND CRIME ETC. ARE RECEIVED."

IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR, MR LIAO NOTED THAT THERE WERE SIX 24-HOUR HOTLINE SERVICES DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE, FAMILY PLANNING AND FAMILY WELFARE, CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING.

HE ADDED THAT THE TERRITORY-WIDE NETWORK OF THE 67 PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE COUNTERS OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION DEALT WITH MANY GENERAL ENQUIRIES DURING OFFICE HOURS, INCLUDING PROVIDING THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF THE HOTLINE SERVICES AVAILABLE IN BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTORS.

AS TO DR IP'S QUESTION OF WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER SETTING UP A CENTRAL HOTLINE WHICH WOULD DIRECT A CITIZEN TO THE APPROPRIATE HOTLINE HE WAS LOOKING FOR, MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT THE OBJECTIVE WAS ALREADY BEING MET BY CNTA'S PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE DURING OFFICE HOURS, AND BY THE TELEPHONE COMPANY'S DIRECTORY ENQUIRY SERVICE, I.E. LINE '108', ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.

"FURTHERMORE, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE TELEPHONE COMPANY IS PLANNING TO EXPAND ITS ENQUIRY SERVICE. THEREFORE, PROVIDING A CENTRAL HOTLINE WILL ONLY COMPETE WITH THE EXISTING HOTLINES, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE ALREADY WELL-KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC," HE SAID.

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TRAINING FOR OFFICIALS FOR DB MEETINGS PLANNED

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PLANS ARE IN HAND TO ORGANISE SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR OFFICIALS FROM DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ATTENDING DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS TO GAIN A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THEIR ROLE IN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN, MR LIAO SAID RECENTLY THE CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING CENTRE HAD CONDUCTED, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, A STUDY TO ASCERTAIN THE TRAINING NEEDS OF THESE OFFICERS AND THE PROPOSED TRAINING REPRESENTED PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME.

/HE ADDED

HE ADDED THAT TO ENSURE A BETTER CO-ORDINATION OF THE WORK OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN THE DISTRICTS AND A POSITIVE RESPONSE OF DEPARTMENTS TO DISTRICT NEEDS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, IN MAY 1987, ISSUED A GENERAL CIRCULAR TO ALL POLICY SECRETARIES, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE AT DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS, SETTING OUT NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME.

"DEPARTMENTS ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO SEND SENIOR AND EXPERIENCED OFFICERS TO ATTEND DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO THE ADVICE AND REQUESTS OF DISTRICT BOARDS," HE SAID.

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CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES BILL AMENDMENTS EXPLAINED

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NAME-DROPPING IS NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT OFFENCE AND THERE IS SUPPORT FOR IT TO BE REGARDED AS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LIAO WAS SPEAKING IN RESPONSE TO THE HON DESMOND LEE'S COMMENT ON THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 THAT THE PENALTIES ON THOSE CONVICTED OF NAME-DROPPING WAS TOO HARSH.

"THE PENALTIES PROPOSED IN THE BILL ARE, AS POINTED OUT BY MISS MARIA TAM, REDUCED WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHER OFFENCES IN THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE SINCE THE SENTENCE OF IMPRISONMENT IS REMOVED," MR LIAO ADDED.

EXPLAINING THE NEED TO INCLUDE "NAME-DROPPING" INTO THE GREEN PAPER ON REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, MR LIAO REITERATED THAT DURING THE REVIEW ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS IN 1986, BOTH THE PUBLIC AND MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS CONSIDERED NAME-DROPPING AND ELECTION EXPENSES RETURN WERE TWO OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE BETTER REGULATED.

"IT WAS THEREFORE PROPER TO INCLUDE THESE ISSUES, TOGETHER WITH OTHER PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ELECTIONS, IN THE GREEN PAPER SO THAT THE PUBLIC WOULD BE AWARE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THEIR VIEWS AND BE GIVEN A FURTHER OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THEM.

"IT IS ALSO APPROPRIATE THAT NO LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS MENTIONED IN THE GREEN PAPER SHOULD BE INTRODUCED BEFORE THE SURVEY OFFICE REPORT WAS PUBLISHED," HE SAID.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ELECTION EXPENSES RETURNS, THE HON DESMOND LEE HAD QUERIED THE NEED FOR THE AMOUNT OF DETAIL TO BE PROVIDED BY CANDIDATES. MR LIAO CLARIFIED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL WAS TO INTRODUCE A MORE FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY THE FORM OF ELECTION EXPENSES RETURN AND DECLARATION NEED NOT BE SPECIFIED BY LAW, BUT WOULD INSTEAD BE SPECIFIED ADMINISTRATIVELY BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY.

"I HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT THE FORM WILL BE AS STRAIGHTFORWARD AS POSSIBLE AND THERE WILL BE CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL BEFORE AMENDMENTS ARE INTRODUCED," HE SAID, ADDING THAT CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS WOULD ALSO BE INFORMED OF THE CHANGES BY WAY OF GUIDANCE NOTES AND BRIEFING SESSIONS.

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COUNCILLOR SUPPORTS ANTI-NAME DROPPING BILL

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON MISS MARIA TAM TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 WHICH MADE IT AN OFFENCE FOR A CANDIDATE TO USE THE NAME OF ANOTHER PERSON OR ORGANISATION IN SUPPORT OF HIS CAMPAIGN WITHOUT THE PRIOR CONSENT OF THAT PERSON OR ORGANISATION.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MISS TAM SAID THAT CONSIDERING THAT THE COLLECTIVE WEIGHT OF THE OPINION OF THE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS HAD GROWN WITH TIME, IT WAS ONLY REASONABLE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE HOLDING HIMSELF FORWARD AS THE BETTER OR BEST CHOICE FOR THE JOB MUST BE HONEST ABOUT HIS OWN CREDENTIALS AND SHOULD NOT MAKE FALSE STATEMENTS OF FACT IN RELATION TO HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER, QUALIFICATIONS OR CONDUCT.

SHE NOTED THAT SECTION 16(1) OF THE EXISTING CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE ALREADY LEGISLATED AGAINST SUCH PRACTICES AND THE PENALTY INCLUDED A SEVEN-YEAR DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE DATE OF HIS CONVICTION TO BE REGISTERED AS AN ELECTOR OR VOTE AT ANY ELECTION.

SHE SAID THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE AMENDMENT BILL WERE IN LINE WITH THE SPIRIT OF SECTION 16 IN THAT THE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE TRUTHFUL IN PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT HIMSELF, AND THAT THE INTEGRITY OF A FAIR AND HONEST ELECTION MUST BE SAFEGUARDED.

"INDEED, IT IS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT IN THE 1985 URBAN COUNCIL ELECTION, THERE WERE GENUINE CASES WHEN CANDIDATES USED THE NAMES OF WELL KNOWN PUBLIC FIGURES IN HONG KONG TO ENDORSE THEIR OWN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS WITHOUT PROPER PRIOR CONSENTS," SHE SAID.

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"THE RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE 1986 REVIEW ON DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION; AND THE 1987 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BORNE OUT THE NEED TO LEGISLATE AGAINST SUCH UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES."

MISS TAM SAID MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP SET UP TO EXAMINE THE BILL, OF WHICH SHE WAS CONVENER, WERE CONCERNED THAT WHERE A CANDIDATE HAD RECEIVED THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF A SUPPORTER, WHO THEN OUT OF MALICE OR GENUINE REGRET WITHDREW HIS SUPPORT, THE CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE NO DEFENCE TO CHARGES UNDER THE BILL.

THE SAME WOULD APPLY TO CASES IN WHICH THE SUPPORTER WAS AN ORGANISATION WHOSE OFFICE-BEARERS GAVE A WRITTEN CONSENT IN THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION WITHOUT THE PROPER AUTHORITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THE CANDIDATE WOULD AGAIN HAVE NO DEFENCE TO CHARGES UNDER THE BILL.

"WE THEREFORE INSIST THAT A DEFENCE OF "REASONABLE EXCUSE" BE WRITTEN INTO THE LAW, BUT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE LAW CANNOT BE EASILY ABUSED, WE SPECIFY THAT AN ORAL CONSENT CANNOT CONSTITUTE A REASONABLE EXCUSE," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT THIS AMENDMENT DEALT WITH LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR MR DESMOND LEE'S "BANANA SKIN" THEORY IN THAT THE CANDIDATE WHO AT THE BEGINNING HAD OBTAINED THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF A DEVIOS SUPPORTER WOULD IN FACT HAVE A GOOD DEFENCE.

SHE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AGREED WITH THE AMENDMENTS, WHICH WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE MOVED BY HON MRS PAULINE NG DURING THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL.

MISS TAM ALSO NOTED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE AD HOC GROUP HAD DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE PROVISIONS IN LAW TO DEAL WITH SUBSEQUENT WITHDRAWALS OF CONSENT, SUCH AS WHETHER THE WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE DONE IN WRITING AND HOW SOON SHOULD IT TAKE EFFECT.

A MAJORITY OF THE AD HOC GROUP MEMBERS BELIEVED THAT THE CANDIDATE SHOULD BE SELECTIVE IN CHOOSING HIS SUPPORTERS, AND VICE VERSA, AND THERE MUST BE REAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HIM AND THE SUPPORTER OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF GIVING PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT TO THE CANDIDATE.

"THE CANDIDATE MUST THINK THAT IT IS TO HIS ADVANTAGE TO OBTAIN SUCH ENDORSEMENT AND MUST THEREFORE TAKE THE RISK IF HIS JUDGEMENT OF CHARACTER OF THE SUPPORTER IS INCORRECT. THE SUPPORTER MUST ALSO BE CAREFUL ABOUT HIS OWN CHOICE OF CANDIDATE AND IN ANY EVENT HE CAN OBTAIN AN INJUNCTION UNDER SECTION 16(3) OF THE ORDINANCE AS A REMEDY IF HE WITHDREW HIS SUPPORT," SHE SAID.

/MISS TAM

MISS TAM ADDED THAT THE AD HOC GROUP DECIDED THAT THE BILL WAS NOT CONCERNED WITH RESOLVING THE DISPUTES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS WHO BROKE A GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT. HENCE THE GROUP DECIDED THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO LEGISLATE ON THESE SIDE ISSUES FOR WHICH THERE WAS ALREADY AN ANSWER UNDER SECTION 16(3).

SHE ALSO REFERRED TO THE SUGGESTION THAT THE CANDIDATE WHO WAS CONVICTED OF THE PROPOSED OFFENCE SHOULD BE DISQUALIFIED FROM STANDING FOR THE RELEVANT ELECTION ONLY, AND THAT THE DISQUALIFICATION PERIOD OF 10 YEARS WAS TOO LONG.

THE AD HOC GROUP HAD LOOKED INTO THIS MATTER AND FOUND THAT UNDER THE EXISTING ORDINANCE, THE SAME DISQUALIFICATION PERIOD WAS IMPOSED FOR OFFENCES SUCH AS MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS CONCERNING A CANDIDATE.

"IN FACT, THE AMENDMENT UNDER CLAUSE 2 OF THIS BILL HAS REMOVED THE SENTENCE OF THREE MONTHS AND SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT FROM ALL THESE OFFENCES," SHE NOTED.

MISS TAM NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ASSURED THE AD HOC GROUP THAT THERE HAD BEEN AMPLE CONSULTATION ON THE BILL SINCE MAY 1986.

SHE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN CLEARLY TO THE CANDIDATES THEIR OBLIGATIONS, AND THE REGULATIONS THAT WOULD AFFECT THE CONDUCT OF THEIR CAMPAIGN, ESPECIALLY ON THE FORM FOR FILLING IN ELECTION EXPENSES WHICH WAS NOW WITHIN THE DEPUTY CHIEF SECRETARY'S POWER TO DEVICE. SHE HOPED THAT THESE FORMS WERE KEPT SIMPLE.

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ELECTION LAW BILL AMENDMENT

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON MRS PAULINE NG TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED A COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENT TO THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 TO MAKE FALSE CLAIMS OF SPONSORSHIP BY AN ELECTION CANDIDATE AN OFFENCE.

NOTING THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN THAT THE BILL MIGHT BE TOO RESTRICTIVE, MRS NG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE AMENDMENT WAS AIMED AT PROVIDING A DEFENDANT WHO IS ALLEGED TO HAVE MADE SUCH FALSE CLAIMS, WITH A DEFENCE ON THE GROUNDS OF "REASONABLE EXCUSE", SO THAT THE BILL WOULD NOT BE TOO RESTRICTIVE AND YET ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTIVELY PREVENTING FALSE CLAIMS.

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LDC TO BE GIVEN FLEXIBILITY
IN CARRYING OUT REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES
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THE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AS SEPARATE PLANS UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IS INTENDED FOR MAJOR COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES INVOLVING CHANGES IN EXISTING ZONINGS ON STATUTORY TOWN PLANS.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHILE WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1987.

HE ADDED THAT MOST SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN BY THE CORPORATION WOULD BE OF THIS TYPE.

"HOWEVER, LDC MAY ALSO UNDERTAKE SMALL SCHEMES WHICH ACCORD WITH THE ZONINGS ON TOWN PLANS. IN SUCH CASES, THE REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH THE SCHEME AS A SEPARATE PLAN UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE IS UNNECESSARY, AND WOULD PUT THE LDC AT A DISADVANTAGE AS COMPARED WITH OTHER DEVELOPERS.

"THIS MIGHT WELL DETER POTENTIAL JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS. I THEREFORE SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND CLAUSE 17 OF THE BILL," MR BARNES SAID.

REFERRING TO THE DESIGNATION OF URBAN RENEWAL AREAS, MR BARNES SAID: "THE ADMINISTRATION ACCEPTS THAT THERE MAY BE SOME SUBSTANCE IN THE CRITICISM OF THE LIKELY EFFECT OF THE DESIGNATION AND PUBLICATION OF URAS."

"IN ANY CASE, WHILE THERE REMAINS A NEED TO RESTRICT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LDC TO THE SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE REDEVELOPMENT IS MOST NECESSARY, FORMAL DESIGNATION AND PUBLICATION OF URA'S IS NOT NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM.

"THE PURPOSE CAN EQUALLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH PROVISIONS IN CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL WHICH RESTRICT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LDC TO AREAS DESIGNATED EITHER GENERALLY OR IN ANY PARTICULAR CASE," MR BARNES SAID.

TURNING TO REHOUSING AND COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING LDC SCHEMES, MR BARNES SAID: "THE CORPORATION SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FLEXIBILITY OF OFFERING AND NEGOTIATING OPTIONS WITH TENANTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS.

"WHILE IT MAY WELL BE DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE TO REHOUSE PERSONS IN OR NEAR THE SAME LOCALITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT THIS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE FEASIBLE. THE TERMS OF COMPENSATION ARE ALSO A MATTER FOR NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE CORPORATION AND OWNERS AND TENANTS, AS IS THE CASE WITH ANY PRIVATE DEVELOPER.

"IN PRACTICE, THOUGH, I WOULD EXPECT THAT DURING NEGOTIATIONS THE LDC WOULD OFFER ACCOMMODATION, OR CASH, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH, DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THOUGH I WOULD NOT SEE THE CORPORATION OFFERING EQUITY PARTICIPATION IN THE SHORT TERM, THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT IT DOING SO IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE FAVOURABLE, AND THE INITIATIVE AS TO WHAT IS OFFERED MUST REMAIN A MATTER FOR THE CORPORATION," MR BARNES SAID.

LDC PROCEDURE SIMPLIFICATION URGED

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON F.K. HU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE PROCEDURAL CONTROL FOR THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S DEVELOPMENT SCHEME SHOULD BE SIMPLIFIED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO GIVE MORE AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY TO THE CORPORATION AND SHORTEN THE TIME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

MR HU SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1987.

THIS WAS ONE OF THE POINTS PUT FORWARD BY THE OMELCO LANDS AND WORKS PANEL AND A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AD HOC GROUP STUDYING THE BILL AFTER A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE BILL. MR HU IS THE CONVENER OF BOTH THE PANEL AND THE AD HOC GROUP.

MR HU MOVED A COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENT TO THE BILL FOR THE PURPOSE OF SIMPLIFYING THE PROCEDURE LEADING TO RESUMPTION OF LAND WHERE REDEVELOPMENT REQUIRED NO CHANGE IN LAND USE.

MR HU SAID THAT SUCCESS OF THE LDC DEPENDED ON THE SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT OF PRIVATE DEVELOPERS WHO WOULD BE GREATLY ENCOURAGED TO WORK WITH LDC IF THE TIME REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COULD BE REDUCED.

HE SAID THE AD HOC GROUP ALSO FELT THAT THE CONCEPT OF DESIGNATING URBAN RENEWAL AREAS (URA) SHOULD BE ABANDONED AS THERE WOULD BE SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE AREA, THEREBY CREATING UNCERTAINTIES FOR OWNERS, TENANTS AND DEVELOPERS, AFFECTING LAND PRICES AND SALE OF PROPERTY.

HE SAID THE CONCEPT COULD CAUSE EITHER FALSE HOPE AND OVER EXPECTATION OR BAD FEELING AMONG PEOPLE DEPENDING ON THE SITE. THE AREA WOULD IN EFFECT BE FROZEN AND NO REDEVELOPMENT BY PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD BE CARRIED OUT.

IT WOULD MULTIPLY THE SLUM PROBLEM SINCE PEOPLE WERE BOUND TO BECOME SLACK IN THE PROPER MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS WITHIN AN URA. IT WOULD ALSO RESTRICT THE SCOPE OF LDC'S WORK SINCE THE BILL PRECLUDED THE LDC FROM DEALING WITH AREAS OUTSIDE THE URA.

MR HU MOVED ANOTHER COMMITTEE STAGE AMENDMENT UNDER WHICH PART IV OF THE BILL ON THE DESIGNATION OF URBAN RENEWAL AREA WOULD BE DELETED.

ANOTHER POINT PUT FORWARD BY THE AD HOC GROUP AND ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS THAT THERE SHOULD BE PROVISIONS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR THE AFFECTED TENANTS BY WAY OF REHOUSING AND/OR CASH COMPENSATION. THE CORPORATION SHOULD OFFER SATISFACTORY OPTIONS, INCLUDING FLAT FOR FLAT, CASH COMPENSATION AND COMBINATION OF OPTIONS TO SMALL PROPERTY OWNERS.

/HOWEVER THE

HOWEVER THE AD HOC GROUP UNDERSTOOD THAT ANY SUCH REHOUSING ARRANGEMENTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE CORPORATION SHOULD NOT CREATE ADDITIONAL DEMAND ON THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

HE SAID THE AD HOC GROUP APPRECIATED THE DIFFICULTIES IN STIPULATING DETAILS OF REHOUSING AND COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS IN THE BILL AS THE CORPORATION SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FLEXIBILITY OF OFFERING AND NEGOTIATING VARIOUS ACCEPTABLE OPTIONS TO THE AFFECTED TENANTS AND SMALL PROPERTY OWNERS.

"HOWEVER, THE GROUP WOULD WELCOME THE ADMINISTRATION'S ASSURANCE AND INDICATION OF ARRANGEMENT ON REHOUSING AND COMPENSATION TO THE AFFECTED TENANTS AS WELL AS THE RANGE OF OPTIONS OPEN TO SMALL PROPERTY OWNERS INCLUDING FLATS IN EXCHANGE OR CASH OR COMBINATION OF BOTH," HE SAID.

THE AD HOC GROUP ALSO NOTED THAT THE LDC WOULD HAVE NO MORE THAN THREE MEMBERS BEING PUBLIC OFFICERS, WHO WOULD BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR ACCORDING TO POST.

MR HU SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED WITH THE AD HOC GROUP THAT THE QUORUM OF THE CORPORATION LAID DOWN IN PARAGRAPH 9 OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE SHOULD BE INCREASED FROM FIVE TO SIX IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE AT LEAST THREE OTHER MEMBERS NOT BEING PUBLIC OFFICERS AT ANY MEETING OF THE CORPORATION.

MR HU ALSO NOTED THAT CLAUSE 18(1) (B) OF THE BILL PROVIDED THAT A PERSON AUTHORISED UNDER THE ORDINANCE MAY ENTER AND INSPECT A BUILDING OR STRUCTURE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF A REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON RESIDENTS, 24 HOURS AFTER NOTICE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE OWNER OR OCCUPIER.

THE AD HOC GROUP CONSIDERED THAT THE 24-HOUR PERIOD WAS UNREASONABLY SHORT FOR THE OWNER OR OCCUPIER TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENT. THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUBSEQUENTLY AGREED THAT THE PERIOD SHOULD BE INCREASED TO 48 HOURS.

HE SAID THE AD HOC GROUP CONSIDERED THAT THERE SHOULD BE PROVISION FOR CONTINUING OFFENCES SO THAT HEAVIER PENALTIES COULD BE IMPOSED FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCES IN OBSTRUCTING AUTHORISED OFFICERS FROM ENTERING OR INSPECTING ANY BUILDING. AN AMENDMENT TO THE BILL WAS SUBSEQUENTLY MOVED ACCORDINGLY.

REFERRING TO COMMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT THE CORPORATION WAS BEING GIVEN TOO MUCH POWER, MR HU SAID A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL WOULD HOWEVER INDICATE THAT THERE WERE MANY RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT THE CORPORATION COULD DO, AND MUCH POWER WAS IN FACT RESERVED FOR THE GOVERNMENT, RESTING EITHER IN THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL IN THE CASE OF RESUMPTION AND TOWN PLANNING CHANGES, OR SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS IN OTHER MATTERS.

THE GROUP IS SATISFIED THAT THERE ARE SUFFICIENT BUILT-IN CHECKS AND BALANCES, AND SOME FLEXIBILITIES SHOULD ALSO BE ALLOWED FOR THE CORPORATION TO OPERATE ON COMMERCIAL PRINCIPLES, MR HU CONCLUDED.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 15 -

ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN URBAN IMPROVEMENT STRESSED

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON EDWARD HO TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SUPPORTED THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL, STRESSING THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN URBAN IMPROVEMENT IN HONG KONG.

MR HO SAID THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WOULD BE AN INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION PROVIDING A VEHICLE FOR COORDINATED EFFORTS IN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS.

"ALTHOUGH ITS OBJECTIVES OF IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT MAY MEAN THAT IT HAS TO OCCASIONALLY UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENTS NOT ENTIRELY ON THE BASIS OF COMMERCIAL VIABILITY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT SHOULD NEVERTHELESS OPERATE ON SOUND COMMERCIAL PRINCIPLES IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE VIABLE ON A CONTINUING BASIS."

ALSO, WHAT WOULD SET THE CORPORATION APART FROM PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS ON URBAN RENEWAL, WHICH TENDED TO BE UNORGANISED AND SPORADIC, WOULD BE THE INJECTION OF INITIATIVENESS, EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HE SAID.

MR HO SAID WHERE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ALREADY OWNED A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE PROPERTIES TO BE DEVELOPED, THEY COULD COOPERATE WITH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND MAKE USE OF ITS ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE AND ACQUIRE THE REMAINDER OF THE PROPERTIES FOR DEVELOPMENT.

BESIDES, PRIVATE-SECTOR DEVELOPERS COULD PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES AND IN DEVELOPMENT, IN THE FORM OF JOINT VENTURES, AND COULD PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN THE FINANCIAL APPRAISAL OF THE VIABILITY OF A PROJECT.

NOTING THAT THESE DEVELOPERS COULD ALSO CARRY OUT A PROJECT ON BEHALF OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WITH THE LATTER AGREEING WITH THEM THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF, MR HO SAID THE CORPORATION WOULD MONITOR THE QUALITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT ENSURING ITS OBJECTIVES WERE MET.

ADDITIONALLY, PROFESSIONALS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR: ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, SURVEYORS, ESTATE MANAGERS, WOULD PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN THE PHYSICAL IMPLEMENTATION, THE MARKETING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CORPORATION'S PROJECTS.

MR HO ALSO NOTED THAT THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL PROVIDED FOR A SYSTEM OF PROCEDURAL CONTROLS AIMED AT PROTECTING PUBLIC INTEREST, ESPECIALLY THOSE INDIVIDUAL OWNERS AND TENANTS WHOSE PROPERTIES WOULD BE RESUMED.

HE CONSIDERED THAT THESE CONTROLS WERE IMPORTANT, AND THAT IF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION APPLIED ITSELF PURPOSEFULLY AND ENERGETICALLY TO ITS TASKS, IT WOULD BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS STATED OBJECTIVES AND COMPLETE ITS FIRST PROJECT IN THREE YEARS.

SET UP LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION QUICKLY PLEA

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THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) SHOULD BE FORMALLY ESTABLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO FACILITATE URBAN RENEWAL, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN URGED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHENG WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1987.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE SETTING UP OF THE LDC, ONE COULD EXPECT TO SEE SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STANDARDS OF HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE DILAPIDATED PART OF HONG KONG.

MR CHENG STRESSED THAT THE ESTABLISHED LDC SHOULD BE GIVEN SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY TO DEAL WITH REHOUSING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MUST SATISFACTORILY LOOK AFTER THE INTERESTS OF THE ORIGINAL OCCUPIERS.

"I WOULD STRONGLY ENDORSE THE PRINCIPLE THAT INITIALLY SITES SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE LDC AT CONCESSIONARY PREMIUM FOR THE SOLE PURPOSES OF CONSTRUCTING DECANTATION ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED THAT THESE SITES ARE NOT SUBSEQUENTLY DISPOSED OF AS AN ASSET.

"IN THE EARLY STAGE, SUCH DECANTATION ACCOMMODATION IS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE SMOOTH REHOUSING FOR PURSUING EFFECTIVE URBAN RENEWAL," HE SAID.

MR CHENG INSISTED THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RE-HOUSING SHOULD REST UPON THE LDC ALONE WITHOUT THE BURDEN BEING SHARED BY THE GOVERNMENT OR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

"SATISFACTORY RE-HOUSING, A PREFERRED OPTION ESPECIALLY FOR OWNER-OCCUPIERS, WILL CERTAINLY ALLEVIATE THE FEARS AND CONCERNS OF PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE DISPLACED BY THE FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

"PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO RE-HOUSING THE MORE NEEDY TENANTS SUCH AS THE POOR AND THE ELDERLY," HE CONTINUED.

MR CHENG ADDED THAT HIS VIEWS WERE SHARED BY ANOTHER COUNCILLOR, THE HON MRS SELINA CHOW.

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LDC BILL ANOTHER BILINGUAL LAW PROJECT

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THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1987 IS, LIKE THE FORMER WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL, A TEST RUN IN HONG KONG'S BILINGUAL LAWS PROJECT, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON PETER C. WONG, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR WONG WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT AS IN THE PREVIOUS TEST RUN, ALTHOUGH THE BILL WAS DRAFTED AND GAZETTED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE AND THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BILINGUAL LEGISLATION AD HOC GROUP HAD SCRUTINISED BOTH VERSIONS OF THE BILL, ONLY THE ENGLISH TEXT WAS TO BE PASSED INTO LAW AT THE MEETING.

HOWEVER, AFTER A FEW MORE TEST RUNS AND WHEN MORE EXPERIENCE IN BILINGUAL LEGISLATION WAS GAINED, IT WAS HOPED THAT A BILL IN BILINGUAL FORM COULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

COMMENTING ON THE LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL, MR WONG SAID THAT THE CHINESE TEXT WAS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT WHEN COMPARED WITH THE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL, AS THE VOCABULARY, USE OF TECHNICAL EXPRESSIONS AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE WERE MORE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE DAILY CHINESE USAGE.

MR WONG THANKED ALL CONCERNED FOR THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTION, ADDING THAT THE CHINESE TEXT OF THIS BILL WOULD SHORTLY BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION.

STRESSING THAT LEGAL BILINGUALISM WAS NEW BUT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG, MR WONG URGED THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED TO PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON ATTRACTING AND KEEPING SUITABLY QUALIFIED STAFF IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE JUDICIARY TO CARRY OUT NECESSARY RELATED PROJECTS.

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RHKJC TO RECEIVE FIXED PERCENTAGE RATE
FOR LOTTERY OPERATIONS

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UNDER THE PROPOSED BETTING DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, A FIXED 7.5 PER CENT OF THE PROCEEDS AFTER EACH LOTTERY WOULD BE PAYABLE TO THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TO COVER ITS OPERATING EXPENSES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MR DAVID FORD, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE FIXED PERCENTAGE RATES, IF APPROVED, SHOULD HAVE RETROSPECTIVE EFFECT FROM JULY 1, 1986, AND THE LOTTERIES BOARD HAD ESTIMATED THAT THE LOTTERIES FUND WOULD BENEFIT FROM AN ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION OF \$27 MILLION IN RESPECT OF THE CLUB'S 1986/87 FINANCIAL YEAR, HE ADDED.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR FORD SAID THAT UNDER THE EXISTING BETTING DUTY ORDINANCE, THE HONG KONG LOTTERIES BOARD MIGHT USE THE FACILITIES OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB FOR CONDUCTING PERMITTED LOTTERIES AND REIMBURSE THE CLUB FOR THE ACTUAL OPERATING COSTS.

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AT PRESENT, ONLY THE MARK SIX IS LICENSED.

"THE CURRENT PRACTICE IS FOR THE JOCKEY CLUB TO DEDUCT A PROVISIONAL 9.5 PER CENT OF THE PROCEEDS AFTER EACH LOTTERY TO COVER ITS OPERATING EXPENSES. AFTER ACCOUNTING FOR PRIZES AND BETTING DUTY AT 59 PER CENT AND 30 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, THE BALANCE OF 1.5 PER CENT OF THE PROCEEDS IS PAID INTO THE LOTTERIES FUND. AT THE END OF THE CLUB'S FINANCIAL YEAR WHEN THE ACTUAL OPERATING COSTS ARE AVAILABLE, THE CLUB IS REQUIRED TO PAY ANY SURPLUS INTO, OR RECOVER ANY DEFICIENCY, FROM THE LOTTERIES FUND," MR FORD EXPLAINED.

"THIS ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY HINDERS THE ACCURATE FORWARD PLANNING OF THE FUND," HE NOTED.

THERE WERE ALSO INCREASING DIFFICULTIES IN SEPARATING LOTTERY OPERATING COSTS FROM THOSE RELATED TO HORSE-RACE BETTING AS BOTH SHARED THE SAME COMPUTER SYSTEM, HE ADDED.

"THE BILL THEREFORE PROPOSES TO FIX THE PERCENTAGE OF THE PROCEEDS PAYABLE TO THE CLUB FOR ITS OPERATING EXPENSES AT 7.5 PER CENT. THIS TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE ACTUAL AVERAGE COST OF 7.88 PER CENT OF THE PROCEEDS FOR THE 10 YEARS ENDING JUNE 1986. THE CONSEQUENTIAL SHARE FOR THE LOTTERIES FUND WILL BE 3.5 PER CENT. THIS FIGURE COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH THE SHARE FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS WHICH WAS 2.42 PER CENT AND 2.96 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY."

HE SAID THAT TO PROVIDE A DEGREE OF STABILITY TO THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS, ANY CHANGE TO THE PERCENTAGES ALLOCATED FOR OPERATING COSTS AND TO THE FUND SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO A RESOLUTION BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THE JOCKEY CLUB WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REVIEW THE COST PERCENTAGE PERIODICALLY.

"WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, ENVISAGE ANY CHANGE TO THE PERCENTAGES WITHIN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF ITS INTRODUCTION," MR FORD SAID.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE LOTTERIES BOARD AND THE JOCKEY CLUB HAD GIVEN THEIR SUPPORT TO THE PROPOSALS. THE BOARD HAD ALSO GIVEN AN ASSURANCE THAT IT HAD NO PLANS TO INCREASE THE UNIT PRICE OF A MARK SIX ENTRY FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED

LAY ELEMENT ON MEDICAL, DENTAL BODIES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONSIDERED IT APPROPRIATE FOR A LAY ELEMENT TO BE INTRODUCED INTO EACH OF THE MEDICAL, DENTAL, NURSING AND MIDWIVES BOARDS AND COUNCILS, TO PROVIDE A LINK BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONS AND THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE SECOND READING OF THE MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, THE DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1987, THE NURSES REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 AND THE MIDWIVES REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MR CHAMBERS SAID THE GOVERNMENT NOW BELIEVED THAT IT WAS NO LONGER APPROPRIATE THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES SHOULD BE THE EX-OFFICIO HEAD OF THE BODIES WHICH WERE OFTEN REQUIRED TO ACT IN A QUASI-JUDICIAL CAPACITY IN DISCIPLINARY ENQUIRIES INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL, DENTAL, NURSING AND MIDWIVES PROFESSIONS.

"MOREOVER FOR THE DIRECTOR TO RELINQUISH THE CHAIRMANSHIP WOULD ENHANCE THE SELF-REGULATING AND INDEPENDENT STATUS OF THE FOUR PROFESSIONS.

"FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE FOUR BODIES IT IS PROPOSED THAT INITIALLY THERE SHOULD BE ONE LAY MEMBER ON EACH BODY, PENDING A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE COMPOSITION OF EACH OF THE COUNCILS AND BOARDS," MR CHAMBERS ADDED.

HE SAID THE BILLS PROVIDED FOR THE CHAIRMEN OF THE FOUR BODIES TO BE ELECTED BY THE MEMBERS FROM AMONGST THEMSELVES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WOULD REMAIN A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL IN HIS CAPACITY AS REGISTRAR OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, AND THAT IN THE NURSING BOARD, DENTAL COUNCIL AND MIDWIVES BOARDS WOULD BE REPLACED BY THE DIRECTOR OF NURSING SERVICES, THE CONSULTANT DENTAL SURGEON IN CHARGE OF THE GOVERNMENT DENTAL SERVICE, AND THE NURSING DIRECTOR RESPECTIVELY.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THE BILLS ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF ONE LAY MEMBER EACH OF THE COUNCILS AND BOARDS, AND, IN ADDITION, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG WOULD ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THE NURSING AND MIDWIVES BOARDS.

DEBATE ON THE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

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NOISE ABATEMENT MEASURES IN HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION
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NOISE ASSESSMENTS ARE CARRIED OUT AT THE PLANNING STAGE FOR ALL MAJOR HIGHWAY PROPOSALS TO MINIMISE NOISE NUISANCE GENERATED BY TRAFFIC, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

RESPONDING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EDWARD HO, MR BARNES SAID, "THE MEASURES ADOPTED TO REDUCE NOISE VARY DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS ENVIRONMENT."

"THESE INCLUDE REALIGNMENT OR RELOCATION OF THE ROAD TO MOVE IT FURTHER AWAY FROM NOISE SENSITIVE BUILDINGS; AND THE ERECTION OF BARRIERS, SUCH AS SCREEN WALLS, CONCRETE OR PERSPEX PANELS, OR EARTH BOUNDS TO SCREEN ADJACENT BUILDINGS.

"THEY ALSO INCLUDE THE REPLANNING OF SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE BUFFERS AGAINST THE TRAFFIC NOISE," MR BARNES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT NOISE ABATEMENT STUDIES HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT ON A TOTAL OF 19 NEW TRUNK ROADS, INCLUDING THE KWUN TONG BY-PASS, ROUTE 5, TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL AND THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING.

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NO PLANS TO CONTROL SALE OF CORROSIVE ACIDS
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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY PLANS TO CONTROL THE SALE OF CORROSIVE ACIDS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE FACT WAS THAT CORROSIVE ACIDS WERE USED EXTENSIVELY IN INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG.

"IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1987 SIX CASES WERE REPORTED OF THROWING A CORROSIVE FLUID WITH INTENT TO DO GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM," HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON ALSO SAID THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT FOUND THESE CASES ABHORRENT, IT DID NOT CONSIDER THAT ANY PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED BY CONTROLLING THE SALE OF CORROSIVE ACIDS, SUCH AS HYDROCHLORIC ACID.

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FIREARMS ORDINANCE REGULATES POSSESSION OF GUNS

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THE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION ORDINANCE REGULATES THE POSSESSION OF ANY GUN FROM WHICH ANY BULLET OR MISSILE CAN BE DISCHARGED WITH A MUZZLE ENERGY GREATER THAN TWO JOULES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI ON STANDARDS BEING USED FOR BANNING TOY GUNS WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF FIRING PROJECTILES AND INFLECTING ACTUAL INJURIES IN THE LIGHT OF A RECENT CASE WHERE A CHILD WAS INJURED BY A PLASTIC PELLET FROM A TOY GUN.

"FIRING A MISSILE FROM A TOY GUN WITH A MUZZLE ENERGY OF LESS THAN TWO JOULES WOULD NOT NORMALLY CAUSE ACTUAL INJURY TO SOMEONE HIT BY THE MISSILE.

"IN THE CASE REFERRED TO BY DR HO, THE INJURY WAS CAUSED BECAUSE, UNFORTUNATELY, THE VICTIM WAS ACCIDENTALLY HIT IN THE EYE," MR MACLEOD SAID.

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JUBILEE SPORT CENTRE TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIP

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THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE WILL SEEK TO FORMALLY STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL AGENCIES IN THE COMING MONTHS, IN ORDER THAT THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT COULD BE DERIVED FROM ITS SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME AND ATHLETES COULD REPRESENT HONG KONG WITH DISTINCTION, LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR THE HON F.K. HU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HU, WHO IS MEMBER OF THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE BOARD, SAID THIS WHEN TABLING THE CENTRE'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 1986 - MARCH 31, 1987 AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

DURING THE PERIOD, MR HU NOTED, THE CENTRE HAD MOVED INTO AN AUTONOMOUS PHASE AS THE RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, MADE POSSIBLE BY THE CLUB GRANTING \$350 MILLION TO THE CENTRE TO ALLOW IT TO MEET ITS OWN EXPENSES FROM FUNDS GENERATED FROM THIS CAPITAL SUM.

THE CENTRE HAD ALSO CONTINUED ITS COACHING SUPPORT TO 10 SPORTS WITHIN THE MAIN BODY OF ITS PROGRAMME AND PROVIDED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT TO OTHER SPORTS AGENCIES, INCLUDING THOSE FROM THE DISABLED SECTOR.

/ADDITIONALLY, INITIATIVE

ADDITIONALLY, INITIATIVE WAS TAKEN BY THE CENTRE IN INTENSIFYING ITS SUPPORT PROGRAMMES TO THE LEADING SENIOR AND TOP AGE-GROUP ATHLETES, BY WAY OF A 'SCHOLARSHIP' SCHEME DESIGNED TO ASSIST COMMITTED ATHLETES TO THE NEXT STAGE OF PROGRESS, WHILE THE SPORTS MEDICINE AND SCIENCE PROGRAMMES DEVELOPED HAD ENABLED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO BE OFFERED IN THE AREAS OF TREATMENT OF INJURY, AND MEDICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL SCREENING AND TESTING.

"AN EXTENSION OF THESE SERVICES TO INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNSELLING PROGRAMME AND A NUTRITIONAL ADVICE SERVICE IS EXPECTED IN THE COMING MONTHS," MR HU SAID.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE CENTRE'S TRAINING HALL FOR GYMNASTICS HAD BEEN UPGRADED, PROVIDING FACILITY AS GOOD AS ANY TO BE FOUND IN HONG KONG.

"WORK IS ALSO UNDERWAY TO BRING BACK TO STANDARD FACILITIES AFFECTED BY LAND SETTLEMENT. THIS INCLUDES THE RESURFACING OF THE ATHLETICS TRACK - A PROJECT JOINTLY FUNDED BY GOVERNMENT AND THE JOCKEY CLUB," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT STANDARDS HAD BEEN IMPROVED IN ALL SPORTS IN THE CENTRE'S PROGRAMMES, MR HU SAID THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COUNCIL FOR RECREATION AND SPORT, THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND THE GOVERNING BODIES WOULD ENSURE THAT THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE HAD A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN SPORTS PROMOTION IN FUTURE.

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TWO BILLS PASSED
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THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987 AND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1987, WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FIVE OTHER BILLS: BETTING DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, DENTISTS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL 1987, NURSES REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, AND MIDWIVES REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1987, WERE READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED.

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FUNDS APPROVED FOR SETTING UP OLI PLANNING COMMITTEE

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROVED THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE OF HONG KONG (OLI) AT ITS MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE OPERATING COSTS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND ITS SECRETARIAT ARE ESTIMATED AT \$10.4 MILLION PHASED OVER THREE YEARS FROM 1987-88 TO 1989-90.

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE WILL COMPRISE A PROMINENT LOCAL FIGURE AS CHAIRMAN, FIVE TO SIX REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS FUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE, THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF OVERSEAS INSTITUTIONS, SIX OVERSEAS ACADEMICS, SIX LOCAL LAY MEMBERS AND ONE SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICER.

ITS TASKS WILL BE TO ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DEMAND AND NEED FOR OPEN EDUCATION COURSES; TO ESTABLISH THE AVAILABILITY OF CONTRIBUTORY EFFORT FROM PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS; TO ASSESS THE AVAILABILITY OF COURSE MATERIAL FROM OVERSEAS; AND TO PRODUCE A DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, INCLUDING ADVICE ON THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OLI'S OWN PROGRAMME AND THE EXTRA-MURAL AND PART-TIME COURSES RUN BY EXISTING INSTITUTIONS.

A SECRETARIAT WILL ALSO BE SET UP IMMEDIATELY WITHIN THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO SET UP THE OLI PLANNING COMMITTEE WAS MADE PUBLIC ON OCTOBER 7 IN THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE 1987-88 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION, WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT OLI WOULD ADMIT ITS FIRST STUDENTS IN 1989.

THIS DECISION FOLLOWED CONSIDERATION OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THERE WAS A PRIMA FACIE CASE FOR AN OPEN EDUCATION PROGRAMME TO SUPPLEMENT COVENTIONAL EDUCATION AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE DENIED FROM THEM.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH SOME TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS PROVIDED EXTRA-MURAL COURSES AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SOME VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OPERATED ADULT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES, HONG KONG LAGGED FAR BEHIND MANY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND NEWLY INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES.

"THE NEED FOR AN OPEN EDUCATION PROGRAMME IS PARTICULARLY GREAT IN HONG KONG WHERE MORE THAN 60 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION OVER THE AGE OF 25 HAVE RECEIVED EDUCATION ONLY UP TO PRIMARY LEVEL OR BELOW.

"THERE IS AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF TERTIARY PLACES AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR FLEXIBLE AND COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ENHANCING THE SKILL OF WORKERS AND MANAGERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IS CONSTANTLY GROWING," HE SAID.

INCREASES IN MONTHLY ALLOWANCES FOR OMELCO, DB MEMBERS APPROVED

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS (OTHER THAN OFFICIAL MEMBERS) OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND MEMBERS OF DISTRICT BOARDS.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ALSO AGREED TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE FOR OMELCO MEMBERS FROM \$20,000 TO \$21,300 AND FOR DB MEMBERS FROM \$6,000 TO \$6,400, BOTH WITH RETROSPECTIVE EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1, 1987.

BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A REVIEW CONDUCTED LAST YEAR BY A WORKING PARTY WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION TO ASSESS THE PAYMENT MADE IN THE THREE TIERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVED THE FOLLOWING NEW ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING THE OMELCO AND DB MEMBERS:

- (A) THE CURRENT DISTINCTION BETWEEN STIPEND AND GENERAL EXPENSES ALLOWANCES (\$9,000 AND \$11,000 RESPECTIVELY) FOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS SHOULD BE ABOLISHED AND A SINGLE ALLOWANCE (\$20,000) SHOULD BE PAYABLE TO LEGCO MEMBERS AGAINST CLAIMS FOR EXPENSES INCURRED AND/OR EARNINGS FOREGONE;
- (B) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS (OTHER THAN OFFICIAL MEMBERS) SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SAME LEVEL OF ALLOWANCE AS LEGCO MEMBERS;
- (C) THE CURRENT LEVELS AND RELATIVITY OF PAYMENTS TO LEGCO MEMBERS AND DB MEMBERS (\$20,000 AND \$6,000 RESPECTIVELY) SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS A BASE;
- (D) IN ADDITION TO THE MEMBER'S ALLOWANCE, THE SENIOR MEMBER OF EXCO, LIKE HIS COUNTERPART IN THE LEGCO, SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL ALLOWANCE EQUAL IN AMOUNT TO THE MEMBER'S ALLOWANCE;
- (E) WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT EXCO MEMBERS WHO ARE ALSO LEGCO MEMBERS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR ONLY ONE OF THE TWO ALLOWANCES (PLUS ANY SPECIAL ALLOWANCE), INDIVIDUALS HOLDING MULTIPLE MEMBERSHIP IN TWO OR MORE INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE IN FULL THE HIGHEST OF THE MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES, ANY SPECIAL ALLOWANCE, AND TWO-THIRDS OF THE OTHER ALLOWANCES, FOR WHICH THEY ARE ELIGIBLE;
- (F) THE SINGLE ALLOWANCE FOR OMELCO MEMBERS SHOULD BE DEEMED TO INCLUDE AN OFFICE RENTAL ELEMENT; AND
- (G) THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FUND THE PAYMENT OF DB ALLOWANCES FOR URBAN COUNCIL MEMBERS.

ON OMELCO STIPEND AND ALLOWANCES, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THESE ALLOWANCES WERE REVIEWED ANNUALLY WITH A VIEW TO INTRODUCING REVISED RATES, WHERE NECESSARY, AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LEGCO SESSION.

"THE STIPEND IS REVISED WITH REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE BAND OF THE ANNUAL PAY TREND SURVEY CONDUCTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES. THE GENERAL EXPENSES ALLOWANCE IS REVISED WITH REFERENCE TO PRICE INDICES RELATING TO SECRETARIAL SALARIES, ENTERTAINMENT AND TRAVELLING," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES HAD BEEN COMPLETED ON THE BASIS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF PAYMENTS.

"THE REVIEW RECOMMENDS AN INCREASE IN THE STIPEND FROM \$9,000 BY \$600 TO \$9,600 AND IN THE GENERAL EXPENSES ALLOWANCE FROM \$11,000 BY \$700 TO \$11,700 PER MONTH. INCORPORATING THESE INCREASES INTO THE NEW SYSTEM OF A SINGLE ALLOWANCE FOR OMELCO MEMBERS PROVIDES A MAXIMUM MONTHLY ALLOWANCE OF \$21,300.

THE REVIEW ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE ALLOWANCE FOR DB MEMBERS SHOULD BE ADJUSTED FROM \$6,000 TO \$6,400. CHAIRMEN OF THE DB'S, AS AT PRESENT, WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL ALLOWANCE EQUAL IN AMOUNT TO THE MEMBER'S ALLOWANCE. THIS WILL ALLOW DB CHAIRMEN TO CLAIM A TOTAL OF \$12,800.

THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMENDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL WERE FINANCIALLY AUTONOMOUS, THE TWO COUNCILS SHOULD BE INVITED TO ACCEPT SETTING THE ALLOWANCES FOR THEIR MEMBERS AT THE AVERAGE OF THOSE FOR MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THAT IS, AT \$13,000 OR \$13,800 UNDER THE REVISED RATES.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE TWO COUNCILS ON THE MATTER.

THE ADJUSTMENTS WILL RESULT IN AN ANNUAL INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE OF \$4,126,000 MADE UP OF \$1,468,000 AND \$2,658,000 FOR OMELCO AND DB'S RESPECTIVELY.

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\$12 MILLION APPROVED TO MEET
REMAINING PAYMENTS FOR PATROL CRAFT
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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED AN ADDITIONAL \$12 MILLION TO MEET THE REMAINING PAYMENTS FOR FIVE REPLACEMENT ROYAL NAVY PATROL CRAFT, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE IN COMMITMENT FROM \$457 MILLION TO \$469 MILLION.

IN JUNE 1981, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVED A COMMITMENT OF \$455 MILLION TOWARDS THE COST OF HONG KONG'S 75 PER CENT CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPLACEMENT OF FIVE ROYAL NAVY PATROL CRAFT WHICH FORM THE HONG KONG SQUADRON.

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- 26 -

IT WAS ANTICIPATED AT THE TIME THAT FURTHER COMMITMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE SINCE THE ESTIMATED FINAL COST OF THE PATROL CRAFT WAS THEN PUT AT 59.8 MILLION POUND STERLING OR \$718 MILLION AT THE THEN EXCHANGE RATE OF ONE POUND STERLING TO \$12, OF WHICH HONG KONG'S SHARE WOULD HAVE BEEN \$538 MILLION.

DUE TO THE DELAY IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY OF THE CRAFT, THE ANTICIPATED CLOSING OF ACCOUNTS HAS BEEN PUT BACK FROM 1986-87 TO 1988-89.

DESPITE THE DELAYS, THE FINAL OUT-TURN EXPENDITURE, AS NOW PROJECTED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD), IS 58 MILLION POUND STERLING WHICH IS LOWER THAN THE 1981 FORECAST OF 59.8 MILLION POUND STERLING, LARGELY DUE TO STRINGENT CONTROL OF THE PROJECT AND THE USE OF COST SAVING MEASURES.

UP TO MARCH 31, 1987, HONG KONG'S EXPENDITURE TOWARDS ITS 75 PER CENT CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION TO THE COST OF THE REPLACEMENT PATROL CRAFT WAS \$453,194,196.

TO MEET FURTHER PAYMENTS IN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER 1987 AND PENDING CONFIRMATION FROM MOD OF THE FINAL OUT-TURN FIGURE, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY EXERCISED HIS DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO INCREASE THE APPROVED COMMITMENT FROM \$455 MILLION BY \$2 MILLION TO \$457 MILLION.

OF THE MOD'S PROJECTED FINAL OUT-TURN FIGURE OF 58 MILLION POUND STERLING, 1.15 MILLION POUND STERLING REMAINS TO BE PAID, 170,000 POUND STERLING IN THE REMAINDER OF THE 1987-88 FINANCIAL YEAR AND 980,000 POUND STERLING IN 1988-89.

HONG KONG'S SHARE OF THIS EXPENDITURE WILL BE 127,500 POUND STERLING IN 1987-88 AND 735,000 POUND STERLING IN 1988-89, A TOTAL OF 862,500 POUND STERLING. THIS AMOUNTS TO \$12,075,000 AT AN ASSUMED EXCHANGE RATE OF HK\$14 TO ONE POUND STERLING.

THE ROYAL NAVY PATROL CRAFT REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME IS A CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT ENTERED INTO IN 1981 AND DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE DEFENCE COSTS AGREEMENT.

"INSTEAD OF THE FIRST PATROL CRAFT BEING DELIVERED IN AUGUST 1983 AND THE LAST IN DECEMBER 1984 AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED, THE FIRST DID NOT ARRIVE UNTIL NOVEMBER 1984 AND THE LAST UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1985.

"THE REASONS FOR THIS WERE CONSTRUCTION DELAYS AND LONGER-THAN-EXPECTED SEA-TRIALS, SINCE THESE REVEALED A NEED FOR MODIFICATIONS. DELIVERY OF CERTAIN ANCILLARY SYSTEMS ALSO TOOK LONGER-THAN-EXPECTED TIME AND SOME ARE ONLY NOW BEING FITTED," A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 27 -

POST OFFICE TO REVIEW POSTMEN RANKS

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THE POST OFFICE WILL CONDUCT IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF THE POSTMEN AND VARIOUS POSTAL OFFICER RANKS AS A RESULT OF MEETINGS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BETWEEN THE UNION OF HONG KONG POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES AND THE HONG KONG POSTAL WORKERS' UNION AND THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH AND THE POST OFFICE.

BOTH THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR HAIDER BARMA, AND THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR HUGH ARDLEY, SAID THAT THEY WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING WITH THE UNIONS AND THAT THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE MEETINGS WERE HELD IN A FRANK AND SINCERE ATMOSPHERE.

MR BARMA SAID THE MEETINGS PROVIDED A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND DEVELOP A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES. THE DISCUSSIONS CENTRED ON THE PROMOTION PROSPECTS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR POSTMEN AND POSTAL OFFICERS. HE ADDED THAT THE STAFF VIEWS PRESENTED AT THE MEETINGS WOULD BE FULLY CONSIDERED IN THE REVIEWS.

THE PMG WILL COMPLETE A REVIEW OF A NEW SENIOR POSTMAN RANK AND WILL ALSO CONDUCT A STUDY TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS A CASE FOR ADDITIONAL SENIOR POSTAL OFFICER POSTS BY THE END OF JANUARY.

THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH WILL MEET WITH THE UNIONS AGAIN SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY, SAID MR BARMA.

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TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME ON TSING YI CONTINUES TEMPORARILY

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE EXISTING TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS ON TSING YI WILL BE REVIEWED AFTER THE OPENING OF THE TSING TSUEN BRIDGE (TSING YI NORTH BRIDGE) ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11.

THE BRIDGE WILL BE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, AT 11 AM TOMORROW BUT IT WILL NOT BE OPEN TO TRAFFIC UNTIL 5 PM ON FRIDAY.

THE EXISTING TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME, IMPLEMENTED ON TSING YI SINCE MAY 23 TO GIVE PRIORITY TO FRANCHISED BUS OPERATIONS, WILL CONTINUE FOR ABOUT SIX WEEKS AFTER THE OPENING OF THE TSING TSUEN BRIDGE.

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"THIS WILL ALLOW THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE TO CARRY OUT DETAILED STUDIES ON THE TRAFFIC PATTERNS RESULTING FROM THE INCREASED ROAD CAPACITY MADE AVAILABLE BY THE OPENING OF THE NEW BRIDGE," A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

"AT THE SAME TIME, THE TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE OPERATIONS OF FRANCHISED BUSES CAN ALSO BE ASSESSED OVER A SETTTLING DOWN PERIOD WITH BOTH THE TSING TSUEN BRIDGE AND TSING YI SOUTH BRIDGE OPEN."

UNDER THE EXISTING TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME, ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES AND GREEN MINIBUSES ARE BANNED FROM MAKING RIGHT TURNS FROM TSING YI ROAD NORTHBOUND ON TO THE SOUTH BRIDGE; FROM THE SOUTH BRIDGE ON TO TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD NORTHBOUND; AND FROM CHUNG MEI ROAD ON TO TSING YI HEUNG SZE WUI ROAD SOUTHBOUND.

"THE SCHEME WILL BE REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF FINDINGS FROM THE STUDIES ON TRAFFIC PATTERNS, AND THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE CONSULTED AT ITS MEETING ON JANUARY 12 NEXT YEAR."

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS OF THE SOUTH BRIDGE, STRENGTHENING WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT ON THE BRIDGE FROM MID-1988 AND A NUMBER OF TRAFFIC MEASURES WILL HAVE TO BE ENFORCED.

"STARTING FROM LATE 1988 OR EARLY 1989, TRAFFIC ON THE SOUTH BRIDGE WILL HAVE TO BE CONVERTED INTO ONE-LANE TWO-WAY OPERATIONS FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS. TEMPORARY TRAFFIC SIGNALS WILL BE ERECTED TO GUIDE MOTORISTS," HE SAID.

"IN MID-1989, THE SOUTH BRIDGE WILL HAVE TO BE CLOSED COMPLETELY TO TRAFFIC FOR ABOUT FOUR TO SIX WEEKS."

REVIEW FINDINGS OF THE EXISTING TRAFFIC DIVERSION SCHEME WILL BE USED TO DETERMINE WHAT MEASURES CAN BE INTRODUCED DURING THE BRIDGE STRENGTHENING PROJECT. MOTORISTS WILL BE INFORMED OF THE ARRANGEMENTS IN DUE COURSE.

MEANWHILE, TOGETHER WITH THE OPENING OF TSING TSUEN ROAD (TSING YI NORTH BRIDGE ROAD) STRETCHING FROM THE ROUNDABOUT AT CHEUNG ON ESTATE IN TSING YI TO THE ROUNDABOUT UNDERNEATH TSUEN WAN ROAD AT TEXACO ROAD, THE SECTION OF ROAD TY8 FROM ROAD TY6 TO THE ROUNDABOUT AT CHEUNG ON ESTATE, THE SECTION OF ROAD TY5 FROM CHING HONG ROAD TO ROAD TY8 AT CHEUNG ON ESTATE, ROAD TY18, AND ROAD TY20 WILL ALSO BE OPEN TO TRAFFIC FROM 5 PM ON FRIDAY.

IN ADDITION, ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND VEHICLES DRIVEN BY LEARNER DRIVERS WILL BE BANNED FROM USING TSING TSUEN ROAD. THE ROAD WILL ALSO BE MADE A 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY ON WHICH NO VEHICLE WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 29 -

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN NEW TOWNS STRESSED

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WHILE PROVIDING A FIRM BASIS FOR THE GROWTH OF NEW COMMUNITIES IN THE NEW TOWNS, THE GOVERNMENT DEPENDS ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS TO SUIT THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT INCOME-GROUPS AS WELL AS FOR COMMERCIAL OUTLETS TO ENABLE A COMMUNITY TO THRIVE AS A SELF-CONTAINED UNIT, THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF A JAPANESE-OWNED DEPARTMENT STORE IN TUEN MUN, MR SUEN STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE NEED TO FOSTER AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN THE NEW TOWNS.

"ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PURSUING THE POLICY OF DEVELOPING NEW TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES, IT IS ONLY RECENTLY THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE THAT THE NEW TOWNS HAVE AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE, TO OFFER AS THE ESTABLISHED URBAN AREAS," MR SUEN SAID.

"THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN HOUSING OF A HIGH STANDARD TOGETHER WITH THE TIMELY PROVISION OF SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL AMENITIES IS, OF COURSE, A MAJOR PART IN THE PROCESS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW TOWNS.

"HOWEVER, LITTLE IS SO SIGNIFICANT AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RANGE OF RETAIL OUTLETS IN THE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE BOTH QUALITY GOODS AND A WIDE RANGE OF CHOICES," HE SAID.

MR SUEN CONSIDERED THE OPENING OF A BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT STORE IN TUEN MUN - ONE OF ITS LARGEST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA -AN AUSPICIOUS SIGN FOR THE PROSPERITY OF TUEN MUN AND A MANIFESTATION OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN THE DISTRICT.

IT WILL ALSO PROVIDE MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NEW TOWN, HE SAID.

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DB DISCUSSES DRAINAGE PROJECT TO EASE FLOODING PROBLEM

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THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE PROPOSED DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO ALLEVIATE THE FLOODING PROBLEM IN THE NORTH-WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE \$67 MILLION PROJECT WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY THE CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT IN THREE PHASES STARTING FROM LATE 1988. THE WORKS AREA WILL INCLUDE HUNG UK TSUEN, FUI SHA WAI, TAI TO TSUEN, HUNG SHUI KIU, TIN SAM, SIK KONG WAI AND TSEUNG KONG WAI.

/DISTRICT BOARD

DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER MR TAI CHIN-WAH WILL ASK WHAT APPROACH HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE ADMINISTRATION CONCERNING THE CLEARANCE OF OYSTER BEDS IN DEEP BAY.

HE WILL ALSO ASK THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ON THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SERVICE TO LONG PING ESTATE, YUEN LONG.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S DISTRICT FESTIVALS SUBSIDY SCHEME; THIRD INTERIM REPORT ON THE WORK OF REGIONAL COUNCIL; PROGRESS REPORTS FROM THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND VARIOUS OTHER COMMITTEES UNDER THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD, 13TH FLOOR, TAI KIU GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG.

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POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR X'MAS AND NEW YEAR

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THE LATEST DATE FOR POSTING CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR LOCAL DELIVERY IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, A POST OFFICE SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"POSTINGS AFTER THIS DATE CANNOT BE GUARANTEED DELIVERY BEFORE CHRISTMAS," HE SAID, ADVISING THAT THE PUBLIC SHOULD POST AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID A LAST-MINUTE RUSH.

ON THE POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID BUSINESS WILL BE CONDUCTED AS USUAL ON CHRISTMAS EVE (DECEMBER 24) AND NEW YEAR'S EVE (DECEMBER 31).

ALL POST OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED DURING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS EXCEPT ON DECEMBER 26, WHEN 42 POST OFFICES WILL BE OPEN FOR BUSINESS FROM 9 AM TO NOON.

THESE 42 POST OFFICES INCLUDE THE GENERAL POST OFFICE ON HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON CENTRAL AND TSIM SHA TSUI IN KOWLOON, AND TSUEN WAN AND TAI PO IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 31 -

"THERE WILL BE SPECIAL DELIVERIES OF LETTERS AND PARCELS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 AND ALSO ON BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26.

"HOWEVER, NO DELIVERIES WILL BE MADE ON CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FURTHER DETAILS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM INDIVIDUAL POST OFFICES OR FROM THE POST OFFICE ENQUIRY BUREAU AT 5-231071.

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DIRECTOR OF MARINE TO PRESENT COMMENDATIONS

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THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR GERRY HIGGINSON, WILL PRESENT CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION TO 21 PEOPLE IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR BRAVE AND PUBLIC-SPIRITED ACTION DURING THE RESCUE OF LIVES IN HONG KONG WATERS AT A CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT 3 PM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 11).

RECIPIENTS OF THE COMMENDATIONS WILL INCLUDE TWO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, 15 CREW MEMBERS OF FERRY COMPANIES AND FOUR OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE, ONE OF WHOM WAS INVOLVED IN TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES COVERING THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY ARE REQUESTED TO ARRIVE AT THE LECTURE ROOM (ROOM 1414), MARINE DEPARTMENT, 14/F, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL, HONG KONG, AT 2.45 PM ON DECEMBER 11 (FRIDAY).

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HIGHLIGHTS OF YUEN LONG ARTS FESTIVAL

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A VARIETY OF PROGRAMMES ARE BEING LINED UP FOR THE EIGHTH YUEN LONG ARTS FESTIVAL WHICH WAS OPENED LAST FRIDAY (DECEMBER 4).

ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 11) EVENING, A POP CONCERT FEATURING PERFORMANCES BY RAIDAS, MR LAI MING, MR WAN SIU-LUN, MISS NGAI YEE-CHING AND COMPERED BY MISS YIP LAI-LING WILL BE HELD AT LUT SAU HALL. IT WILL START AT 7.30 PM.

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ON THE SAME DAY, AN EXHIBITION OF BOOKS ON ART AND AN EXHIBITION OF YUEN LONG CHILDREN'S ARTS WILL BE HELD AT THE LOBBY AND THE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES ROOM OF YUEN LONG PUBLIC LIBRARY RESPECTIVELY. A POSTER EXHIBITION ON WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND HIS AGE WILL BE HELD AT YUEN LONG KEI YUEN COLLEGE.

ADMISSION TO THE THREE EXHIBITIONS IS FREE.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FESTIVAL, WHICH WILL END ON DECEMBER 20, INCLUDE A CONCERT BY THE HONG KONG PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE, EXHIBITION OF CHINESE PAINTINGS BY ARTISTS OF THE LING NAM SCHOOL, CHOR FUNG MING CANTONESE OPERA TROUPE'S "THE STORY OF THE PURPLE HAIRPIN" AND "THE ROMANCE OF THE PEAR BLOSSOM", AND PIANO RECITAL BY CHEN SU-CHING.

PROGRAMME PAMPHLETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD, THE DISTRICT OFFICE PUBLIC ENQUIRY CENTRES, YUEN LONG TOWN HALL AND LUT SAU HALL.

TICKETS ARE OBTAINABLE FROM THE YUEN LONG TOWN HALL, HONG KONG BANK YUEN LONG BRANCH AND LUT SAU HALL.

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TSUEN WAN SPORTS FESTIVAL CLOSES

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A VISITING CHINESE NATIONAL MARTIAL ART TEAM WILL GIVE PERFORMANCES AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF MONTH-LONG NINTH TSUEN WAN SPORTS FESTIVAL TOMORROW (THURSDAY) EVENING.

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN; LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, DR RICHARD LAI AND COMMUNITY LEADER, MR CHAN PO-FONG WILL OFFICIATE AT THE CEREMONY AT THE SHA TSUI ROAD PLAYGROUND AT 8 PM.

DURING THE PAST MONTH, RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT HAVE BEEN TREATED TO SOME 40 SPORTS EVENTS HELD IN VARIOUS VENUES IN TSUEN WAN INCLUDING SPECIAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE HANDICAPPED AND THE ELDERLY.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE SPORTS NURTURE SCHEME OF THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD ALSO TOOK PART IN SOME OF THE EVENTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CLOSING CEREMONY CUM MARTIAL ART PERFORMANCE HELD AT 8 PM AT THE SHA TSUI ROAD PLAYGROUND IN TSUEN WAN ON THURSDAY (DECEMBER 10).

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1987

- 33 -

RS TO SWITCH ON MONG KOK LIGHTINGS

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THE LIGHTING DISPLAY IN MONG KOK WILL BE SWITCHED ON TOMORROW (THURSDAY) EVENING TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE FIRST MONG KOK DISTRICT FESTIVAL AND TO CELEBRATE THE APPROACH OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY (HONG KONG AND KOWLOON), MR T.H. CHAU, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE SWITCH-ON CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT THE JUNCTION OF ARGYLE STREET AND NATHAN ROAD.

THE SIX-WEEK DISTRICT FESTIVAL IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD AND LOCAL COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS TO PROMOTE THE MESSAGE OF "HOME IN MONG KOK" AMONG RESIDENTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MONG KOK DISTRICT FESTIVAL TO BE HELD AT 6.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) ON THE PAVEMENT OUTSIDE HANG SENG BANK, AT THE JUNCTION OF ARGYLE STREET AND NATHAN ROAD.

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON STUDENT READING AWARD SCHEME

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE HONG KONG TAI PING SHAN LIONS CLUB WILL JOINTLY HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE MANDARIN HOTEL TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON TO ANNOUNCE A READING AWARD SCHEME FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN.

THE AWARD SCHEME AIMS TO DEVELOP READING HABITS AND LANGUAGE SKILLS AND TO PROMOTE THE USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY RESOURCES. IT IS ORGANISED BY THE LIBRARY SECTION OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SPONSORED BY THE HONG KONG TAI PING SHAN LIONS CLUB.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS), MR SO FAI-CHO, WILL CHAIR THE PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 3 PM AT EAST-WEST ROOM, 23RD FLOOR, MANDARIN HOTEL, CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT.

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