



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
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Wednesday, March 5, 1997

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Transcript of Governor's media session

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Following is the transcript of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's media session after his visit to the Islands District today (Wednesday):

Governor: Don't say I don't bring you to some nice places. This is the fourth official visit I have made to the Islands District and though of course like most of you I have been to Island District on many other occasions, I am very pleased to have been able to see some of the community's activities and to discuss some of the serious issues that people face in the district. There is obviously particular concern on Lantau that people on the south of the island should be able to share in the prosperity and the creation of jobs which is taking place with the airport project on the north, and that is an issue that I will be discussing with my colleagues in government on my return.

Question: Governor, Mr Wong Siu-ye has opened the provisional legislature office this morning in (inaudible), what is your reaction?

Governor: Mr who?

Question: Mr Wong Siu-ye, he is a provisional legislator.

Governor: I've never heard of him. Perhaps he is trying to get better known.

Question: So (inaudible) Hong Kong Government?

Governor: Anybody who acts to set up an organisation in Hong Kong has to operate within the terms of the Societies Ordinance and if anybody has a complaint about how somebody is acting, they should put it to the police who will investigate.

Question: But this office is in the name of a provisional legislator.

Governor: I have never heard of him and I have never heard of his office.

Question: So do you think that his office is (inaudible)?

Governor: I haven't got the faintest idea. Since I have never heard of the man before and never heard of his office before, and since he purports to belong to an organisation which meets on occasional Saturday mornings in Shenzhen, I am not sure that I could be expected to answer any more questions about him.

Question: Now you have heard that, what action will you take?

Governor: I have answered as much about this previously unknown person as I want to.

Question: Governor --

Governor: Yes, let's go on to something serious.

Question: -- will you be putting up any proposals to Mrs Ogata on how to resolve the problem of the Boat People whose identities have not been established yet?

Governor: We are very pleased indeed that Mrs Ogata is coming to Hong Kong. We have been working very closely with the UNHCR over the years, as you know, to deal with this very difficult problem, and with their assistance Hong Kong has now coped with over 200,000 Vietnamese migrants, some of them refugees, some of them not. We are now in a situation where the number of migrants is less than 5,000. We have returned about 15,000 since the beginning of last year - perhaps rather more - and there are also about 1,300 refugees who remain a problem which the UNHCR and all of us are concerned about.

Clearly, we want to ensure that we continue the rate of progress in returning migrants under the Orderly Repatriation Programme that we managed last year. The problem, as you probably know, is clearance of names at the moment with the Vietnamese authorities. It is an issue which has been taken up with the Vietnamese at the highest level by the British Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Minister of State, and we will be discussing with the UNHCR what more we can do.

The particular problem that we face is a reluctance on the part of the Vietnamese to clear rapidly those that they say are ethnically Chinese. It is clearly not a matter of complete principle because about 6,000 ethnically Chinese Vietnamese migrants have returned to Vietnam, so I hope we will be able to persuade, with the help of Mrs Ogata and her officials, the Vietnamese to be more helpful.

I have to say that if their worry is that accepting back these people will be a precedent for the 260,000 or so ethnic Chinese Vietnamese who are in China since the 1978 war, then it would help if the Chinese authorities themselves could make it clear to the Vietnamese Government that they would not regard taking back ethnic Chinese Vietnamese from Hong Kong as a precedent for the 260,000 or so who are in China. I think rather than just criticise the excellent efforts made by the Hong Kong Government to return the migrants, it would be helpful if the Chinese authorities could actually give us some assistance by making that point absolutely clear to the Vietnamese Government.

That was a serious question.

Question: Sir, is Mr Michael Suen and other officials to be seconded to Mr Tung Chee Hwa's office very soon?

Governor: I discussed this request with Mr Tung on Monday morning when I saw him. We had a useful discussion about it and we will be making an announcement shortly. As you know, we said many months ago that we would want to be as helpful as possible to the Chief Executive (designate) and as helpful as was consistent with continuing the good administration of Hong Kong. We intend to keep our word.

But I would just make one point. While I think one or two more secondments may be sensible, from June 30 the Hong Kong Government, the whole team of civil servants, is the team that will be working for the Chief Executive. So I very much hope that in the coming months he will be able to meet more of those who will be working with him full-time from July 1, and that we won't have to think very much more about people being seconded to his private office after this.

Question: What is your reaction to the (inaudible) to urge the government to clarify this (inaudible) said that the Government was disappointed to be asked for senior officers? It seems like two governments exist in Hong Kong.

Governor: No, I think that it is reasonable that the Chief Executive (designate) should have a team to help him prepare for his Policy Address for example, and for his other initiatives from July 1. But I think we are probably getting to about the stage where, as I have said, there should be enough people working for Mr Tung. He has got quite a lot of people there in his team now and I am sure that in any event he will want to be talking to other policy secretaries on their existing areas of responsibility. It is more sensible for him to talk to them in their present jobs than to move a lot more people across.

Question: How can you ensure that the seconded Secretary will not have to work on the provisional legislature?

Governor: What I would certainly not do, and the community knows this is my view, is to second people like parliamentary draftsmen whose sole and principal function would be to assist the provisional legislature. Beyond that it is for Mr Tung to explain and justify the work that civil servants do for him. But he has made it clear that he respects the integrity of civil servants, that he does not want to put civil servants in a difficult situation and he has also made it clear that if civil servants don't want to transfer to his private office, then he will understand that situation.

Question: Governor, I was given an opinion-poll that was published today - I don't know if this counts as a serious question but I'll put it - which suggested that at least half the people in Hong Kong feel that the Governor's position is becoming increasingly irrelevant as time goes along. How do you respond? You are very dismissive about the provisional legislature but they and not you will be powerful in a hundred days.

Governor: It is perfectly true that there is a limit to what the Government is able to do in the next four months but there is rather a lot we have done in the last four years and eight months. And I very much hope that Mr Tung's administration will be able to do as much to strengthen the economy and work for the livelihood of the people of Hong Kong in the next five years as the Government has been able to do in the last five.

Question: There is a suggestion also, from the poll, that people feel that perhaps (inaudible) to the provisional legislature, it might be more helpful if you muted that and ceased to criticise it and regarded it as more of a team-player towards the handover. Is there any chance of that?

Governor: Look, the team-players are supposed to be China and Mainland officials who are supposed to co-operate with the Hong Kong Government and the British Government in the good management of Hong Kong until 30 June. We should remember what Article 30 of the Joint Declaration says. We should also remember that the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law talk about a legislature constituted by elections. There is no reference in the Basic Law to a provisional legislature.

And there is one thing people in Hong Kong know about me. Whether they agree with me or not, they know that when I say what I intend to do I stick to it. I have made the Government's position on the Legislative Council, on this business in Shenzhen, I have made the Government's position on those things absolutely crystal clear. And I don't intend changing my mind, the British Government doesn't intend changing its mind, the Hong Kong Government doesn't intend changing its mind. People should recognise that the existence of this body is not making friends for Hong Kong around the world.

Question: About the JLG plenary session, do you expect major progress will be made in the next JLG plenary session?

Governor: I hope we will make some progress. I would very much like to see us making progress, for example, on an issue like Air Service Agreements where there is still plenty of detailed and important work to do and where we haven't made sufficiently rapid progress. I would also like to see an agreement on right of abode because I think that is an issue which concerns the community and concerns many from the community who are now living abroad who would like to come back to Hong Kong. So I hope we make progress on those issues.

I think sometimes people underestimate the amount that has been achieved in the Joint Liaison Group, albeit sometimes painfully slowly. But there is still more to do and I hope we can get some more agreements under our belt in March, preparatory to the last meeting before the handover in June.

Question: Will you talk about the handover ceremony? Will the Hong Kong Government agree that the bodyguards of Mainland (inaudible) foreigners can get carry along with their weapons?

Governor: Well, we will behave in the same sensible way that we have always behaved. On the whole, visitors to Hong Kong, even very distinguished visitors, don't come with armed-bodyguards. But there are exceptions, for example, for heads of state and for some very senior visitors. But we work these things out. The Commissioner does it with his opposite numbers in a perfectly sensible way.

I don't think anybody in the community wants to see Hong Kong, at a time when we want to be celebrating, turned into an armed camp, and that is certainly not going to happen.

We very much hope that we can get on with the invitations to the handover as soon as possible. Some invitations are being given rather informally. I am delighted at what Mr Qian said about Secretary of State Albright. It was interesting that he said that because I think within hours of her appointment, Malcolm Rifkind when he spoke to her had also invited her to come to Hong Kong for the handover. So it is nice to see Mr Rifkind and Mr Qian at one on this.

Question: (inaudible) an example of the ground force with the Chinese officials (inaudible)?

Governor: I don't think Chinese officials need to be excessively concerned about their security in Hong Kong. This is one of the safest places in the world, and that is true for Chinese officials just as it is true for the Governor, the Chief Executive (designate) and visitors from other countries and communities as well. But obviously, as I said, there are occasional cases involving very senior officials when we do make exceptions. That is not remarkable. The same thing would happen in other free societies where people don't walk around all the time with large numbers of armed-bodyguards.

But I think what is fundamental is that everybody attending the handover, including representatives from the Mainland and including British representatives, should recognise that with the Hong Kong Police unambiguously in charge of security arrangements, everybody can go about enjoying and taking part in these very momentous events with complete peace of mind. Thank you very much indeed.

End

Governor visits Islands District

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Wednesday) visited Yung Shue Wan, Lamma Island and Mui Wo to see the latest developments in the Islands District.

Accompanied by the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Shelley Lau; the Islands District Officer, Christopher Wong and the Chairman of Regional Council and Islands District Board Chairman, Mr Daniel Lam, the Governor first proceeded to Yung Shue Wan to view the latest developments along the shoreline of Yung Shue Wan.

He also joined a Lunar New Year Carnival for the aged at a local restaurant and was entertained by singing and dancing performance.

At Mui Wo, Mr Patten took in a bird's view of developments across Mui Wo from the roof top of Ngan Wan Estate, Mui Wo. He was also briefed on the implementation of the Rural Planning and Improvement Strategy Minor Work projects to further improve the hinterland of Mui Wo Plain.

Before concluding the visit, the Governor met Islands District Board members and community leaders at a tea reception at NT Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School.

End

Handover Ceremony for Hong Kong

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In accordance with the Agreed Minute of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group on the Handover Ceremony for Hong Kong, the Chinese and British sides met on March 5, 1997 in Hong Kong to discuss media arrangements for covering the Handover Ceremony within the framework of normal internationally accepted practice. Both sides acknowledge that the Hong Kong Handover Ceremony is an important event jointly held by the British and Chinese Governments. Both sides welcome journalists representing media organisations from all over the world to cover the Handover Ceremony. In order to ensure the smooth coverage of the event by the media, the two sides have agreed to entrust the Hong Kong Government to receive and process applications from journalists, as well as handle and arrange other matters relating to media coverage of the Handover Ceremony.

Media organisations which are interested in covering the Handover Ceremony should submit applications together with personal particulars of their representatives to the Information Services Division of the Handover Ceremony Coordination Office of the Hong Kong Government before April 7, 1997. Application forms will be distributed by the Handover Ceremony Coordination Office from March 15, 1997 onwards.

In addition, a Press and Broadcast Centre will be established to facilitate media coverage of the Handover Ceremony. Media organisations from different countries and regions are welcome to use the Press and Broadcast Centre and its facilities and services.

End

HKNPL to have new shareholder

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The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (Wednesday) that the Financial Secretary has entered into an agreement with the China Banknote Printing and Minting Corporation (CBPMC) to sell 3,825,000 Ordinary Shares of the Hong Kong Note Printing Limited (HKNPL). The consideration for the sale of these shares, which represent 15% of the issued share capital of the HKNPL, is HK\$42.5mn.

HKNPL, which operates a banknote printing plant in Tai Po, is fully owned by the Hong Kong Government through the Exchange Fund. The HKNPL was acquired by the Hong Kong Government in April 1996 and its main line of business is the printing of HK\$ banknotes.

"I am pleased to have CBPMC participating in HKNPL as a minority shareholder. I am sure that HKNPL will benefit from this new business relationship, given CBPMC's expertise in banknote printing and its position in China in the security printing business," said Mr Donald Tsang, the Financial Secretary.

CBPMC is a subsidiary enterprise of the People's Bank of China responsible for the printing and minting of RMB currency. It possesses comprehensive expertise in banknote printing, including design, plate-making and printing of banknotes. It also manufactures anti-counterfeit papers and printing inks. CBPMC currently operates 15 printing and minting plants as well as a technology development institute.

In welcoming CBPMC's participation in HKNPL, the Chief Executive of HKMA and Chairman of the HKNPL Board of Directors, Mr Joseph Yam said, "As a small and stand-alone banknote printing operation, HKNPL must be able to tap the best technical know-how in this highly specialised field. While the printing of HK\$ banknotes will continue to be its core, and profitable, business, HKNPL needs to explore other security printing business opportunities both within and outside Hong Kong. I am sure that CBPMC's participation as a business partner will strengthen HKNPL's ability to explore such opportunities in the years ahead."

End

Truly bilingual court system to be in place

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The Hong Kong Government is committed to putting in place before July 1 this year on a phased basis a truly bilingual court system which allows the use of Chinese, along with English, in courts of all levels, the Deputy Solicitor General, Mr Stephen Wong, told the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva on Tuesday (Geneva time).

Mr Wong, leader of the Hong Kong Government team forming part of the British delegation, was responding to a question on the use of Chinese in Hong Kong courts raised by Professor Rudiger Wolfum, a member of the committee which examines the 14th periodic report under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

He said the Government had made considerable progress towards that goal and is confident of achieving it in good time.

"While English will continue to be used in our courts, as appropriate, there is a growing need for more Chinese to be used in legal proceedings.

"The Attorney General's Chambers of Hong Kong will address this need by completing the authentication of Chinese texts, promoting wider use of bilingual prosecution documents, and training government lawyers on advocacy in Chinese," he said.

As to the question on why there is no provision in the Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO) to protect Hong Kong people from racial discrimination, Mr Wong said the decision to exclude inter-citizen rights from the BORO was based on concerns expressed by the community before its enactment about the legal uncertainty that might be created by applying the BORO to the private sector.

"The Hong Kong Government believes that, where appropriate, it is more effective to protect inter-citizen rights by specific legislation in areas where the need for a remedy for the infringement of inter-citizen rights is most commonly felt.

"We have already taken concrete steps in this direction, such as the enactment of legislation against sex and disability discrimination and protection of individual privacy in respect of personal data," he said.

Responding to concern expressed by a member, Professor Theodoor van Boven, about the Equal Opportunities (Race) Bill sponsored by Legislative Councillor, Mrs Elizabeth Wong, Mr Wong said a consultation paper had been issued to gauge public views on racial discrimination.

"We are currently seeking the public's view on the possible way forward and we believe measures that are eventually adopted must have public support.

"We are grateful to the Committee which supported this approach in its concluding observations on the 13th report last year. We will seek to persuade Legislative Councillors in Hong Kong to take these considerations into account and await the outcome of the consultation," he added.

Meanwhile, the Committee commended the report as a model for others, particularly in respect of follow-up reports. The responding point-by-point to each of the Committee's questions was an exemplary contribution to the ongoing dialogue between the Committee and the State Party.

Committee members also thanked the delegation for the openness and thoroughness in their replies and a constructive dialogue during the hearing.

The Committee is expected to release its concluding observations in a few weeks' time.

End

Removal operation against cooling towers

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The Buildings Department has launched a large-scale operation since March 1 to remove abandoned and dilapidated water cooling towers from buildings in the industrial areas of Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, and Kwun Tong to protect public safety.

Giving details of the operation this (Wednesday) morning, the Department's Chief Building Surveyor (Control and Enforcement), Mr Au Choi-kai, estimated some 1,800 cooling towers in 720 buildings would need to be removed.

A dedicated team, headed by a senior engineer and comprising five technical staff, has been set up for the task. The whole operation will take about 30 months to complete.

Mr Au said a similar operation, successfully completed in November last year, had been carried out in Chai Wan and San Po Kong since January 1995.

"During the first operation, we inspected 145 industrial buildings and subsequently identified 1,043 abandoned or defective water cooling towers and air-conditioner supporting frames.

"A total of 1,043 advisory letters and 572 removal orders were then served on the owners and occupants requiring them to remove those unauthorised building works.

"We are glad that at the end, all the dangerous towers and structures were removed by the owners voluntarily and no Government enforcement action was needed," Mr Au said.

He pointed out that most of the owners were very co-operative in the removal operation as they all realised the danger posed by abandoned cooling towers.

"I would urge all owners and occupants of industrial buildings in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Kwun Tong to render the same support to our staff to remove the dangerous structures," he said.

End

Outward processing arrangement rationalised

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The Trade Department will launch a Rationalised Outward Processing Arrangement (ROPA) next month to facilitate manufacturers in the outward processing of subsidiary and minor finishing processes of their products.

The existing Outward Processing Arrangement (OPA) operated by the Department enables registered manufacturers to subcontract outside Hong Kong the subsidiary or minor finishing processes without affecting the eligibility of such goods for a Certificate of Hong Kong Origin (CHKO).

A prerequisite for participation in the OPA is that the goods must have undergone the principal manufacturing processes in Hong Kong which are sufficient to qualify for the issue of a CHKO by the Department or any of the five Government Approved Certification Organisations.

"The ROPA continues to facilitate the outward processing of subsidiary and minor finishing processes without affecting the eligibility of such goods for a CHKO," a Trade Department spokesman said today (Wednesday).

"The procedural and documentation requirements have been modified and streamlined to better facilitate the trade and to enhance control over outward processing activities."

Main features of the ROPA are as follows:

- * Manufacturers participating in the ROPA must be holders of valid Factory Registration with the Trade Department for certification purposes;
- * A prior OPA registration on a factory basis is required and the registration is renewable on an annual basis. The factory only needs to declare the broad product type registered with the Department. Approved OPA registrants will be issued with multiple OPA cards;
- * Photographs of the goods before and after outward processing must accompany the cargo, but prior endorsement of the photographs will not be required from the Trade Department;
- * A Combined Form will be adopted to replace the existing OPA Form 1 (Export) and Form 2 (Import);

The rehabilitation works will be completed in phases working down from the crest of the existing ridge.

"The top portion of the site will be rehabilitated and turned green within the next five years and the contractor is required to appoint qualified landscape architects to do the design," said the Director.

The 17-year contract will give the contractor rights to process the excavated rock into aggregates and other quarry products for sale off-site and to manufacture and sell ready-mixed concrete, bituminous materials and precast concrete products over the next 15 years, plus a two-year maintenance period for the establishment of trees and plants.

"This will ensure a steady supply of aggregates and other material to our construction industry," Mr Lam said.

"In return for these rights, the contractor has to make payments to the Government apart from carrying out the rehabilitation works. Works are designed to avoid as far as possible off-site disposal of surplus material in order to minimise the environmental impact on the adjacent areas," he said.

The planning and engineering design for the Stage 2 works are expected to begin in the middle of this year.

These involve mainly site formation below Anderson Road and will be carried out by civil engineering works contract.

End

Visits to bedspace apartment tenants and street sleepers

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Bedspace apartment (BSA) tenants and street sleepers in Wan Chai were reassured during visits to their homes today (Wednesday) by government representatives and community leaders that they had not been forsaken and were advised of a whole range of services designed to help them.

The visits, jointly organised by the Wan Chai District Office and Wan Chai District Board, were meant to show concern by the Government and the community for those less fortunate during the Lunar New Year period.

Each of the visiting groups comprised representatives from the Home Affairs Department (HAD), Social Welfare Department, Wan Chai District Board and local area committees.

Mrs Elaine Tang, Wan Chai District Officer and head of one of the groups, said: "The main purpose of the visits was not just to exchange some festival greetings and distribute presents, although this too is important, but to express our genuine concern for those less fortunate amongst us and offer concrete assistance."

"For example, they were given information leaflets published by HAD on the rehousing arrangements for BSA tenants who might be affected as a result of the implementation of the BSA Ordinance. Many were also given valuable advice on the spot with regard to their eligibility and application for public housing.

"We also took the opportunity to outline the wide range of services for them provided by the Government as well as non-governmental organisations.

"Among other things, BSA tenants can seek help and advice from the authorities when they encountered problems concerning their accommodation arrangements," Mrs Tang added.

"Those aged 60 and above and with social and medical difficulties, if found eligible, will be offered compassionate rehousing or admission to welfare institutions or homes for the elderly.

"Those aged below 60 can apply for a place in the HAD's singleton hostels located in Wan Chai, Western, Shau Kei Wan and other districts in Kowloon," Mrs Tang said.

At every opportunity, Mrs Tang and other visitors urged street sleepers to consider applying for public housing or hostels operated by non-governmental welfare organisations.

End

Booklet on use of potent/toxic Chinese herbs published

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A booklet on the proper handling of potent/toxic Chinese herbs was recently published by the Preparatory Committee on Chinese Medicine (PCCM) for the reference of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) dispensers.

Introducing the booklet today (Wednesday), Chairman of PCCM's Chinese Medicine Sub-Committee, Mr Tam Ling-kwan said: "The booklet aimed at enhancing better understanding in the processing and use of potent/toxic Chinese herbs among TCM dispensers."

Printed in full colour, the booklet contains a list of 31 kinds of potent/toxic Chinese herbs and a number of pictures of these potent/toxic herbs. This list of potent/toxic herbs had been published earlier in an educational leaflet for the public by the PCCM.

Aimed for TCM dispensers, this booklet contains more details on the sources of origin and nature of these Chinese herbs and how to distinguish them.

It also gives useful information on the functions, applications and points to note in the handling and application of these herbs as well as their toxicity and symptoms of poisoning.

"The booklet was compiled after taking reference from a number of authoritative literature on traditional Chinese medicine," Mr Tam said.

He stressed that potent or toxic Chinese herbs could be very useful so long as they were processed and used properly and correctly, adding that unprocessed potent/toxic herbs were usually not suitable for internal use.

However, TCM dispensers should always consult TCM practitioners when they had doubts over certain prescriptions, Mr Tam said.

The booklet also contains a set of recommended practising guidelines for Chinese herbs retailing trade. This covers areas such as knowledge that should be equipped by TCM dispensers, their role and responsibility, management of Chinese herbal shops, and proper storage methods for Chinese herbs.

Copies of the booklet would be available free to TCM dispensers, practitioners and traders starting from tomorrow at PCCM Secretariat at 1st Floor, Shun Feng International Centre, 182 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (Tel no. 2527 8391).

They would also be distributed to members of the trade through TCM associations.

End

Operator and staff of unlicensed guesthouse fined

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Two men were fined \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively today (Wednesday) in the North Kowloon Magistracy after pleading guilty to operating and managing an unlicensed guesthouse in King Hing Building, Mong Kok.

The proprietor had been ordered by the Home Affairs Department's Licensing Authority to cease operation since his certificate of exemption had expired on August 31, 1996. However, when the officers conducted an inspection in October last year, they found that the guesthouse was still in operation.

The proprietor and an employee were subsequently charged under Section 5 of the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department said unlicensed guesthouses would not be tolerated and enforcement action would continue to be taken against them to ensure that they operate only with all building and fire safety provisions in place.

He also appealed to members of the public to help in the crackdown on unlicensed guesthouses by reporting them to the Licensing Authority on 2881 7034.

End

Seminar and training guide for security personnel

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A seminar on fire prevention will be held this month specially for property managers and security personnel to enhance their awareness of the importance of fire safety and precaution, enrich their knowledge in the subject and strengthen their skills in handling a fire emergency.

The Chairman of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (SGSIA), Mrs Miriam Lau Kin-ye, announced this at a press conference today (Wednesday).

The seminar will be held on March 14, between 2.30 pm and 5.30 pm, at the Royal Pacific Hotel, Canton Road, Kowloon.

It will be organised jointly by the SGSIA, the Fire Services Department, the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies (HKAPMC) and the Hong Kong Institute of Housing.

Mrs Lau said that the four organisations saw the need to hold this seminar in view of recent incidents of serious fire in which many lives were lost, many people seriously injured and properties damaged.

"We all wish to do something positive in order to avoid similar tragedies in future. We believe that property managers and their front-line security personnel play a vital role in protecting buildings and occupiers from fire hazards.

"Their ability in taking appropriate actions in an outbreak of fire is crucial to the safety and well-being of people under their care," she said.

At the seminar, fire protection experts from the Fire Services Department will explain the basic fire safety rules, the daily responsibilities of security personnel in ensuring compliance with such rules, the contingency plan and steps to follow if a fire does occur.

Mrs Lau also introduced a set of guidelines produced by the SGSIA's Training Sub-committee to assist front-line security personnel to discharge their duties more effectively and improve their knowledge about fire prevention.

"In this Training Guide, security personnel are given specific guidance on their daily duties, with particular emphasis on the prevention of fire," she said.

The guidelines also provide information about fire services installations as well as some directions as to the right steps to take when an outbreak of fire occurs.

The Training Guide was prepared with the assistance of the Fire Services Department and the two trade associations from the property management and security fields, namely, the HKAPMC and the Security Association.

Copies of the Guide will be distributed to property managers and security guards at the coming fire prevention seminar. Owners Corporations, Mutual Aid Committees and their security guards will also receive copies through the Home Affairs Department.

Also present at today's press conference were the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Fire Protection Bureau), Mr Chu Man-chun; President of the HKAPMC, Mr Alfred Lai; Chairman of the Education Committee, the Hong Kong Institute of Housing, Mr Johnnie Chan; and Vice-Chairman of the SGSIA, Mr Edward Pong.

End

Garrison gets physical

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Two Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) at the Hong Kong Garrison will climb twice the height of Central Plaza - the territory's tallest building, run more than a marathon, do more than 6,000 sit-ups and cycle the equivalent of Central to Sai Kung and back, all without leaving the building.

Warrant Officer II "Tug" Wilson and Sergeant George Best, PTIs at the Prince of Wales Barracks, will take part in a Physathon, 24 hours of non-stop exercise, beginning at 12 noon tomorrow (Thursday).

Colleagues within the Garrison have been invited to sponsor them to raise money for a local charity, the Mother's Choice Baby Care Home.

"We wanted to take the opportunity before we all split up and return to the United Kingdom to do something to remember our time in Hong Kong," explained Sergeant Best, the Physathon's organiser.

"This way, we can do something for others at the same time," he added.

End



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SARVING THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC

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Supreme Court (Amendment) Bill 1997

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Following is a speech by the Attorney General, Mr Jeremy Mathews, in moving the second reading of the Supreme Court (Amendment) Bill 1997 in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr President,

I move that the Supreme Court (Amendment) Bill 1997 be read the second time. The Bill aims to amend the Supreme Court Ordinance so as to re-enact, in an updated form, those provisions of the English Habeas Corpus Acts 1679 and 1816 that are relevant to Hong Kong, and to make consequential amendments to the Application of English Law Ordinance.

Freedom of the person is a fundamental human right. But that freedom would be illusory if there were no effective procedure for protecting it. This is recognized in Article 9(4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that "anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful."

Habeas corpus, the most famous of all common law writs, provides the means by which such proceedings may be instituted. The writ can be traced back to the thirteenth century, even before Magna Carta. It has proved its effectiveness throughout the centuries. In seventeenth century England, members of the parliamentary opposition, who had been imprisoned by command of the King, availed themselves of this writ to seek their release. And it was on a habeas corpus application that slavery was declared illegal in England in 1772.

The independent Judiciary plays a vital part in hearing habeas corpus applications. As a great English judge has said - "It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty, that the judges stand between the subject and any attempted encroachments on his liberty by the executive, alert to see that any coercive action is justified in law."

Today, the remedy of habeas corpus continues to be of constitutional importance as the classic common law guarantee of personal liberty. It is frequently resorted to in Hong Kong, particularly, in recent years, by Vietnamese detainees. But although habeas corpus has its origins in the common law, the two Habeas Corpus Acts of 1679 and 1816 developed the remedy in significant ways.

The Act of 1679 was passed after an individual was arrested for delivering a speech urging the summoning of Parliament, and was kept in prison for several months without bail. Under that Act, if the applicant showed that there was any ground for supposing that the prisoner was wrongfully detained, the writ would be issued requiring the person detaining the prisoner to bring him before the court and to explain the grounds of detention. If it appeared that the prisoner was confined without lawful authority, the court would release him; otherwise it would release him on bail, or make provision for his speedy trial. The Act also included provisions designed to prevent evasion of the writ, but it only applied to persons imprisoned for alleged criminal activities.

The 1816 Act improved upon the 1679 Act and extended it to detention otherwise than in respect of alleged criminal activities. The later Act has been described as the beginning of the modern jurisprudence, the effect of which is that it is the court, in civil cases, will determine for themselves the existence of the facts upon which the executive cites as justifying the detention.

The two English Acts are currently applied in Hong Kong by virtue of being listed in the Schedule to the Application of English Law Ordinance. The Administration is now conducting an exercise that involves identifying those Acts in the Schedule that are still of importance, and re-enacting them in an updated form.

If the provisions in the two English Acts that are relevant to Hong Kong were not re-enacted, and ceased to apply in Hong Kong, this would create great uncertainty as to what the common law position would be. Mr President, given that Habeas Corpus is one of the most fundamental remedies known to our law, the Administration considers it essential that these provisions be re-enacted in an updated form and that is what this Bill proposes to do.

The Bill contains two main provisions. First, clause 3 adds a new section 22A to the Supreme Court Ordinance to provide for applications for, and the issue of, writs of habeas corpus. Secondly, clause 6 amends the Schedule to the Application of English Law Ordinance by repealing items 18 and 50, which are references to the two English Acts.

Mr President, I commend the short but vitally important Bill to this Council for early passage into law.

End

Second reading of PPE (Amendment) Bill

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Following is a speech by the Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport, Mr Chau Tak-hay, in moving the second reading of the Places of Public Entertainment (Amendment) Bill 1997 in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr President,

I move the Second Reading of the Places of Public Entertainment (Amendment) Bill 1997.

Under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation, no person shall keep or use any places of public entertainment, including cinemas, without a licence. At present, the two Municipal Councils, which are the licensing authorities in their respective areas, have no power to order an unlicensed place of public entertainment to be closed.

In order to strengthen enforcement action against the continued illegal operation of unlicensed places of public entertainment, the Bill intends to empower the licensing authorities to apply to a magistrate for the grant of a Prohibition Order. This would prohibit the keeping or use of a place of public entertainment for all purposes or for any purposes specified in the Prohibition Order. If the Prohibition Order is breached, the licensing authority may apply to a magistrate for a Closure Order to close the unlicensed business.

Similar provisions already exist under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance in respect of unlicensed food premises.

Thank you, Mr President.

End

Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions (Amendment) Bill

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Following is a speech by the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, in moving the second reading of the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions (Amendment) Bill in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr President,

I move that the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions (Amendment) Bill be read a second time.

At present, pensions and allowances are provided to veterans of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps and the Hong Kong Naval Volunteer Force who fought in defence of Hong Kong during the Second World War. Payments are made by reference to the UK Naval, Military and Air Forces etc (Disablement and Death) Service Pensions Order. We feel that it is appropriate to establish a local payment scheme and to remove the reference to the UK Order.

This can be achieved by amendments to the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions Ordinance. Under the amendment Bill, payment of pensions, gratuities and allowances in respect of disablement and death of veterans due to service, are largely retained. The prevailing rates will be converted into Hong Kong dollar, and will form the basic rates. It is our intention to adjust these rates in future in accordance with local inflation and in line with the civil service pension increase.

The UK Order is formulated to cater for members of various UK forces. We propose to adopt provisions that are relevant and omit those that are no longer applicable to members of the two voluntary forces. The Bill however contains suitable saving provisions to ensure that existing beneficiaries will continue to draw pensions and allowances at levels no worse off than those prevailing under the Ordinance.

We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services, the Social Welfare Advisory Committee and chairmen of relevant war veterans associations. They are all in support of our proposals.

Mr President, I commend this Bill to Members.

End

Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1997

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Following is the speech by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in moving the second reading of the Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1997 in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr President,

I move the second reading of the Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1997.

The Bill seeks to increase the maximum penalties of certain sexual and related offences to reflect their gravity. It sends a clear signal that the community would not tolerate such crimes.

In response to a motion of this Council, we have reviewed the legislation relating to sexual assaults and improved the procedures adopted by the departments concerned in handling such cases.

In our review, we have selected the ten-year maximum penalty level for indecent assault as the benchmark since it is the most prevalent sexual offence and the penalty level was raised from five to ten years' imprisonment in 1991. Having completed our review, we propose to increase the maximum imprisonment terms of certain sexual and related offences to ten years. These offences include, for example, indecent conduct towards a child under 16 and intercourse with a defective. The seriousness of these offences are considered comparable to that of indecent assault.

We have paid particular attention to the offence of incest as it is a more traumatic experience and one over which the community has great concern. Having regard to the position in other common law jurisdictions and taking into account the views expressed by the Security Panel of this Council, we propose to increase the maximum imprisonment penalty of incest with women between the age of 13 and 16 from seven to 20 years. Women of this age bracket are more vulnerable and should therefore be offered increased protection. For incest with women of or above the age of 16, we propose to double the maximum imprisonment term from seven to 14 years.

As regards offences relating to vice establishments, we propose to raise the maximum imprisonment terms on offences concerning premises used as vice establishment or for prostitution from two to seven years, as these offences are less serious when compared with indecent assault. For offenders convicted on indictment of "keeping a vice establishment", we propose to raise the maximum imprisonment term upon conviction on indictment from seven to ten years and, upon summary conviction, from two to three years. We also propose to remove the maximum fine levels for these offences to allow the courts more flexibility in imposing an appropriate fine.

We understand that raising maximum imprisonment penalties alone cannot be the sole solution to the problem of sex crimes. We adopt a three-pronged approach in tackling the problem. This includes prevention by enhancing sex education, enforcement by increasing the maximum penalties of these offences and providing support to victims by introducing improved procedures so that they are more willing to come forward to report these cases.

On preventive measures, we have launched a publicity campaign on the prevention of child sexual abuse in 1996/97, focussing on teaching young children to protect themselves and promoting awareness of the problem on the parents' and the carers' part. To develop students' ability to prevent and cope with sexual harassment, we are reviewing the Guidelines on Sex Education in schools. In parallel, we are developing a sex education kit for parents. We have also strengthened our sex education programmes for the younger generation so that they will have a proper perspective of sex and are therefore less prone to commit sexual offences.

We recognise that it is important for victims of sexual offences to come forward and report their misfortune. To achieve this, we have improved our procedures for supporting victims of such crimes. The Police have emphasised a sympathetic approach in their training for officers handling such crimes. In addition, a comfortable atmosphere is provided in the Police report room so that victims will feel at ease to give their statements. In collaboration with the Social Welfare Department, the Police have established a dedicated Child Protection Special Investigation Team to handle child victims involved in child sexual abuse cases. Meanwhile, we have introduced measures to protect child witnesses from the trauma of testifying in court in incest cases by, for example, allowing a child's videotaped testimony to be produced as evidence in court. The Victim's Charter was also issued in 1996 to improve services for victims of crimes. This Charter will be of particular assistance to victims of sex crimes.

We have consulted the Security Panel of this Council and the Fight Crime Committee. Both bodies have indicated support for our proposals.

Mr President, we believe that by enacting the Bill, it will have a strong deterrent effect against such crimes. These changes will contribute towards our efforts to make Hong Kong one of the safest cities in the world.

Thank you, Mr President.

End

Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill

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Following is the speech by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, at the resumption of the second reading debate of the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr President,

The Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill aims to provide better protection from the risk of fire in certain kinds of commercial premises where members of the public are likely to be present in significant numbers.

I am grateful to the Honourable James To and members of the Bills Committee for the great care they have taken in scrutinizing the Bill since it was introduced into this Council in May last year. This process has helped the Administration to fine-tune the Bill in a manner which would ensure the purpose of the legislation can be achieved in the most effective manner.

In the course of discussions in the Bills Committee, we have also received comments from the Real Estate Developers Association and Hong Kong Institute of Architects on the implementation of the Bill. We have carefully considered the views of both the Bills Committee and the two organisations in preparing for the committee stage amendments.

The principal amendments in respect of this Bill which I will propose at the committee stage include -

- (a) To specify in the Schedules the responsibilities of "owner" and "occupier" of prescribed commercial premises in complying with the fire safety requirements under the Bill. This will reflect clearly that owners will be responsible for those improvement works which require structural changes of the premises and the occupier for those involving non-structural changes. There has been some lengthy discussion on the definition of "occupier". Although some members still find it not entirely satisfactory, the proposed definition should ensure that no one will unreasonably be caught by the definition. At the same time, it should enable the relevant enforcement authority to identify a senior staff member responsible for the management of the premises so that necessary enforcement action can be taken to ensure that relevant premises are as far as possible kept free from the risk of fire and the consequences of fire.

- (b) To introduce a new clause to reflect that offices in prescribed commercial premises, e.g. offices in banks, will not be covered by the Bill if they are separated by a fire resistant wall, floor or ceiling from the area to which members of the public generally have access and they have a separate means of escape.
- (c) To address members' concern about the concept of reasonableness for compliance with a fire safety direction, a new sub-clause will be added to explain what constitutes a "reasonable excuse". This includes factors mainly relating to the structural integrity of the building and the technology available to carry out the necessary improvements.
- (d) To specify the versions of the four Codes of Practice that can be applied to premises that are covered by the Bill, i.e. the Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment 1994; the Code of Practice for the Provision of Means of Escape in Case of Fire 1996; the Code of Practice for Fire Resisting Construction 1996; and the Code of Practice for Means of Access for Firefighting and Rescue 1995. It is also stipulated that any substituted or amended code in future would apply to premises only after the passing of a resolution by the LegCo. This would address a concern expressed by members of the Bills Committee that owners who had upgraded their fire safety measures to the current standard would be required to carry out a further upgrading soon afterwards because of the issue of a substituted or amended Code of Practice.
- (e) To state clearly in the Bill that only jewellery and goldsmith shops with a security area would be covered by the legislation. As discussed in the Bills Committee, the fire risk is less in those jewellery and goldsmith shops that do not have a security partition that segregates a part of the premises from the part to which members of the public normally have access.

In addition to the proposed committee stage amendments, we have also discussed the implementation of the legislation. It was proposed that the legislation would be implemented in stages. The 500 prescribed commercial premises without sprinkler installation as identified by FSD in a survey conducted in 1995 would be included in our first phase of implementation. The next phase will include prescribed premises completed before 1980. The third phase will include prescribed premises completed between 1980 to 1990 and phase four include those premises completed after 1990. Requirements to carry out fire safety improvements to prescribed commercial premises completed in recent years will therefore not be imposed in the immediate future. However, if particular premises are found to be at a high risk of fire, enforcement action will be taken immediately without reference to the age of the premises.

The implementation plan, although not included as part of the legislation, will be publicised. The industry will be consulted on the plan and it will be issued as a practice note to the industry. On completion of each phase of implementation, the LegCo will be consulted before proceeding to the next phase.

I would also like to reiterate that, in taking enforcement action under this Bill, the enforcement authorities will consider extending the specified period for complying with a direction if the owner or occupier found that, after commencement of the improvement works, he could not finish the work due to unforeseen problems. This is the current practice adopted in other related legislation.

Finally, I am aware that there are increasing concerns expressed on the improvement of fire safety measures in old commercial buildings and karaoke establishments in the territory. We are actively looking into the possible options to address the problem, including legislative and licensing measures. This legislation will provide a very good reference for us to work on.

Mr President, I recommend the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill to this Council.

End

Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill: committee stage

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Following are the speeches by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in moving the committee stage amendments of the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Bill in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Mr Chairman,

I move that the clauses specified be amended as set out in the paper circularized to Members.

The amendments to clauses 3, 3(1) and 5 have already been referred to in the Second Reading debate.

Clause 11 is amended to reflect more clearly the power of the police to remove, and prevent re-entry of persons to, premises that are subject to use restriction order. Clause 21(1) is amended in order to increase the deterrent effect relating to the unlawful disclosure of information obtained in relation to the premises by the authorised officer. Clause 24 is amended to specify the major considerations that would be taken in determining whether a commercial activity should be included as a prescribed activity under the Bill.

Amendments to the other clauses are mainly technical in nature and are consequential to amendments to the other clauses. All the proposed amendments have been discussed in detail by the Bills Committee and received the Committee's endorsement.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

[For clause 25]

Mr Chairman,

I move that new clause 25 as set out in the paper circularized to Members be read the second time. The amendment have already been referred to in the Second Reading debate.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

[For schedules 1 and 2]

Mr Chairman,

I move that schedules 1 and 2 be amended as set out in the paper circularized to Members. The amendments have already been referred to in the Second Reading debate.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

End

Land Fund

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Following is a question by the Hon Sin Chung-kai and a reply by the Secretary for Treasury, Mr K C Kwong, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council whether it has made a proposal to the Chief Executive (Designate) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for depositing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Land Fund in the Exchange Fund managed by the Monetary Authority; if so, of the reasons for putting forward the above proposal; if not, of the options being considered by the Government for handling the Land Fund?

Reply:

Mr President,

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Land Fund is now managed under trust. While the trustees of the Land Fund are responsible for the management of the Land Fund, the beneficial ownership of the Land Fund belongs to the HKSARG when it comes into being on 1 July 1997 as provided for under the Joint Declaration. How to handle the Land Fund as from 1 July 1997 is a matter for the HKSARG to decide. We have raised the subject in our general briefing for the Chief Executive (Designate) on the matters which have to be dealt with by the HKSARG but we have not made any specific proposal to the Chief Executive (Designate) as to how the Land Fund should be managed as from 1 July 1997.

End

Publicity of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance

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Following is a question by the Hon Leung Yiu-chung and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Questions:

Although the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (the Ordinance) was implemented at the end of last year, the public are still not fully aware of their rights to privacy - for example, the public are not clear as to whether it is an offence under the Ordinance for a member of any private or government organisation (including a police officer) to inspect a person's Identity Card or ask for a copy of it - thus resulting in the Ordinance not being applied generally in the territory. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the ways adopted by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (the Office) in promoting and publicising the Ordinance to enhance the public's awareness of their rights to privacy;
- (b) of the steps taken by the Office to promote the Ordinance to various business organisations, so that they can avoid violating the law when requesting personal data from individuals; and
- (c) of the number and major types of complaints received by the Office since its establishment; the number of enquiries concerning infringement of rights to privacy, and whether there have been any such enquiries to which the Office could not provide definite replies; if so, of the number of such enquiries, and whether alternative enquiry channels are available to the public.

Reply:

Mr President,

I should say at the outset that the core provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance already commenced operation on 20 December 1996. Whether or not the public understand their privacy right does not affect the application of the Ordinance. Therefore, I cannot agree with Hon Leung Yiu-chung's view that the Ordinance is not being applied generally in the territory.

The following are my replies to the three questions asked by Mr Leung.

- (a) The Government began promoting and publicizing the Ordinance in August 1995 when this Council had passed the Ordinance but the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data had not yet been established. Efforts by the Home Affairs Branch to promote the Ordinance during the year from August 1995 include:
1. 50,000 copies of two information booklets were prepared and distributed to promote the Ordinance and provide guidance to data users;
 2. Nearly 100,000 posters were distributed, and some had been displayed on 100 advertisement boards at various MTR stations for one to three weeks;
 3. Representatives attended some 30 seminars and workshops during which members of public and private organisations were briefed on the Ordinance. Participants amounted to some 2,400; and
 4. A telephone hotline was set up and approximately 5 to 10 enquiries were received every day.

Since the establishment of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data on 1.8.1996, publicity and promotion efforts have been stepped up. In order to heighten public awareness of the rights to privacy, the Office has carried out the following work:

1. Publishing a pamphlet entitled "Personal Information: Your Privacy Rights Explained", and so far around 90,000 copies have been distributed;
2. Distributing some 7,000 posters and arranging TV and radio promos to go on air from 20.12.1996 onwards;
3. Organising Logo Design Competition to enhance public awareness of the work of the Office;
4. Joining the Internet, and so far almost 8,000 visits have been made to the Office's home page;

5. Setting up a telephone hotline;
 6. Promoting the rights to privacy in relation to personal data through newspaper, radio and civic education exhibitions.
- (b) There are two approaches in helping various industries and organisations comply with the Ordinance.

First, to prepare guidance note to data users. In addition to reprinting the two data user guides issued by the Home Affairs Branch, the Office has produced a new one. A total of about 150,000 copies of the three data user guides have been distributed. The Office, in conjunction with the Radio Television Hong Kong, has also produced a short bilingual video to be used as basic teaching materials. The video is now on sale for \$80. So far more than 250 packages have been sold.

On the other hand, the Office has made direct contact with about 40 organisations and provided guidance on the preparation of internal guidelines for compliance with the Ordinance. The Office has sent representatives to attend some 50 seminars and talks so as to answer questions on compliance with the Ordinance.

- (c) From 20.12.1996 to the end of February 1997, a total of 39 complaints were received, some of which covered more than one subject, thus effectively giving a total of 45 complaints. Most of them related to the use of data, without the data subjects' consent, for purposes not related to the purposes for which they were collected (25 complaints) or inadequate protection of data (10 complaints).

During the said period, some 1,700 enquiries were received. Half of them were about compliance with the Ordinance, including enquiries on whether specific cases amounted to infringement of the rights to privacy. However, we do not know the number of enquiries related to such specific cases since the Office has not further classified the enquiries into different categories.

Bearing in mind that an inquirer may give a one-sided account only, the Office cannot give a definite answer. Unless a full picture of the case is available through contacts with other data subjects and users, the Office cannot and should not provide any definite answer to any enquiry.

End

Principles in granting TWP holders permission for residence

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Following is a question by the Hon Law Chi-kwong and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

It is learnt that during the period from January to November last year, the Immigration Department, in exercising its discretionary powers, granted exceptional permission on strong compassionate grounds to 73 applications from Chinese residents wishing to reside in the territory, whereas other applications were rejected due to the lack of such grounds. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the principles and procedures adopted by the Immigration Department in determining if compassionate grounds exist when processing such applications;
- (b) in regard to Chinese residents who are spouses or children of local residents applying to settle in the territory, of the number of applications in the past two years in which-
 - (i) exceptional permission was granted, together with a breakdown of the categories of the grounds for approving the applications;
 - (ii) exceptional permission was not granted, together with a breakdown of the categories of the grounds for rejecting the applications; and
- (c) whether the right of the child as stipulated in Articles 9 and 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been taken into consideration in adopting the principles and procedures mentioned in the answer to (a) above?

Reply:

Mr President,

During the meeting of the Security Panel on 16 December 1996, we informed Honourable Members that the Director of Immigration had granted exceptional permission to 73 two-way permit holders between January and November 1996 on strong humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

- (a) Chinese Two-way Permit holders are allowed to enter Hong Kong as visitors only and they are required to return to China when their limit of stay expires. Under existing arrangement, Chinese residents who wish to come to Hong Kong for residence need to obtain a One-way Permit issued by the relevant Chinese authorities. To prevent the One-way Permit system from being abused, as a general rule, applications for residence from Two-way Permit holders will not be considered except on strong humanitarian or compassionate grounds. Some examples of such grounds are: the need to take care of a seriously ill resident spouse or child, to take care of surviving children on the sudden death of the resident spouse. The Director of Immigration will take into consideration all relevant factors and circumstances put forth by the applicant and assess each case on its own merits. Where necessary, the Director of Immigration will also consult other government departments such as the Hospital Authority and Social Welfare Department for a thorough and comprehensive assessment.
- (b)(i) In 1995 and 1996, the Director of Immigration approved 110 and 80 applications respectively from Two-way Permit holders who are the spouse or children of local residents for exceptional permission for residence. All are approved on humanitarian or compassionate grounds. As the circumstances of the cases are different, and in many cases more than one ground was advanced for humanitarian or compassionate consideration, it is not possible to categorise these cases according to grounds for approval.
- (ii) In 1995 and 1996, the Director of Immigration rejected 54 and 125 applications respectively from Two-way Permit holders because of the lack of strong humanitarian or compassionate grounds. For the same reasons which I have mentioned in part (b)(i) of my answer, it is not possible to categorize these cases according to grounds for approval.

- (c) The Government shares the values enshrined in Articles 9 and 10 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and recognises the need for family reunion. However, given the substantial number of families involved, we must regulate the immigrant inflow from China for settlement in a controlled and manageable manner. At present, over 90% of Chinese immigrants coming to Hong Kong under the One-way Permit system come for family reunion purposes. Applications for residence from Two-way Permit holders will only be considered in very exceptional cases on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and each case is considered on its own merits. The discretion to allow Two-way Permit holders to settle in Hong Kong would only be exercised where there are compelling reasons which require special treatment. Any relaxation of this policy to allow Two-way Permit holders to settle on merely family reunion grounds will punch a hole through the One-way Permit system, and would be unfair to those who are waiting for their turn to come legally.

End

Social networking for the elderly

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Following is a question by the Hon Mok Ying-fan and a reply by the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

In connection with the project of social networking for the elderly, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the total amount of resources allocated for the implementation of this project which will last for two years, and their distribution among various districts;
- (b) given that volunteers participating in the project are important helpline to identify and understand the needs of the elderly and to bring them into the formal welfare service network, whether the Government has any training programme in hand to enhance the volunteers' knowledge of the general problems faced by the elderly and the formal welfare services provided to them;

- (c) whether there are any other ways to promote the project, besides referrals by local groups and organisations, so that more elderly people can learn of and participate in it;
- (d) of the respective numbers of elderly people and volunteers who have participated in the project since its implementation last October; and
- (e) whether the Government has any plan to carry out the project on a long term basis?

Reply:

- (a) The Social Networking Scheme for the Elderly was launched in October 1996. It is a two-year experimental project. To implement this project, we have provided resources to the existing 25 multi-service centres for the elderly to employ extra social workers, purchase computers, design computer programmes in order to compile and store the information of the participating elderly. Besides, we have provided resources to all the multi-service centres to meet the recurrent expenses such as administrative costs, insurance for staff and volunteers, etc. Aside from the existing 25 multi-service centres, the other five centres which will open in the coming year will also be allocated resources for the project. The distribution of resources among different districts varies, depending on the number of multi-service centres in the respective districts. The total allocation for the whole project is \$22 million.
- (b) Volunteer organisations participating in the project will provide training to the volunteers. The multi-service centres and the Group Work Units of the Social Welfare Department will provide assistance to the volunteer organisations. The operational guidelines in the outline for volunteer training include the following topics: concept of volunteer service; objectives and contents of the Scheme; roles and duties of volunteers; safety of volunteers; communication skills; physical and psycho-social changes of ageing; home safety; community and residential services for the elderly. Besides, the District Committees of Social Networking for the Elderly also arrange training for volunteers.

- (c) Besides referrals by local groups and organisations, the social workers of the District Social Welfare Offices also contact the elderly in the districts to explain to them about the Scheme and to register those who need the service. The Social Welfare Department has also distributed posters, leaflets and press release to promote the Scheme. TV and radio API as well as programmes are produced. The Social Networking for the Elderly - Ambassadors Flag Presentation Ceremony was held on 5 January 1997 to further promote the Scheme. At the same time, the Social Welfare Department and all the multi-service centres organise various activities to widely publicise the Scheme.
- (d) As at the end of January 1997, the Social Welfare Department has received about 10,000 applications and the number of volunteer recruited is over 3,000.
- (e) An evaluation will be conducted on the Scheme at the end of the trial period. We will decide whether the Scheme should be carried out on a long-term basis after the evaluation.

Thank you, Mr President.

End

No plan to extend BNSS

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Miss Emily Lau and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Regarding the granting of full British citizenship to Hong Kong people, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of beneficiaries of the British Nationality Selection Scheme (BNSS) who have applied to renounce their British citizenship; and whether the BNSS places arising from the renunciation of British citizenship by this group of people can be re-distributed to unsuccessful BNSS applicants;

- (b) whether, in view of the British Government's decision to give full citizenship to the non-Chinese ethnic minorities, those BNSS places which have been given to the ethnic-minorities can be re-distributed to other unsuccessful BNSS applicants; and
- (c) whether the Government has any plan to urge the British Government to extend the BNSS to ethnic-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents wishing to renounce their Chinese citizenship or to grant them full British citizenship outside the BNSS; if not, why not?

Reply:

Mr President,

- (a) British citizenship was introduced by the British Nationality Act 1981, which commenced on 1 January 1983. Between 1983 and the end of 1996 when the responsibility for processing renunciations of British Citizenship was handed over to the British Trade Commission, which will be the future British Consulate General, a total of 43 British citizens submitted declarations of renunciation under Section 12 of the British Nationality Act 1981 through the Hong Kong Immigration Department acting as an agent of the United Kingdom Government. Their declarations were all registered by the Secretary of State, and they all ceased to be British Citizens. Although there is nothing to distinguish a beneficiary under the BNSS from any other British citizen, 20 of these 43 persons voluntarily surrendered certificates of registration acquired under the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990 as evidence of their British Citizenship to be renounced.

Under section 1(1) of the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990, the Secretary of State shall register as British citizens up to 50,000 principal applicants. The Act does not provide for the registration of an additional number of principal applicants on account of some BNSS beneficiaries subsequently renouncing their British citizenship. Once a principal applicant is registered as British citizen under the Act, a place is used up. Renunciation of his British citizenship does not release a new place for another principal applicant.

- (b) Once 50,000 principal applicants have been registered, there is no legal provision for the registration of any other principal applicants. There is thus no question of depriving BNSS beneficiaries of their British citizenship so that the places could be reallocated. Indeed there is no such legal power to do so.
- (c) The Hong Kong Government's long standing position is that British citizenship should be granted to all Hong Kong British Dependent Territories Citizens (HKBDTCs), regardless of whether they take any action to renounce their Chinese nationality. We will continue to put our position to the British Government, as effectively as we can and whenever the opportunity arises. The British Government has no plan to extend the British Nationality Selection Scheme in any way. As Honourable Members are aware, nor does the British Government accept the case for granting British citizenship to all HKBDTCs.

End

No signs of speculation in the secondary market of HOS flats

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Frederick Fung and a reply by the Secretary for Housing, Mr Dominic Wong, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Recently there are indications that property speculation has spread to the secondary market of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of:

- (a) the total number of HOS flats currently available for free resale;
- (b) the total number of HOS flats that have been resold and the percentage of such flats out of the total number of HOS flats available for resale;
- (c) the number of transactions in the past year involving the further resale of HOS flats of ten years standing or above within two years of the resale of such flats, together with the percentage of such transactions out of the turnover volume in the overall secondary market of HOS flats;
- (d) the average increase in the price level of secondary HOS flats in the past year;

- (e) the number of transactions involving the resale of HOS flats by confirmors in each of the years since HOS flats have become available for free resale; and
- (f) the measures adopted by the Government to curb speculative activities in the secondary market of HOS flats, so that prospective home buyers may purchase such flats at reasonable prices?

Answer:

Mr President,

As at January 1997, there were about 57,900 Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) and Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) flats, for which the ten-year resale restriction had expired and which could be resold freely in the open market, subject to the payment of premium proportionate to the original price discount at the time of purchase from the Housing Authority. Of these, about 8,200 units or 14% had actually been sold in the open market.

In 1996, there were 535 cases of resale of these flats within two years of sale by the original owner, accounting for 12% of all transactions (4,342) in the open market involving HOS or PSPS flats.

In December 1996, prices of HOS and PSPS flats in the open market increased by an average of 21% over January 1996 prices, depending on location.

As regards Part (e) of the Question, "confirmor" is a term commonly used to refer to people who buy a property and then resell it before completing the assignment of the property. We do not have such statistics before 1992. Information for recent years is as follows -

Number of transactions

1992	1
1993	4
1994	12
1995	16
1996	108

As regards Part (f) of the Question, prices of HOS and PSPS flats in the open market are influenced by the same factors as prices of flats in the private residential property market, namely, supply and demand, and general market sentiments. Buying and selling is an economic activity reflecting changing accommodation needs and investment decisions. We will monitor the situation closely, and consider taking appropriate action if necessary.

End

Garrison Law

* * * * *

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Cheung Bing-leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

In connection with the "Garrison Law of the People's Republic of China for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" passed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on 30 December 1996, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether there are any corresponding local laws that need to be enacted before 30 June this year; if so, of the progress of the discussions in the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group in this regard; if not, how the Government can ensure that a legal vacuum will not emerge when the British Forces are replaced by the People's Liberation Army troops stationed in the territory on 1 July 1997; and
- (b) of the progress of the review of existing laws involving the rights and exemptions enjoyed by troops stationed in the territory?

Reply:

Mr President,

- (a) We are studying the Garrison Law carefully to identify any need for enacting new local legislation or amending existing legislation. To ensure that the Law can be successfully implemented in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region after 30 June, we have expressed our wish to discuss with Chinese legal experts and clarify a number of key provisions of the Law. We are still waiting for the Chinese side's response.
- (b) The question of reviewing the rights and exemptions for the garrison under existing Hong Kong laws is dealt with under the overall adaptation of laws exercise. The process is to ensure that they will not contravene the Basic Law and will suit the circumstances of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

End

Speed limits on highways

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Zachary Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport, Mr Gordon Siu, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

It is learnt that different speed limits are imposed on private cars and container-trucks on some highways in the territory. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the highways adopting the above speed limit measures, and the speed limits for private cars and container-trucks respectively;
- (b) how the Government monitors the speed of vehicles subject to different speed limits on highways, so as to ensure that no speeding will occur; and
- (c) of the number of successful prosecutions against drivers of container-trucks for speeding on highways with different speed limits imposed in the past three years?

Reply:

Mr President,

- (a) For roads/expressways with a speed limit in excess of 70km/h, different speed limits are imposed on private cars and goods vehicles. At Annex A is a list of roads/expressways and the speed limits imposed. The maximum speed on these roads/expressways for buses, medium, heavy goods vehicles and articulated vehicles remains at 70km/h.
- (b) Traffic Police monitor the speed of vehicles on roads by setting up ad-hoc check points on safe positions along roads or on bridges above roads and using -
 - (i) Radar;
 - (ii) Laser Gun;
 - (iii) VASCAR [(Visual Average Speed Computer and Recorder).

The timings and locations for mounting check points are constantly changed for effective monitoring.

Speed monitoring is also carried out by moving police traffic patrol cars using :-

- (i) VASCAR (Visual Average Speed Computer and Recorder) mounted on a police patrol vehicle.
- (ii) VASCAR AUTOVISION (VASCAR equipment combined with a video recording system which is mounted on police patrol vehicle).
- (iii) Calibrated speedometer.

In police speed check of all types, the offending vehicle is either stopped and a Fixed Penalty Ticket immediately issued to the driver; or the vehicle particulars are recorded and reported to a Regional Traffic Office. In the latter case, a notice is sent to the vehicle owner to identify the driver who will then either be sent a demand note under the Fixed Penalty proceedings or issued with a summons to appear in court.

On expressways, vehicles are not generally stopped because of danger to the officers and other road users. However, if in certain areas of the expressways there is room to safely stop vehicles and officers are available, the stopping operation would be mounted.

- (c) Statistics on speeding are compiled and classified according to the vehicle classes listed in the Schedule to the Road Traffic Ordinance Cap. 374. A tractor unit which is the prime mover of a container truck is classified as a Medium Goods Vehicle. Record is not kept on whether a speeding medium goods vehicle has a trailer or not. Neither do statistics show the type of road on which speeding is committed.

Appended below are the number of successful prosecutions against speeding medium goods vehicles in the last three years -

<u>Offence Code</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>Total</u>
01 (excess 15 km/h or less)	1,833	1,496	1,102	4,431
02 (excess 16 to 30 km/h)	1,637	2,186	2,879	6,702
2A (excess 31 to 45 km/h)	35	77	105	217
2B (excess 45 km/h)	1	3	2	6
Total	3,506	3,762	4,088	11,356

We are reviewing the categorisation of speeding vehicles for statistical purpose so that in future, there will be a better statistical system to provide, among others, a separate category for speeding container trucks.

Annex A

List of Roads/Expressways with Speed Limit over 70km/h

<u>No.</u>	<u>Roads/Expressways</u>	<u>Speed Limit (km/h)</u>
1	Sha Tin Road	80
2	Tate's Cairn Highway	80
3	Ma On Shan Road (From Tate's Cairn Highway to Hang On Estate)	80
4	Tai Po Road (From Tate's Cairn Highway to Sha Tin Road)	80
5	Tolo Highway (From Ma Liu Shui to Tate's Cairn Highway)	80
6	Tolo Highway (From Ma Liu Shui to Fanling Highway)	100
7	Fanling Highway (Except Sheung Shui bound section between San Tin Interchange and Fan Kam Road which is 80km/h)	100
8	San Tin Highway (Except Sheung Shui bound section between San Tin Interchange and a point 330m west of it which is 80km/h)	100
9	Cheung Pei Shan Road	80
10	Kwai Chung Viaduct	80
11	West Kowloon Expressway	80
12	Kwun Tong Bypass (From Kwun Tong Ferry Pier to Lam Hing Street)	80

End

Validity of Hong Kong visas explained

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Howard Young and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Peter Lai, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

At present, the nationals of certain countries are required to obtain visas to visit Hong Kong on business or as tourists, and this process may take many working days. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

- (a) the British embassies in the countries concerned have been given guidelines as to whether the validity of such visas extends beyond 30 June 1997; and
- (b) the Chinese Government has been requested to consider whether special measures need to be put in place in good time to accept visa applications from overseas visitors intending to visit Hong Kong on or shortly after 1 July 1997 and who need to apply before that date?

Reply:

Mr President,

Hong Kong operates a liberal visa regime which allows nationals of over 170 countries to enjoy visa-free visits. Nationals of only 23 countries have to obtain a visa to visit Hong Kong.

- (a) Visas are normally valid for three months. Article 160 of the Basic Law states that

"Documents, certificates, contracts, and rights and obligations valid under the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall continue to be valid and be recognized and protected by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, provided that they do not contravene this Law."

Since all Hong Kong visas are issued on the authority of the Immigration Department, those issued before 1 July 1997 should continue to be valid until their natural expiry date. British Embassies and all other British Visa posts which implement Hong Kong visa policy on the Hong Kong Government's behalf have been given guidance on this.

- (b) Applicants for Hong Kong visas may submit applications either through British visa posts up to 30 June, or direct to the Immigration Department. The majority of applications are now made directly to the Immigration Department, which, in the majority of cases, has a shorter turnaround time. The Immigration Department is prepared to give advice on application procedures, as they normally do, to applicants who need to come to Hong Kong shortly after 1 July 1997.

End

Adoption system ensures best interest of children

* * * * *

Following is a question by Dr the Hon David Li Kwok-po and a written reply by the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

It is reported that single men and women, divorcees as well as older people will be allowed to adopt children through the Social Welfare Department under the revised criteria for adoption which took effect in February this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it will review the existing assessment and supervision systems so as to ensure a healthy upbringing for these children?

Reply:

Mr President,

The purpose of our adoption service is to find a suitable and permanent home for the child whose parents are unable or unwilling to take care of him/her so that he/she can enjoy family life and grow in a caring and nurturing environment.

The eligibility criteria for an adoption applicant set out in the Adoption Ordinance are the residency and minimum age requirement. The latter is set at 25 or, if the applicant is the relative of the child, 21. There is no other statutory requirement for an adoption applicant in respect of maximum age and marital status.

In the past, prospective applicants who were single or divorced or aged above 45, would not normally be encouraged to submit applications. In the light of the development in relation to the Bill of Rights Ordinance, SWD reviewed its practice in early 1996. All eligible applicants are now given an equal opportunity for a full assessment on their suitability as adoptive parents.

In adoption, the primary concern is to find a suitable home for the child and not a suitable child for an adoption applicant. The child's best interest is always of paramount importance.

Applicants are subject to a rigorous assessment and supervision process. They are required to provide detailed information on their personal circumstances to SWD. This is followed by a thorough investigation whereby the social worker of SWD visits and interviews the applicant as well as his/her family and nominated referees. The applicant's personality, coping ability, early life experience, interests and integration in the community, marital stability, parenting attitudes and capacities, adoption motivation are all taken into consideration in the assessment on an applicant's suitability.

Should the applicant be assessed to be a suitable adoptive parent for a child, the child will be placed into the applicant's home for a trial period of at least six months under close supervision of a social worker. If both the child and the applicant adapt to each other well and the applicant has proven his/her parenting capacity, the social worker will prepare a report to the Court to outline the circumstances of the adoption application and to make a recommendation based on his or her best professional judgement on whether an Adoption Order should be granted to the applicant. Every such application is carefully examined by the Court to ensure that the adoption is in the best interest of the child before an Adoption Order is granted.

End

No evidence of an upward trend in contractual claims

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Zachary Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Works, Mr Kwong Hon-sang, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the individual public works projects in which compensation in excess of \$50 million was claimed by contractors, together with the total amount of compensation claimed, over the past three years;
- (b) of the reasons for contractors claiming compensation in respect of the above projects, the outcome of such claims and the amount of compensation ultimately paid by the Government; and
- (c) whether there is an upward trend of such claims in recent years and, if so, what the reasons are; and what measures the Government has put in place to improve the situation?

Reply:

Mr President,

Construction contracts for public works apportion risks involved in the construction process between the Employer (Government) and the Contractor. It follows logically, therefore, that contracts should provide means by which contractors may submit claims for additional money (cost claim) or time (extension of time or "EOT" claim) or both, associated with the risks where liability rests with the Employer. Contractual claims are a normal and natural part of construction contracting.

For a construction contract, claims for compensation are assessed, determined and valued, where appropriate, by the Engineer for the Contract (the Engineer) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract. The amount so assessed by the Engineer is usually less than that claimed by the contractor, often substantially less.

Referring to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, please note that:

- (a) For the past three years up to end of January 1997, there were a total of 29 contracts in respect of which claims in excess of \$50 million have been received under each contract. The total amount as claimed by the contractors under these 29 contracts in the past three years is \$8.6 billion. The total value for these 29 contracts is \$32.2 billion. However, as claims information is confidential under the provisions of the conditions of contract, we cannot disclose individual contract details.
- (b) The reasons put forward by contractors in their claims include, inter alia, the following:
 - (i) disturbance to works progress for which the Contractor is not responsible;
 - (ii) delay in possession of works site;
 - (iii) limitations imposed by the Employer on the methods of construction;
 - (iv) special provisions for third parties such as access to an adjoining site;
 - (v) disruption to or delay in works progress arising from problems associated with interfacing with other contracts;
 - (vi) claimed impossibility of works;
 - (vii) requirements for additional/extra work and related disputes on rates;
 - (viii) under-recovery of overheads where works are deleted from the contract;
 - (ix) dispute over interpretation of provisions in the contract or method of measurements;
 - (x) prolongation costs where the contractor is not responsible for the contractual delay; and
 - (xi) design changes to suit site conditions.

Of the \$8.6 billion claimed by the contractors, \$5.1 billion has been resolved and Government has paid contractors \$1 billion as at end of January 1997. The remaining unresolved claims are still being assessed in accordance with prescribed procedures.

- (c) For the contracts under the Airport Core Programme (ACP), the incidence of claims notifications by contractors depends to a large extent on the stage of construction. The number of claims submitted by contractors have increased as most of the ACP projects have progressed over the past three years. However, the number of new claims for these projects will reduce as the construction is approaching the completion stage. A downward trend is therefore expected in the next few months.

For the Non-ACP Public Works Programme as a whole, which is a rolling programme with over 1400 projects at various stages and around 2000 contracts of different sizes at various stages of completion, there is no evidence of an upward trend in contractual claims over the past three years.

The Government has been closely monitoring the settlement of contractual claims which is part and parcel of our overall cost control measures. Compensation is given to contractors only if the claims are found fully substantiated and justifiable after careful consideration.

End

Safety of health food closely monitored

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Choy Kan-pui and a written reply by the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mrs Katherine Fok, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

In view of the great varieties of health food on sale in the market at present, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the legislation regulating the sale of health food;

- (b) whether a review will be conducted to examine if the legislation mentioned in the answer to (a) above is adequate in safeguarding the interests of the consumers; and
- (c) whether there were any cases of people having health problems due to the intake of health food on sale in the market in the past three years; if so, of the total number of such cases and the main causes of their occurrence?

Reply:

The legal framework for control of foods is laid down in Part V of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) and its subsidiary legislation. Under the Ordinance, the sale of any food intended for, but unfit for, human consumption is an offence. The Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation also lay down specific requirements and standards relating to the composition and labelling of foods, use of colouring matter, artificial sweeteners and preservatives. In addition, there are provisions in the Undesirable Medical Advertisements Ordinance (Cap. 231) to prohibit the advertising of any substance for the purpose of treatment or prevention of specified diseases.

At present, there is no established categorization of "health foods" worldwide. The sale of "health food" is therefore subject to the legal provisions described above which are meant to give adequate protection to public health and the interests of the consumers. We will keep abreast of local and overseas developments in considering whether a review of the control measures is necessary.

Since "health food" is not distinguished from the rest of the food items, we do not have any specific information on cases of people having health problems due to intake of "health food" on sale in the market. Nevertheless, the safety of all kinds of foods, including "health foods", is closely monitored by the Department of Health and the municipal departments.

End

"Target" Buildings for building management improvement

* * * * *

Following is a question by the Hon Christine Loh Kung-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Michael Suen, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

At the meeting of the Home Affairs Panel of the Legislative Council held on 20 December last year, the Government informed the Panel that about 1,000 private buildings in the territory with potential fire and safety hazards had been put on a "watchlist". In his reply to a written question at the sitting on 22 January this year, the Secretary for Home Affairs released a list of 331 buildings on Hong Kong Island targeted for comprehensive building management improvement. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the names and addresses of the buildings in Kowloon and the New Territories which have been targeted for comprehensive building management improvement;
- (b) given that the names of the buildings may be taken off or added onto the 'target' list, whether the Government will consider providing an updated list of such building throughout the territory to this Council at 12-monthly intervals; and
- (c) whether there have been any changes to the list of 'target' buildings on Hong Kong Island since its compilation last year; if so, what the details are?

Answer:

- (a) The names and addresses of the buildings in Kowloon and the New Territories targeted for comprehensive building management improvement are attached at the Annex.
- (b) The Government will be happy to provide the Legislative Council Secretariat with an updated list on an annual basis, in February, of those buildings added to and deleted from the original lists.
- (c) The list of 331 buildings on Hong Kong Island has not been changed since its compilation for release on 22 January 1997.

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
<i>Kowloon City</i>		
1.	Tung Po Building	No. 60 Pak Tai Street
2.	Tung Hoi Mansion	No. 66 Pak Tai Street
3.	-	No. 7 Bailey Street
4.	-	Nos. 2-4, 6-8 and 10-12 Baker Court
5.	-	No. 87 Tak Ku Ling Road
6.	-	No. 26 Whampoa Street
7.	-	No. 20 Wan Fuk Street
8.	-	No. 69 Kai Tak Road
9.	Fung Shing Building	No. 7 Hau Wong Road
10.	Yick Kwan House	No. 244 Chatham Road
11.	-	No. 1 Wan King Street
12.	Prince Chinese Building	No. 376 Prince Edward Road
13.	Menon Mansion	No. 18 Homantin Street
14.	-	No. 48 Nga Tsing Long Road
<i>Kwai Tsing</i>		
1.	Mei Kei Industrial Building	23-29 Wing Kei Road
2.	On Fat Industrial Building	12-18 Kwai Wing Road
3.	Shui Sum Industrial Building	8-10 Kwai Sau Road
4.	Bold Win Industrial Building	16-18 Wah Sing Street
5.	Mai Wah Industrial Building	1-7 Wah Sing Street
6.	Kam Shing Industrial Building	1-11 Kwai Wing Road
7.	On Fook Industrial Building	41-45 Kwai Fung Crescent
8.	Sing Mei Industrial Building	29-37 Kwai Wing Road
9.	Goldfield Industrial Building Block 1	144-150 Tai Lin Pai Road
10.	Goldfield Industrial Building Block 2	144-150 Tai Lin Pai Road
11.	Wing Hang Industrial Building	13-29 Kwai Hei Street
12.	Wells Industrial Building	21-23 Lam Tin Street
13.	Golden Dragon Industrial Centre Block 1	152-160 Tai Lin Pai Road
14.	Golden Dragon Industrial Centre Block 2	162-170 Tai Lin Pai Road

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
15.	Golden Dragon Industrial Centre Block 3	172-180 Tai Lin Pai Road
16.	Golden Dragon Industrial Centre Block 4	182-190 Tai Lin Pai Road
17.	Wing Loi Industrial Building	8-14 Wing Lap Street
18.	Grand Factory Building	159-165 Wo Yi Hop Road
19.	Chiap Luen Industrial Building	30-32 Kung Yip Street

Kwun Tong

1.	Kin Tak Fung Industrial Building	174 Wai Yip Street
2.	Mai Hing Industrial Building (Block A)	16-18 Hing Yip Street
3.	Mai Hing Industrial Building (Block B)	16-18 Hing Yip Street
4.	Kwun Tong Industrial Centre (Block I)	472-484 Kwun Tong Road
5.	Kwun Tong Industrial Centre (Block II)	472-484 Kwun Tong Road
6.	Kwun Tong Industrial Centre (Block III)	472-484 Kwun Tong Road
7.	Kwun Tong Industrial Centre (Block IV)	472-484 Kwun Tong Road
8.	Kiu Sun Factory Building	41 King Yip Street
9.	Sunray Industrial Centre	610 Cha Kwo Ling Road
10.	Yen Fu Mansion	121-124 Hip Wo Street
11.	Hip Wo Building	143-167 Hip Wo Street
12.	Keysky Industrial Building	151 Wai Yip Street
13.	Yee On Building	4-6 Yee On Street
14.	Good Year Factory Building	119-121 How Ming Street
15.	Hung Fuk Factory Building	60 Hung To Road
16.	Camel Paint Building (Blk I & II)	62 Hoi Yuen Road
17.	Hong Ning Building	105 Hong Ning Road
18.	Shui Ning Building	38 Shui Ning Street
19.	Selwyn Factory Building	404 Kwun Tong Road
20.	Hoi Bun Industrial Building	6 Wing Yip Street
21.	Morning Star Mansion	42 Wan Hon Street
22.	Yen Hau Mansion	100 Ting Fu Street
23.	Howard Industrial Building	66 Chun Yip Street
24.	Wai King Building	3 Jordon Valley Road North
25.	Tsat Hei Building	4-22 Ting Fu Street

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
26.	Hang On Mansion	23 Hang On Street
27.	Yau Tong Industrial Building (Phase III)	2 Sze Shan Street
28.	Yan On Mansion	357-375 Ngau Tau Kok Road
29.	House of Corona	50 Hung To Road
30.	Shui Wo House	49 Ka Lok Street
31.	Wai Yip Industrial Building	171 Wai Yip Street
32.	Wah Fat Building	91 Hong Ning Road
33.	King Yip Factory Building	59 King Yip Street
34.	Hung Shing Industrial Building	27 Tai Yip Street
35.	Chilcott Industrial Building	97 Wai Yip Street
36.	Kin Tai House	88-101 Wan Hon Street
37.	Ting Yip Building	30-42 Ting Yip Street
38.	On Tak Building	44-54 Ting Yip Street
39.	Wing Ming Building	114 Ting On Street
40.	Yau Fook Building	167-175 Cha Kwo Long Road
41.	Chung Nam House	79-83 Hip Wo Street
42.	Shiu King Building	6 On Wah Street
43.	Cheong On Mansion	78 Shui Wo Street
44.	Foo Yue Building	93 Ting Fu Street
45.	Wang Yip Building	2 Ka Lok Street
46.	Kwong Fai Building	24 Mut Wah Street
47.	Hong Ning Building	79 Hong Ning Road
48.	Morning Light Building	9 Hong Ning Road
49.	Gee Luen Factory Building	316 Kwun Tong Road
50.	King Wan Industrial Building	54 Hung To Road
51.	Wah Shun Industrial Building	4 Cho Yuen Street
52.	Draco Industrial Building	46 Lai Yip Street
53.	Mai Hong Industrial Building	160 Wai Yip Street
54.	Yip Win Industrial Building	10 Tsun Yip Street
55.	Liven House	61-83 King Yip Street
56.	Tai Hing Lau	1-7 Luen On Street
57.	Yan Ning Mansion	19 Ting Yip Street

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
58.	Mai Gar Industrial Building	146 Wai Yip Street
59.	Viet Luen Factory Building	126 Wai Yip Street
60.	Hung Fat Mansion	27 Tung Ming Street
61.	Hong Wah Building	38 Hong Ning Road
62.	Kai Tak Mansion (Block 1)	53 Kwun Tong Road
63.	Yip Fat Industrial Building (I)	77 Hoi Yuen Road
64.	Mai Tak Industrial Building	221 Wai Yip Street
65.	Kai Tak Mansion (Block 2)	53A Kwun Tong Road
66.	Lin On Building	23A Luen On Street
67.	On Ning Building	49 Mut Wah Street
68.	Yau Tong Industrial Building (Block 1)	2 Shung Shun Street
69.	Wing Hing Lee Industrial Building	32 Hung To Road
70.	Wah Yee House	2-8 Yan Oi Court
71.	Roomy Mansion	85 Fu Yan Street
72.	Chung Hing House	15-33 Yan Oi Court
73.	-	10-24 Yan Oi Court
74.	Winful Industrial Building	15-17 Tai Yip Street
75.	Kai Tak Mansion (Block 3)	55 Kwun Tong Road
76.	Kai Tak Mansion (Block 4)	55A Kwun Tong Road
77.	On Cheung Building	311-315 Kwun Tong Road
78.	On Cheong Factory Building	19 Tai Yip Street
79.	Viet Shing Industrial Building	145 Wai Yip Street
<i>Shamshuipo</i>		
1.	Kwong Fung Building	143 Hai Tan Street and 16-18 Nam Cheong Street
2.	-	2 Kim Shin Lane and 586 Fuk Wah Street and 475 - 475A Castle Peak Road
3.	Kam Wah Building	226 - 242 Cheung Sha Wan Road
4.	Merlin Centre	65 Po On Road and 48 Tonkin Street and 88 Shun Ning Road

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
5.	Chew Onn Building	44 - 50 Yen Chow Street and 367 - 369 Lai Chi Kok Road
6.	Sunning Mansion	203 - 209 Pei Ho Street
7.	Shamshuipo Building	1A Shek Kip Mei Street
8.	Wing Fat Building	318 - 320 Un Chau Street
9.	Hoover Building	493 - 497 Un Chau Street
10.	Sun Ming Court	84 - 90 Castle Peak Road
11.	-	570 - 572 Fuk Wah Street and 16 - 18 Kim Shin Lane
12.	Wah On Mansion	103 - 107 Fuk Wa Street
13.	-	574 - 576 Fuk Wah Street and 12 - 14 Kim Shin Lane
14.	New Pei Ho Building	178 Apliu Street
15.	Wai Bun Building	126 - 130 Pei Ho Street
16.	Tai On Building	145 - 149A Cheung Sha Wan Road
17.	-	553 - 555 Fuk Wing Street and 21 - 23 Kim Shin Lane
18.	Sheung Wing Building	187 - 189 Fuk Wing Street and 143 - 149 Kiu Kiang Street
19.	Ming Hing Building	174 - 176 Fuk Wing Street and 149A Kiu Kiang Street
20.	Wen Pang Building	66 - 68 Nam Cheong Street and 270 - 272 Lai Chi Kok Road
21.	Man Hoi Mansion	80 - 82 Cheung Sha Wan Road
22.	Cheung Shing Building	1 - 5 Cheung Sha Wan Road and 41A - D Boundary Street
23.	Ka Wui Building	7 Fuk Wing Street
24.	Un On Building	128 - 134 Camp Street and 154 - 160 Un Chau Street
25.	Fat Tseung Building	290 Castle Peak Road and 7C - 7E Fat Tseung Street
26.	Sheung Fook Building	92 - 98 Fuk Wing Street and 143F - 143H Kweilin Street

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
27.	Fuk Wing Mansion	226 Fuk Wing Street and 149 - 155A Pratas Street
28.	Federal Mansion	544 - 560 Fuk Wing Street and 463 - 471 Castle Peak Road
29.	Kam Ling Building	80 - 82 Fuk Wing Street
30.	Wah Tong House	187 - 189 Cheung Sha Wan Road
31.	Maple Mansion	9 - 13 Maple Street
32.	Kiu Fuk Building	184A & 148B Kiu Kiang Street and 170 & 172 Fuk Wing Street
33.	Golden League Building	76 - 82 Castle Peak Road
34.	-	101 - 103 Kweilin Street and 281 Yu Chau Street
35.	Cheong Fat Factory Building (Block C, D)	265 - 271 Un Chau Street and 344 - 348 Fuk Wing Street
36.	Cheong Fat Factory Building (Block A, B, E, F)	265 - 271 Un Chau Street and 344 - 348 Fuk Wing Street
37.	Wing Shun Building	1 - 7 Wing Lung Street
38.	Wing Tai Building	280 - 286A Yu Chau Street
39.	Kan Seng Building	186 - 188 Cheung Sha Wan Road
40.	Hung Yu Mansion	155 - 181 Castle Peak Road and 162 - 164 Un Chau Street
41.	Shun King Mansion	114 - 118 Yee Kuk Street
42.	Lung Fung Building	151 - 155 Kiu Kiang Street and 131 - 135 Un Chau Street
43.	Winsum Industrial Building.	588 - 592 Castle Peak Road
44.	Wing Hong Factory Building.	777 - 783 Yu Chau West Street
45.	Cheong Ming Building	72 - 74 Cheung Sha Wan Road
46.	Yen Li Mansion	222 - 224 Yee Kuk Street
47.	-	56 Tai Po Road
48.	Kwong Hing Building	52 - 54 Cheung Sha Wan Road
49.	Kam Hoi Mansion	243 Hai Tan Street
50.	Golden Jade Heights	482 - 492 Un Chau Street
51.	-	75 - 81 Kweilin Street and 333 - 337 Tai Nan Street

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
52.	Mei Kei Mansion	457 - 463 Castle Peak Road and 501 Un Chau Street
53.	Sum Ming Mansion	124 - 126 Yee Kuk Street
54.	Ka Ming Court	688 - 690 Castle Peak Road
55.	Wing Hing Industrial Building	499 Castle Peak Road
56.	Ying Fuk Building	212 - 214 Fuk Wing Street and 118 - 122 Camp Street
57.	Tung Shing Building	155 - 167 Apliu Street
58.	Sham Tsung Court	17 - 19 Wong Chuk Street
59.	-	205 - 211A Hoi Tan Street
60.	Diamond Building	154 - 156 Cheung Sha Wan Road
61.	Por Mei Factory Building	500 Castle Peak Road
<i>Tsuen Wan</i>		
1.	Wah Kai Industrial Centre	221 Texaco Road
2.	Chung Nam Industrial Building	152-160 Kwok Shui Road
3.	Wah Lung Industrial Building	49-53 Wang Lung Street
4.	Lok Shun Industrial Building	6-28 Chai Wan Kok Street
5.	Edward Wong Industrial Centre	13-23 Wang Wo Tsai Street
6.	Metropolitan Factory & Warehouse Building	30-32 Chai Wan Kok Street
7.	Wah Wai Industrial Building	53-61 Pak Tin Par Street
8.	Po Yip Building (Block A)	62-70 Texaco Road
9.	Po Yip Building (Block B)	62-70 Texaco Road
10.	Bonsun Industrial Building	364-366 Sha Tsui Road
11.	Wong's Factory Building	368-370 Sha Tsui Road
12.	Texaco Road Industrial Centre (Block A)	256-264 Texaco Road
13.	Texaco Road Industrial Centre (Block B)	14-22 Wang Lung Street
14.	Lung Shing Factory Building	141-148 Texaco Road
15.	Sun Fung Industrial Building	8-12 Ma Kok Street
16.	Metropolitan Industrial & Warehouse Bldg.No.2	216-218 Texaco Road
17.	Jing Ho Industrial Building	78-84 Wang Lung Street
18.	Peninsula Factory Building	250-254 Texaco Road

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
<i>Yaumatei & Tsimshatsui & Mong Kok</i>		
1.	Ching King Mansion	36-44 Nathan Road
2.	Mirador Mansion	54-64B Nathan Road
3.	New Lucky House	300 Nathan Road
4.	Pollock Building	9-11 Tak Hing Street
5.	Grandview Mansion	119 Chatham Road
6.	Hung Hsing Building	482-484 Nathan Road
7.	Union House	33-35 Chatham Road
8.	Alpha House	27-31 Nathan Road
9.	Wing On Building	208-212 Shanghai Street
10.	-	200-210 Temple Street
11.	-	150-160 Reclamation Street
12.	Kay Pont Building	29-37 Wai Ching Street
13.	Yen Kit Building	14-18 Kwun Chung Street
14.	Hankow Apartment	45 Hankow Road
15.	Kam Shing Building	65 Parkes Street
16.	Wai On Building	1 Austin Road
17.	David Mansion	83-103 Woosung Street
18.	Carnarvon Mansion	8-12 Carnarvon Road
19.	Kim Hing Mansion	49-51 Kimberley Road
20.	Kam Fai Building	20 Waterloo Road
21.	Far East Bank Mongkok Building	11 Nelson Street
22.	Peony House West Block.	8-22 Foo Kwai Street and 7A-21 Pok Man Street and 34-46 Hoi King Street and Tai Kok Tsui
23.	Rex House	648-652 Nathan Road
24.	Kingland Apartments	737-741 Nathan Road
25.	Shiu Fung Mansion	33 Bedford Road
26.	Wing Shun Building	53-67 Larch Street
27.	Po On Building	30-36 Mong Kok Road

*"Target" Buildings in Kowloon & New Territories
for Building Management Improvement*

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Name of Building</i>	<i>Address</i>
28.	Manlin Building	96-100 Prince Edward Road
29.	Lee Hung Building	137-143 Fa Yuen Street
30.	Shun King Building	330 Ferry Street
31.	Kwok Hong Building	94-98 Lai Chi Kok Road
32.	-	15-17 Ka Shin Street , Tai Kok Tsui
33.	-	59-61 Prince Edward Road , Tai Kok Tsui
34.	Chung Hing Building	33 Chung Wui Street
35.	Wah Mei Building	150-156 Fa Yuen Street
36.	Wah On Building	201-203 Tong Mi Road
37.	Wong Choi Building	80-86 Hak Po Street

End

Costs of World Bank Group and IMF meetings

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Following is a question by the Hon Emily Lau Wai-hing and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Rafael Hui, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

At its meeting held on 7 July 1995, the Finance Committee approved a non-current commitment of \$485 million at money-of-the-day prices to meet the costs of holding the Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in the territory in September 1997. In this connection, will the Administration inform this Council:

- (a) whether the estimated total expenses of hosting the above event will be kept within the approved budget; and
- (b) of the total amount of financial sponsorship which the Chief Executive of the Monetary Authority has secured to-date and whether there is further sponsorship forthcoming?

Reply:

- (a) The estimated total expenses of hosting the Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund are within the approved budget of \$485 million.
- (b) The Hong Kong Monetary Authority set up a sponsorship advisory committee in late 1995 to help seek sponsorship. Despite the restriction stipulated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund of not commercialising the Annual Meetings, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has secured a cash sponsorship of about \$45 million and sponsorship in kind, including saloon cars, telecommunication services and equipment, office furniture and equipment etc. The cost savings from sponsorship in kind and loan of furniture and equipment from Government departments are estimated at \$25 million. More sponsorship in kind is being negotiated.

End

Smoking in court lobbies

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Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuen-han and a written reply by the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether smoking is prohibited in the lobbies of all court buildings; and
- (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative,
 - (i) of the respective numbers of persons who were warned and prosecuted for smoking in court lobbies last year; and
 - (ii) which government department is currently responsible for issuing warnings to, or instituting prosecutions against, those persons who smoke in court lobbies?

Reply:

Mr President,

According to information provided by the Judiciary Administrator, smoking is discouraged in all public areas within court premises, and no-smoking signs are displayed for this purpose. However, these public areas have not been designated as statutory no-smoking areas under Schedule 3 of the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap 371). Accordingly, it is not an offence to smoke in these areas.

The Judiciary Administrator has also advised us that both local and overseas experience indicates that it is difficult to stop those waiting to attend courts, especially the criminal courts, from smoking. Given the stress and anxiety that some parties to court proceedings are under, they may find it difficult to refrain from smoking, regardless of whether smoking is prohibited or not.

Nevertheless, the Judiciary Administrator has assured us that all court staff have been instructed to advise members of the public not to smoke in public areas within court premises and that such efforts will continue. However, the Judiciary Administrator does not have statistics on the number of persons who were advised not to smoke in public areas within court premises last year.

End

Government rent in lieu of premium

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Following is a question by the Hon Christine Loh and a written reply by the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands, Mr Bowen Leung, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

Under Annex III to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, all land leases not containing a right of renewal that expire before 30 June 1997 may be extended for a further period, subject to payment of an annual rent equivalent to 3% of the rateable value of the property at the date of extension. For new land leases granted in the period between the entry into force of the Joint Declaration and 30 June 1997, such leases shall be granted at a premium and nominal rental until 30 June 1997, after which date they shall not require payment of an additional premium but an annual rent equivalent to 3% of the rateable value of the property at that date shall be charged. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of:

- (a) the reasons behind the 3% charge mentioned above; and
- (b) the estimated annual revenue arising from the collection of the above rent?

Reply:

Mr President,

- (a) the annual rent to be charged -
 - (i) upon the extension of leases expiring before 30 June 1997; or
 - (ii) after 30 June 1997 in respect of those leases granted from the entry into force of the Joint Declaration to 30 June 1997,

is in lieu of premium at full market value which could have been charged in these circumstances. From the property owners' point of view, the annual rent is much less burdensome than premium, which is likely to be substantially higher than the rent and will normally have to be paid upfront at one go. The formula of 3% of the rateable value is consistent with that used in renewing leases under the Crown Leases Ordinance (Cap 40), which was enacted in 1973; and

- (b) revenue from the collection of the annual rent mentioned in (a) above is estimated at \$3.2 billion in 1997-98 (three quarters), increasing to \$4.5 billion in 1998-99 and \$4.8 billion 1999-2000.

End

Mandatory Provident Fund

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Following is a question by the Hon Eric Li Ka-cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services, Mr Rafael Hui, in the Legislative Council today (Wednesday):

Question:

As the Government has proposed that the percentage of the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) assets to be held in Hong Kong dollar should be 30%, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the foreign currency risks, if any, should the 30% restriction be relaxed to include assets held in the US dollar, to which the Hong Kong dollar is officially pegged; and
- (b) if such foreign currency risks do exist, whether they are within the acceptable limit in the context of prudential regulation to protect the interests of MPF beneficiaries?

Answer:

- (a) The Hong Kong government is firmly committed to the maintenance of exchange rate stability of the Hong Kong dollar under the linked exchange rate system. The foreign currency risk involved in US dollar investment should therefore be minimal under the linked exchange rate system. Nevertheless, MPF involves very long-term contributions and liabilities, as most contributors may get back his or her contributions only in 20 to 40 years' time. It would therefore be imprudent to assume that foreign currency risk in US dollar investment is totally non-existent in this context.

- (b) As investment in US dollar still involves currency risk (as explained in (a)), it would be inappropriate to consider US dollar as the same as the Hong Kong dollar for the 30% restriction. Should an MPF fund invest in US dollar assets resulting in less than 30% of its holdings in HK dollar, however, the fund would still be within the acceptable limit if there is appropriate currency hedging to bring the effective currency exposure to within the 30% restriction. It would be useful to note that foreign currency risk is already very much on the minds of the investment managers of voluntary retirement funds in Hong Kong. Assets of these funds denominated in Hong Kong dollar have been ranging from about 25% to 45%.

End