



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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FULL TEXT OF SPEL'S SPEECH IN DEBATE ON PROPERTY SPECULATION

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE WINDING-UP SPEECH OF THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON PROPERTY SPECULATION AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR,

AFTER THIS WIDE-RANGING DEBATE, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO THINK OF ANYTHING NEW TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT. SO CAN I CONFINE MYSELF TO SIMPLY UNDERLINING A FEW UTTERLY UNORIGINAL POINTS.

FIRST

UNCOMPLETED FLATS ARE ONLY A RELATIVELY SMALL PART OF THE HOUSING MARKET, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL SPECULATION IN COMPLETED FLATS. THERE ARE ALSO A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF FLATS OUT FOR SALE IN THE MARKET AND AS MR CHUNG PUI-LAM SAID THERE ARE SOME 60,000 ON THE WAY THIS YEAR WHICH CERTAINLY SHOULD HELP STABILISE THE MARKET.

SECOND

WE ARE NO LONGER DEALING WITH A MARKET IN WHICH BUYERS ARE DESPERATE TO FIND A HOME TO PURCHASE, OR NEED TO BE DESPERATE TO HAVE TO FIND A HOME TO PURCHASE. MOST FLATS ARE BEING BOUGHT BY PEOPLE WHO ARE SEEKING TO IMPROVE THEIR HOUSING OR FORMING NEW HOUSEHOLDS OR ARE LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS.

THIRD

THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF COMPETITION BETWEEN DEVELOPERS WHICH SHOULD INCREASE DURING THE NEXT YEAR WITH AN EVEN GREATER SUPPLY OF FLATS.

FOURTH

GOVERNMENT DOES NOT GENERALLY INTERFERE WITH FREE MARKETS UNLESS THERE ARE VERY STRONG REASONS FOR DOING SO AND IT HAS DONE SO WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN VERY STRONG REASONS FOR DOING SO. THIS IS NOT LAZINESS; IT IS BECAUSE IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO INTERVENE EFFECTIVELY IN THE MARKET AND WITHOUT CAUSING EFFECTS WHICH ARE NOT INTENDED.

/FIFTH

FIFTH

GOVERNMENT DID HOWEVER INTERVENE RECENTLY WHEN IT WAS SHOWN THAT SALE PRACTICES WERE GIVING RISE TO DISTURBANCES AND TYING UP LARGE NUMBERS OF POLICEMEN IN CROWD CONTROL. IT REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION ON SALES PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD BE MORE CONDUCIVE TO ORDERLY BEHAVIOUR. SOME OF THE MEASURES AGREED WERE SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT REDUCING THE ACTIVITIES OF EXCESSIVE SPECULATORS, SUCH AS THE INCREASE IN THE INITIAL DEPOSIT PAYABLE FOR THE POTENTIAL PURCHASE TO 50% OF THE AVERAGE PRICE OF THE UNITS, AND OF THE AMOUNT FORFEITED IN THE CASE OF NON-COMPLETION BY THE BUYER TO 1.5%.

SIR, MANY OF US WILL REMEMBER VERY DIFFERENT TIMES IN WHICH IT SEEMED THAT THERE WAS A VERY MUCH STRONGER CASE TO BRING IN STRICTER CONTROL ON SPECULATION THAN THERE IS NOW.

BUT SUCH MAY HAPPEN AGAIN WHEN THE PRESENT FLUSH OF NEW PROPERTIES IS SOLD AND I AGREE WITH MEMBERS AND ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE VERY WIDE PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT THIS MATTER AT THE PRESENT THAT IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO COOLLY AND CALMLY REVIEW THE SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS AND TAKE A FRESH VIEW ON THEIR SUITABILITY AND PRACTICABILITY AND OVERALL BENEFIT. AS I MENTIONED ABOVE WE HAVE ALREADY - PERHAPS FOR THE WRONG REASONS IN SOME MEMBERS' VIEW - INTRODUCED MEASURES WHICH ARE ANTI-SPECULATIVE IN NATURE. MEMBERS BOTH TODAY AND ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS WHEN THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN DISCUSSED, HAVE RAISED VERY REAL ISSUES AND HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED OTHER MEANS FOR CURBING EXCESSIVELY SPECULATIVE AND UNETHICAL PRACTICES, INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION OF BALLOTING, LIMITATIONS OF THE NUMBER OF UNITS ALLOWED TO BE REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF EACH PERSON, AND RESTRICTING RESALES BETWEEN THE FINAL SALE AND PURCHASE AGREEMENT. ALL THESE IDEAS HAVE THEIR ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES FOR HOME BUYERS, DEVELOPERS, BANKS AND ABOVE ALL THE ECONOMY AND THEY DO NEED LOOKING AT, AS I SAID, VERY COOLLY AND CAREFULLY FROM EVERY ANGLE BEFORE CONSIDERING ADOPTION. THEY ALSO REQUIRE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH INTERESTED PARTIES INCLUDING AGAIN THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, BANKS, DEVELOPERS AND OTHERS BEFORE ADOPTION. BUT I ACCEPT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REVIEW ALL THESE ISSUES AND NO DOUBT MEMBERS WILL WISH TO KEEP TRACK OF OUR PROGRESS.

ONE FURTHER RELATED MATTER WHICH I KNOW ALSO CONCERNS THE PUBLIC AND WHICH HAS BEEN MENTIONED BY MR MARTIN LEE TODAY AND ONE OR TWO OTHER MEMBERS IS THE IRREGULAR PRACTICES OF SOME REAL ESTATE AGENTS. REAL ESTATE AGENTS IS, LIKE SPECULATION, A RATHER BROAD TERM. IT COVERS BOTH FLY-BY-NIGHT AND ALSO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS.

WITH THE BUOYANCY OF THE PROPERTY MARKET AND BETTER AWARENESS OF CONSUMER RIGHTS, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASING NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST REAL ESTATE AGENTS RECEIVED BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND THE CONSUMER COUNCIL. IN 1990, A TOTAL OF 181 SUCH COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED, COMPARED WITH 140 ONLY IN 1989. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS IS STILL RELATIVELY SMALL, GIVEN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS EACH YEAR, WHICH AMOUNTS TO OVER 74,000 IN 1990/91. NONETHELESS, THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED IN THESE COMPLAINTS IS SUBSTANTIAL AND IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT MANY MORE WOULD HAVE HAD COMPLAINED, IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN SO SUCCESSFULLY CHEATED. THE MALPRACTICES REPORTED INCLUDE MIS-REPRESENTATION, NON-DISCLOSURE OF KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTY, ILLEGAL ALTERATIONS, EXAGGERATION OF SIZE, STAMP DUTY FRAUD, AND DECEPTION.

/BECAUSE I

BECAUSE I WAS AWARE THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WAS LOOKING INTO THE SUBJECT AND HAD AVAILABLE TO IT AN EXCELLENT REPORT PREPARED BY THE ICAC, I TOLD THIS COUNCIL SOME TIME AGO THAT I INTENDED TO AWAIT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL'S STUDY BEFORE TAKING ANY FURTHER STEPS. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS STUDY HAS JUST BEEN COMPLETED OR IS VERY NEARLY COMPLETED AND LIKE THE ICAC'S REPORT, RECOMMENDS THE LICENSING OF REAL ESTATE AGENTS. I CANNOT NOW PRE-JUDGE THIS ISSUE AS IT IS OBVIOUSLY ALSO VERY COMPLEX, BUT WOULD WISH TO CONFIRM THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WILL BE CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY AS SOON AS IT IS RECEIVED. IN THE LIGHT OF BOTH THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE AND OF THE PUBLIC CONCERN ON THIS ISSUE, WE WILL TRY TO REACH A CONCLUSION ON WHETHER ANY FURTHER ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AS SOON AS WE POSSIBLY CAN.

SIR, I PROPOSE TO SUPPORT MISS LEUNG'S MOTION.

MY PROBLEM WITH MR SIT'S AMENDMENT IS THAT SPECULATION IS AN ISSUE WHICH IS MORE FRAUGHT WITH MYTHS AND MORALISATION THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER.

AND ANY STEPS PROPOSED WOULD REQUIRE GREAT CARE AND A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION BEFORE BEING TAKEN IN ORDER TO AVOID HARM. WHEREAS THE ADMINISTRATION FULLY RECOGNISES THE VERY WIDE PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT THE ISSUE AND THAT THIS CONCERN CERTAINLY JUSTIFIES A CLOSE AND SYSTEMATIC EXAMINATION OF EXISTING PRACTICES AND THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR SOLUTIONS, MR SIT'S AMENDMENT APPEARS TO PRE-SUPPOSE THAT THE CONCLUSION OF SUCH A REVIEW WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER RESTRICTIVE ACTION. AFTER LISTENING TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HERE THIS AFTERNOON IN THIS DEBATE I DOUBT WHETHER THIS WOULD BE WISE. SO I SUPPORT MISS LEUNG'S MOTION.

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DAMAGES FOR BEREAVEMENT INCREASED TO \$70,000

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THE AWARD FOR DAMAGES FOR BEREAVEMENT UNDER THE FATAL ACCIDENTS ORDINANCE WAS RAISED FROM \$40,000 TO \$70,000 BY A RESOLUTION MADE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE RESOLUTION, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, EXPLAINED THAT IN 1986 THE FATAL ACCIDENTS ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED TO MODERNISE THE LAW ENABLING CLOSE RELATIONS OF PERSONS KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT, SUCH AS A ROAD ACCIDENT, TO BRING AN ACTION IN THE COURTS TO RECOVER DAMAGES FOR THEIR LOSS AGAINST THE PERSON CAUSING THE DEATH.

"THESE DAMAGES USUALLY INCLUDE THE LOSS OF THE DECEASED'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT, MEDICAL COSTS AND ANY PROPERTY DAMAGE.

"UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ORDINANCE DEPENDANTS ARE ALSO ABLE TO CLAIM DAMAGES FOR THEIR BEREAVEMENT," MR MATHEWS SAID.

SINCE 1986, THE SUM AWARDED AS DAMAGES FOR BEREAVEMENT HAD BEEN FIXED BY THE ORDINANCE AT \$40,000.

SUBSECTION (5) OF SECTION 4 PROVIDED THAT THIS SUM MIGHT BE ALTERED BY A RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"SINCE 1986, INFLATION HAS REDUCED THE MONETARY VALUE OF THIS AWARD FOR BEREAVEMENT.

"IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO INCREASE IT SO THAT DEPENDANTS CAN BE ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED."

HE SAID THIS FIGURE OF \$70,000 WAS ARRIVED AT AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE LEGAL PROFESSION, THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID, AND THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES.

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BILL PERMITS HIGH COURT ORDERS IN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION
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THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 PROVIDED THAT PARTIES CONDUCTING THEIR INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATIONS IN HONG KONG WOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY TO THE HIGH COURT FOR APPROPRIATE ORDERS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN 1989 THE ARBITRATION ORDINANCE WAS AMENDED TO INTRODUCE A SEPARATE SCHEME FOR INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATIONS UNDER THE UNCITRAL (UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW) MODEL LAW.

"THIS HELPED TO ESTABLISH HONG KONG AS A LEADING REGIONAL CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATIONS.

"RECENTLY, DOUBTS HAVE ARISEN AS TO WHETHER THE ORDINANCE PERMITS THE HIGH COURT TO MAKE ORDERS, IN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATIONS CARRIED OUT UNDER THE UNCITRAL MODEL LAW, AS IT CAN FOR DOMESTIC ARBITRATIONS.

"THE BILL SEEK TO REMOVE ANY DOUBT ON THIS POINT," HE EXPLAINED.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991

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MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN ENSURING THAT THE PUBLIC HAD ACCESS TO COMPETENT, PROFESSIONAL LAWYERS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MR MATHEWS SAID THE BILL HAD THREE MAIN PURPOSES.

"FIRST, IT SEEKS TO INTRODUCE A MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION SCHEME TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE LAW SOCIETY FOR SOLICITORS AND TRAINEE SOLICITORS.

"SECONDLY, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE BAR ASSOCIATION BE EMPOWERED TO ISSUE ITS OWN PRACTISING CERTIFICATES.

"AND THIRDLY, THE BILL PROPOSES AN AMENDMENT TO FACILITATE THE ADMISSION AS BARRISTERS OF PRACTISING SOLICITORS," HE SAID.

ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION, MR MATHEWS SAID IT WAS A VERY IMPORTANT METHOD FOR PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE.

"A CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION SCHEME RECOGNISES THAT A LAWYER'S EDUCATION DOES NOT CEASE UPON GRADUATION OR THE COMPLETION OF THE POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LAWS COURSE.

"THE LAW AND THE PRACTICE OF LAW ARE CHANGING; HENCE THE NEED FOR LAWYERS TO KEEP ABREAST OF CHANGES THROUGHOUT THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAREER," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS SAID MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION SCHEMES WERE OPERATING SUCCESSFULLY IN MANY OTHER JURISDICTIONS.

"FOR HONG KONG, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE LAW SOCIETY HAS DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE SCHEME IN PLACE IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

"INITIALLY, CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION COURSES WILL BE MANDATORY FOR RECENTLY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS AND TRAINEE SOLICITORS.

"MAKING THE SCHEME MANDATORY FOR SOLICITORS WITH ONE YEAR EXPERIENCE AFTER ADMISSION, AND TRAINEE SOLICITORS DURING THEIR TWO-YEAR TRAINING PERIOD, ENSURES THAT THESE LAWYERS START WITH GOOD PRACTICE SKILLS AND ARE COMPETENT IN THOSE AREAS OF THE LAW THAT THEY WILL MOST LIKELY COME ACROSS IN THEIR EARLY YEARS OF PRACTICE," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL AMENDED THE ORDINANCE TO EMPOWER THE LAW SOCIETY TO ENFORCE THE MANDATORY NATURE OF THE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION SCHEME.

/IT MIGHT

IT MIGHT REFUSE TO ISSUE A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE, OR PLACE CONDITIONS UPON A CERTIFICATE, IF THE APPLICANT HAD NOT COMPLETED THE REQUIRED COURSES, MR MATHEWS EXPLAINED.

TURNING TO THE SECOND PURPOSE OF THE BILL, MR MATHEWS SAID CLAUSE 6 PROPOSED THAT THE BAR ASSOCIATION WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO ISSUE PRACTISING CERTIFICATES.

"THE LAW SOCIETY ALREADY HAS THIS POWER IN RELATION TO SOLICITORS.

"HOWEVER, A BARRISTER'S PRACTISING CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT.

"BY TAKING OVER THIS RESPONSIBILITY AND RETAINING THE REVENUE, THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE BAR WILL BE ENHANCED AND IT WILL HAVE AN ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCE FOR ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS," HE SAID.

ON THE THIRD MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BILL, MR MATHEWS SAID CLAUSE 5 WOULD ALLOW ANY SOLICITOR WHO HAD PRACTISED IN HONG KONG FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS TO BECOME A BARRISTER.

"THIS AMENDMENT WAS PROPOSED BY THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND HAS THE SUPPORT OF BOTH THE BAR AND THE LAW SOCIETY," THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID.

CLAUSE 7 OF THE BILL REMOVED THE BARRIER PREVENTING THOSE BARRISTERS WHO HAD BEEN ADMITTED TO PRACTISE IN COUNTRIES WITH A FUSED PROFESSION FROM BEING QUALIFIED AS A BARRISTER IN HONG KONG.

THE BILL ALSO MADE CHANGES TO NOMENCLATURE WITH 'ARTICLED CLERK' BEING REPLACED BY 'TRAINEE SOLICITOR', AND 'BAR COMMITTEE' BEING REPLACED BY 'BAR COUNCIL'.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILLS TO REGISTER SURVEYORS AND PLANNERS

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THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE SURVEYORS REGISTRATION BILL 1991 AND THE PLANNERS REGISTRATION BILL 1991 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES SAID: "THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE BILLS IS TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BE PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED SURVEYORS AND PLANNERS HAVE INDEED RECEIVED APPROPRIATE TRAINING AND ARE COMPETENT TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG."

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROFESSIONS INVOLVED ALSO BELIEVED THAT THIS LEGISLATION WOULD SERVE TO ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES ADDED THAT REGISTRATION OF THOSE QUALIFIED WOULD NOT BE COMPULSORY, BUT THERE WOULD BE OBVIOUS BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM THE USE OF THE TITLE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR" OR "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER".

THE SURVEYORS REGISTRATION BILL REQUIRED THAT A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR SHOULD SPECIFY THE DISCIPLINE IN WHICH HE OR SHE WAS QUALIFIED, SO THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT AS TO THE ACTUAL FIELD OF EXPERTISE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONCERNED.

NEVERTHELESS, PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE NOT REGISTERED WOULD STILL BE PERMITTED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG PROVIDING THAT THEY DID NOT IMPLY THAT THEY WERE REGISTERED.

MR BARNES SAID: "THE MAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION ARE THAT THE PERSON IS ORDINARILY RESIDENT AND HAS AT LEAST ONE YEAR'S RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN HONG KONG, IN ADDITION TO MEETING THE REQUIRED ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING STANDARDS."

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SAW POTENTIAL BENEFITS IN REGISTRATION BEING LINKED TO THE RIGHT TO CARRY OUT STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE.

"THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED ONCE THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR PROFESSIONAL SURVEYORS HAS BECOME AS WELL ESTABLISHED AS THOSE FOR ARCHITECTS AND PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS.

"THE INTRODUCTION OF REGISTRATION DOES NOT MEAN THERE WILL BE A "CLOSED SHOP", OR THAT THE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES WILL BE ABLE TO OPERATE RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES," MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID THE BILLS PROVIDED FOR REGISTRATION TO BE ADMINISTERED BY REGISTRATION BOARDS WHICH WERE APPOINTED BY THE COUNCILS OF THE INSTITUTES BUT WERE INDEPENDENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES IN THEIR OPERATION.

"PROVISION IS MADE FOR A GOVERNMENT APPOINTEE TO EACH BOARD. THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONFIDENT THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARDS WILL PROVIDE THE RIGHT BALANCE AND THE NECESSARY DEGREE OF SELF REGULATION," MR BARNES SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IF A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LOST FOR WHATEVER REASON HIS QUALIFICATION FOR REGISTRATION, HIS NAME MIGHT BE REMOVED FROM THE REGISTER.

"IN THE EVENT THAT A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL COMMITS A DISCIPLINARY OFFENCE THE BILL PROVIDES FOR INVESTIGATION BY AN INQUIRY COMMITTEE WHICH MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL OF THE PROFESSIONAL'S NAME FROM THE REGISTER, EITHER PERMANENTLY OR FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

"ALTERNATIVELY THE COMMITTEE MAY ORDER SOME FORM OF REPRIMAND. AS A SAFEGUARD, PROVISION IS MADE FOR APPEAL TO THE COURT OF APPEAL AGAINST DISCIPLINARY ORDERS," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

QUEEN ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED BILL INTRODUCED
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF THE QUEEN ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED AND TO EMPOWER IT TO APPOINT PERSONS OR INSTITUTIONS TO MANAGE THE INVESTMENT OF THE FOUNDATION'S ASSETS IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIRECTIONS GIVEN BY THE COUNCIL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WAS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MRS WONG SAID CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL AMENDED SECTION 5 OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE TO INCLUDE THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AS OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE FOUNDATION'S COUNCIL, AND TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS, IN ADDITION TO THE CHAIRMAN AND THE MEMBER NOMINATED BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, FROM FIVE TO SEVEN.

SHE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT AT PRESENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR REHABILITATION WERE THE ONLY TWO OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

HOWEVER, A RECENT REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS SPONSORED BY THE COUNCIL SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1988 HAD REVEALED THAT MOST OF THEM RELATED CLOSELY TO SERVICES PROVIDED OR SUBVENTED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT OR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

IT WAS THEREFORE USEFUL FOR THESE TWO DEPARTMENTS TO BE REPRESENTED ON THE COUNCIL TO ENSURE, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, THAT THE ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS SPONSORED BY THE COUNCIL WERE COMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING AND PLANNED SERVICES, MRS WONG EXPLAINED.

AS THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL MEMBERS WOULD BE INCREASED TO FOUR, THE COUNCIL CONSIDERED IT DESIRABLE FOR THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO BE INCREASED PROPORTIONALLY SO AS TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING LEVEL OF NON-OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION, SHE ADDED.

ON ASSET MANAGEMENT, MRS WONG SAID CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL AMENDED SECTION 8(B) OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE TO EMPOWER THE FOUNDATION'S COUNCIL TO APPOINT PERSONS OR INSTITUTIONS TO MANAGE THE INVESTMENT OF THE FOUNDATION'S ASSETS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DIRECTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.

"SECTION 8(B), AS IT NOW STANDS, IMPOSES NO RESTRICTION ON THE FUND MANAGER'S POWER TO MANAGE AND ADMINISTER THE FOUNDATION'S ASSETS.

"AS A RESULT, THE EXERCISE OF SUCH POWER MAY CONFLICT WITH THE COUNCIL'S DUTIES UNDER SECTION 6(1) TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF INCOME AND ASSETS," THE SECRETARY NOTED.

"TO RECTIFY THIS, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE PERSONS OR INSTITUTIONS APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL TO MANAGE THE INVESTMENT OF THE FOUNDATION ASSETS BE REQUIRED TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL OR SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS WHICH THE COUNCIL MAY GIVE IN WRITING FROM TIME TO TIME," SHE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

AMENDMENT MADE ON TRADE MARKS BILL
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THE TRADEMARK IS A VALUABLE ITEM OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND THE PROPER USE OF IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY OF BENEFIT TO THE ECONOMY.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN WINDING UP THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE TRADE MARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

SIR PIERS SAID UPON FURTHER DELIBERATION, THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL WOULD NOT BE COMPLETELY ACHIEVED WITHOUT THE AMENDMENT OF ANOTHER TWO SECTIONS IN THE ORDINANCE.

AMENDMENTS WERE THEREFORE MADE TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF SECTIONS 23 AND 53 TO COVER TRADE MARKS FOR SERVICES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

SECTION 23 OF THE ORDINANCE GAVE A DISCRETION TO THE REGISTRAR OF TRADE MARKS TO REFUSE TO REGISTER A TRADE MARK THAT WAS IDENTICAL WITH OR NEARLY RESEMBLED ONE WHICH WAS ALREADY REGISTERED IN RESPECT OF THE SAME GOODS IN A COUNTRY FROM WHICH THOSE GOODS ORIGINATED.

SECTION 53 ALLOWED A COURT TO REMOVE FROM THE REGISTER A TRADE MARK UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

SIR PIERS ADDED SIMILAR PROVISIONS WERE CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR TRADE MARKS FOR SERVICE.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH THE ABOVE AMENDMENT.

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MANPOWER INCREASE FOR INSOLVENCY FUND JUSTIFIED
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THE FOUR ADDITIONAL POSTS CREATED TO COPE WITH WORKLOAD INCREASE IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS TO THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND ARE FULLY JUSTIFIED, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON CHRISTINE CHOW, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WINDING UP THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, MISS CHOW SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIT WHICH ADMINISTERED THE FUND HAD NOT BEEN INCREASED SINCE 1985, WHEN THE FUND WAS FIRST ESTABLISHED.

UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY ORDINANCE, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS TO THE FUND.

/SHE POINTED

SHE POINTED OUT THAT IN 1989 WHEN THE FUND STARTED TO COVER SEVERANCE PAYMENTS, THERE WERE 4,460 APPLICATIONS; LAST YEAR, THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS INCREASED BY MORE THAN 56 PER CENT TO 6,977.

"IN THE CURRENT YEAR WE EXPECT THE NUMBER TO INCREASE BY ANOTHER 4.5 PER CENT TO WELL OVER 7,200 CASES," SHE SAID.

ON POSSIBLE FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS, MISS CHOW SAID SINCE A MAJOR STEP HAD BEEN TAKEN FORWARD, IT WOULD SEEM PRUDENT TO ALLOW SOME TIME FOR ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE RESOURCES OF THE FUND TO BE ASCERTAINED, BEFORE CONSIDERING FURTHER CHANGES.

"IN SO DOING, WE WOULD NEED TO CONSULT THE BOARD CONTROLLING THE FUND AND THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD," SHE SAID.

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LAW ALLOWS POSTAL PACKETS TO BE OPENED FOR INSPECTION

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UNDER THE POST OFFICE ORDINANCE, THE POSTMASTER GENERAL IS PERMITTED TO OPEN FOR INSPECTION POSTAL PACKETS WHICH ARE SUSPECTED OF CONTAINING PROHIBITED ARTICLES.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG.

"IN PRACTICE, ENFORCEMENT IS UNDERTAKEN BY CUSTOMS OFFICERS WHO, UNDER THE IMPORT AND EXPORT ORDINANCE, ARE EMPOWERED TO OPEN AND EXAMINE ANY POSTAL PACKET IN THE PRESENCE OF A POSTAL OFFICER," MR ASPREY SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE SELECTION OF PACKETS TO OPEN FOR INSPECTION OR TO X-RAY WAS BASED ON INTELLIGENCE AND PROFILING.

IN 1990, 81,736 INWARD AND 13,720 OUTWARD PARCELS WERE CLOSELY EXAMINED AND, AS A RESULT, 97 SEIZURES WERE MADE.

"THE SEIZURES WERE MAINLY OF DUTIABLE COMMODITIES BUT ALSO INCLUDED DRUGS, PART I POISONS, AMMUNITION AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS SUCH AS IVORY," THE SECRETARY SAID.

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GOVT CONTINUES TO REPRESENT HK'S INTEREST IN U.S. MFN DEBATE

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THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO REPRESENT HONG KONG'S INTEREST IN THE MOST FAVOURED NATION (MFN) DEBATE IN THE UNITED STATES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI, SIR PIERS SAID THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT HAD YET TO FORMALLY ANNOUNCE HIS DECISION TO EXTEND THE MFN STATUS TO CHINA FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

SOME DRAFT BILLS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE U.S. CONGRESS EITHER TO TERMINATE CHINA'S MFN STATUS OR TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON ITS RENEWAL, HE NOTED.

WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION WAS MONITORING THE DEVELOPMENT'S CLOSELY, THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, HAD BEEN IN TOUCH PERSONALLY WITH A NUMBER OF KEY MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS.

CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF WORK HAD ALSO BEEN DONE IN WASHINGTON, AND ELSEWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES, THROUGH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICES, THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG TEAM OF CONSULTANTS, SIR PIERS SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG/U.S. ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE WOULD BE CALLING ON U.S. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN BEFORE AND AFTER A JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE AND ITS AMERICAN COUNTERPART TO BE HELD IN NEW YORK ON JUNE 6.

MEANWHILE, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IN HONG KONG SUCH AS THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND OTHER TRADE OR INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS TO ENSURE PROPER CO-ORDINATION OF EFFORTS, INCLUDING POSSIBLE VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES.

NOTING THAT THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAD SENT A DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES IN EARLY MAY, SIR PIERS SAID THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WAS PRESENTLY IN WASHINGTON.

MEANWHILE, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO THE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR HONG KONG OF ANY DECISION TO REVOKE OR IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON RENEWAL OF CHINA'S MFN STATUS.

ON THE IMPACT ON HONG KONG, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT ESTIMATED THAT IF THE MFN STATUS WERE WITHDRAWN FROM CHINA, HONG KONG'S RE-EXPORTS, WHICH AMOUNTED TO HK\$82 BILLION IN 1990, WOULD PROBABLY BE REDUCED BY ABOUT 33 PER CENT TO 44 PER CENT OR SOME HK\$27-36 BILLION.

HONG KONG'S OVERALL TRADE MIGHT BE REDUCED BY ABOUT FIVE PER CENT TO SEVEN PER CENT OR SOME HK\$69-91 BILLION AND HONG KONG COULD ALSO LOSE 1.3 PER CENT TO 1.8 PER CENT IN THE GROWTH RATE OF THE OVERALL GDP.

THE LOSS IN EMPLOYMENT MIGHT BE IN THE RANGE OF 32,000 TO 43,000 JOBS, HE ADDED.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTED TO IMPROVE LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

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THE ADMINISTRATION WAS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF LEGAL KNOWLEDGE OF HONG KONG PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE YOUNG, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MIRIAM LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID A GREAT DEAL OF WORK WAS DONE BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO PROMOTE LEGAL AWARENESS AND ENHANCE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE LAW.

"SINCE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM IS BENEFICIAL TO EVERYONE, IT IS NOT SURPRISING TO FIND THAT APART FROM MANY ACTIVITIES TARGETTED SPECIFICALLY AT THE YOUNG, THERE ARE ALSO MANY OTHERS WHICH ARE AIMED AT THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE," HE SAID.

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, MR MATHEWS SAID THE CURRENT SCHOOL CURRICULUM FULLY RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF PASSING ON TO PUPILS SOME BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LAW AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM, THROUGH SUBJECTS SUCH AS ECONOMIC & PUBLIC AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL STUDIES.

"TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE LAW AND ORDER AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM IN HONG KONG. TOPICS RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY, THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE ADVANCED LEVEL AND ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY LEVEL AND OF LIBERAL STUDIES AT THE ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY LEVEL, IN 1992.

"TO HELP TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING OF LAW-RELATED TOPICS, REFERENCE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES ARE MADE AVAILABLE IN CIVIC EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRES RUN BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

"EDUCATION TV PROGRAMMES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO ASSIST THE TEACHING OF SOME TOPICS," HE SAID.

FOR PUPILS, MR MATHEWS SAID THEY WERE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE LAW AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM THROUGH SCHOOL CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AS OUTLINED IN THE "GUIDELINES ON CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS" PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

"THE ADMINISTRATION ALSO FULLY RECOGNISES THE VALUE OF EXTRA-CURRICULA ACTIVITIES IN ENABLING PUPILS TO WIDEN THEIR EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE FORMAL CURRICULUM.

"THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN SUCH ACTIVITIES, PUPILS FIND IT MUCH EASIER TO COMPREHEND ABSTRACT CONCEPTS RELATING TO RULE OF LAW AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM.

"SCHOOLS THEREFORE ORGANISE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS VISITS TO COURTS AND TALKS ON SUBJECTS RELATING TO LAW," HE SAID.

TURNING TO ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF SCHOOLS, MR MATHEWS SAID THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROMOTION OF CIVIC EDUCATION, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR DANIEL TSE, HAD PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE.

"LAST YEAR THE COMMITTEE SPONSORED FIVE PROJECTS ORGANISED BY DIFFERENT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS TO ENHANCE YOUNGSTERS' LEGAL KNOWLEDGE.

"THIS YEAR, THE COMMITTEE WILL SPONSOR ANOTHER TWO PROJECTS ON THE THEME OF THE RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS ADDED THAT WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE, CIVIC EDUCATION BODIES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE DISTRICT BOARDS OR DISTRICT OFFICES ALSO ORGANISED A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES LAST YEAR TO ENHANCE PUBLIC LEGAL KNOWLEDGE.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDED SEMINARS, VISITS TO THE SUPREME COURT, QUIZZES AND EXHIBITIONS.

"THESE DISTRICT CIVIC EDUCATION BODIES ARE NOW CONSIDERING THEIR WORKING PLANS FOR 1991/92," HE SAID.

ON EFFORTS MADE BY THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO IMPROVE LEGAL KNOWLEDGE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PAID TRIBUTE TO THE LEGAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG.

"THE COMMITTEE COMPRISES MEMBERS FROM THE LAW SOCIETY, THE BAR ASSOCIATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, THE CITY POLYTECHNIC, THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE AND RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG.

"LAST MONTH, IT ORGANISED THE FIRST LAW WEEK IN HONG KONG WHICH AIMED AT PROMOTING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OF THE LAW AND ITS ROLE IN SOCIETY.

"IT WAS RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC VERY ENTHUSIASTICALLY," MR MATHEWS SAID.

THE LAW WEEK COVERED A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMES, SOME OF WHICH WERE DESIGNED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ONLY.

THERE WAS A POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION IN WHICH 30 SCHOOLS TOOK PART AND A TOTAL OF 419 ENTRIES WERE RECEIVED.

IN ADDITION, 31 COURT VISITS WERE ARRANGED FOR OVER 900 SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, WHO WERE BRIEFED ON THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE COURT IN ACTION.

JUDGES AND LAWYERS ALSO VISITED 56 SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG AND ADDRESSED NO LESS THAN 5,000 STUDENTS ON A VARIETY OF LEGAL TOPICS.

MEASURES IN HAND TO CUT VIET CRIMES

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AND IS TAKING A NUMBER OF SECURITY AND SOCIAL MEASURES TO REDUCE CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES BY VIETNAMESE GANGS IN NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON ALISTAIR ASPREY INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH, MR ASPREY SAID CRIMES BY VIETNAMESE IN THE NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES WERE A CAUSE OF CONCERN TO THE GOVERNMENT.

MR ASPREY NOTED THAT MOST CRIMES COMMITTED BY VIETNAMESE WERE AGAINST THEIR FELLOW VIETNAMESE INSIDE THE DETENTION CENTRES AND REFUGEE CAMPS, BUT THERE WAS ALSO A WORRYING TREND OF GENERAL CRIME BY VIETNAMESE.

TO REDUCE SUCH CRIMES, A NUMBER OF MEASURES HAD BEEN AND WERE BEING TAKEN, HE SAID.

"THE SECURITY OF THE DETENTION CENTRES HAS BEEN GREATLY IMPROVED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

"ESCAPES STILL OCCUR, BUT THEIR FREQUENCY IS NOW LOW," THE SECRETARY ADDED.

IN THE REFUGEE CENTRES, SECURITY WAS BEING IMPROVED BY THE RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL GUARDS AND CARETAKERS.

MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT THIS WOULD GIVE A GREATER DEGREE OF SECURITY COVERAGE AND LED TO A REDUCTION IN THE CRIME FIGURES.

MR ASPREY SAID THE SOCIAL MEASURES INTRODUCED IN THE REFUGEE CENTRES WERE THE FORMATION OF CAMP COMMITTEES INVOLVING THE VIETNAMESE, THE CAMP MANAGEMENT AND A SOCIAL WORK GROUP, THE COMMUNITY & FAMILY SERVICES INTERNATIONAL (CFSI).

"THE AIM OF SUCH COMMITTEES IS TO INVOLVE THE VIETNAMESE IN THEIR OWN CAMP MANAGEMENT AND BRING ABOUT A GREATER SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY.

"ONE OF THE MAIN AIMS OF THIS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WILL BE TO PREVENT CRIME," MR ASPREY NOTED.

ADDITIONALLY, MR ASPREY SAID, MOVES WERE AFOOT TO IMPROVE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CENTRES, AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES (ISS) WAS SEEKING FUNDS FOR EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMES, THERE WAS AN ONGOING ANTI-DRUGS CAMPAIGN IN THE CENTRES WITH REGULAR PUBLICITY AND ACTIVITIES.

MR ASPREY NOTED THAT THE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WAS STEADILY REDUCING THROUGH RESETTLEMENT AND TRANSFERS TO THE REFUGEE TRANSIT CENTRE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CLOSE IN THE NEAR FUTURE BOTH THE TUEN MUN AND KAI TAK REFUGEE CENTRES, HE ADDED.

PHASING OUT OF RENT CONTROLS BEING WORKED OUT

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A DECISION ON THE LIKELY TIMING OF THE PHASING OUT OF RENT CONTROLS HAS YET TO BE MADE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON PETER TSAO, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG, MR TSAO SAID HE EXPECTED TO BE IN POSITION TO GIVE A CLEAR INDICATION OF A POSSIBLE TIME-TABLE LATER THIS YEAR AND TO SUBMIT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DETAILS OF THE MEASURES WHICH WOULD ACHIEVE THE PHASING OUT OF CONTROLS OVER THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR YEARS.

HE RECALLED THAT IN 1981, THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED A RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO ACCELERATE THE PHASING OUT OF RENT CONTROLS AS SOON AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT AND HAVING REGARD TO THE NEED TO AVOID ADVERSE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES.

"ADJUSTMENTS ARE MADE ANNUALLY TO THE CONTROL MECHANISMS IN AN EFFORT TO BRING THE CONTROLLED RENTS CLOSER TO PREVAILING MARKET RATES," HE SAID.

CURRENTLY, THERE ARE SOME 44,000 PREMISES SUBJECT TO RENT CONTROLS AND THEIR NUMBER IS DIMINISHING AT A RATE OF ABOUT 5,000 PER YEAR DUE TO REPOSSESSION BY OWNERS, FRESH LETTINGS AT MARKET RATES AND DEMOLITION.

THE AVERAGE CONTROLLED RENTS OF PRE-WAR AND POST-WAR BUILDINGS ARE \$1,652 AND \$2,565 RESPECTIVELY, REPRESENTING 64.7 PER CENT AND 61.9 PER CENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PREVAILING MARKET RENTALS.

MR TSAO SAID HE INTENDED TO ALLOW FOR THE ADJUSTMENT UPWARDS OF THESE CONTROLLED RENTS ON A PROGRESSIVE BASIS PROVIDED HE WAS SATISFIED THAT SUCH ADJUSTMENTS WOULD NOT RESULT IN UNACCEPTABLY ADVERSE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES.

"TO THAT EXTENT, AFFORDABILITY WILL BE A FACTOR," HE SAID.

WITH REGARD TO MR CHEUNG'S QUERY REGARDING RATES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO RENTALS, MR TSAO EXPLAINED THAT THE RATEABLE VALUE OF A PROPERTY WAS BASED ON AN ESTIMATE OF THE REASONABLE OPEN MARKET RENT AT WHICH THE PROPERTY MIGHT BE RENTED IF VACANT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE SAME RATEABLE VALUE WOULD APPLY WHETHER OR NOT THE PROPERTY WAS SUBJECT TO RENT CONTROL.

"THIS ENSURES UNIFORMITY OF ASSESSMENT AND THUS THE FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF THE RATES BURDEN BETWEEN DIFFERENT RATEPAYERS," MR TSAO SAID.

"THUS, IF RENT CONTROLS ARE LIFTED, THIS WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE LEVEL OF RATEABLE VALUES.

"THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF RATES COLLECTED WILL ANYWAY DEPEND ON THE RATES PERCENTAGE CHARGE TO BE APPLIED TO THE RATEABLE VALUE."

HE ADDED THAT THIS PERCENTAGE WAS DETERMINED FROM TIME TO TIME BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

FIRST TIME FOR KCR TO DISTRIBUTE DIVIDEND

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FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF EXISTENCE AS A STATUTORY CORPORATION, THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO DISTRIBUTE A DIVIDEND PAYMENT OF SOME \$125 MILLION, OR 20 PER CENT OF ITS PROFITS, TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THUS TO THE COMMUNITY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN TABLING THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1990.

FUTURE DIVIDEND PAYMENTS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER REVIEWS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CORPORATION.

"THE DISTRIBUTION OF DIVIDENDS REFLECTS NOT ONLY THE RETURN TO THE TAXPAYERS ON THE SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE CORPORATION BUT ALSO THE CAPABILITY OF THE CORPORATION TO OPERATE ON A PRUDENT COMMERCIAL BASIS," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS NOTED THAT THE CORPORATION CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION LAST YEAR.

OPERATING REVENUE STOOD AT \$1,591 MILLION, REPRESENTING A 17 PER CENT INCREASE OVER 1989. NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR, INCLUSIVE OF INCOME FROM PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, ROSE BY MORE THAN 50 PER CENT TO \$624 MILLION.

OPERATING COSTS, HOWEVER, INCREASED BY 30 PER CENT TO \$1,392 MILLION, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF TRAIN SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WHICH LED TO INCREASES IN STAFF, ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS.

TOTAL ASSETS STOOD AT \$5 BILLION AT THE END OF THE YEAR. BORROWING WAS REDUCED BY 37 PER CENT TO LESS THAN \$1 BILLION, WITH A DEBT-TO-EQUITY RATIO OF 1 TO 3.9.

THE REPORT ALSO STATED THAT THE CORPORATION HAD TRANSFERRED \$320 MILLION TO A DEVELOPMENT RESERVE FOR THE PURPOSE OF UPGRADING EXISTING FACILITIES AND MEETING NEW INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS NECESSITATED BY GROWTH IN SERVICE DEMAND.

SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT THE HEAVY RAIL CARRIED OVER 179 MILLION PASSENGERS, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF FOUR PER CENT OVER 1989.

"AVERAGE DAILY PATRONAGE FOR THE YEAR EXCEEDED 491,000. INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS PASSING THROUGH LO WU INCREASED BY EIGHT PER CENT TO 28 MILLION," HE SAID.

MAJOR EFFORTS HAD BEEN MADE DURING THE YEAR TO IMPROVE TRAIN SERVICES, SIR PIERS NOTED.

/"NEW TRAIN

"NEW TRAIN CARS ORDERED IN 1989 BEGAN TO ARRIVE IN 1990," HE SAID, "A NEW TRAIN TIMETABLE TO ENHANCE PUNCTUALITY AND A SUNRISE SAVINGS SCHEME TO ENCOURAGE TRAVEL BEFORE THE MORNING PEAK WERE INTRODUCED."

AS FOR THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM, SIR PIERS SAID THE DAILY PATRONAGE ROSE BY 13 PER CENT TO AN AVERAGE 235,000.

THE GROWTH IN PATRONAGE COUPLED WITH INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY RESULTED IN A REDUCTION OF THE LIGHT RAIL DIVISION'S OPERATING LOSS TO \$31 MILLION, HE SAID.

IN MARCH LAST YEAR, THE KCRC BOARD APPROVED THE PURCHASE OF 30 NEW LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EXTENSION TO TIN SHUI WAI FOR COMPLETION BY THE END OF 1992.

TOGETHER WITH THE THREE EXTENSIONS IN TUEN MUN APPROVED IN 1989, THE CORPORATION WOULD SPEND MORE THAN \$800 MILLION IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SYSTEM OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, DEMONSTRATING ITS FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHWEST NEW TERRITORIES, SIR PIERS SAID.

THE REPORT ALSO SHOWED THAT FREIGHT TRAFFIC WAS SLIGHTLY CURTAILED DURING THE YEAR.

WHILE IN-BOUND CARGO RECORDED A MODEST GAIN OF 4.4 PER CENT TO 3.3 MILLION TONNES, OUT-BOUND TRAFFIC DROPPED BY 18 PER CENT TO 1.1 MILLION TONNES.

IN OVERALL TERMS, SIR PIERS SAID THE CORPORATION PERFORMED WELL LAST YEAR.

"IT HAS SERVED THE COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING SAFE, RELIABLE, EFFICIENT AND ECONOMIC TRANSPORT SERVICES TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC AND BY CONSTANTLY IMPROVING ITS SERVICES," HE SAID.

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PROPERTY SPECULATION DEBATED IN LEGCO
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NINETEEN LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS SPOKE IN A THREE-AND-A-HALF HOUR MOTION DEBATE ON PROPERTY SPECULATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG, WAS PASSED WHILE AN AMENDMENT MOTION BY THE HON KINGSLEY SIT WAS DEFEATED.

/MEANWHILE, THREE

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MEANWHILE, THREE BILLS WERE PASSED BY THE COUNCIL. THE TRADE MARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENT WHILE THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 AND BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WERE PASSED WITH NO AMENDMENT.

FIVE OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS AND DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED.

THEY WERE THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, SURVEYORS REGISTRATION BILL 1991, PLANNERS REGISTRATION BILL 1991 AND QUEEN ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991.

FURTHER, A MOTION ON THE FATAL ACCIDENTS ORDINANCE WAS ALSO PASSED.

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LADY WILSON OPENS NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

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THE OPENING OF A NEW BUILDING AT THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF STANDS AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW MUCH CARING THERE IS IN HONG KONG, LADY WILSON SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE DEDICATION OF THE FIRST-EVER PURPOSE-BUILT BUILDING OF THE SCHOOL, LADY WILSON SAID THE PROJECT REPRESENTED A GREAT DEAL OF DEDICATION, GENEROSITY AND HARD WORK OF MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED.

CLEARLY THE REPROVISIONED BUILDING WOULD FACILITATE TEACHING, ENCOURAGE THE PUPILS, AND LEAD THE SCHOOL INTO THE 1990S, SHE SAID.

LOOKING BACK, LADY WILSON NOTED THAT WHEN THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF BEGAN ITS WORK IN 1968, THERE WERE ONLY EIGHT CHILDREN AND ONE TEACHER, OPERATING OUT OF RENTED ACCOMMODATION.

"TWENTY-THREE YEARS LATER, THE SCHOOL PROVIDES EDUCATION FOR OVER 200 HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILDREN RANGING FROM PREPARATORY TO SENIOR SECONDARY LEVEL.

"THERE ARE NOW ROOMS FOR HOME MANAGEMENT, TYPING AND COMPUTER STUDIES, ARTS AND CRAFTS AND SCIENCE," SHE SAID.

PUPILS WHO HAD REACHED SECONDARY 5 LEVEL WERE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO SIT FOR THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION IN SUCH SUBJECTS AS CHINESE, ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, ART, TYPING AND COMPUTERS STUDIES IN ORDER TO BETTER EQUIP THEMSELVES FOR EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER EDUCATION, SHE ADDED.

THANKING ALL THOSE WHO HAD TAUGHT IN THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, LADY WILSON SAID GRADUATES FROM THE SCHOOL WOULD LOOK BACK IN GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION FOR THE EDUCATION THEY HAD RECEIVED THERE.

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HK-GUANGDONG ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP'S TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP MEETS

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THE SECOND MEETING OF THE HONG KONG-GUANGDONG ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LIAISON GROUP'S TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP (TSG) WAS HELD TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN HONG KONG.

THE MEETING DISCUSSED THE TECHNICAL REPORT JOINTLY PRODUCED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING EXPERTS FROM BOTH THE GUANGDONG PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

THE PRODUCTION OF A TECHNICAL REPORT IS THE FIRST PART OF THE TSG'S WORK WHICH WAS AGREED AT THE SUB-GROUP'S FIRST MEETING HELD IN SHENZHEN ON SEPTEMBER 12 LAST YEAR.

/MEMBERS OF

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MEMBERS OF THE TSG INCLUDE OFFICIALS FROM THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH, AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, AND PLANNING DEPARTMENTS, AS WELL AS THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN GUANGDONG AND SHENZHEN.

THE HONG KONG SIDE WAS LED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, MR ROBERT UPTON, AND THE GUANGDONG SIDE BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE SHENZHEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BUREAU.

THE FORMATION OF THE TSG IS THE RESULT OF THE MEETING OF THE HONG KONG-GUANGDONG ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LIAISON GROUP HELD ON JULY 10 LAST YEAR TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN DEEP BAY AND THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME.

THE TSG IS INTENDED TO BE A WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS TO LOOK INTO THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE DEEP BAY ISSUES.

PHASE ONE OF THE TSG'S WORK HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED. IT INCLUDES EXAMINATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF DEEP BAY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THE DEEP BAY CATCHMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.

APART FROM DISCUSSING DETAILS OF THE TECHNICAL REPORT, THE TSG'S SECOND MEETING ALSO DISCUSSED THE APPROACH TO UNDERTAKE REMAINING PHASES OF THE SUB-GROUP'S WORK.

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PILOT SCHEME ON MARK SIX OUTLETS
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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED A PROPOSAL BY THE LOTTERIES BOARD TO INTRODUCE A PILOT SCHEME TO TEST MARKET DEMAND FOR AN EXTENSION OF MARK SIX OUTLETS, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SCHEME IS EXPECTED TO START IN OCTOBER AND WILL NOT RUN FOR LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS.

IT WILL ONLY INVOLVE THE SALES OF MARK SIX TICKETS AT ABOUT 12 HONG KONG TELECOM CSL SHOPS WHICH HAVE YET TO BE SELECTED BY THE LOTTERIES BOARD AND THEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

"APPROVAL FOR PREMISES TO BE USED WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POLICE VIEWS ON THE SAFETY AND SUITABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL OUTLETS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SALES WILL BE TELLER-CONTROLLED FROM BEHIND THE COUNTERS WHERE UTILITY BILLS ARE PAID TO PREVENT SALES TO, AND ANY BAD INFLUENCE ON, YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE AN ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF THE TRIAL RUN AND THE RESULT WILL BE MADE PUBLIC.

/"MEMBERS OF

"MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL BE WELCOME TO SUBMIT THEIR VIEWS ON THE PILOT SCHEME DURING THE ASSESSMENT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT NO EXPANSION TO OTHER OUTLETS WOULD BE APPROVED BEFORE COMPLETION OF THE EVALUATION EXERCISE AND FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

"UNLESS THE EVALUATION SUCCESSFULLY PROVES THE LOTTERIES BOARD'S ARGUMENT THAT THE SCHEME IS IN FACT HARMLESS, MODERATE IN IMPACT, AND WELCOME BOTH TO THE PUBLIC AS PARTICIPANTS AND THE LOTTERIES FUND WHICH WOULD BENEFIT THROUGH INCREASED RECEIPTS FROM MARK SIX, THERE WILL BE NO CONTINUATION OR EXPANSION OF THE SCHEME TO OTHER OUTLETS," HE SAID.

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TELA MEETS THEATRE REPRESENTATIVES

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FIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HONG KONG THEATRES ASSOCIATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HELD A DISCUSSION WITH OFFICIALS OF THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY ON HOW THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FILM CENSORSHIP ORDINANCE AND THE CONTROL OF OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES ORDINANCE AFFECTS CINEMA OPERATORS.

AT THE MEETING, THE REPRESENTATIVES EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH TELA OFFICIALS ABOUT THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LEGISLATION AGAINST THE ADMITTANCE OF PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS TO CATEGORY III FILMS AND THE DISPLAY OF FILM STILLS AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS IN CINEMAS.

THE REPRESENTATIVES WERE REMINDED THAT CINEMA OPERATORS SHOULD TAKE ALL REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT PERSONS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS FROM ADMITTANCE FOR WATCHING CATEGORY III FILMS.

TELA OFFICIALS ALSO STRESSED THAT THE DISPLAY OF FILM STILLS AND OTHER PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS IN CINEMAS WAS SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONTROL OF OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES ORDINANCE.

"IF OPERATORS HAVE ANY DOUBT, THEY CAN SUBMIT THEIR MATERIALS TO THE OBSCENE ARTICLES TRIBUNAL FOR A RULING OR THEY CAN DRAW REFERENCE FROM PREVIOUS RULINGS OF THE TRIBUNAL," THE REPRESENTATIVES WERE TOLD.

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23 NEW GREEN MINIBUS ROUTES AWARDED

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TWENTY-THREE NEW GREEN MINIBUS ROUTES WILL COME INTO OPERATION BY THE END OF JULY THIS YEAR SERVING DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE 23 ROUTES, GROUPED INTO 11 PACKAGES, FORMED PART OF THE 14 PACKAGES ANNOUNCED LAST AUGUST, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE NEW ROUTES WILL SERVE SOUTHERN, WAN CHAI AND CENTRAL DISTRICTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND; KWUN TONG, LOK FU AND JORDAN ROAD IN KOWLOON; AND TSEUNG KWAN O, SHA TIN, KWAI TSING,, TSUEN WAN AND YUEN LONG IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

A NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS TO OPERATE THESE ROUTES WAS GAZETTED ON AUGUST 31 LAST YEAR AND 49 APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED WHEN THE INVITATION PERIOD CLOSED.

NO APPLICATION WAS RECEIVED ON THREE PACKAGES, TWO OF THESE SERVING SHA TIN AND TAI PO VIA THE SHING MUN TUNNELS AND ONE SERVING YUEN LONG, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WERE SELECTED BY THE GREEN MINIBUS OPERATORS SELECTION BOARD CHAIRED BY THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT AND COMPRISED MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION.

WHEN MAKING ITS SELECTION, THE BOARD HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE APPLICANTS' EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC LIGHT BUS AND GREEN MINIBUS OPERATION, FINANCIAL RESOURCES, THE APPLICANT'S MANAGEMENT RIGHTS OVER THE VEHICLES, THE MAINTENANCE RECORD OF THE VEHICLES, THE AGE OF THE VEHICLES TO BE DEPLOYED INCLUDING THE AVAILABILITY OF AIR-CONDITIONING, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1991

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GRAND OPENING OF THE HONG KONG PARK TOMORROW

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, WILL OFFICIATE AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE \$390 MILLION HONG KONG PARK - THE LATEST URBAN COUNCIL PARK AT THE FORMER VICTORIA BARRACKS SITE IN CENTRAL.

THE OPENING CEREMONY AT 3.30 PM WILL BE HELD AT THE GARDEN PLAZA LOCATED NEAR THE PARK'S COTTON TREE DRIVE ENTRANCE AND WILL BE ATTENDED BY HUNDREDS OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND WELL-WISHERS.

OTHER OFFICIATING GUESTS WILL BE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR GERRY FORSGATE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, MR GORDON MACWHINNIE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG PARK PROJECT BOARD, SIR SIDNEY GORDON, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL'S RECREATION SELECT COMMITTEE, MR PETER CHAN, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, MAJOR GENERAL GUY WATKINS, AND THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES, MR JAMES SO.

SIR DAVID WILL OFFICIALLY UNVEIL A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE SECOND MAJOR PARK IN THREE YEARS JOINTLY DEVELOPED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB WHO MADE A GENEROUS DONATION OF \$170 MILLION AS WELL AS PROVIDING THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT.

THE 10-HECTARE PARK FEATURES A HOST OF NEW AND UNIQUE FACILITIES INCLUDING A THREE-CHAMBER CONSERVATORY, A WALK-THROUGH AVIARY, A SIX-PLATFORM CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, A GARDEN PLAZA, A CENTRAL GARDEN, A VISUAL ARTS CENTRE AND A LAKE-SIDE RESTAURANT.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG PARK WHICH STARTS AT 3.30 PM TOMORROW. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES COVERING THE EVENT ARE REQUESTED TO ARRIVE AT THE PARK'S GARDEN PLAZA BY 3 PM AT THE LATEST FOR THE ISSUANCE OF PRESS PASSES AND FOR A BRIEFING ABOUT THE PRESS POSITIONS ARRANGED ESPECIALLY FOR THEM TO COVER THE EVENT.

INFORMATION STAFF OF THE URBAN COUNCIL'S PUBLIC INFORMATION UNIT WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST.

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WESTERN WHOLESALE FOOD MARKET COMPLEX NEAR COMPLETION

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MEMBERS OF THE MARKETING SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON TOOK A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE WESTERN WHOLESALE FOOD MARKET, THE FIRST PHASE OF WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED NEXT MONTH AND COME INTO FULL OPERATION BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

THE WHOLESALE MARKET, LOCATED AT THE WESTERN RECLAMATION ON HONG KONG ISLAND, IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE TERRITORY INTEGRATING FIVE DIFFERENT TRADES WITHIN A SINGLE MULTI-LEVEL COMPLEX. THE PROJECT IS DEVELOPED IN TWO PHASES.

LED BY THE SENIOR MARKETING DEVELOPMENT OFFICER OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, MR TSOI HOO-CHOI, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE, DR ZEE SZE-YONG, MEMBERS TOURED PHASE I OF THE PROJECT, WHICH IS A TWO-STOREY MARKET COMPLEX PROVIDING WHOLESALE FACILITIES FOR FRESHWATER FISH, FRUIT AND EGGS.

MEMBERS LEARNT THAT PHASE I HAS A TOTAL AREA OF 4.2 HECTARES AND THE CONSTRUCTION COST IS \$350 MILLION.

THEY WERE ALSO INFORMED THAT PHASE I HAS THREE PIERS ALONG ITS 360-METRE SEAFRONT EACH BEING INSTALLED WITH PURPOSE-DESIGNED MECHANISED EQUIPMENT FOR LOADING AND UNLOADING OF GOODS.

THE PHASE I MARKETS ARE EXPECTED TO HANDLE 194,900 TONNES OF FRESH FOODSTUFFS YEARLY BY 1996.

AS FOR PHASE II OF THE MARKET COMPLEX, WHICH STANDS ON THE EXISTING TEMPORARY FRUIT MARKET SITE, MEMBERS WERE TOLD THAT IT WOULD BE COMPLETED IN 1994 AND WOULD PROVIDE WHOLESALE FACILITIES FOR POULTRY AND VEGETABLES.

UPON COMPLETION OF PHASE II, THE MARKET WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE ANTICIPATED THROUGHPUT BEYOND 2000.

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FC MEETING ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (MAY 24) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER. IT WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE COMMITTEE'S PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES AND THEY MAY MAKE RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONING 844 0899.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1991

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1990 SURVEY OF BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE SECTORS
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THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE SURVEY OF BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE SECTORS FOR 1990 HAS JUST COMMENCED.

THE SURVEY IS CONDUCTED ANNUALLY AND REPRESENTS PART OF A CONTINUOUS PROGRAMME IN THE DEPARTMENT TO COMPILE STATISTICS ON THE STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES IN HONG KONG.

THE AIMS OF THE SURVEY ARE TO OBTAIN UP-TO-DATE DATA FOR EVALUATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES TO HONG KONG'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, AND FOR ASCERTAINING THEIR COST STRUCTURE, OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS AND OUTPUT LEVELS.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ARE USEFUL TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN FORMULATING POLICIES AND MAKING DECISIONS.

ABOUT 4,200 ESTABLISHMENTS ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WILL BE ENUMERATED IN THE PRESENT ROUND OF THE SURVEY, INCLUDING A FULL COVERAGE OF PROMINENT ESTABLISHMENTS AND A RANDOM SAMPLE OF SMALLER ESTABLISHMENTS :

- * BUILDING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION;
- * REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT;
- * ARCHITECTURAL, SURVEYING AND PROJECT ENGINEERING; AND
- * REAL ESTATE LEASING, BROKERAGE AND MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT.

THE SURVEY IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS (ANNUAL SURVEY OF BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE SECTORS) ORDER 1984, WHICH WAS MADE UNDER THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 316) AND ISSUED AS LEGAL NOTICE NO. 14 IN THE GAZETTE ON JANUARY 13, 1984.

A DIFFERENT VERSION OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE IS USED FOR EACH OF THE FOUR AFORE-MENTIONED CATEGORIES OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

IN GENERAL, INFORMATION SOUGHT IN THE SURVEY INCLUDES : TYPE OF OWNERSHIP; NUMBER OF DIRECT EMPLOYEES; COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES; CONSUMPTION OF MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES; PAYMENTS FOR SUB-CONTRACT WORK; OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES; VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK PERFORMED; VALUE OF PROPERTIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT AND THE ASSOCIATED PROJECT OUTLAYS (INCLUDING LAND VALUES); OTHER FORMS OF BUSINESS RECEIPTS; AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN MAILED TO THE ESTABLISHMENTS SAMPLED FOR THE SURVEY.

/THESE ESTABLISHMENTS

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THESE ESTABLISHMENTS ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRES TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT BY JULY 31 THIS YEAR.

IF REQUIRED, OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL VISIT INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS AND ASSIST THEM IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRES.

THESE OFFICERS WILL CARRY A GOVERNMENT IDENTITY CARD AND A CERTIFICATE FOR CONDUCTING THE SURVEY WHILST ON DUTY, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS APPEALED TO THE MANagements OF ALL SAMPLED ESTABLISHMENTS TO RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES PROMPTLY AND TO CO-OPERATE WITH OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT IN THE COURSE OF THE SURVEY, SO AS TO FULFIL THEIR LEGAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

HE STRESSED THAT INFORMATION RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS WOULD BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE UNDER THE PROVISION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS ORDINANCE.

ONLY AGGREGATE INFORMATION, WHICH DOES NOT REVEAL DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS, WILL BE RELEASED.

THE COMMISSIONER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT AUDITED ACCOUNTS ARE NOT ESSENTIAL FOR THE SUPPLY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE DATA REQUIRED IN THE SURVEY.

THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ACCEPTS FIGURES BASED ON PRELIMINARY ACCOUNTS OR ESTIMATES WHICH ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF THE RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AT THE TIME OF SUBMISSION OF THE RETURNS, IF AUDITED ACCOUNTS ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE.

ANY ENQUIRIES REGARDING THE SURVEY MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON TEL. 839 3204.

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TWO GOVT LOTS TO LET BY TENDER
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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT TERM TENANCIES ON TWO PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND.

THE FIRST ONE IS LOCATED OFF WAH LAM PATH, POK FU LAM, HONG KONG.

WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 620 SQUARE METRES, IT IS FOR A PLANT NURSERY AND/OR A PROCESSING YARD FOR LANDSCAPE GARDENING OR AN OPEN STORAGE AREA, EXCLUDING CONTAINERS.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR AND QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

/THE SECOND

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1991

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THE SECOND SITE IS IN AREA 58, TUEN MUN NEW TOWN. WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 11,000 SQUARE METRES, IT IS INTENDED FOR OPEN STORAGE, EXCLUDING STORAGE OF CONTAINERS.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR AND QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

FORMS OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICES AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLANS OF THE TWO SITES INSPECTED AT, THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG AND THE KOWLOON DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

THOSE FOR THE POK FU LAM SITE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE HONG KONG SOUTH DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, SOUTHOEN CENTRE, 20TH FLOOR, 130 HENNESSY ROAD, WAN CHAI; AND THOSE FOR THE TUEN MUN SITE AVAILABLE AT THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, TUEN MUN GOVERNMENT OFFICES, SIXTH FLOOR, 1 TUEN HI ROAD, TUEN MUN.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS FOR BOTH SITES IS NOON ON JUNE 7.

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LABOUR INSPECTION DIVISION OFFICE RELOCATED

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THE LAI CHI KOK DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LABOUR INSPECTION DIVISION HAS MOVED TO THE FIRST FLOOR OF WINNER MANSION AT 695 NATHAN ROAD FROM TONKIN STREET IN KOWLOON.

THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE IS 396 5393.

THE DIVISION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING THE HOURS OF WORK AND REST PERIODS FOR WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN INDUSTRY AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN AGED UNDER 15.

IT ALSO ENFORCES PROVISIONS IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE RELATING TO EMPLOYEES' STATUTORY BENEFITS AND EMPLOYERS' KEEPING OF EMPLOYMENT RECORDS, AS WELL AS ENSURING EMPLOYERS TAKE OUT INSURANCE POLICIES TO COVER THEIR LIABILITY TO COMPENSATE EMPLOYEES INJURED AT WORK.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1991

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YAN OI TONG DIRECTORS CALL ON SWD
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THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF YAN OI TONG THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING PAID A COURTESY VISIT TO THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR M.D. CARTLAND, TO DISCUSS THE ORGANISATION'S MAJOR WELFARE SERVICES IN THE CURRENT YEAR.

THE BOARD'S CHAIRMAN, MR NG WAI-KWONG, OUTLINED THE ORGANISATION'S SERVICES AND THANKED THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR REGULARLY PROVIDING ADVICE AND GUIDANCE.

MR CARTLAND COMMENDED THE ORGANISATION FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY AND ASSURED THE BOARD MEMBERS THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THEM.

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FRESH WATER SUSPENSION
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SUPPLY OF FRESH WATER TO SOME PREMISES IN MA TAU KOK, IN KOWLOON, WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 9.30 AM TO 5 PM ON FRIDAY (MAY 24) TO FACILITATE MAINS CONNECTION WORKS.

THE PREMISES TO BE AFFECTED ARE BOUNDED BY KOWLOON CITY ROAD, MOK CHEONG STREET, TO KWA WAN ROAD AND MA TAU KOK ROAD AND INCLUDING 3-19 MOK CHEONG STREET, THE MA TAU KOK ANIMAL QUARANTINE DEPOT AND THE PUBLIC TOILET IN MA TAU KOK ROAD.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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HKEF

	DATE	\$ MILLION
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CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	21.5.91	480
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	22.5.91	-52
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+52
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 112.3 *-0.1* 22.5.91

/HONG KONG

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
91-DAY EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

HKEI

ISSUE NUMBER	MATURING ON	OUTSTANDING \$ MILLION	
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Q115	10.7.91	340	+140
Q116	17.7.91	340	+140
Q117	24.7.91	328.5	+151.5
Q118	31.7.91	450	+30
Q119	7.8.91	395	+85
Q120	14.8.91	380	+100
Q121	21.8.91	370	+110
Q109	29.5.91	630	-150
Q110	5.6.91	330	+150
Q111	12.6.91	374	+106
Q112	19.6.91	630	-150
Q113	26.6.91	440	+40
Q114	3.7.91	510	-30

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
182-DAY EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

HKEJ

ISSUE NUMBER	MATURING ON	OUTSTANDING \$ MILLION	
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H164	13.11.91	90	+170
H003	29.5.91	190	+70
H004	12.6.91	260	+0
H005	26.6.91	230	+30
H101	10.7.91	143	+117
H156	24.7.91	150	+110
H157	7.8.91	169.5	+90.5
H158	21.8.91	140	+120
H159	4.9.91	150	+110
H160	18.9.91	150	+110
H161	2.10.91	70	+190
H162	17.10.91	104	+156
H163	30.10.91	50	+210

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
364-DAY EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

HKEK

ISSUE NUMBER	MATURING ON	OUTSTANDING \$ MILLION	
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Y187	26.2.92	230	+30
Y188	25.3.92	180	+80
Y189	22.4.92	190	+70
Y190	20.5.92	200	+60

AVERAGE DAILY TRANSFER FOR WEEK ENDING 17.5.91 WAS 2,410 MN