



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
FIRST STEPS IN DIRECTLY ELECTED DEMOCRACY IN 1991: FOREIGN SECRETARY ..	1
FOREIGN SECRETARY VISITS SHA TIN	5
FOREIGN SECRETARY VISITS HI-TECH FACTORY	6
DECISION NOT MADE ON 1991 FIGURES	6
FOREIGN SECRETARY ATTENDS DB MEETING	7
CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRANK MEETING WITH OMELCO: FOREIGN SECRETARY	8
LARGE POOL OF SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDED: GOVERNOR	8
HK EXTENDS ROLE AS BUSINESS HUB FOR AISA/PACIFIC	10
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CRITICISMS UNFOUNDED: SECRETARY FOR SECURITY ..	13
SEPT EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS RELEASED	14
UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR SEPT - NOV RELEASED	19
INCREASE IN APPLICATIONS FOR TRADE MARKS IN 1989	21
FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO LONG SERVICE PAYMENT DISCUSSED	22
SWD HOTLINE PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING	24
MSB HYGIENE DIVISION ON MOVE	25
JFIU GETS NEW HOTLINE NUMBER	25
CHANGE IN TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR DRAINAGE COMPLAINTS	25
POSTAL SERVICES DURING LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS	26
DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS FOOTBRIDGE CONGESTION PROBLEM	26
DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS CHILD CARE SERVICE	27
TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA	27
WATER STORAGE FIGURE	28
WATER CUT IN MUI WO	28
TEMPORARY LANE CLOSURE ON TAI PO ROAD IN SHA TIN	28

FIRST STEPS IN DIRECTLY ELECTED DEMOCRACY IN 1991: FOREIGN SECRETARY

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, SAID TODAY (MONDAY) IT IS CERTAIN THAT HONG KONG WILL ACHIEVE IN 1991 A MOMENTOUS CHANGE IN THE WAY IT IS GOVERNED BY TAKING THE FIRST STEPS IN DIRECTLY ELECTED DEMOCRACY.

"WHAT IS ALSO CERTAIN IS THAT THESE STEPS WILL BE BIGGER THAN WAS PROPOSED BY US TWO YEARS AGO IN THE WHITE PAPER," MR HURD SAID.

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON JOINTLY HOSTED BY THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID: "IF POSSIBLE, THE SYSTEM WE ESTABLISH BEFORE 1997 SHOULD BE PART OF A PROCESS WHICH WILL CONTINUE IN THE YEARS THEREAFTER."

"THAT WOULD BE THE BEST PRIZE. WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SCORING DEBATING POINTS," HE ADDED.

"WE WANT TO START A PROCESS OF DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG WHICH WILL ATTRACT SENSIBLE PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL TO PLAY A FULL ROLE IN POLITICAL LIFE. THIS IS MOST LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED IF THEY CAN SEE THAT IT WILL CONTINUE AND PROGRESS AFTER 1997," HE SAID.

MR HURD SAID SINCE HE BECAME FOREIGN SECRETARY, HE HAD SPENT MUCH TIME ON HONG KONG ISSUES AND SO HAD OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS MINISTERIAL TEAM -- MR FRANCIS MAUDE IN PARTICULAR.

"THERE IS NOTHING SURPRISING ABOUT THAT. HONG KONG MATTERS TO BRITAIN. IT MATTERS TO ME PERSONALLY. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF BEING NEGATIVE OR DEFENSIVE ABOUT HONG KONG, EITHER HERE, OR IN PARLIAMENT OR IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES," HE SAID.

"YOU ARE ENTITLED TO AN ACTIVE, INTELLIGENT BRITISH POLICY WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF AND THAT IS WHAT YOU WILL GET," HE ADDED.

MR HURD SAID HE WOULD DO ALL HE COULD TO ENSURE THAT BRITAIN'S LONG ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG ENDED HONOURABLY FOR BRITAIN AND SUCCESSFULLY FOR HONG KONG.

DESCRIBING HONG KONG'S SITUATION AS A UNIQUE ONE, HE SAID THE TERRITORY'S FUTURE WAS BASED ON THE FAR-SIGHTED CONCEPT OF ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS. "NOW WE HAVE TO MAKE IT WORK."

HE SAID THE TASK WOULD NOT BE EASY OR STRAIGHTFORWARD. "THERE ARE NO CONVENIENT PRECEDENTS, NO READY MADE MODELS TO FOLLOW. THERE ARE BOUND TO BE PROBLEMS AND SETBACKS. BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THIS ENTERPRISE."

MR HURD STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT JUST SITTING BACK AND LETTING THE CLOCK TICK TOWARDS 1997. "OF COURSE THE CHOICES FROM TIME TO TIME WILL BE HARD. WE SHALL TAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS WHEN THESE ARE NECESSARY," HE SAID.

/MR HURD

MR HURD SAID THAT THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION WAS THE BEST FRAMEWORK FOR HONG KONG AND THAT IT REQUIRED A CONTINUOUS DISCUSSION ON EQUAL TERMS WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

"IT IS FRANKLY FRIVOLOUS TO PRETEND OTHERWISE. AND THOSE WHO DO SO CAN HAVE NO STANDING AS FRIENDS OF HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"BUT IT WOULD BE NONSENSE TO PRETEND THAT THE AGREEMENT MARKS THE END OF OUR PROBLEMS. THE TASK NOW IS TO TURN THE JOINT DECLARATION INTO REALITY," HE SAID.

"THAT MEANS WORKING ON MATTERS OF METICULOUS TECHNICAL DETAIL. IT MEANS, I REPEAT, CONDUCTING A TENACIOUS AND CONSISTENT DIALOGUE WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, NEITHER HOSTILE NOR SUBSERVIENT, AIMING AT THE LONG VIEW RATHER THAN THE QUICK TRICK, ALWAYS SEEKING TO JUDGE AND SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF HONG KONG. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THIS TASK," THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID.

MR HURD WELCOMED THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP'S CONFIRMATION OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE JOINT DECLARATION. "OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD BUT WE WANT TO REBUILD THOSE RELATIONS: IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRITAIN AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO HONG KONG THAT WE SHOULD DO SO."

"HONG KONG ALSO NEEDS A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS FUTURE AS A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF CHINA, BUT ALSO BECAUSE CHINA IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS A VALUABLE BACK-UP TO HONG KONG'S OWN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, AND THE TERRITORY HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY AS AN ECONOMIC BRIDGE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD," HE ADDED.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT TO CHINA LAST WEEK WAS AN IMPORTANT ONE IN MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE WITH CHINESE LEADERS ON MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG. "HE CONDUCTED HIS TALKS IN PEKING WITH CHARACTERISTIC DEDICATION TO HONG KONG'S INTERESTS."

TURNING TO BRITAIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT LAST MONTH OF A PACKAGE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE KEY PEOPLE IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY TO REMAIN IN THE TERRITORY, MR HURD SAID THE PACKAGE WAS THE RESULT OF A GREAT DEAL OF WORK BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

"WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO DEVISE A SCHEME WHICH TACKLES AS FAIRLY AND EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE THE PROBLEM OF EMIGRATION OF TALENTED PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG," HE SAID.

"OF COURSE, MANY PEOPLE HERE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THE NUMBERS COVERED BY THE SCHEME TO BE LARGER. I UNDERSTAND THEIR WISH. BUT WE HAVE HAD TO BALANCE OUR WISH TO BE AS GENEROUS AS POSSIBLE AGAINST OUR ABILITY TO ACCEPT PEOPLE FOR SETTLEMENT IN BRITAIN SHOULD THAT EVER BE NECESSARY.

"I BELIEVE THIS POLITICAL REALITY IS WELL UNDERSTOOD IN HONG KONG. IT IS A REALITY WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED. RECENT CONTROVERSY AT HOME MAKES THAT CLEAR," HE ADDED.

/"WE COULD

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 3 -

"WE COULD HAVE GONE FOR AN EASIER OPTION, INVOLVING THE GUARANTEE OF SETTLEMENT WITHOUT FULL BRITISH CITIZENSHIP. WE DID NOT DO THAT, BECAUSE WE JUDGED THAT IT WAS CITIZENSHIP RATHER THAN ANYTHING LESS WHICH WOULD MOST ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF ENABLING PEOPLE TO STAY IN HONG KONG WITH CONFIDENCE," THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID.

"WE WANT PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DYNAMIC PROSPERITY OF THIS TERRITORY. WE CHOSE THE HIGHER ROAD. OUR OBLIGATION UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY MEANT THAT NOTHING LESS THAN THIS WOULD DO, WHATEVER THE DIFFICULTIES," HE SAID.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THE SECOND CRUCIAL DECISION TAKEN BY BRITAIN BEFORE CHRISTMAS WAS TO AUTHORISE THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE FIRST MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN SCREENED OUT AS NON-REFUGEES.

"THIS WAS NOT A DECISION WHICH I RELISHED, NOR IS IT AN OPERATION WHICH ANY OF THOSE INVOLVED LIKED HAVING TO CARRY OUT. BUT IT WAS RIGHT TO PROCEED, AND TO FACE THE INEVITABLE CRITICISM FROM PEOPLE IN BRITAIN AND AROUND THE WORLD," MR HURD SAID.

"HONG KONG CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO COPE INDEFINITELY WITH AN ENDLESS STREAM OF IMMIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM, MOST OF WHOM HAVE NO PROSPECT OF EVER FINDING A HOME IN THE WEST.

"IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT WE FIND EFFECTIVE WAYS OF DETERRING THIS FUTILE EXODUS AND THAT WE EMPTY THE CAMPS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HONG KONG HAS SHOULDERED THIS BURDEN FOR TOO LONG," HE ADDED.

ON THE BASIC LAW, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THAT THROUGHOUT THE DRAFTING PROCESS, WHICH HAD REACHED A CRUCIAL PHASE, HONG KONG PEOPLE HAD EXPRESSED THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THE DRAFT IN A THOROUGH AND CONSTRUCTIVE WAY.

"I CONGRATULATE THEM ON WHAT I BELIEVE HAS BEEN A MATURE RESPONSE FROM AN INCREASINGLY MATURE POLITICAL COMMUNITY. THE VIEWS OF THIS COMMUNITY DESERVE THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE ATTENTION FROM THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAFTING THE BASIC LAW," MR HURD SAID.

"THE OUTCOME OF THIS PROCESS IS A MATTER OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE A CHINESE LAW. BUT OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS CO-SIGNATORIES OF THE JOINT DECLARATION MEAN THAT WE HAVE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE INTEREST IN A LAW INTENDED TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THAT AGREEMENT," HE ADDED.

"THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC LAW IS A MATTER FOR CHINA. BUT THAT HAS NOT PREVENTED US FROM TAKING EVERY SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY TO GET ACROSS OUR VIEWS. IN DOING SO, WE HAVE ALWAYS RESPECTED THE WISHES OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE PRIVATELY AND IN CONFIDENCE," HE SAID.

/THE FOREIGN

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 4 -

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT A KEY AREA OF THE BASIC LAW WAS THE CHAPTER ON THE FUTURE POLITICAL STRUCTURE. "IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THIS SECTION SHOULD HAVE BECOME THE FOCUS OF DEBATE IN HONG KONG.

"ITS PROVISIONS WILL HAVE A CRUCIAL EFFECT ON WHAT HONG KONG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE BASIC LAW AS A WHOLE. IT IS RIGHT THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD HAVE EXPRESSED ITS VIEWS FULLY AND VIGOROUSLY.

"IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT, IN THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS AND COMPROMISE, A NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS SHOULD HAVE EMERGED FROM THE COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG. THIS IS VERY MUCH TO HONG KONG'S CREDIT," MR HURD SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE DEBATE ON THE BASIC LAW HAD STIMULATED INTEREST IN HONG KONG'S CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEFORE 1997. "IN TAKING OUR DECISIONS ABOUT THIS WE MUST TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE EVOLUTION OF OPINION IN HONG KONG. WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO ENSURE THAT THE CHANGES WE MAKE MATCH THE ASPIRATIONS OF THIS SOCIETY."

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE OF BRITAIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HONG KONG. "AS THE ELEVENTH LARGEST TRADING ENTITY IN THE WORLD, HONG KONG MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A MARKET IN ITS OWN RIGHT, NOT JUST AS A GATEWAY TO CHINA -- IMPORTANT THOUGH THAT IS."

"HONG KONG BUYS MORE GOODS PER HEAD FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM THAN FROM THE REST OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY PUT TOGETHER. THE WORK OF THE SENIOR BRITISH TRADE COMMISSIONER, PETER HEAP, AND HIS STAFF IS CRUCIAL.

"THAT IS WHY I AM MAKING A POINT DURING MY VISIT OF SEEING FOR MYSELF HIS OPERATION AND MEETING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HERE. WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE BRITISH COMPANIES TO PLAY THE FULLEST POSSIBLE PART IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE. WE ARE DETERMINED TO BUILD A GREATER SHARE OF THIS IMPORTANT MARKET," HE SAID.

"THIS IS NOT A SHORT TERM STRATEGY. BRITISH INTERESTS IN HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE WELL BEYOND 1997. WE ARE WORKING URGENTLY ON PLANS TO ESTABLISH A SUBSTANTIAL REPRESENTATION AFTER 1997, TO MATCH OUR CONTINUING INTERESTS IN THE TERRITORY. I KNOW THAT THE BRITISH COUNCIL ALSO HAVE PLANS TO EXTEND THEIR PRESENCE HERE," HE ADDED.

MR HURD SAID HONG KONG WAS ALSO IMPORTANT AS A SIGNIFICANT FORCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL WORLD AND WAS A FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT.

"RECENT INVESTMENT DECISIONS BY BRITISH, JAPANESE AND AMERICAN FIRMS; INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECTS AND CABLE TV DEVELOPMENTS ARE ALL AN INTERNATIONAL VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG," HE SAID.

/"THE PROSPECTS

"THE PROSPECTS FOR HONG KONG AS WE ENTER THE 1990'S HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE EXCITING. WE ARE LIVING IN A PERIOD OF DRAMATIC CHANGES AROUND THE WORLD, OFTEN AT A BEWILDERING PACE. HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO ADAPT SHOULD PUT HER IN A STRONG POSITION TO SUCCEED AND PROSPER," HE ADDED.

MR HURD SAID HE DID NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE NEXT DECADE. BRITAIN WOULD NOT REST IN DEFENDING AND PROMOTING HONG KONG'S INTEREST IN ANY WAY IT COULD.

"OUR AIMS WILL BE: TO MAINTAIN THE PROSPERITY AND WAY OF LIFE OF A UNIQUELY GIFTED AND RESOURCEFUL PEOPLE; TO BRING ABOUT THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF HONG KONG FROM A BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORY TO A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF CHINA --- ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS.

"WE SHALL WORK WITH YOU FOR A STABLE, PROSPEROUS HONG KONG, CONSTANTLY RENEWING ITSELF, CONSTANTLY SURPRISING THE WORLD WITH ITS SKILLS, ITS DISCIPLINE, ITS IMAGINATIVE ENERGY," MR HURD SAID.

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FOREIGN SECRETARY VISITS SHA TIN
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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, THIS (MONDAY) MORNING VISITED SHA TIN NEW TOWN -- ONE OF THE MOST POPULOUS DISTRICTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, AND ALSO TOURED ONE OF THE LATEST PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AT MA ON SHAN.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR PETER TSAO, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAD A PANORAMIC VIEW OF SHA TIN FROM THE ROOF OF GARDEN RIVERA WHERE HE WAS BRIEFED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICER, MR VICTOR YUNG, AND THE PROJECT MANAGER, MR LAM MOON-TIM.

ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF SHA TIN'S 514,000 POPULATION LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES INCLUDING HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEMES, WHILE THE REMAINDER FORMS A MIXTURE OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS AND VILLAGES.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY LEARNED THAT THE DESIGNED POPULATION OF SHA TIN BY THE MID-90'S WAS 700,000 SERVED BY A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES, A VAST ROAD NETWORK AND RAIL LINKS.

THE TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$17.4 BILLION OF WHICH SOME \$11.3 BILLION HAD BEEN SPENT TO DATE.

THE SHING MUN RIVER WHICH DIVIDES THE DISTRICT PROVIDES AN AESTHETICAL ATTRACTION IN THE NEW TOWN'S LAYOUT, AND ALTHOUGH POLLUTED THERE ARE PLANS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SLUDGE EXPORT SCHEME AND EFFLUENT EXPORT SCHEME.

MR HURD TRAVELLED TO HENG ON ESTATE IN MA ON SHAN WHERE HE WAS MET BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, MR FREDDIE PANG.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 6 -

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TOURED THE ESTATE GARDEN AND SHOPPING ARCADE, AND VISITED A FAMILY IN ONE OF THE HOUSING BLOCKS.

MR HURD LEARNED THAT MA ON SHAN'S CURRENT POPULATION OF 54,000 WOULD GROW TO ABOUT 200,000 BY 1998. TO DATE ABOUT \$800 MILLION HAD BEEN SPENT ON LAND FORMATION AND OTHER ENGINEERING CONTRACTS AND A TOTAL OF \$1.8 BILLION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LAND INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES TO SERVE THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN POPULATION.

THERE ARE ALSO PLANS TO IMPROVE THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE 40 INDIGENOUS VILLAGES IN THE DISTRICT. A RURAL PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY IS BEING FORMULATED TO EFFECT LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS TO RURAL AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

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FOREIGN SECRETARY VISITS HI-TECH FACTORY

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, TODAY (MONDAY) VISITED A FACTORY IN TAI PO WHICH MAKES HI-TECH PRECISION EQUIPMENT AND MACHINES FOR MOULDING.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MR T.H. BARMA, AND THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MR ANDREW LEUNG, MR HURD VISITED THE CHEN HSONG MACHINERY COMPANY LIMITED IN THE TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY, MR CHIANG CHEN, BRIEFED THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ON THE FACTORY'S OPERATION AND INVESTMENT. THE COMPANY PRODUCES PLASTIC INJECTION MOULDING MACHINES, PRECISION ROBOTS, PRECISION MOULDED PRODUCTS, MOULDS AND CASTED DUCTILE IRON, USING IRON, STEEL, BRASS AND OTHER ALLOYS.

MR HURD LEARNED THAT THE COMPANY EXPORTS ITS PRODUCTS TO MAJOR MARKETS IN EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, CHINA, AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AMERICA, WEST AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

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DECISION NOT MADE ON 1991 FIGURES

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, SAID THIS (MONDAY) AFTERNOON THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE ON FIGURES IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1991.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD, MR HURD SAID WHAT HE HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT IN HIS VISIT CONCERNED THE PRINCIPLES, THE ARGUMENTS AND THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WERE IMPORTANT.

/HE SAID

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 7 -

HE SAID MANY OF THE VARYING THOUGHTS AND ARGUMENTS WERE EXPRESSED IN THE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING HE ATTENDED.

"THE EXPRESSION OF VIEWS IN THERE WAS VERY VARIED AS YOU WOULD EXPECT," HE SAID.

"I OBVIOUSLY LISTENED TO THEM ALL AND WE MUST ABSORB AS MANY VIEWS AS WE CAN WHILE MAKING THIS DECISION," HE ADDED.

MR HURD POINTED OUT THERE WOULD BE A SUBSTANTIAL MOVE TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC ELECTION IN 1991, A MOVE WHICH WOULD BE MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN WAS ORIGINALLY PLANNED IN THE WHITE PAPER TWO YEARS AGO.

"EXACTLY WHAT THE FIGURE, THE OPENING FIGURE, WILL BE, THAT IS SOMETHING WE HAVE YET TO DECIDE," HE SAID, ADDING THAT IT WOULD NOT BE A VERY LONG DELAY IN DECIDING IT.

ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE A SHIFT IN CHINA'S POLICY WITH THE REPORTED APPOINTMENT OF MR ZHOU NAN AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE IN HONG KONG SOMEONE WHO CLEARLY WAS INFLUENTIAL IN PEKING SO THAT MATTERS WHICH HAD TO BE DISCUSSED COULD BE DISCUSSED IN AN AUTHORITATIVE WAY.

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FOREIGN SECRETARY ATTENDS DB MEETING

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, ATTENDED A MEETING OF THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD THIS (MONDAY) AFTERNOON WHERE HE HEARD MEMBERS' VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES AFFECTING HONG KONG.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR PETER TSAO, MR HURD WAS MET AT THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT OFFICE BY DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR LAM HANG-FAI, AND DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRIS WAN.

ITEMS ON THE DISTRICT BOARD'S AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION INCLUDED THE MANDATORY REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE; THE NATIONALITY PACKAGE PROPOSED FOR HONG KONG BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT; AND THE FUTURE POLITICAL REFORM IN HONG KONG.

THE KWUN TONG DISTRICT BOARD COMPRISES 24 ELECTED AND 12 APPOINTED MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT A TOTAL POPULATION OF 630,000. BOARD MEMBERS COME FROM A WIDE CROSS-SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY RANGING FROM HOUSEWIVES TO MERCHANTS.

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MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 8 -

CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRANK MEETING WITH OMELCO: FOREIGN SECRETARY
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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, TONIGHT (MONDAY) DESCRIBED HIS MEETING WITH OMELCO MEMBERS AS CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRANK.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING-CUM-DINNER, MR HURD SAID HE HAD A LONG TALK ON MANY MATTERS WITH OMELCO. "IT WAS EXTREMELY USEFUL, AND WE TALKED ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF THE BOAT PEOPLE, WE TALKED ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY, WE TALKED ABOUT THE NATIONALITY PROBLEM, WE TALKED ABOUT THE BASIC LAW.

"EVERYBODY SET OUT THEIR VIEWS COURTEOUSLY AND REASONABLY BUT ALSO VERY FRANKLY, AND I GAVE MY REPLIES IN THE SAME SENSE," HE SAID.

ASKED IF HE MADE ANY NEW PROMISE TO THE OMELCO MEMBERS, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID: "NO. WE WENT OVER THE GROUND IN DETAIL AND IN FRANKNESS AND I THINK THE ARGUMENTS WERE WELL DEPLOYED.

"IT WAS A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE MEETING. IT WAS THE FIRST OCCASION WHERE I MET OMELCO IN THEIR FULL SESSION. I WAS VERY IMPRESSED," MR HURD SAID.

ASKED TO COMMENT ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVANTS PENSION SCHEME WHICH WAS RAISED AT AN EARLIER MEETING HE HAD WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CIVIL SERVANTS ASSOCIATIONS, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THE PROVISION TO PAY THE PENSION ON TERMS NOT LESS FAVOURABLE THAN AT PRESENT WAS CLEARLY IN THE JOINT DECLARATION. "AND WE EXPECT IT TO BE THERE IN THE BASIC LAW.

"THE GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG TELLS ME, AS YOU ALREADY KNOW, HE IS REVIEWING THE POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER STRENGTHENING THAT POSITION, THAT ASSURANCE BECAUSE THAT IS OBVIOUSLY VERY IMPORTANT," MR HURD SAID.

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LARGE POOL OF SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDED: GOVERNOR
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HONG KONG MUST MAKE SURE THAT IT WILL HAVE AS LARGE A POOL AS POSSIBLE OF SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE AS IT MOVES INTO AN ERA WHERE TECHNOLOGY WILL HAVE AN INCREASINGLY KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN THE ECONOMY, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

"OUR MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE SECTORS ARE EXPERIENCING A MAJOR SHIFT FROM LABOUR-INTENSIVE PROCESSES TO MORE 'KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE' PROCESSES.

/"IN THIS

"IN THIS NEW ERA WE MUST RELY ON OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE THE TECHNOLOGISTS AND TECHNICIANS THAT OUR ECONOMY WILL NEED," SIR DAVID SAID WHEN SPEAKING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NEW CAMPUS OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE CITY POLYTECHNIC HAD RESPONDED BY PROVIDING UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES WHICH WERE DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES HONG KONG WOULD NEED IF ITS GOODS AND SERVICES WERE TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WORLD-WIDE.

"ITS COURSES ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING ARE ONLY TWO EXAMPLES OF THIS," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID REFERRED TO THE AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME HE HAD ANNOUNCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST OCTOBER TO INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AIM WAS TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF FIRST YEAR, FIRST DEGREE PLACES FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF 7,000 PLACES TO ABOUT 15,000 BY THE MIDDLE OF THE DECADE.

THIS WOULD REPRESENT ABOUT 18 PER CENT OF THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP OF THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE.

"AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ENOUGH PLACES AT CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA LEVELS TO ENSURE THAT WE MEET THE VARIED NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TAKEN THESE IMPORTANT DECISIONS SIMPLY TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEM OF EMIGRATION OR TO BOOST CONFIDENCE, AND HE POINTED OUT THAT THE EXPANSION OF UNDERGRADUATE NUMBERS WAS PLAINLY NOT ENOUGH ON ITS OWN IN MEETING THE NEW REQUIREMENTS.

"WE MUST ALSO CONTINUE TO EXPAND OUR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY THROUGH CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY.

"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY AND THE CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY FOR INDUSTRY AT THE CITY POLYTECHNIC LAST YEAR ARE MAJOR STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

"WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ENCOURAGE OTHER SUCH PROJECTS," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR ADDED THAT HONG KONG AS A COMMUNITY WOULD COUNT ON THE CITY POLYTECHNIC TO CONTINUE TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR A POOL OF TECHNICALLY TRAINED AND QUALIFIED YOUNG PEOPLE, FOR THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS ALIKE.

"YOU HAVE A SPLENDID NEW HOME WELL SUITED FOR THE TASKS AHEAD," HE SAID.

- 10 -

SIR DAVID NOTED THAT IT WAS ONLY TWO AND A HALF YEARS SINCE HE HAD LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE BUILDINGS OPENED TODAY.

"THE CITY POLYTECHNIC NOW HAS SOME 10,000 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDENTS AND ITS AWARDS ARE HIGHLY REGARDED BOTH IN HONG KONG AND OVERSEAS," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNOR CONGRATULATED THE COUNCIL AND THE STAFF OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC ON HAVING ACHIEVED SO MUCH SO QUICKLY.

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HK EXTENDS ROLE AS BUSINESS HUB FOR ASIA/PACIFIC

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GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG'S ROLE AS A BUSINESS HUB FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION REQUIRES THE NECESSARY PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON ATTENDED BY FINNISH, SWEDISH, NORWEGIAN AND DANISH BUSINESSMEN, SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S ROLE AS AN ENTREPOT HAD BEEN REASSERTED SPECTACULARLY OVER THE PAST DECADE AND ITS ECONOMIC LINKS EXTENDED BEYOND THOSE WITH CHINA.

"HONG KONG IS INCREASINGLY PROVIDING AN ENTREPOT ROLE FOR THE RAPIDLY GROWING ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIES, AND HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN HAVE DIVERSIFIED THEIR INVESTMENTS TO OTHER LOW COST MANUFACTURING LOCATIONS IN THE REGION, SUCH AS THAILAND AND MALAYSIA.

"IN ESSENCE, HONG KONG IS CAPITALISING ON ITS UNIQUE GEOGRAPHY TO EMERGE AS A BUSINESS HUB FOR THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION," HE SAID.

UNDERLINING THE NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT, SIR PIERS NOTED THAT WHILE HONG KONG'S CONTAINER PORT AT PRESENT WAS THE BUSIEST IN THE WORLD AND ALSO AMONG THE MOST EFFICIENT AND MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, ITS CAPACITY RECENTLY HAD BEEN STRETCHED BY THE ENORMOUS GROWTH OF TRADE.

"IT FACES COMPETITION FROM ELSEWHERE, PARTICULARLY FROM OUR FRIENDS IN SINGAPORE," HE SAID.

THE AIRPORT AT KAI TAK WHICH HANDLED NOT ONLY RECORD NUMBERS OF PASSENGERS BUT ALSO CONSIDERABLE QUANTITIES OF CARGO WAS SHOWING SIGNS OF STRAIN.

"SO WE CANNOT REST ON WHAT WE HAVE," SIR PIERS STRESSED, ADDING THAT THE PLANNED TRANSFORMATION OF THE PORT WOULD EVENTUALLY ALLOW FOR A FIVE-FOLD INCREASE IN CONTAINER TRAFFIC AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WOULD PROVIDE OVER THREE TIMES THE CAPACITY OF KAI TAK.

/"I KNOW

"I KNOW THAT HONG KONG IS RENOWNED FOR ITS SENSATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, BUT THIS PROGRAMME OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE THE LARGEST AND MOST EXCITING YET," HE SAID.

WHILE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WAS VITAL, SIR PIERS SAID HONG KONG HAD ALSO BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGICAL STANDARDS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF CABLE TELEVISION, HONG KONG WOULD ACQUIRE A SECOND TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, AND THIS WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR LINKS WITH THE WORLD, HE SAID.

"LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, ROUTINE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS WILL INCREASINGLY BE DONE BY COMPUTER TO COMPUTER COMMUNICATION, WITHOUT THE NEED FOR HUMAN INTERVENTION.

"THIS 'ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE' OR EDI WILL BE OF PARTICULAR VALUE TO ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN TRADING, FOR WHOM SPEED AND ACCURACY IN HANDLING DOCUMENTATION ARE CRITICAL TO PROFIT MARGINS AND CUSTOMER RELATIONS.

"IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR HONG KONG NOT TO LAG BEHIND IN THIS RESPECT, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO ITS TRADING PARTNERS IN EUROPE AND THE U.S. WHERE EDI IS BECOMING WELL-ESTABLISHED.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY EXPLORING WHAT IT CAN OR SHOULD DO, TOGETHER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDI IN THE TRADING COMMUNITY IN HONG KONG. THE SUBJECT IS COMPLEX, BUT WE CANNOT IGNORE IT," HE SAID.

SPEAKING OF HONG KONG'S PEOPLE -- ANOTHER CORNERSTONE FOR CONTINUED PROSPERITY, SIR PIERS NOTED THAT HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND THREAT ALIKE WAS DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE OF ITS PEOPLE.

"ONE CONSEQUENCE OF THAT ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IS THAT THE HONG KONG ECONOMY IS FRAGMENTED.

"HONG KONG CARRIES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MANUFACTURING AND TRADING ENTERPRISES, EACH WITH, ON AVERAGE, JUST A HANDFUL OF EMPLOYEES.

"ALTHOUGH HONG KONG DOES HAVE SOME LARGE AND SUCCESSFUL FIRMS, THE TYPICAL ENTERPRISE IS SMALL AND IT IS LINKED TO MANY OTHER SUCH CONCERNS TO FORM AN EXTENDED NETWORK OF SUPPLIERS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, BROKERS AND SO ON.

"THIS BUSINESS STRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE IN HONG KONG OFFERS UNPARALLELED ADAPTABILITY PLUS THE MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION THAT COMES WITH OWNERSHIP AND INDEPENDENCE," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS AFFIRMED THAT THESE WERE VALUABLE ASSETS IN RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD MARKETS, "SO MUCH SO THAT U.S. MANAGEMENT EXPERTS ARE NOW SUGGESTING THAT THE NETWORK MODEL MAY BE THE INDUSTRY STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE".

"I ACCEPT THAT THIS MODEL ALSO HAS ITS DISADVANTAGES. THERE CAN BE A LACK OF LONG TERM THINKING, OR A LACK OF THE RESOURCES NEEDED FOR, SAY, MAJOR TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS.

"HERE WE RECOGNISE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS A ROLE TO PLAY, AND OUR INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME AIMS TO HELP BUSINESSES IMPROVE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY AND DEVELOP TECHNOLOGICALLY.

"WE BELIEVE THAT THE BENEFITS OF OUR BUSINESS STRUCTURE FAR OUTWEIGHT THE DIFFICULTIES OR PROBLEMS," HE STRESSED.

EARLIER, SIR PIERS DWELT ON THE STRUCTURE OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY AND SAID IT HAD MOVED TOWARDS MORE VALUE ADDED SERVICES FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY ALONG WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG'S TRADING ROLES BOTH IN RELATION TO CHINA AND THE REGION GENERALLY.

"THIS STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY HAS CARRIED ITS SHARE OF GROWING PAINS. IT HAS GENERATED UNCOMFORTABLE LEVELS OF INFLATION AS A RAPIDLY GROWING SERVICE SECTOR COMPETED FOR LABOUR WITH A BUOYANT INDUSTRIAL SECTOR.

"SOME SLOWING DOWN IN THE RATE OF GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY WAS INEVITABLE AS THE ECONOMY REACHED CAPACITY AFTER THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH.

"OUR CURRENT FORECAST THAT GDP WILL INCREASE BY ONLY THREE PER CENT IN 1989 REFLECTS THAT.

"HOWEVER, THESE ARE TRANSITIONAL TROUBLES. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT INFLATION IS LEVELLING OFF, AND IT SHOULD BEGIN TO SUBSIDE, NOW THAT THERE IS LESS PRESSURE ON CAPACITY," HE SAID.

ON THE "BRAIN DRAIN" PROBLEM, HE SAID WHILE THIS WAS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN, ONE NEEDED TO BEAR IN MIND THAT A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED MANPOWER WAS NOT A NEW PROBLEM FOR HONG KONG, WHERE UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS HAD TRADITIONALLY BEEN LOW.

"HONG KONG MANAGERS HAVE HAD TO BECOME ADEPT AT FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO VACANCIES AND SHORTAGES AND THEY ARE CONTINUING TO DO SO.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING WHAT IT CAN TO SUPPORT THEM," HE SAID, REFERRING TO THE MASSIVE EXPANSION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

"WE ARE ALSO TAKING A MORE RELAXED VIEW WHERE EMPLOYERS WANT TO BRING IN QUALIFIED PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE HONG KONG TO CONTRIBUTE TO MEETING LOCAL SKILL SHORTAGES," HE SAID.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 13 -

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CRITICISMS UNFOUNDED: SECRETARY FOR SECURITY
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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR GEOFFREY BARNES, TODAY (MONDAY) DESCRIBED AS "UNFOUNDED" CRITICISMS MADE BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL OF HONG KONG'S SCREENING PROCEDURES AND TREATMENT OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE.

MR BARNES SAID THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO THE OPERATION OF FAIR STATUS DETERMINATION PROCEDURES WITH A VIEW TO IDENTIFYING ANY PERSONS WITH A GENUINE CLAIM TO REFUGEE STATUS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF UNDUE FORCE BEING USED IN THE REMOVAL OF BOAT PEOPLE FROM CHI MA WAN CENTRE TO PHOENIX HOUSE LAST OCTOBER.

ON MANDATORY REPATRIATION, HE SAID THIS WAS THE LOGICAL OUTCOME OF THE SCREENING/APPEALS PROCEDURES FOR THOSE BOAT PEOPLE DETERMINED AS NON-REFUGEES AND WHO DID NOT VOLUNTEER TO GO BACK.

IN OPERATING THE SCREENING AND APPEALS PROCEDURES, MR BARNES SAID: "THE BENEFIT OF DOUBT WAS GIVEN TO VIETNAMESE CLAIMING REFUGEE STATUS WITH THE RESULT THAT THERE ARE PROBABLY A GREAT MANY MORE SUCCESSFUL CLAIMS THAN WOULD BE WARRANTED BY A STRICT APPLICATION OF THE UNHCR CRITERIA."

MR BARNES SAID THE UNHCR HAD PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF THE SCREENING/APPEALS PROCEDURES AND THAT THEY HAD UNLIMITED ACCESS TO THE PRE-SCREENING DATA COLLECTION INTERVIEWS AND TO ALL SCREENING INTERVIEWS.

"UNHCR HAVE THE RIGHT TO BRING CASES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES MEET WITH THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT REFUGEE STATUS REVIEW BOARD REGULARLY TO DISCUSS CASES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN," HE SAID.

"ON THE SAME DAY THE SCREENING RESULT IS MADE KNOWN TO THE APPLICANTS OF APPEALS, A COPY OF THE COMPLETE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT FILE IS GIVEN TO THE LEGAL CONSULTANTS OPERATING UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNHCR WHO WILL ASSIST APPELLANTS IN THE PREPARATION OF THEIR APPEALS.

"A FURTHER COPY OF THE FILE IS GIVEN TO THE UNHCR TO AID THEM IN PERFORMING THEIR PROTECTION ROLE.

"IT IS OUR FIRM UNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNHCR THAT UNHCR LAWYERS ARE PERMITTED TO SEEK CLARIFICATION ON UNCLEAR POINTS OR ASK QUESTIONS DURING THE INTERVIEWS.

"AN ADDITIONAL SAFETY PRECAUTION IS THE RIGHT OF THE UNHCR TO EXERCISE ITS MANDATE IN CASES WHERE THEY WISH TO DECLARE SOMEONE A REFUGEE."

/ON ALLEGATIONS

ON ALLEGATIONS OF ILL-TREATMENT, MR BARNES SAID THE REMOVAL OF BOAT PEOPLE FROM CHI MA WAN TO PHOENIX HOUSE HAD BEEN FULLY INVESTIGATED AND NO EVIDENCE HAD BEEN PRODUCED TO SUBSTANTIATE CLAIMS THAT ANYTHING MORE THAN MINIMUM AND NECESSARY FORCE WAS USED ON THAT OCCASION.

"THERE IS NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER IN THE ACCUSATION THAT PEOPLE AT CHI MA WAN WERE ILL-TREATED OR RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS. NONE WAS STUNNED OR BECAME UNCONSCIOUS OR WAS KNOCKED TO THE GROUND," HE SAID.

"THE GOVERNMENT HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE POLICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OFFICERS INVOLVED DISCHARGED THEIR DUTIES WITH GREAT RESTRAINT AND PATIENCE AND THAT AN INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY IS NOT JUSTIFIED."

REFERRING TO MANDATORY REPATRIATION, MR BARNES SAID IT REMAINED THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM INTENTION TO PUT INTO PLACE A CONTINUING PROGRAMME TO RETURN TO VIETNAM ALL THOSE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN DETERMINED TO BE NON-REFUGEES.

"UNDER THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION, THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FINALLY SCREENED OUT CANNOT BE RESETTLED. THEY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RETURN TO VIETNAM TO RESTART THEIR LIVES. IT WOULD BE WRONG AND CANNOT BE HUMANE TO LEAVE THEM IN DETENTION INDEFINITELY," HE SAID.

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SEPT EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS RELEASED

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THERE WERE 803,000 PERSONS ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN SEPTEMBER 1989, REPRESENTING A DECREASE OF 4.9 PER CENT IN COMPARISON WITH SEPTEMBER 1988, ACCORDING TO FIGURES RELEASED TODAY (MONDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, AT 757,700 IN SEPTEMBER 1989, WAS 8.5 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN SEPTEMBER 1988.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, AT 249,500, WAS UP BY 8.2 PER CENT.

EMPLOYMENT AT CONSTRUCTION SITES DECREASED BY 7.6 PER CENT COMPARED WITH SEPTEMBER 1988.

A DEPARTMENTAL SPOKESMAN SAID THE STATISTICS FOR SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY IN SEPTEMBER 1989 WERE DERIVED FROM THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

/THESE SECTORS

THESE SECTORS COVER THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR; THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR; AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR. THERE IS A SEPARATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY COVERING CONSTRUCTION SITES.

THE OVERALL EMPLOYMENT FIGURES FOR SEPTEMBER 1989 IN THESE SELECTED MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS, WITH COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR SEPTEMBER 1988 AND JUNE 1989, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	PERSONS ENGAGED (EMPLOYMENT) IN*			PERCENTAGE CHANGE**	
	SEPT 88	JUNE 89	SEPT 89	SEPT 89 ON SEPT 88	SEPT 89 ON JUNE 89
MANUFACTURING	844,600	824,300	803,000	- 4.9	- 2.6
CONSTRUCTION (MANUAL WORKERS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES ONLY)	73,100	72,000	67,500	- 7.6	- 6.2
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	698,500	746,300	757,700	+ 8.5	+ 1.5
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	230,500	253,300	249,500	+ 8.2	- 1.5

* FIGURES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST HUNDRED.

** BASED ON UNROUNDED EMPLOYMENT FIGURES.

COMPARING SEPTEMBER 1989 WITH JUNE 1989, EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING, THE CONSTRUCTION SITES, THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTORS, DECREASED BY 2.6 PER CENT, 6.2 PER CENT, AND 1.5 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, EMPLOYMENT IN THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR INCREASED BY 1.5 PER CENT.

- 16 -

THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL ALSO PROVIDES VANCANCY STATISTICS FOR THESE SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS (EXCEPT CONSTRUCTION SITES WHICH ARE COVERED IN A SEPARATE SURVEY).

THE VACANCY DATA TOGETHER WITH A COMPARISON WITH THE CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR SEPTEMBER 1988 AND JUNE 1989 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES IN*			PERCENTAGE CHANGE**	
	SEPT 88	JUNE 89	SEPT 89	SEPT 89 ON SEPT 88	SEPT 89 ON JUNE 89
MANUFACTURING	55,070	43,450	43,960	-20.2	+ 1.2
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	34,380	23,070	28,830	-16.1	+25.0
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	9,640	8,990	10,850	+12.6	+20.7

* FIGURES ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST TEN.

** BASED ON UNROUNDED VACANCY FIGURES.

RELATIVE TO SEPTEMBER 1988, THE NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES FOR THE MANUFACTURING, THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTORS DECREASED BY 20.2 PER CENT, AND 16.1 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

ON THE SAME BASIS OF COMPARISON, THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE OF 12.6 PER CENT.

COMPARED WITH JUNE 1989, AND BEARING IN MIND THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF SEASONAL FACTORS, THE NUMBER OF REPORTED VACANCIES IN THE MANUFACTURING, THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTORS INCREASED BY 1.2 PER CENT, 25.0 PER CENT AND 20.7 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN SEPTEMBER 1989.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE SURVEY ARE STATISTICS ON MONTHLY PAYROLL OUTLAYS IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR; THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR; AND THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR.

QUARTERLY TOTALS FOR EACH OF THESE SECTORS ARE SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE:

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	TOTAL QUARTERLY PAYROLL IN		% CHANGE*
	3RD QTR. 1988	3RD QTR. 1989	3RD QTR. 1989 ON 3RD QTR. 1988
	HK\$ MN	HK\$ MN	
MANUFACTURING	10,137	11,125	+ 9.7
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	8,184	10,446	+27.6
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	4,435	5,698	+28.5

* BASED ON UNROUNDED PAYROLL FIGURES.

COMPARED WITH THE SAME QUARTER A YEAR AGO, PAYROLL OUTLAYS IN THE ABOVE THREE SECTORS INCREASED BY 9.7 PER CENT, 27.6 PER CENT AND 28.5 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1989.

AFTER ADJUSTMENT FOR VARIATIONS IN TOTAL MONTHLY PAYROLL OUTLAYS IN SEPTEMBER 1988 AND SEPTEMBER 1989, ARISING FROM CHANGES IN THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT, A NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IS OBTAINED.

TO ALLOW FOR THE EFFECTS OF PRICE CHANGES, THE NOMINAL INDEX IS DEFLATED BY THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) TO GIVE THE REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED.

THESE TWO INDICES FOR SEPTEMBER 1988 AND SEPTEMBER 1989 ARE GIVEN IN THE TABLES BELOW:

/NOMINAL INDEX

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (JUNE 1980 = 100)		% CHANGE
	SEPT 88	SEPT 89	SEPT 89 ON SEPT 88
MANUFACTURING	277.1	321.7	+16.1
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	258.7	303.5	+17.3
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	246.5	295.3	+19.8

SELECTED MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY	REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED (JUNE 1980 = 100)		% CHANGE
	SEPT 88	SEPT 89	SEPT 89 ON SEPT 88
MANUFACTURING	146.8	154.9	+ 5.5
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS	137.1	146.1	+ 6.6
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES	130.6	142.2	+ 8.9

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1988 AND SEPTEMBER 1989, AN INCREASE OF 16.1 PER CENT WAS REGISTERED IN THE NOMINAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

FOR THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 17.3 PER CENT AND FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR, THE INCREASE WAS 19.8 PER CENT.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE REAL INDEX OF PAYROLL PER PERSON ENGAGED REGISTERED AN INCREASE OF 5.5 PER CENT FOR THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, 6.6 PER CENT FOR THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS SECTOR, AND 8.9 PER CENT FOR THE FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR.

DETAILED BREAKDOWNS OF THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE QUARTERLY REPORT OF EMPLOYMENT, VACANCIES AND PAYROLL STATISTICS, SEPTEMBER 1989, WHICH IS AVAILABLE AT \$11 PER COPY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GPO BUILDING, GROUND FLOOR, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL, AND AT THE SALES COUNTER OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AT 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER I, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

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UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR SEPT - NOV RELEASED
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THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE REMAINED STABLE AT A LOW LEVEL WHILE THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASED marginally DURING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1989, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (MONDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THESE FIGURES INDICATE THAT THE TIGHT LABOUR MARKET SITUATION CONTINUED.

THE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1989 WAS 1.3 PER CENT WHICH WAS THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1989 AND THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER.

THE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IN SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1989 WAS ESTIMATED AT 37,000, COMPARED WITH 36,700 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1989 AND 36,900 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER 1988.

THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE FOR SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1989 WAS 0.8 PER CENT, COMPARED WITH 0.6 PER CENT FOR BOTH THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1989 AND THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF 1988.

THE INCREASE OF 0.2 OF A PERCENTAGE POINT OVER THE PRECEDING THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT, WHILE THE INCREASE OF 0.2 OF A PERCENTAGE POINT OVER THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER IS STATISTICALLY NOT SIGNIFICANT.

/THE ESTIMATED

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS FOR SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 1989 WAS 22,000, COMPARED WITH 17,500 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING AUGUST 1989 AND 18,100 FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDING NOVEMBER 1988.

CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO), PERSONS WHO WORKED LESS THAN 35 HOURS A WEEK DUE TO ECONOMIC REASONS (SUCH AS SLACK WORK, MATERIAL SHORTAGE, MECHANICAL BREAKDOWN AND INABILITY TO FIND FULL-TIME WORK) WERE REGARDED AS UNDEREMPLOYED ONLY IF THEY WERE EITHER SEEKING OR AVAILABLE FOR MORE WORK.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS SAID THAT BECAUSE THE PROPORTION OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS (FOR EXAMPLE PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST LEFT SCHOOL) VARIES FROM MONTH TO MONTH, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES THAT HAD BEEN SEASONALLY ADJUSTED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE VARIATIONS IN THE NUMBER OF FIRST-TIME JOB-SEEKERS SHOULD BE USED IN MAKING COMPARISONS OVER TIME.

THE COMMISSIONER ADDED THAT, BASED ON A SYSTEM OF PROVISIONAL COUNTS, THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES COVERING THE LATEST THREE-MONTH PERIOD COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE SURVEY. THESE PROVIDE AN EARLY INDICATION OF THE LATEST UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT SITUATION.

THE PROVISIONAL SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1989 WAS 1.3 PER CENT AND THE PROVISIONAL UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 0.8 PER CENT.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT STATISTICS WERE OBTAINED FROM A CONTINUOUS GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT. THIS SURVEY COVERED A QUARTERLY SAMPLE OF SOME 14,000 HOUSEHOLDS OR 52,000 PERSONS, SELECTED SCIENTIFICALLY TO REPRESENT THE LAND-BASED CIVILIAN NON-INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION IN HONG KONG.

PERSONAL AND LABOUR FORCE DATA WERE OBTAINED IN THE SURVEY BY INTERVIEWING EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AGED 15 AND ABOVE IN THE HOUSEHOLDS SAMPLED. IN THE SURVEY, THE DEFINITIONS USED IN MEASURING UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT FOLLOW CLOSELY THOSE RECOMMENDED BY THE ILO.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS IS GIVEN IN THE REPORT ON THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WHICH IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR.

THE NEXT REPORT COVERING THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 1989 WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL AROUND MARCH 20 AT \$10 PER COPY.

INCREASE IN APPLICATIONS FOR TRADE MARKS IN 1989

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THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, MR NOEL GLEESON, SAID TODAY (MONDAY) THE TRADE MARKS REGISTRY OF HIS DEPARTMENT SHOWED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR TRADE MARKS RECEIVED DURING 1989, WITH APPLICATIONS TOTTALLING 10,255, COMPARED WITH 8,956 IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THERE WERE 4,060 NEW TRADE MARKS REGISTERED, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADE MARKS REGISTERED TO 54,255.

IN THE PATENTS REGISTRY, THE NUMBER OF UNITED KINGDOM PATENTS RE-REGISTERED LOCALLY DURING 1989 WAS 1,030, AS AGAINST 1,070 IN 1988.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF "LIVE" OR VALID PATENTS RE-REGISTERED WAS NOW APPROXIMATELY 15,000.

IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GIVE A PRECISE FIGURE AS THIS DEPENDED ON THE LIVES OR VALIDITY OF THE PATENTS AS ORIGINALLY REGISTERED IN THE UK PATENTS OFFICE IN LONDON, MR GLEESON SAID.

THE RECORDS OF THE TRADE MARKS REGISTRY WERE NOW COMPUTERISED BUT THIS DID NOT AS YET EXTEND TO SEARCH FACILITIES FOR THE PUBLIC, HE POINTED OUT.

MR GLEESON SAID THE STANDARDS OF THE TRADE MARKS AND PATENTS REGISTRIES, BOTH OPERATIONALLY AND IN THE LEVEL OF PROTECTION PROVIDED BY THEM, WERE HIGH AND WERE WELL REGARDED INTERNATIONALLY.

NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND, FOLLOWING UPON A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY HIM, THESE REGISTRIES WOULD FORM LATER THIS YEAR THE CORE OF A NEW INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT WOULD CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO THE PROTECTION OF LEGITIMATE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS.

THE DEPARTMENT, UNDER THE POLICY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, WOULD IN DUE COURSE BE EXPANDED TO ENABLE IT TO FUNCTION MORE EFFICIENTLY AND WIDEN THE RANGE OF ITS ACTIVITIES.

MR GLEESON SAID THIS FURTHER EXPANSION WOULD INCLUDE THE FORMULATION OF LAWS FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS.

TRADE MARKS FOR SERVICES (AS DISTINCT FROM TRADE MARKS FOR GOODS) WOULD BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY, AS AND WHEN RESOURCES PERMITTED.

OTHER FIELDS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WOULD INCLUDE THE PROTECTION OF INTEGRATED CIRCUITS AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS, COPYRIGHT LAW, AND A NEW SYSTEM AND LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF PATENTS AND PETTY PATENTS.

/THIS EXPANSION

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 22 -

THIS EXPANSION WOULD BE PHASED ACCORDING TO REQUIREMENTS AND THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL STAFF AND OTHER RESOURCES.

THE NEW DIRECTOR OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WOULD ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING HONG KONG'S IMAGE OVERSEAS IN THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY FIELD, PARTICULARLY AMONG ITS MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS, AND ALSO ITS CONCERN FOR PROTECTING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS.

MR GLEESON SAID THE WORK OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT WOULD BE CHALLENGING AND EXCITING.

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FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO LONG SERVICE PAYMENT DISCUSSED

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THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD TODAY (MONDAY) CONSIDERED PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT (LSP) SCHEME UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

ONE OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS IS TO REMOVE THE DIFFERENTIAL RATES OF LSP BASED ON AGE UNDER AN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME TO BE PHASED OVER TWO YEARS SO THAT ANY EMPLOYEE AGED BELOW 40 WILL EVENTUALLY ALSO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THE FULL RATES OF PAYMENT.

AT PRESENT, EMPLOYEES AGED BETWEEN 36 AND 40 RECEIVE ONLY 75 PER CENT OF THE FULL PAYMENT WHILE THOSE AGED BELOW 36 RECEIVE ONLY 50 PER CENT.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL IS THAT PARTIAL ENTITLEMENT TO LSP SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR AN EMPLOYEE WHO IS DISMISSED AND WHO HAS FIVE OR MORE YEARS OF SERVICE BUT LESS THAN THE QUALIFYING SERVICE REQUIRED UNDER THE EXISTING PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE.

MEMBERS' VIEWS ON THESE PROPOSALS WERE DIVERSE AND THE CHAIRMAN UNDERTOOK TO REFLECT THEM TO THE GOVERNMENT.

THE BOARD ALSO CONSIDERED SOME PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE AIMED AT CLARIFYING THE PROVISIONS CONCERNING SETTING OFF OF LSP OR SEVERANCE PAY AGAINST PAYMENT OF PROVIDENT FUND OR OTHER RETIREMENT BENEFITS TO ENSURE AN EMPLOYER WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY DOUBLE BENEFITS TO HIS EMPLOYEES.

MEMBERS AGREED TO THIS TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

ALSO AGREED AT TODAY'S MEETING WAS A PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE "CROSS-HARBOUR" PROVISION IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE RELATING TO AN EMPLOYEE'S ENTITLEMENT TO SEVERANCE PAY UPON A CHANGE IN THE PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT.

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UNDER THE PROPOSAL, A CHANGE OF WORKPLACE WITHOUT DISMISSAL WILL NOT ENTITLE AN EMPLOYEE TO SEVERANCE PAYMENT UNLESS SUCH A CHANGE CAUSES UNDUE HARDSHIP TO HIM SUFFICIENTLY SEVERE THAT IT IS UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT THE EMPLOYEE TO CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT AT THE NEW WORKPLACE.

ANOTHER ITEM DISCUSSED TODAY WAS A PROPOSAL THAT ALL MINOR WORK-INJURY CLAIMS FOR EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION INVOLVING SICK LEAVE NOT EXCEEDING SEVEN DAYS AND WITHOUT PERMANENT INCAPACITY SHOULD BE SETTLED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE EMPLOYER AND THE INJURED EMPLOYEE WITHOUT ANY NEED FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPENSATION ASSESSMENT TO BE ISSUED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO ASSIST EMPLOYEES IN CASES OF DISPUTE AND WILL INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS ALLEGING NON-PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION OR OTHER IRREGULARITIES.

AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, THE BOARD AGREED TO THE PROPOSAL.

THE BOARD ALSO CONSIDERED A PROPOSAL TO REVISE THE DEFINITIONS OF "EMPLOYEE" AND "DEPENDANTS" IN THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE PROTECTION TO COVER THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF PERSONS:

- (A) SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS WHO ARE ENGAGED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE EMPLOYER'S TRADE OR BUSINESS;
- (B) SHARE LABOURERS AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS;
- (C) PART-TIME DOMESTIC HELPERS; AND
- (D) PROSPECTIVE DEPENDANTS SUCH AS A CHILD BORN AFTER THE EMPLOYEE'S DEATH.

THE BOARD GENERALLY AGREED TO THE PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE BUT SOME MEMBERS FELT THAT THE REVISED DEFINITION OF "EMPLOYEE" SHOULD BE MORE SPECIFIC.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL LOOK AT THIS MORE CLOSELY AND WILL CIRCULATE A FURTHER PAPER TO MEMBERS BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH DRAFTING AN AMENDMENT BILL.

SOME OTHER PROPOSALS WERE ALSO AGREED AT TODAY'S MEETING TO STREAMLINE CONTROLS OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES.

THESE INCLUDE THE REMOVAL OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS LICENCES FOR EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES, THE ABOLITION OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO KEEP REGISTERS OF JOB APPLICANTS IN A PRESCRIBED FORM AND TO SUBMIT QUARTERLY RETURNS, PROHIBITING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES FROM RECEIVING ANY REGISTRATION FEE FROM JOB APPLICANTS, REQUIRING THE AGENCIES TO MAINTAIN RECORDS OF OVERSEAS JOB APPLICATIONS AND ALLOWING THE AGENCIES TO SHARE FEES EXCEPT FOR CONTRACTORS, CONTRACTORS' AGENTS OR OTHER PERSONS TO WHOM JOB APPLICANTS ARE SENT FOR WORK.

SWD HOTLINE PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S TELEPHONE HOTLINE, WHICH PROVIDES PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING AND FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON SOCIAL SERVICES, ENTERS ITS 11TH YEAR THIS YEAR.

THE HOTLINE RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 14,000 ENQUIRIES IN 1989, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF 30 PER CENT AS COMPARED WITH 9,800 CALLS WHEN THE SERVICE WAS INTRODUCED IN 1980. OVER THE PAST DECADE THE HOTLINE HAS HANDLED ABOUT 158,000 ENQUIRIES.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CALLS RECEIVED IN 1989 SHOWED THAT ABOUT 65 PER CENT OF THE ENQUIRIES WERE RELATED TO SWD SERVICES.

THESE INCLUDED ENQUIRIES ABOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME BENEFITS, AND INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE AT FAMILY SERVICE CENTRES AND THOSE PROVIDED FOR THE ELDERLY, DISABLED CHILDREN AND THE NEEDY.

OTHER ISSUES INCLUDED EMOTIONAL AND RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS SUCH AS PARENT-CHILD, IN-LAWS, MARITAL PROBLEMS, CONFLICTS AND BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS OF BOYS AND GIRLS.

"IN THESE CASES, OUR SOCIAL WORKERS WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH IMMEDIATE COUNSELLING OVER THE TELEPHONE OR REFER THEM TO THE RIGHT CHANNEL FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE.

"SOME CASES WILL REQUIRE WRITTEN FOLLOW-UP SERVICE BY THE RELEVANT UNITS," AN SWD SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (MONDAY).

HE ADDED THAT THE SERVICE PROVED TO BE VERY USEFUL AS IMMEDIATE TELEPHONE COUNSELLING OR ADVICE COULD BE RENDERED IN A CRISIS SITUATION.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THOSE CALLS WHICH WERE NOT CONNECTED WITH SWD SERVICES WERE REFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

THE HOTLINE IS MANNED BY A TEAM OF FOUR SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANTS ON ROTATION FROM 9 AM TO 10 PM FROM MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS, AND FROM 1 PM TO 10 PM ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS. IT ALSO HAS AN AUTOMATIC RECORDING SYSTEM OPERATING OUTSIDE NORMAL WORKING HOURS.

THE SPOKESMAN URGED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO CALL THE HOTLINE - 3432255 - WHENEVER THEY REQUIRED ASSISTANCE.

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MSB HYGIENE DIVISION ON MOVE

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THE HYGIENE DIVISION OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH WILL MOVE FROM HARBOUR CENTRE IN WAN CHAI TO THE EIGHTH FLOOR OF THE URBAN COUNCIL FA YUEN STREET COMPLEX, 123A FA YUEN STREET, KOWLOON, TOMORROW (TUESDAY).

THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR PUBLIC ENQUIRIES WILL BE 7870007.

HOWEVER, THE DIVISION'S HEALTH EDUCATION HOTLINE -- 7230013 -- WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. IT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TAPED MESSAGES TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC ON HYGIENE MATTERS.

AT PRESENT THE HOTLINE IS PUBLICISING THE ANNUAL ANTI-RAT EDUCATION CAMPAIGN WHICH STARTED LAST MONTH.

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JFIU GETS NEW HOTLINE NUMBER

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THE NARCOTICS DIVISION OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT TODAY (MONDAY) ANNOUNCED THAT THE TELEPHONE HOTLINE OF THE JOINT POLICE/CUSTOMS FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT (JFIU) WILL BE CHANGED TO 8663366 ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 21.

THE JFIU STARTED OPERATION WHEN THE NEW DRUG TRAFFICKING (RECOVERY OF PROCEEDS) ORDINANCE 1989 CAME INTO EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1 LAST YEAR.

THE UNIT RECEIVES REPORTS ABOUT KNOWN OR SUSPECTED DRUG-RELATED TRANSACTIONS.

ALL CALLS AND INFORMATION RECEIVED WILL BE TREATED IN CONFIDENCE.

ITS PRESENT NUMBER IS 5520520.

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CHANGE IN TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR DRAINAGE COMPLAINTS

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STARTING FROM TOMORROW (TUESDAY), MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WANT TO MAKE ENQUIRIES OR COMPLAINTS ON DRAINAGE SERVICES SHOULD CALL THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS AS FOLLOWS:

REGION	TELEPHONE NUMBER
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NEW TERRITORIES	3001444
KOWLOON	7110920
HONG KONG	8056344

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MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 26 -

POSTAL SERVICES DURING LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

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THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, MR DOMINIC WONG, TODAY (MONDAY) ANNOUNCED THE SPECIAL LETTER DELIVERY SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

THERE WILL BE ONE DELIVERY EACH ON LUNAR NEW YEAR'S EVE (JANUARY 26) AND ON JANUARY 29 (MONDAY). THERE WILL BE NO LETTER DELIVERY ON JANUARY 27 AND 28 (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY).

ALL POST OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON JANUARY 26 TO 29 EXCEPT FOR THE GENERAL POST OFFICE AND THE TSIM SHA TSUI POST OFFICE BOTH OF WHICH WILL OPEN FOR COUNTER BUSINESS FROM 9 AM TO NOON ON JANUARY 29.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS FOOTBRIDGE CONGESTION PROBLEM

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THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE CONGESTION PROBLEM AT THE NAM FUNG CENTRE FOOTBRIDGE AT A MEETING TOMORROW (TUESDAY) AFTERNOON.

MEMBERS WILL ASK QUESTIONS CONCERNING TRAFFIC NOISE IN WAI TSUEN ROAD AND INADEQUATE COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN LOWER HON MAN VILLAGE.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE PROGRESS REPORTS FROM VARIOUS WORKING GROUPS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT BOARD FUNDS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING TOMORROW (TUESDAY) IN THE MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, SECOND FLOOR, TSUEN WAN STATION MULTI-STOREY CARPARK BUILDING, TSUEN WAN.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS CHILD CARE SERVICE

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THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE OPERATION OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROJECT ON OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE SERVICE AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (TUESDAY).

IN MONG KOK, THE PORTLAND STREET DAY NURSERY OF THE HONG KONG SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN HAS BEEN SELECTED TO TAKE PART IN THE PROJECT.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO STUDY THE FUNDING OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROJECTS AS AT JANUARY 5.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (TUESDAY) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, 157 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD, KOWLOON.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

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TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA

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THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS A PROPOSED TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT SCHEME FOR THE JUNCTION OF WONG NAI CHUNG ROAD, QUEEN'S ROAD EAST AND SPORTS ROAD AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (TUESDAY).

THE SCHEME, PROPOSED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, INVOLVES PROHIBITING VEHICLES COMING OUT FROM SPORTS ROAD FROM GOING STRAIGHT AHEAD TO QUEEN'S ROAD EAST, AND PROVIDING A U-TURN FACILITY AT THE MORRISON HILL ROAD NORTHBOUND LANE AT ITS JUNCTION WITH LEIGHTON ROAD.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO STUDY A REPORT MADE BY THE DB CHAIRMAN ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT'S VISIT TO WAN CHAI DISTRICT IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 4 PM TOMORROW (TUESDAY) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, 21ST FLOOR, SOUTHERN CENTRE, 130 HENNESSY ROAD, WAN CHAI.

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MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1990

- 28 -

WATER STORAGE FIGURE

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STORAGE IN HONG KONG'S RESERVOIRS AT 9 AM TODAY (MONDAY) STOOD AT 40 PER CENT OF CAPACITY OR 234.237 MILLION CUBIC METRES.

THIS TIME LAST YEAR THE RESERVOIRS CONTAINED 227.290 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF WATER, REPRESENTING 38.8 PER CENT OF CAPACITY.

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WATER CUT IN MUI WO

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN MUI WO, LANTAU ISLAND WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 10 AM TO 3 PM ON WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 17) TO FACILITATE WATERMAIN CONNECTION.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT ALL PREMISES AT MUI WO CHUNG HAU STREET, CHUNG HAU, MUI WO RURAL COMMITTEE ROAD, LUK TEI TONG, TAI TEI TONG, CHOI YUEN TSUEN, TSENG TAU SAN TSUEN, PAK NGAN HEUNG, WONG KUNG TIN, NAM PING, WANG TONG, METHODIST CONFERENCE CENTRE, OUTDOOR RECREATION CAMP, TUNG WAN TAU, KIU TAU TSUEN AND WO TIN.

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TEMPORARY LANE CLOSURE ON TAI PO ROAD IN SHA TIN

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT A SECTION OF ABOUT 300 METRES OF THE SLOW AND MIDDLE LANES OF THE NORTHBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF TAI PO ROAD NEAR TOLO HIGHWAY IN SHA TIN WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED FROM 8 PM TO 8 AM THE NEXT MORNING FROM WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 17) TO FRIDAY (JANUARY 19) TO FACILITATE ROAD MAINTENANCE WORKS.

ROAD SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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