



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HK WILL DO WELL IN THE NEXT CENTURY: CS

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HONG KONG IS THE ECONOMIC HUB OF EAST ASIA AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE WELL INTO THE NEXT CENTURY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE "HONG KONG - 2001" CONFERENCE IN LONDON, MRS CHAN SAID SHE FOUND A GREAT DEAL THAT WAS POSITIVE AT HONG KONG IN THE NEXT CENTURY.

"1997 WILL BE WELL BEHIND US, AND A NEW AND CHINESE ERA WILL HAVE STARTED," SHE SAID.

"I DETECT A SIMILAR ATTITUDE AMONG OUR FRIENDS OVERSEAS, NOT LEAST, HERE IN BRITAIN. I BELIEVE THAT YOU, TOO, SEE 1997 AS OPENING THE DOOR TO A LARGER RELATIONSHIP."

MRS CHAN SAID THE REMARKABLE ECONOMIC SUCCESS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT DECLARATION IN 1984 HAD BEEN REASSURING THAT HONG KONG COULD COPE WITH THE CHALLENGES OF 1997.

SHE NOTED THAT DURING THIS DECADE, TOTAL GDP HAD GONE UP BY 79 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS; TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE BY 350 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS; TOTAL TRADE WITH CHINA UP BY MORE THAN 500 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS; UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN FROM ALMOST 4 PER CENT TO LESS THAN 2 PER CENT; HOME-OWNERSHIP UP FROM 31 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION TO 48 PER CENT; AND THE OVERALL CRIME RATE DOWN BY 10 PER CENT.

POLITICALLY, THE COMMUNITY HAS FOUND THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE TO ADJUST TO THE POLITICAL UNKNOWNNS AND TO DEVELOP ITS EXECUTIVE-LED GOVERNMENT INTO A MORE OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE STYLE OF ADMINISTRATION.

"THIS REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE HAS DONE A GREAT DEAL TO REASSURE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG THAT THEY CAN COPE WITH THE CHALLENGES OF 1997 AND MAKE THEIR PLANS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY WITH CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE."

SHE NOTED THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAD A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE TERRITORY'S LONG-TERM BUSINESS SUCCESS.

"WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE A COMMUNITY THAT LIVES WITHIN ITS MEANS, WITH LOW TAXES AND A SMALL BUT EFFICIENT PUBLIC SECTOR," SHE SAID.

"WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND OPEN MARKETS, OUR CONVICTION THAT COMPETITION AND FREE TRADE ARE THE BEST ENGINES OF GROWTH."

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ALSO BELIEVED THAT TO MAINTAIN BUSINESS CONFIDENCE AND HONG KONG'S CONTINUED ECONOMIC SUCCESS, IT WAS NECESSARY TO PUT IN PLACE THE LEGISLATURE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE RULE OF LAW AND A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.

"HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC VITALITY IS ROOTED IN ITS WAY OF LIFE, A WAY OF LIFE THAT IS GUARANTEED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW," SHE SAID.

/MRS CHAN

MRS CHAN ALSO STRESSED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHINA'S OPEN DOOR POLICY TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

"THE OPEN DOOR POLICY HAS TRANSFORMED THE FACE OF CHINA. BUT ITS IMPACT HAS BEEN NO LESS PROFOUND FOR HONG KONG.

"IT IS A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR US THAT CHINA IS NOW TAKING ITS PLACE IN THE ECONOMIC AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL COUNCILS OF THE WORLD.

"HONG KONG KNOWS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE HOW FAR-REACHING ARE THE CHANGES IN CHINA AND HOW GREAT THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVES OF ITS CITIZENS. THIS KNOWLEDGE, I BELIEVE, IS ANOTHER SECURE FOUNDATION ON WHICH WE, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, HOPE TO BUILD OUR FUTURE.

"IT FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR PARTICULARLY WIDE FOR HONG KONG'S TRADERS AND INVESTORS, UNDERPINNING OUR BOOMING ECONOMY OVER THE LAST DECADE.

"THE OPEN DOOR POLICY ALSO CLEARED THE WAY FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTION TO THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM OF HONG KONG.

"IT HELPED TO MAKE POSSIBLE OUR FUTURE AS A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, SO THAT THERE COULD BE ONE COUNTRY BUT TWO SEPARATE SYSTEMS.

"IN THE REMAINING YEARS OF TRANSITION, WE STAND READY TO CO-OPERATE CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH CHINA TO MAKE A REALITY OF THE 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS' CONCEPT."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY BELIEVED THAT HONG KONG WOULD CONTINUE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE CHINESE ECONOMY IN ITS TRANSACTIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

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HK'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AMONG BEST IN ASIA

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THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOS) ARE NOT CONFRONTATIONAL IN THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN HONG KONG, THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, MR DANIEL R FUNG, QC, SAID IN GENEVA TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A HEARING OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS AS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION, MR FUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT ENJOYED A CLOSE AND CORDIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH NGOS, AND HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THEIR VIEWS AND CONCERNS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S REPORT COVERING HONG KONG.

THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED NOT ONLY TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH NGOS BUT, ADDITIONALLY, TO STRENGTHEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH THEM IN THE FUTURE, HE SAID.

HONG KONG HAS BY AND LARGE A VERY IMPRESSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, ONE WHICH MUST RANK AMONG THE VERY BEST IN ASIA, MR FUNG SAID.

HE NOTED THAT HONG KONG FULLY OBSERVED AND RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ABIDED BY A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR) AND THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR).

FURTHER, THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD HAS RECENTLY BEEN EXTENDED TO HONG KONG, AND THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING THE EXTENSION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW) TO HONG KONG.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID HONG KONG APPLIED 49 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS, WHICH COMPARED FAVOURABLY WITH MOST MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED A SEX DISCRIMINATION BILL INTO THE LEGISLATURE.

HE ADDED THAT A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES WERE BEING TAKEN TO FACILITATE THE HANDLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS DISPUTES, INCLUDING GIVING MORE RESOURCES TO THE JUDICIARY TO ENABLE IT TO OPEN SEPARATE LISTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS CASES AND MAKING LEGAL AID MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE PURSUING CLAIMS UNDER THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

"WE ARE DETERMINED TO MOVE AHEAD ON THESE AND OTHER INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO ENHANCE OUR EXISTING SYSTEMS AND TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE SHORTCOMINGS," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT COMPLACENT, HE SAID: "WE ARE AWARE THAT THERE ARE AREAS IN WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE FULLY TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF ICESCR OR WHERE IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE TO THE EXISTING SYSTEMS."

"WE WILL ATTEMPT TO REMAIN VIGILANT AND STRIVE CONTINUOUSLY TO ATTAIN THE STANDARDS LAID DOWN UNDER THE COVENANT," HE SAID.

MR FUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT REGARD THE PRESENT HEARING AS BEING ADVERSARIAL IN NATURE.

BOTH NGOS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE LEGITIMATE AND COMPLEMENTARY ROLES TO PLAY IN THIS PROCESS, THE FORMER TO DRAW TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE WHAT THEY REGARD AS THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE DOMESTIC REGIME WHILE THE LATTER IS HERE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE WRITTEN REPORT AND ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THE COMMITTEE SO AS ULTIMATELY TO ASSIST THE COMMITTEE IN ARRIVING AT A FAIR, ACCURATE AND BALANCED VIEW OF THE STATE OF HEALTH OF HUMAN RIGHTS ENJOYED BY THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, HE SAID.

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THREE GOVT LOTS SOLD FOR \$576 MILLION

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THREE LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND WERE SOLD FOR A TOTAL OF \$576 MILLION AT THE PUBLIC LAND AUCTION HELD BY THE LANDS DEPARTMENT THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED IN AREA 2, TAI PO KAU HUI, TAI PO, WAS BOUGHT BY YINTALY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED AT \$372 MILLION. BIDDING OPENED AT \$250 MILLION.

WITH AN AREA OF 2,367 SQUARE METRES, IT IS INTENDED FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, EXCLUDING GODOWN.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 8,500 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1998.

THE SECOND LOT, LOCATED IN 351-361 SHAU KEI WAN ROAD, HAS AN AREA OF 452.1 SQUARE METRES. IT WAS SOLD TO FINE COSMOS DEVELOPMENT LIMITED AT \$190 MILLION, WITH BIDDING OPENING AT \$180 MILLION.

IT IS INTENDED FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, EXCLUDING GODOWN, WAREHOUSE, PETROL FILLING STATION, RETAIL (EXCEPT RETAIL BANKING), RESTAURANT, HOTEL,, SERVICE APARTMENT AND PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL FLATS.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 4,070 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1997.

THE THIRD LOT, AT 212 LAI CHI KOK ROAD, HAS AN AREA OF 83.5 SQUARE METRES. IT WAS SOLD TO SHEENSBURGH LIMITED AT \$14 MILLION, WITH BIDDING OPENING AT \$8 MILLION.

THE LOWEST THREE FLOORS, INCLUDING ANY BASEMENT LEVELS, ARE TO BE USED FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, BUT EXCLUDING GODOWN, HOTEL, SERVICE APARTMENT AND PETROL FILLING STATION, AND THE REMAINING FLOORS FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 264 SQUARE METRES ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1997.

THE AUCTION WAS HELD IN THE CONCERT HALL OF THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE, TSIM SHA TSUI, AND WAS CONDUCTED BY GOVERNMENT LAND AGENT, MR VICTOR LEUNG LOK-YIU.

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HK TRADE DELEGATION VISITS HO CHI MINH CITY

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AND TRADE DELEGATION TO VIETNAM ARRIVED IN HO CHI MINH CITY THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON FOLLOWING THREE DAYS OF HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS AND A BUSINESS WORKSHOP IN THE CAPITAL, HANOI.

THE DELEGATION LEADER, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, DESCRIBED THE HANOI LEG OF THE VISIT AS VERY SUCCESSFUL.

/"WE HAVE

"WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ACROSS THE MESSAGE THAT HONG KONG IS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING BROADER AND DEEPER RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM ACROSS THE BOARD AND THAT HONG KONG IS AN IDEAL GATEWAY FOR TRADE WITH, AND INVESTMENT IN, VIETNAM.

"THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST FROM VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN HONG KONG'S EXPERTISE IN A NUMBER OF AREAS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, INWARD INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND TRADE PROMOTION," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT INDICATED THAT IT WAS PARTICULARLY KEEN ON ATTRACTING FURTHER INVESTMENT FROM HONG KONG WHICH WAS ALREADY THE LEADING INVESTOR IN VIETNAM IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS APPROVED.

DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS, MR CHAU STRESSED THAT, UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW, HONG KONG'S EXISTING SYSTEMS WOULD CONTINUE UNCHANGED, INCLUDING ITS AUTONOMY IN THE CONDUCT OF ITS ECONOMIC AND TRADING RELATIONS WITH TRADING PARTNERS AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE FREE TRADE AND OPEN ECONOMIC POLICIES.

LAST NIGHT, MR CHAU HOSTED A DINNER FOR SOME 40 VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LEADING VIETNAMESE BUSINESSMEN.

IN HO CHI MINH CITY, THE DELEGATION WILL HAVE MEETINGS WITH THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR CO-OPERATION AND INVESTMENT, MINISTRY OF TRADE REPRESENTATIVES, THE VIETCO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE OF HO CHI MINH CITY. THEY WILL VISIT THE CITY'S EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE.

MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION INCLUDE THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INDUSTRY, MISS DENISE YUE; THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER; THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES, MR TAM WING-PONG; PRINCIPAL ECONOMIST MR H Y CHEUNG; AND DEPUTY POLITICAL ADVISER MR JOHN ASHTON.

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PASCUTTO TO HEAD COMPANIES REVIEW

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF MR ERMANNO PASCUTTO, THE FORMER DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION, TO LEAD THE REVIEW OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

THE REVIEW, WHICH WILL INVOLVE STREAMLINING AND RATIONALISING THE LEGISLATION AS WELL AS DEALING WITH A NUMBER OF ISSUES OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE FOR HONG KONG, IS EXPECTED TO RUN UNTIL THE END OF 1996.

A FINAL REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY UPON ITS COMPLETION.

MR PASCUTTO, 41, IS CURRENTLY THE MANAGING PARTNER IN THE HONG KONG OFFICE OF A LEADING CANADIAN LAW FIRM AND HAS BEEN ENGAGED RECENTLY IN WORK RELATING TO ADVISING ON SECURITIES REGULATION AND FINANCING OF HONG KONG-CHINA-CANADA BUSINESSES.

PRIOR TO COMING TO HONG KONG, HE WAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION.

"THIS REVIEW WILL BE AN IMPORTANT AND SUBSTANTIAL PROJECT. THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE IS STILL BASED LARGELY ON ENGLISH COMPANY LAW OF 1929 AND 1948 OVERLAID WITH A VARIETY OF AD HOC AMENDMENTS," MR PASCUTTO SAID.

"MANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN HONG KONG AND ELSEWHERE SINCE THE ORDINANCE WAS LAST REVIEWED IN THE EARLY 1970S.

"THE UNIFIED STOCK EXCHANGE AND THE FUTURES EXCHANGE HAVE BEEN SET UP. COMPANIES ON THE REGISTER ARE NOW GETTING ON FOR HALF A MILLION. AND HONG KONG HAS EARNED INTERNATIONAL STATUS AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS CENTRES.

"WE SHOULD NOW TAKE STOCK AND CONSIDER WHETHER AND WHAT KIND OF CHANGES MIGHT BE NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE OPERATION OF BUSINESS IN HONG KONG IN THE DECADES AHEAD."

MR PASCUTTO EXPLAINED THAT WHILE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS OF REGULATION IN THE TERRITORY'S FINANCIAL SECTOR HAD MATURED AND DEVELOPED ENORMOUSLY, COMPARATIVELY LESS ATTENTION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SYSTEMIC ISSUES ON THE COMPANIES SIDE.

SUCH ISSUES INCLUDE WHETHER SMALL PRIVATE COMPANIES AND LARGE LISTED COMPANIES SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE SAME STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF LARGE LISTED COMPANIES REDOMICILING OVERSEAS WHILE CONDUCTING MOST OF THEIR BUSINESS IN OR FROM HONG KONG.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE REVIEW WOULD COMPLEMENT THE ONGOING WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMPANY LAW REFORM (SCCLR) WHICH LOOKED AT DAY-TO-DAY ISSUES AFFECTING BUSINESS OPERATION IN HONG KONG.

THE REVIEW WILL EXAMINE ISSUES OF A MORE STRUCTURAL NATURE, HE ADDED.

"I AM KEEN TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF LOCAL PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESSMEN ON SOME OF THE SPECIFIC TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE REVIEW, AND HOPE TO ESTABLISH ONE OR MORE SPECIALIST GROUPS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE," MR PASCUTTO SAID.

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GOVT CARES FOR THE ELDERLY
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THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING BETTER CARE FOR THE ELDERLY AND HELPING THEM TO LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES IN DIGNITY AFTER THEIR LONG YEARS OF SERVICE TO HONG KONG, THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR PATTEN REITERATED THIS PLEDGE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG SOCIETY FOR THE AGED'S NEW KWAN FONG NIM CHEE HOME FOR THE ELDERLY.

/"LAST YEAR

"LAST YEAR A WORKING GROUP WAS SET UP TO CARRY OUT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF OUR SYSTEM OF CARE FOR THE ELDERLY. .

"WE HAVE COMMITTED ALL THE RECURRENT EXPENDITURE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE WORKING GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS UP TO THE YEAR 2000," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INCREASING THE QUANTITY AND THE QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL SERVICES, MR PATTEN SAID SEVEN NEW NURSING HOMES WOULD BE UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

A NEW MONITORING UNIT AND COMPUTER NETWORK WERE BEING SET UP TO LINK ALL ELDERLY HOMES SO AS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLACEMENT SERVICES, HE ADDED.

TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, HE SAID SEVEN NEW ELDERLY HEALTH CENTRES WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AND EACH OF THE EIGHT HOSPITAL IN THE TERRITORY WOULD BE SETTING UP A GERIATRIC ASSESSMENT CLINIC.

HE NOTED THAT FOUR ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY GERIATRIC TEAMS AND FOUR ADDITIONAL PSYCHOGERIATRIC TEAMS ARE BEING SET UP TO IMPROVE OUTREACH MEDICAL SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY.

"WE HAVE SET UP A FUND TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS, TO HELP THEM TO INTRODUCE NEW SELF-FINANCING WELFARE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY," MR PATTEN SAID.

THE GOVERNOR SAID THE HIGH STANDARD OF CARE FOR THE ELDERLY REFLECTED THE GRATITUDE THE COMMUNITY HELD FOR THOSE WHO HAD GIVEN THEIR LIVES' WORK TO MAKE THIS COMMUNITY THE SUCCESS THAT IT WAS.

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT REGRETS ACTION BY SURVEY OFFICERS
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THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT REGRETS THAT MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL AND SURVEY OFFICERS WORKING IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE A ONE-DAY LEAVE TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING THAT ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION DUTIES WERE TAKEN UP BY THE DEPARTMENT IN 1991 FOLLOWING THE ENACTMENT OF THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1991.

THE DECISION TO DEPLOY SURVEY OFFICER (PLANNING) GRADE OFFICERS TO UNDERTAKE SUCH DUTIES WAS MADE WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE STAFF SIDE.

SUBSEQUENT TO A REQUEST MADE BY THE ASSOCIATION, A WORKING PARTY COMPRISING BOTH STAFF AND MANAGEMENT WAS FORMED. THE WORKING PARTY HAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE REQUEST MADE BY THE STAFF SIDE AND HAS REACHED AN AGREEMENT ON THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF ALL RANKS OF THE SURVEY OFFICER (PLANNING) GRADE, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE WORKING PARTY HAS MANAGED TO NARROW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES. THE OUTSTANDING ISSUE IS THE NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL SURVEY OFFICERS REQUIRED IN UNDERTAKING ENFORCEMENT AND PROSECUTION DUTIES.

IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY, THE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERS THAT THE NUMBER SHOULD RELATE TO BOTH THE LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED WORKLOAD.

THE PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY THE ASSOCIATION THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONE PRINCIPAL SURVEY OFFICER TO ASSIST ONE SENIOR TOWN PLANNER MUST BE SUPPORTED WITH FULL JUSTIFICATIONS IN REGARD TO THESE TWO ASPECTS.

"NEVERTHELESS, THE MANAGEMENT IS ALWAYS WILLING TO DISCUSS FURTHER WITH THE STAFF SIDE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL ENDEAVOUR TO MINIMISE THE DISRUPTION THAT MAY BE CAUSED WITH STAFF REDEPLOYMENT AND RESCHEDULING OF WORK PRIORITIES.

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NO E COLI BACTERIA IN DRINKING WATER

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) POINTED OUT THAT THE DETECTION OF E COLI BACTERIA IN SOME OF THE WATER SAMPLES REFERRED TO IN A RECENT MEDIA REPORT COULD BE BECAUSE OF SAMPLING PROCEDURES AND CONTAMINATION OF WATER TAPS OR THE FILTERS ATTACHED TO THE TAPS.

HE SAID THE TEST RESULTS WERE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE QUALITY OF THE WATER SUPPLIED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

"THE TEST RESULTS OF THE WATER SAMPLES TAKEN EARLIER BY THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT IN THE SAME DISTRICTS USING PROPER SAMPLING METHODS SHOWED NO E COLI BACTERIA IN THE WATER," HE SAID.

ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY HIGHER QUANTITIES OF MANGANESE AND ZINC WERE DETECTED IN SOME OF THE WATER SAMPLES REFERRED TO IN THE REPORT, THE EFFECTS OF THESE METALS ARE NOT SIMILAR TO THOSE COMMONLY KNOWN AS TOXIC HEAVY METALS SUCH AS LEAD, MERCURY AND CADMIUM WHICH PRESENT SERIOUS HEALTH DETRIMENT EVEN IN VERY MINUTE CONCENTRATIONS.

"INDEED BOTH MANGANESE AND ZINC ARE ESSENTIAL TRACE ELEMENTS FOR NORMAL METABOLISM. CURRENTLY, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION HAS SET A PROVISIONAL HEALTH-BASED GUIDELINE VALUE OF 0.5 MILLIGRAM PER LITRE FOR MANGANESE IN DRINKING WATER, WHILST THE LEVEL OF THREE MILLIGRAMS PER LITRE IS SET FOR ZINC ON AESTHETIC GROUNDS ONLY," HE SAID.

"THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THAT THE HEAVILY CORRODED PIPES AND DIRTY WATER TANKS ARE THE PRIME CAUSES OF THE HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF MANGANESE AND ZINC IN THE DISCOLOURED WATER SAMPLES, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE WATER HAS REMAINED STAGNANT IN THE WATER PIPES OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD.

"THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT CARRIES OUT INTENSIVE CONTINUOUS MONITORING THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY OF WATER SUPPLIED TO THE CONSUMERS FULLY COMPLIES WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S GUIDELINES CHEMICALLY AND BACTERIOLOGICALLY," HE ADDED.

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CLUB CERTIFICATE FEES TO BE REVISED NEXT YEAR

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THE FEES FOR ISSUING AND RENEWING CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION AND CERTIFICATES OF COMPLIANCE TO CLUB OPERATORS WILL BE REVISED FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION (CNTA) EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT FEES SHOULD IN GENERAL BE SET AT LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO RECOVER THE FULL COST OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE FEE WAS LAST REVISED IN JANUARY THIS YEAR TO REFLECT THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION SINCE 1991, A RECENT COSTING EXERCISE HAD INDICATED THAT THE CURRENT FEES WERE STILL SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW COST.

AS A RESULT, A NEW SET OF FEES HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WITH THE AIM OF ACHIEVING FULL COSTS RECOVERY, HE ADDED.

UNDER THE NEW RATE, THE FEE FOR THE ISSUE AND RENEWAL OF THE CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$600 TO \$660 WHILE THAT OF THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WILL RANGE FROM \$3,200 TO \$49,000. DEPENDING ON THE GROSS AREA OF THE CLUB.

DETAILS OF FEE INCREASE ARE SET OUT IN THE CLUBS (SAFETY OF PREMISES) (FEES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATION 1994, WHICH WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 25).

CLUB OPERATORS WILL BE INFORMED OF THE NEW FEES WHEN THEY APPLY FOR OR RENEW THEIR CERTIFICATES.

PUBLIC ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE TO CNTA'S OFFICE OF THE LICENSING AUTHORITY ON TEL 881 7034.

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CERTAIN POWERS IN HANDLING MARITIME MATTERS TRANSFERRED

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THE GOVERNMENT IS INTRODUCING THE SHIPPING (MISCELLANEOUS POWERS) BILL WHICH SEEKS TO TRANSFER CERTAIN POWERS IN THE HANDLING OF MARITIME MATTERS FROM THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES OR THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION THE GOVERNOR HAS THE POWER TO:

- * DESIGNATE PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS, PUBLIC WATER-FRONT OR EXCLUDED WATER-FRONT UNDER THE PORT CONTROL (CARGO WORKING AREAS) ORDINANCE;
- * DECLARE ANY AREA OF WATERS OF HONG KONG TO BE A PORT UNDER THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE;
- * DECLARE ANY AREA OF THE WATERS OF HONG KONG TO BE AN AREA CLOSED TO DWELLING VESSELS AND WITHIN WHICH NO DWELLING VESSEL MAY ENTER OR REMAIN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE AND THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (DWELLING VESSELS) REGULATIONS;

* GIVE DIRECTION UNDER THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) ORDINANCE TO SHIPS IN SHIPPING CASUALTIES TO PREVENT OR REDUCE POLLUTION WHICH MAY POSE DANGER TO HONG KONG, AND TO SPECIFY SUBSTANCE AS HAZARDOUS; AND

* SPECIFY REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION FOR OIL POLLUTION) ORDINANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR COMPENSATION FOR OIL POLLUTION DAMAGE.

"THE EXERCISE OF ALL THESE POWERS DOES NOT GIVE RISE TO MAJOR POLICY OR RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY NEED TO BE VESTED IN THE GOVERNOR PERSONALLY," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE TRANSFER OF THESE POWERS FROM THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES OR THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE WILL RELIEVE THE GOVERNOR OF INVOLVEMENT IN RELATIVELY MINOR ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL," HE SAID.

THE BILL WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE THIS FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 25) AND WILL BE INTRODUCED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 7.

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LATEST HK-REGISTERED CONTAINER SHIP WELCOMED

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THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR ALLAN PYRKE, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WELCOMED THE LATEST CONTAINER SHIP REGISTERED WITH THE HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER, MV TRADE COSMOS, TO HONG KONG.

THE TRADE COSMOS WHICH LEFT THE SHIPYARD IN EUROPE LAST MONTH ARRIVED AT HONG KONG LAST NIGHT.

BUILT IN THE FLENSBURG SHIPYARD, GERMANY, THE 28,892 GROSS REGISTERED TONNE VESSEL WAS OWNED BY THE TRADE COSMOS SHIPPING COMPANY LIMITED AND MANAGED BY THE WAH TUNG SHIPPING AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED.

THE SHIP IS THE SECOND VESSEL IN THE WORLD THAT ADOPTED THE ECOBOX DESIGN. THE DESIGN HAS VARIOUS ADVANTAGES AMONG WHICH IS LOW FUEL CONSUMPTION.

MR PYRKE WAS DELIGHTED THAT SUCH A VESSEL OF ADVANCED DESIGN HAD JOINED THE HONG KONG TONNAGE.

"THE TRADE COSMOS IS AN EXAMPLE OF QUALITY TONNAGE THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR," HE SAID.

"OUR AIM OF SETTING UP A QUALITY REGISTER IS SUPPORTED BY LOCAL SHIPOWNERS WHO WILL NOT TRADE OFF QUALITY BY A LOWERING OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS," MR PYRKE ADDED.

FIVE OTHER SHIPS TO BE MANAGED BY THE WAH TUNG SHIPPING AGENCY COMPANY ARE IN THE PROCESS OF JOINING THE HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER.

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SCHOOLS NEED PARENTAL SUPPORT

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THE SUCCESS OF MANY IMPROVEMENT MEASURES TAKEN BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DEPENDS ON THE SUPPORT OF PARENTS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY ARE PREPARED TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS.

SPEAKING AT THE SPEECH DAY OF ST STEPHEN'S GIRLS' COLLEGE TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR DOMINIC S W WONG, SAID: "EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS A MATTER NOT ONLY FOR SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, BUT ALSO ONE FOR PARENTS."

HE STRESSED THAT GOOD PARENTAL SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING IS A KEY FACTOR LEADING TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF SCHOOLS AND THE PROPER DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

HE COMMENDED ST STEPHEN'S GIRLS' COLLEGE FOR HAVING AN ACTIVE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION WITH A LONG HISTORY OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS AND PARENTS SINCE 1951.

MR WONG ALSO THANKED THE ASSOCIATION FOR ITS VERY POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION AND FOR THE SUPPORT IT HAD GIVEN TO THE DEPARTMENT BY PUBLISHING A BOOKLET ON HOME-SCHOOL CO-OPERATION, A MESSAGE THAT HE HAS BEEN DISSEMINATING REGULARLY IN THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS.

HE NOTED THAT THE COLLEGE HAD IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION BY MAKING LEARNING MORE PLEASURABLE AND EFFECTIVE. HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO DONE MUCH POSITIVE WORK AND PUBLICITY IN THIS REGARD IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

AT THE SAME TIME, MR WONG WAS GLAD TO KNOW THAT THE COLLEGE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT WAS NOW IN ITS FINAL PHASE WHICH, ON COMPLETION, NOT ONLY BENEFITED STUDENTS BUT ALSO YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEIGHBOURING AREAS BY PROVIDING MORE SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES.

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MONETARY AUTHORITY PUBLISHES QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY (HKMA) LAUNCHES TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ITS QUARTERLY BULLETIN, WHICH CARRIES AN OFFICIAL ASSESSMENT OF BANKING AND MONETARY ACTIVITIES.

THE INAUGURAL ISSUE CONTAINS NINE ARTICLES, INCLUDING REVIEWS OF THE BANKING SECTOR'S PROFIT IN THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS AND THE NEW REGIME FOR THE SUPERVISION OF LIQUIDITY, AS WELL AS DISCUSSIONS ON HONG KONG'S INTEREST RATE STRUCTURE AND HKMA'S REVISED MODE OF MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS.

THE DEBUT OF THE BULLETIN FOLLOWS THAT OF THE MONTHLY STATISTICAL BULLETIN IN SEPTEMBER.

WHILE THE MONTHLY BULLETIN COMPRISES STATISTICAL TABLES, THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN PROVIDES A FORUM FOR THE HKMA TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS AND ANALYSIS ON REGULATORY AND POLICY ISSUES.

THE LAUNCH OF BOTH PUBLICATIONS UNDERSCORES HKMA'S COMMITMENT TO GREATER OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY.

THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN WILL BE PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST AND NOVEMBER OF EACH YEAR. THE PUBLICATION, ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, MAY ALSO BE ORDERED FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS SECTION OF THE HKMA.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FREE COPIES OF THE QUARTERLY BULLETIN ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS AT HKMA'S RECEPTION DESK. A NEWS BRIEFING WILL BE HELD AT 2.30 PM ON 30TH FLOOR, 3 GARDEN ROAD TO INTRODUCE THE BULLETIN.

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STUDY HALL EXTERIOR DECLARED "DEEMED MONUMENT"

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THE EXTERIOR OF THE ENTRANCE HALL OF SHUT HING STUDY HALL AT TONG FONG TSUEN, PING SHAN, YUEN LONG, HAS BEEN DECLARED A "DEEMED MONUMENT" BY THE GOVERNOR.

THE SHUT HING STUDY HALL WAS BUILT IN THE 13TH YEAR OF TONGZHI REIGN (1874) IN THE LATE QING DYNASTY BY TANG KWAN-SHEK TO COMMEMORATE HIS FATHER TANG SHUT-HING.

THE TANGS OF PING SHAN HAVE BRANCHED OUT FROM KAM TIN AND HAVE SETTLED IN THE PING SHAN AREA SINCE THE 12TH CENTURY.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS OFFICE OF THE RECREATION AND CULTURE BRANCH TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THE STUDY HALL WAS OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE TYPE, BUILT BY CRAFTSMEN AND MASONS FROM GUANGDONG.

IT WAS ORIGINALLY A TWO-HALL BUILDING WITH A CENTRAL COURTYARD SEPARATED BY A SPLENDID ARCH.

THIS ELABORATELY BUILT STUDY HALL WAS UNFORTUNATELY DEMOLISHED IN 1977, LEAVING ONLY THE ENTRANCE HALL.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE OVERALL DECORATION OF THE REMAINING ENTRANCE HALL FULLY REFLECTS THE BYGONE SPLENDOR OF THE HISTORIC BUILDING.

"ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY IS THE ARTISTIC EXECUTION OF THE PAIR OF DOOR-GOD IMAGES WHICH ARE RATED BY MANY AS THE BEST FOUND IN HONG KONG SO FAR."

THE STRUCTURE AND DECORATIONS OF THE ENTRANCE HALL REMAIN IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORMS.

ALTHOUGH THE ENTRANCE HALL IS STRUCTURALLY SOUND, ITS DECORATION WORKS REQUIRE FULL RESTORATION TO BRING IT BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL SPLENDOR.

RESTORATION WORK IS NOW BEING CARRIED OUT AND IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED EARLY NEXT YEAR.

APART FROM THE ENTRANCE HALL OF THE SHUT HING STUDY HALL, A NUMBER OF HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN THE PING SHAN AREA HAVE ALSO BEEN DEEMED AS MONUMENTS.

THESE INCLUDE YU KIU ANCESTRAL HALL, KUNG TING STUDY HALL, CHING SHU HIN AND TSUI SHING LAU PAGODA WHICH WERE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN DECEMBER 1993 AS THE FIRST HERITAGE TRAIL IN HONG KONG.

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TWO GOVERNMENT LOTS TO LET

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THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCIES OF TWO LOTS OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE FIRST LOT, LOCATED IN AREA 19, LUEN WO HUI, FANLING, HAS AN AREA OF 9,350 SQUARE METRES FOR USE AS A CAR PARK.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

THE SECOND LOT IS SITUATED AT TSING KING ROAD, AREA 2, TSING YI. COVERING AN AREA OF 1,620 SQUARE METRES, THE LOT IS INTENDED FOR USE AS A PUBLIC FEE-PAYING CAR PARK FOR PRIVATE CAR AND LIGHT GOODS VEHICLES, EXCLUDING HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES, CONTAINER TRACTORS AND TRAILERS.

THE TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS, RENEWABLE QUARTERLY.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS FOR THE TWO LOTS IS NOON ON DECEMBER 9.

TENDER FORMS, TENDER NOTICES AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING; DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON AND THE NORTH AND KWAI TSING DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES.

TENDER PLANS CAN ALSO BE INSPECTED AT THE OFFICES.

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RENT CONTROL DIVISION ON MOVE

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THE RENT CONTROL DIVISION OF THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT WILL MOVE FROM HENNESSY CENTRE TO THIRD FLOOR, 111 LEIGHTON ROAD, CAUSEWAY BAY, HONG KONG ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 25).

THE NEW OFFICE IS ONLY A FEW MINUTES' WALK FROM HENNESSY CENTRE.

NORMAL BUSINESS WILL RESUME NEXT MONDAY (NOVEMBER 28).

THE MAIN TELEPHONE EXCHANGE NUMBERS ARE 805 7666 AND 805 7888. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES IS 805 7049.

THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL REMAIN IN THEIR PRESENT PREMISES AT HENNESSY CENTRE, 17TH FLOOR, 500 HENNESSY ROAD, CAUSEWAY BAY, HONG KONG.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1994

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NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF HUNG HOM CLINIC

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WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES AT THE HUNG HOM CLINIC OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN HUNG HOM WILL BE CHANGED.

THE NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE:-

* GENERAL OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT: 356 9281 (EXT 112)

* MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRE: 356 9323

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID THESE SERVICES COULD NO LONGER BE REACHED ON THE NUMBER 362 4173.

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HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION	TIME (HOURS)	CUMULATIVE CHANGE (\$ MILLION)
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OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,210	0930	+715
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,590	1000	+715
CHANGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO :		1100	+785
MONEY MARKET ACTIVITY	+485	1200	+785
LAF TODAY	-105	1500	+485
		1600	+485
LAF RATE 3.75% BID/5.75% OFFER	TW1 121.4	*-0.1*	23.11.94

HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY

EF BILLS

EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	4.80	18 MONTHS	2605	6.35	99.72	6.66
1 MONTH	4.84	23 MONTHS	3610	4.20	99.90	7.07
3 MONTHS	5.23	29 MONTHS	3704	6.15	97.60	7.37
6 MONTHS	5.61	36 MONTHS	3710	7.25	99.34	7.64
12 MONTHS	6.15	58 MONTHS	5909	7.45	97.46	8.25

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 19,946 MN

CLOSED 23 NOVEMBER 1994

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 842 8777

SUPPLEMENT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1994

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MOTION DEBATE ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION AT THE LEGCO SITTING TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

I WOULD LIKE TO FIRST OF ALL THANK ALL THE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SPOKEN AND THANK THEIR VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS DEBATE. THEY INDICATE ONCE AGAIN THE PRIORITY AND IMPORTANCE MEMBERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY ATTACH TO PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION. WE SHARE A LOT OF COMMON GROUND WITH MANY MEMBERS IN THIS DEBATE. IT IS INDEED GOVERNMENT'S AIM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION TO MATCH RISING COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS.

IMPROVEMENTS TO KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION SHOULD REMAIN NON-COMPULSORY AND THAT IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR. WITHIN THIS BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK, GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO A PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENTS WHICH AIM TO FACILITATE CHILDREN OF THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP TO HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION.

WE HAVE ALREADY DONE QUITE A LOT IN THIS DIRECTION. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS BY WAY OF REIMBURSEMENT OF RENTS AND RATES. TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR TEACHERS, BASIC AND ADVANCED TRAINING COURSES WERE ORGANISED, CURRICULUM GUIDELINES PRODUCED, AND NORMATIVE SALARY SCALES RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION BY KINDERGARTEN OPERATORS. LEGISLATION WAS ALSO INTRODUCED TO PROVIDE FOR A MINIMUM TEACHER TO PUPIL RATIO; AND A FEE REMISSION SCHEME INTRODUCED FOR NEEDY PARENTS. AS A RESULT OF THESE IMPROVEMENT MEASURES, THE WASTAGE OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY REDUCED, FROM 30% A FEW YEARS AGO TO LESS THAN 20% LAST YEAR.

BUT WE ACCEPT THAT WE NEED TO DO MORE. IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS YEAR'S POLICY ADDRESS AND IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE AD HOC SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION EARLIER THIS YEAR, GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON MORE INITIATIVES. THESE INCLUDE:

- (A) SPENDING 54% MORE ON THE FEE ASSISTANCE SCHEME TO ENABLE 4,000 MORE CHILDREN TO BENEFIT;
- (B) RAISING THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS FROM COMPLETION OF FORM THREE TO COMPLETION OF SECONDARY FIVE WITH AT LEAST TWO PASSES IN THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION;

/(C) SPENDING \$163M

- (C) SPENDING \$163M IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND TRAINING FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL TRAINING COURSES FOR 1,130 SERVING TEACHERS IN 1995-96, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW CERTIFICATE COURSE IN THE SAME YEAR. WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION ON THESE COURSES AND I WELCOME THE ASSURANCE GIVEN TO THIS COUNCIL BY THE HON SIMON IP IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INSTITUTE;
- (D) WE ALSO REQUIRE EACH KINDERGARTEN TO HAVE AT LEAST 40% OF THEIR TEACHERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED BASIC TRAINING BY SEPTEMBER 1995 AND BY SEPTEMBER 1997 WE WILL REQUIRE THAT TRAINED TEACHERS, AT LEAST 40% OF THE TEACHERS, SHOULD HAVE COMPLETED ADVANCED TRAINING.

IN ADDITION, WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO EXAMINE THE QUESTION OF DIRECTLY SUBSIDISING KINDERGARTENS AND TAKE A DECISION ON THIS MATTER IN 1995.

THIS LAST COMMITMENT HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF LIVELY DISCUSSION IN THIS COUNCIL AND THE WIDER EDUCATION COMMUNITY SINCE IT WAS ANNOUNCED.

THE CASE FOR INTRODUCING DIRECT SUBSIDY TO KINDERGARTENS HAS BEEN WELL ARGUED BY MEMBERS. AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROPOSAL IS TO ENABLE KINDERGARTENS TO PAY THEIR TRAINED TEACHERS AT SALARIES RECOMMENDED BY THE GOVERNMENT SO THAT THEY MAY RETAIN EXPERTISE, REDUCE WASTAGE, AND HENCE IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION. WE ACCEPT THE LOGIC OF THIS ARGUMENT. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE WIDE RANGE OF KINDERGARTENS IN OPERATION - HALF-DAY AND FULL DAY; PROFIT-MAKING AND NON-PROFIT-MAKING; AND THE WIDELY DIFFERENT LEVELS OF FEES BEING CHARGED - THE FORMULATION OF A SUITABLE SUBSIDY SCHEME IS A COMPLEX EXERCISE. AN EXERCISE NOT MADE EASIER BY THE FACT THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF KINDERGARTENS ARE NOT PAYING THEIR TRAINED TEACHERS RECOMMENDED SALARIES; NOT MADE EASIER BY THE FACT THAT INDIVIDUAL KINDERGARTEN FEES RANGE FROM A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS AT ONE END OF THE SPECTRUM TO A FEW THOUSAND DOLLARS AT THE OTHER END WITH VAST VARIATIONS IN BETWEEN; AND ABOVE ALL BY THE NEED TO TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE LEVELS OF FEES WHICH KINDERGARTEN OPERATORS WOULD HAVE TO CHARGE IN ORDER TO PAY THEIR TRAINED TEACHERS AT RECOMMENDED SALARIES. ALSO ANOTHER AREA WE MUST EXAMINE CAREFULLY IS THE IMPLICATION OF SUCH SUBSIDY ON THE OPERATION OF OUR CHILD CARE CENTRES, AN IMPORTANT ASPECT WHICH MEMBERS WOULD NOT WISH US TO OVERLOOK.

WE ARE AT THE MOMENT EXAMINING THIS COMPLEX SUBJECT URGENTLY WITH A VIEW TO DEVISING AN APPROPRIATE AND WORKABLE SUBSIDY SCHEME AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. THEREAFTER, PROVIDED THAT THE NECESSARY POLICY APPROVAL CAN BE OBTAINED AND FUNDING SECURED, WE HOPE TO MAKE A START ON THE SCHEME IN SEPTEMBER 1995. THIS IS THE BEST WE CAN PLAN TO ACHIEVE UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

UNIFICATION OF PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES

I NOW TURN TO THE PROPOSAL TO UNIFY PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES.

THE QUESTION OF UNIFICATION OF KINDERGARTENS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES WAS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN OCTOBER 1989 IN THE CONTEXT OF EXAMINING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 2. THE VIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATION THEN WAS THAT CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS SERVED DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS. IN THE CASE OF CHILD CARE CENTRES, THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO PROVIDE CARE FOR AND TO MEET THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF THE VERY YOUNG CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS CANNOT LOOK AFTER THEM DURING THE DAY. IN THE CASE OF KINDERGARTENS, THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, ALBEIT OF AN INFORMAL AND NON-ACADEMIC KIND. THIS ROLE DIFFERENTIATION REMAINS A REALITY AT PRESENT.

TO FOLLOW UP THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN EDUCATION COMMISSION REPORT NO. 2, A WORKING PARTY WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1990, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, TO ADVISE ON IMPROVEMENTS TO KINDERGARTENS AND ON THE PRACTICALITIES OF UNIFYING ALL PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES. AS STATED IN ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE, PRIORITY WAS GIVEN TO IMPROVEMENTS TO KINDERGARTENS AS THE LATTER AIM IS A LONG-TERM GOAL. AS A RESULT, THE WORKING PARTY HAS YET TO LOOK AT THE PRACTICALITIES OF UNIFICATION.

UNIFICATION OF PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES IN TERMS OF COMMON REGULATORY STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS, FINANCING MODE, STAFF QUALIFICATION AND SALARY, STAFF TRAINING PROGRAMME AND CURRICULUM WILL HAVE WIDE IMPLICATIONS ON BOTH TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS. THIS IS RECOGNISED BY SUCCESSIVE WORKING PARTIES APPOINTED TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE. INVARIABLY, THEY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT UNIFICATION SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH GREAT CARE AND THAT IT SHOULD BE A LONG-TERM GOAL. IRRESPECTIVE OF THESE PAST STUDIES, WE SEE THE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS DIFFICULT ISSUE EARLY AS WE SEEK FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE KINDERGARTEN SECTOR. WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE PROBLEM. IN THIS REGARD, THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AD HOC SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION SHOULD SERVE AS A GOOD STARTING POINT. AS MEMBERS MAY BE AWARE, THIS SUB-COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED THAT PRIORITY CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON CURRICULUM COMPRISING BOTH EDUCATION AND CARE; THE PROVISION OF COMMON TEACHER TRAINING COURSES; AND THE NARROWING OF THE GAP IN THE STANDARDS OF PROVISION APPLICABLE TO BOTH KINDERGARTENS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES. THESE SOUND REASONABLE STARTING POINTS. I SHALL THEREFORE ASK THE SAID WORKING PARTY TO START WORK ON THESE ISSUES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, WE SHALL STRENGTHEN THE WORKING PARTY BY APPOINTING TO IT FOUR ADDITIONAL MEMBERS, NAMELY -

- * ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AS CO-CHAIRMAN;
- * TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CHILD CARE SECTOR; AND
- * ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH.

/THESE ADDITIONAL

THESE ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS, PLUS THE EXISTING MEMBERS WHICH INCLUDE ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH AND TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE KINDERGARTEN OPERATORS, SHOULD PROVIDE THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE REQUIRED TO TAKE THIS IMPORTANT TASK FORWARD. BUT I HAVE TO POINT OUT ONCE AGAIN THAT UNIFICATION OF THESE TWO TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS IS A VERY COMPLICATED SUBJECT AFFECTING THOUSANDS OF STAFF AND MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND CHILDREN. WE MUST NOT THEREFORE SACRIFICE PRUDENCE AT THE EXPENSE OF SPEED. I EXPECT THE WORKING PARTY TO SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE AND TO MYSELF BEFORE THE END OF 1995.

MR PRESIDENT, WHILE WE ARE WORKING AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN ON THE QUESTION OF DIRECT SUBSIDY, A POLICY DECISION HAS YET TO BE TAKEN AND THE FUNDING HAS YET TO BE SECURED. SO WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION IS IN PRINCIPLE IN SUPPORT OF MEASURES TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION AND WE HAVE ALSO ACCEPTED THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF UNIFICATION OF KINDERGARTENS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES, IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR US TO COMMIT THE GOVERNMENT TO THIS MOTION AT THE PRESENT STAGE. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS WILL THEREFORE ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON THIS MOTION. THANK YOU.

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MARINE PARKS BILL INTRODUCED

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE MARINE PARKS BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THAT THE MARINE PARKS BILL TO BE READ THE SECOND TIME.

THE AIM OF THE MARINE PARKS BILL IS TO PROTECT VALUABLE SEA AREAS IDENTIFIED AS ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT BY DESIGNATING THEM AS MARINE PARKS OR MARINE RESERVES. MEMBERS WERE BRIEFED LAST OCTOBER ON THIS PROPOSAL AFTER THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD AGREED TO IT IN PRINCIPLE AND HAD ALSO AGREED THAT NEW LEGISLATION SHOULD BE PREPARED. ACCORDINGLY, THE BILL HAS BEEN PREPARED.

UNDER THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES WILL BE THE AUTHORITY WHO WILL CONTROL AND MANAGE MARINE PARKS AND MARINE RESERVES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COUNTRY PARKS BOARD. BECAUSE OF THIS EXTENSION OF ITS ROLE, THE BOARD WILL BE RENAMED AS THE COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD.

THE PROCEDURES FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARINE PARKS OR MARINE RESERVES UNDER THE NEW LAW WILL BE SIMILAR TO THE PROCEDURES SET OUT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF COUNTRY PARKS UNDER THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE. THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL WILL DIRECT THE AUTHORITY TO PREPARE A DRAFT MAP OF A PROPOSED MARINE PARK OR MARINE RESERVE. THE AUTHORITY WILL PUBLISH THE NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE AND NEWSPAPERS, AND MAKE THE DRAFT MAP AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.

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FROM THE TIME OF PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE UP TO WHEN THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPROVES OR REJECTS THE DRAFT MAP, THE NEW LAW WILL NOT ALLOW NEW DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN A PROPOSED MARINE PARK OR MARINE RESERVE WITHOUT THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY. AFTER THE AREA IS APPROVED AND DESIGNATED, DEVELOPMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE CONTROLLED.

THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL PROVIDE FOR PROCEDURES FOR OBJECTIONS. ANYONE WHO OBJECTS TO A DRAFT MAP MAY SEND A WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE AUTHORITY WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE. HEARINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE BOARD. WITHIN A 6 MONTH PERIOD STARTING FROM THE LAST DAY ALLOWED FOR OBJECTIONS, THE AUTHORITY WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE DRAFT MAP TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL, ACCOMPANIED BY A SCHEDULE OF OBJECTIONS AND THE AUTHORITY'S REPRESENTATIONS, AS WELL AS A SCHEDULE OF AMENDMENTS MADE PURSUANT TO DIRECTIONS FROM THE BOARD TO MEET OBJECTIONS HEARD.

AFTER A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, THE AUTHORITY WILL BE REQUIRED TO PLACE A NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE, NOTIFYING EITHER A REFUSAL TO APPROVE OR THE DEPOSIT OF THE APPROVED MAP.

THERE WILL BE PROVISIONS FOR THE MAKING OF REGULATIONS FOR THE PROPER CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PARKS AND MARINE RESERVES. IT IS INTENDED THAT NO FISHING ACTIVITIES WILL BE ALLOWED IN MARINE RESERVES. IF THIS RESULTS IN LOSS OF FISHING GROUNDS, EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE TO ANY FISHERMEN AFFECTED. THE AUTHORITY MAY GRANT A LICENCE OR PERMIT FOR FISHING AND OTHER CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES WITH OR WITHOUT CONDITIONS.

MR PRESIDENT, THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL ENABLE CONSERVATION OF IMPORTANT MARINE AREAS IN HONG KONG AND WILL PROVIDE A LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPORTANT MARINE RESOURCES. THIS IS A PIECE OF LEGISLATION THAT SHOULD BE WELCOME BY ALL. IT IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT - NOT ONLY FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT BUT ALSO FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. IN PREPARING THE DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS BILL, WE HAVE CONSULTED MEMBERS OF GREEN GROUPS AND OTHER INTEREST GROUPS AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES. WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED MARINE PARKS PROGRAMME.

AFTER THE BILL'S PASSAGE BY THIS COUNCIL, IT IS OUR INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAMME IMMEDIATELY. IT WILL BEGIN WITH THE DESIGNATION OF TWO MARINE PARKS AT HOI HA WAN AND YAN CHAU TONG AND ONE MARINE RESERVE AT CAPE D' AGUILAR.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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DUMPING AT SEA BILL INTRODUCED

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DUMPING AT SEA BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE DUMPING AT SEA BILL. THE BILL SEEKS TO LOCALISE THE PROVISIONS OF THE DUMPING AT SEA ACT 1974 (OVERSEAS TERRITORIES) ORDER 1975 SO THAT EXISTING CONTROL ON MARINE DUMPING ACTIVITIES CAN CONTINUE AFTER 30 JUNE 1997. IT ALSO ADDRESSES DEFICIENCIES IN THE OPERATION OF THE EXISTING CONTROL SCHEME AND THE NEEDS TO INCREASE PENALTIES.

THE DUMPING OF WASTE AT SEA IS GOVERNED BY THE LONDON CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION OF MARINE POLLUTION BY THE DUMPING OF WASTES AT SEA, AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY EXTENDED TO HONG KONG BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT THROUGH AN OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ORDER IN 1975. SINCE THEN HONG KONG HAS BEEN CARRYING OUT ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE LONDON CONVENTION BY APPLYING THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDER. THE BILL ENABLES US TO REPLACE THE 1975 ORDER BY LOCAL LEGISLATION.

THE BILL CONTAINS SEVERAL MAJOR PROVISIONS. PART IV OF THE BILL SPECIFIES THAT THE WASTE PRODUCER SHOULD APPLY FOR A PERMIT FROM THE AUTHORITY BEFORE COMMISSIONING A DUMPING OR INCINERATION ACT AT SEA. THE OPERATOR ENGAGED BY THE WASTE PRODUCER TO CARRY OUT THE DUMPING SHOULD NOT TAKE ON BOARD WASTE FOR DUMPING UNLESS HE IS SATISFIED THAT THE WASTE PRODUCER HAS A PERMIT AS REQUIRED. PART VIII OF THE BILL PROVIDES FOR A RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OR DIRECTION OF THE AUTHORITY.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO ADDRESS SEVERAL DEFICIENCIES IN THE OPERATION OF THE CONTROL SCHEME BASED ON THE 1975 ORDER, AND TO INCREASE PENALTIES.

FIRSTLY, PART V OF THE BILL ENABLES THE AUTHORITY TO SERVE ABATEMENT NOTICES IN RESPECT OF MARINE POLLUTION RESULTING FROM DREDGING, BORROWING, MARINE STOCKPILING AND OTHER MARITIME CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE ABATEMENT NOTICE WILL BE AN OFFENCE. WE WILL PROMULGATE A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM ESTABLISHING THE PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING ABATEMENT NOTICES. WE INTEND TO IMPLEMENT THESE CONTROLS WITHIN TWO YEARS OF THE BILL BECOMING LAW AND AFTER CONSULTATION WITH AFFECTED PARTIES.

SECONDLY, POWERS ARE NOW PROVIDED IN PART VI OF THE BILL TO ENABLE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST IMPENDING OFFENCES. FOR INSTANCE, IN CASES WHERE A BARGE IS LOADED WITH WASTE MATERIALS WITHOUT A DUMPING PERMIT AND WITHOUT REASONABLE EXPLANATION THAT THE MATERIALS ARE INTENDED FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN DUMPING, THE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO STOP AND DETAIN A VESSEL IN ORDER TO MAKE INVESTIGATIONS AND TO PREVENT AN OFFENCE FROM BEING COMMITTED.

/THIRDLY, CLAUSE

THIRDLY, CLAUSE 25 OF THE BILL RAISES THE LEVEL OF THE EXISTING PENALTIES FROM \$5,000 PLUS SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT TO \$200,000 PLUS SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT. THIS INCREASE IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENCE AND WILL BRING THE PENALTIES IN LINE WITH THOSE UNDER OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION, SUCH AS THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE AND THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE.

MR PRESIDENT, THE BILL AIMS TO ENABLE EXISTING CONTROL ON DUMPING OF WASTE AT SEA TO CONTINUE AFTER 30 JUNE 1997. AT THE SAME TIME IT ADDRESSES DEFICIENCIES IN THE EXISTING CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS AND INCREASES PENALTIES. I COMMEND THE BILL TO MEMBERS FOR THEIR FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION.

THANK YOU, MR PRESIDENT.

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EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 INTRODUCED

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994.

THIS BILL SEEKS TO IMPROVE THE AMOUNT OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT FOR LONG SERVING WORKERS, AND TO RECTIFY SOME AMBIGUITIES IN THE PROVISIONS FOR MATERNITY LEAVE AND SICKNESS ALLOWANCE UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

A BILL SERVING SIMILAR PURPOSES WAS FIRST INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL ON 15 DECEMBER 1993. IT WAS DEFEATED AT ITS THIRD READING ON 6 JULY 1994. THE ADMINISTRATION UNDERTOOK TO CONSULT THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD AGAIN AND TO SUBMIT A NEW BILL TO THE COUNCIL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE PRESENT BILL INCORPORATES MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSAL MADE IN THE PREVIOUS BILL IN RESPECT OF AMENDMENTS TO SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT PROVISIONS. THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD HAS ENDORSED THE REVISED PROPOSAL BY CONSENSUS.

AT PRESENT, AN EMPLOYEE'S ENTITLEMENT TO SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT IS CALCULATED AT THE RATE OF TWO-THIRDS OF A MONTH'S WAGES FOR EACH YEAR OF SERVICE, SUBJECT TO A MAXIMUM LIMIT OF 12 MONTHS' WAGES OR \$180,000, WHICHEVER IS THE LESS. THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS THE EFFECT OF LIMITING THE RECKONABLE SERVICE OF AN EMPLOYEE TO 18 YEARS.

/TO ENABLE

TO ENABLE LONG SERVING EMPLOYEES TO EARN SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT BEYOND 18 YEARS, WE PROPOSED TO REMOVE THE CEILING OF 12 MONTHS' AGGREGATE WAGES, BUT THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT OF \$180,000 WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. THIS MAXIMUM AMOUNT WOULD BE REVIEWED PERIODICALLY, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT INFLATION AND GENERAL WAGE MOVEMENT. TO CUSHION THE FINANCIAL IMPACT ON EMPLOYERS, WE ALSO PROPOSE TO RECOGNIZE HALF OF AN EMPLOYEE'S SERVICE OVER AND ABOVE 24 YEARS ACCRUED BEFORE THE AMENDMENT BILL COMES INTO OPERATION WHEN CALCULATING SEVERANCE PAYMENT AND LONG SERVICE PAYMENT. THIS IS A FURTHER IMPROVEMENT TO THE ENTITLEMENT OF LONG SERVING EMPLOYEES AS THE PREVIOUS BILL ONLY PROPOSED THAT HALF OF AN EMPLOYEE'S SERVICE BEYOND 18 YEARS SHOULD BE COUNTED. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD INCREASE THE TOTAL WAGE BILL OF EMPLOYERS BY 0.033% IN 1994.

AT PRESENT, A FEMALE EMPLOYEE WHO HAS BEEN EMPLOYED BY THE SAME EMPLOYER UNDER A CONTINUOUS CONTRACT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN 26 WEEKS SHALL BE ENTITLED TO MATERNITY LEAVE. HOWEVER, THE LAW IS SILENT ON HOW TO COUNT THE 26 WEEKS WHEN THE PREGNANT EMPLOYEE IS ABOUT TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE. WE PROPOSE TO REMOVE THIS AMBIGUITY BY SPECIFYING IN THE LAW THAT THE 26-WEEK PERIOD SHOULD BE COUNTED BACKWARD FROM THE EXPECTED DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE. TO IMPROVE PROTECTION TO PREGNANT EMPLOYEES, WE ALSO PROPOSE TO MAKE LATE PAYMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE PAY AN OFFENCE LIABLE TO A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$10,000.

UNDER THE EXISTING EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, AN EMPLOYER IS NOT LIABLE TO PAY SICKNESS ALLOWANCE TO AN EMPLOYEE UNLESS THE DAY OF SICKNESS IS SPECIFIED IN AN APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER. HOWEVER, A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY A REGISTERED DENTIST IS NOT REGARDED AS AN APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE. AN EMPLOYEE HAVING ENCOUNTERED A DENTAL INJURY OR RECEIVED A DENTAL SURGICAL OPERATION REQUIRING A FEW DAYS' SICK LEAVE IS AT PRESENT UNABLE TO RECEIVE SICKNESS ALLOWANCE. TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION, WE ALSO PROPOSE TO INCLUDE THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY A REGISTERED DENTIST AS A VALID DOCUMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLAIMING SICKNESS ALLOWANCE.

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EMPLOYEES RETRAINING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 INTRODUCED

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994.

THIS BILL SEEKS TO INTRODUCE A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING ORDINANCE TO BRING IT IN LINE WITH THE PRESENT NEED.

/WHEN THE

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WHEN THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED TWO YEARS AGO, THE EMPLOYEE RETRAINING BOARD HAS NOT YET COME INTO EXISTENCE. THE ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES OF VETTING THE APPLICANTS FOR RETRAINING HAVE THEREFORE BEEN PLACED ON THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR. NOW THAT THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BOARD IS IN FULL OPERATION, WE PROPOSE THAT THE DUTY OF VETTING THE APPLICANTS FOR RETRAINING SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD, WHO MAY, IF NECESSARY, DELEGATE THIS POWER TO THE STAFF OF THE TRAINING BODIES OR TRAINING PROVIDERS.

WE ALSO PROPOSE TO PROVIDE FOR "SUPPLEMENTARY RETRAINING PROGRAMMES" IN THE BILL TO ENABLE THE BOARD TO INTRODUCE SUITABLE RETRAINING PROGRAMMES SUCH AS THE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING SCHEME.

OTHER TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS PROPOSED IN THE BILL SERVE TO CLARIFY CERTAIN DEFINITIONS. THESE AMENDMENTS INCLUDE EXTENDING THE MEANING OF "EMPLOYEE" TO COVER HOUSEWIVES AND DISABLED PERSONS IN SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT WHO MAY NOT FALL WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF AN "EMPLOYEE" UNDER THE EXISTING EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE AND ALSO AMENDING THE CHINESE TITLE OF THE BOARD.

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MOTION ON CNTA REORGANISATION

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN MOVING A MOTION ON THE REORGANISATION OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

MR PRESIDENT,

I RISE TO MOVE THE MOTION STANDING IN MY NAME.

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE REORGANISATION OF THE CITY NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION INTO THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH AND THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL ON 18 NOVEMBER 1994, A NUMBER OF MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE NECESSARY TO EFFECT THE TRANSFER OF CERTAIN FUNCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE FORMER REGIONAL SECRETARY (HONG KONG KOWLOON), AND THE FORMER REGIONAL SECRETARY (NEW TERRITORIES), TO THE NEW HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, THE DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS.

MR PRESIDENT, I BEG TO MOVE.

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VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES TO BE REVIEWED

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN BARROW AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : REGARDING THE PROCESSING OF VISAS FOR VISITORS FROM OVERSEAS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) WHAT STEPS WILL THE GOVERNMENT TAKE TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSING OF THESE APPLICATIONS;
- (B) OF THE REASONS WHY THE NATIONALS OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES E.G. LEBANON, CAN OBTAIN VISAS TO THE UK IN 6 HOURS WHILE IT TAKES 6 WEEKS TO OBTAIN VISAS TO HONG KONG?
- (C) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER ISSUING NEW PLEDGES WITH IMPROVED PERFORMANCE; AND
- (D) WHETHER IT WILL REVIEW FURTHER ABOLITION OF VISIT VISA REQUIREMENTS?

REPLY:

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) HONG KONG HAS A LIBERAL VISA REGIME. NATIONALS FROM OVER 170 COUNTRIES DO NOT REQUIRE VISAS FOR SHORT VISITS TO HONG KONG. WHERE VISIT VISAS ARE REQUIRED, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT USUALLY CAN ISSUE VISAS WITHIN FOUR WEEKS, ALTHOUGH SIX WEEKS IS NORMAL WHERE MORE THOROUGH SECURITY CHECKS ARE REQUIRED. WE DO REGULARLY SEEK WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR EFFICIENCY IN VISA PROCESSING. FOR EXAMPLE, WE PLAN TO ISSUE MACHINE READABLE PERMITS FOR TAIWAN VISITORS AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, TO REDUCE PROCESSING AND CLEARANCE TIME. WE PLAN TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR VISIT VISAS DIRECT FROM OVERSEAS APPLICANTS IN MID-1995; THIS WILL ENABLE THE PROCESSING TIME TO BE SHORTENED.
- (B) I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DIFFERENCE IN TERMS OF PROCESSING TIME BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HONG KONG IS NOT AS GREAT AS THE QUESTION SUGGESTS. THE UNITED KINGDOM GENERALLY TAKES BETWEEN TWO AND THREE WEEKS TO PROCESS A VISA, BUT THIS CAN EXTEND UP TO SIX WEEKS IN THE CASE OF CERTAIN MIDDLE EAST NATIONALS. THIS IS SIMILAR TO THE LENGTH OF TIME IT PRESENTLY TAKES US TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS FROM THOSE MIDDLE EAST NATIONALS WHOSE COUNTRIES FAIL TO CONTROL TERRORISM.

/(C) THE DIRECTOR

(C) THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION HAS ESTABLISHED A USERS' COMMITTEE. THIS COMMITTEE MONITORS AND REVIEWS THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DEPARTMENT. NEW TARGETS ARE SET WHERE APPROPRIATE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PERFORMANCE PLEDGE FOR 1995 WILL INCLUDE, INTER ALIA, AN IMPROVED PROCESSING TIME FOR THE ISSUE OF VISAS AND VISIT PERMITS.

(D) OUR VISA POLICY IS REVIEWED REGULARLY, HAVING REGARD TO OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SECURITY FACTORS. CHANGES IN THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SPECIFIC COUNTRY WILL BE MADE IF WARRANTED. WE ARE INTENDING TO REVIEW THE PRESENT REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES, SUCH AS LEBANON. BUT I MAKE NO COMMITMENT SUCH A REVIEW WILL IN FACT LEAD TO AN EASING OF REQUIREMENTS.

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WEST KOWLOON DRAINAGE SYSTEM

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON SELINA CHOW LIANG SHUK-YEE AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN SERIOUS FLOODING OCCURRED IN WEST KOWLOON AFTER TORRENTIAL RAINS. THE DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS INDICATED THAT IT WILL NOT BE UNTIL DECEMBER 1995 AT THE EARLIEST BEFORE THERE IS ANY HOPE OF RESOLVING THE FLOODING PROBLEM IN THE DISTRICT. THE REASON IS THAT THE DRAINAGE CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM HAS BEEN REDUCED AS A RESULT OF LARGE SCALE RECLAMATION WORKS BEING CARRIED OUT IN WEST KOWLOON. AS THE GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED TO EXAMINE THIS PROBLEM IN JUNE THIS YEAR, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

(A) WHETHER THE DRAINAGE PROBLEM HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AT THE TIME OF STUDYING THE RECLAMATION WORKS IN WEST KOWLOON : WHETHER THE PRESENT SITUATION IS DUE TO AN UNDERESTIMATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM; OR WHETHER THE WORKS STILL WENT AHEAD NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THE PROBLEM COULD NOT BE RESOLVED WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME;

(B) OF THE REASONS WHY STUDIES ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM WERE NOT UNDERTAKEN UNTIL JUNE THIS YEAR AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RECLAMATION WORKS; AND

/(C) WHETHER THE

- (C) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL, IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE GAINED, MAKE APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS WELL BEFORE ANY RECLAMATION WORKS ARE TO COMMENCE IN THE FUTURE?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

THE HONOURABLE MEMBER SUGGESTS THAT THE DRAINAGE CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM HAS BEEN REDUCED AS A RESULT OF LARGE SCALE RECLAMATION WORKS BEING CARRIED OUT IN WEST KOWLOON. THIS ASSUMPTION IS NOT CORRECT, SINCE THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE RECLAMATIONS HAS AT ALL TIME BEEN PREDICATED BY THE NEED TO AVOID REDUCING THE EXISTING DRAINAGE SYSTEM.

THE PROBLEM OF EXISTING DRAINAGE HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. HOWEVER, THE DRAINAGE PIPES AND CHANNELS IN THE WEST KOWLOON AREAS WERE BUILT MANY YEARS AGO, THEY ARE DETERIORATING, AND HAVE INADEQUATE CAPACITY TO CATER FOR INCREASING URBANIZATION. EVEN WITHOUT THE RECLAMATION WORKS IN WEST KOWLOON, THESE AREAS ARE AT RISK OF FLOODING UNDER EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY RAINFALL SUCH AS WE HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS YEAR.

WHEN THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION PROJECT WAS CONCEIVED, THE PROBLEM OF THE EXISTING DRAINAGE CAPACITY DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF THE RECLAMATION WAS NOT IGNORED OR UNDERESTIMATED. THE EFFECT OF THE PROJECT ON THE EXISTING DRAINAGE SYSTEM WAS IDENTIFIED IN 1990 IN THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION FEASIBILITY STUDY, WELL BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RECLAMATION. DETAILED STUDIES THEN FOLLOWED AND ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS WERE DEVISED. THE AIM WAS TO MAINTAIN AT LEAST THE EXISTING CAPACITY OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM AND, WHERE SITE CONDITIONS PERMITTED, TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY FURTHER. THE FIRST CONTRACT FOR THESE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT WORKS WAS AWARDED THREE YEARS AGO, AND BEFORE THE NEXT RAINY SEASON ARRIVES, A LARGE PART OF THESE WORKS WILL BE COMPLETE THUS REDUCING THE RISK OF SERIOUS FLOODING IN THESE AREAS.

THE CONSULTANCY STUDY REFERRED TO BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER THAT STARTED IN JUNE THIS YEAR IS SEPARATE FROM THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH RECLAMATION WORKS. IT IS AN INVESTIGATION, WHICH MAY RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS BEING PROPOSED TO BRING THE WHOLE OF THE OLD SYSTEM UP TO MODERN STANDARDS. WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERING WHETHER SIMILAR INVESTIGATIONS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE TERRITORY AS PART OF THE CONTINUING PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE OUR DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE.

FINALLY, PRESIDENT MAY I SAY THAT GOVERNMENT HAS GAINED VALUABLE EXPERIENCE FROM THE RECENT LARGE-SCALE RECLAMATION PROJECTS. LET US REMEMBER, DURING THESE FEW YEARS OF PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENTS TOTAL AREA RECLAIMED AMOUNTS TO AN INCREASE OF SOME 35% OF ALL PREVIOUS RECLAMATIONS. OUR TECHNIQUES FOR ASSESSING THE DRAINAGE IMPACT OF A RECLAMATION PROJECT ON ITS SURROUNDING AREA HAVE BEEN IMPROVING, ALONG WITH OUR ASSESSMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND THE TRAFFIC IMPACTS. LEARNING FROM THE RESULTS THUS FAR APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO COUNTERACT SUCH ADVERSE IMPACTS WILL BE UTILISED IN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BRING ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FUTURE. THANK YOU.

KOWLOON MOTOR BUS PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR HAIDER BARMA, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WHEN THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY (KMB) RAISED ITS FARES LAST TIME, THE GOVERNMENT UNDERTOOK TO REVIEW (I) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INCOME ARISING FROM LAND SALES OF FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES AND THEIR FARE ADJUSTMENTS; AND (II) THE RENEWAL OF THE FRANCHISE OF KMB UPON ITS EXPIRY IN 1997 AND THE RELATED PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME. IN THIS CONNECTION, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) OF THE PROGRESS OF THE TWO REVIEWS MENTIONED ABOVE; AND
- (B) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSULT THE PUBLIC WIDELY ON THE FINDINGS OF THESE REVIEWS?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

IN APPROVING KMB'S FARE INCREASE IN MARCH 1994, THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL DIRECTED THAT, IN PROCESSING FUTURE APPLICATIONS FOR BUS FARE INCREASES, THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LAND SALE PROCEEDS OF FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES. THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ALSO ASKED THE ADMINISTRATION TO CONSIDER ABOLISHING KMB'S PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS COMMENCED A REVIEW AND HAS STARTED DISCUSSION WITH THE FRANCHISED BUS OPERATORS CONCERNED. OUR INTENTION IS THAT WHEN BUS DEPOT SITES ARE SOLD, A PORTION OF THE PROFIT SHOULD GO TOWARDS A FARE STABILITY FUND. SINCE THIS EXERCISE INVOLVES LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES ORDINANCE, IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO COMPLETE BUT I EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO INTRODUCE A BILL TO THIS COUNCIL IN APRIL 1995 WITH A VIEW TO ITS ENACTMENT DURING THE CURRENT SESSION. IN THE MEANTIME I CAN ASSURE HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT CONSIDER ANY FURTHER APPLICATIONS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF DEPOT SITES UNTIL THIS EXERCISE HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

/MEMBERS WILL

MEMBERS WILL RECALL THAT AMONG THE 4 FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES, ONLY KMB IS STILL SUBJECT TO A FORMAL PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME. THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION IS TO ABOLISH THIS SCHEME FOR KMB AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE SCHEME IS ENSHRINED IN THE KMB FRANCHISE, WE CANNOT ABOLISH IT UNILATERALLY. WE HAVE STARTED DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH KMB. WHILST THE SCHEME PERMITS A MAXIMUM RATE OF RETURN OF 16% ON AVERAGE NET FIXED ASSETS, THIS DOES NOT GUARANTEE SUCH A LEVEL OF RETURN FOR THE COMPANY. THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, KMB FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS WERE DETERMINED ACCORDING TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS SUCH AS PERFORMANCE, COMMITMENT TO FURTHER INVESTMENT IN SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS, OPERATING COSTS, INFLATION LEVELS AND PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY. THESE FACTORS WILL CONTINUE TO BE ADOPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION IN ASSESSING FUTURE FARE INCREASE APPLICATIONS.

MR PRESIDENT, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONSULT THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE TRANSPORT PANEL OF THIS COUNCIL ON PROPOSALS TO AMEND THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICES ORDINANCE TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES OF LAND SALE PROFITS AND ABOLITION OF THE PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME.

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HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLATS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT AND A REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : ACCORDING TO THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR GREEN FORM APPLICANTS OF HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME (HOS) FLATS, SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED, INTER ALIA, TO SURRENDER THEIR EXISTING PUBLIC RENTAL FLATS UPON OCCUPATION OF HOS FLATS. WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL -

- (A) OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOS FLATS (INCLUDING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME FLATS) PRODUCED SINCE 1978, WHEN THE SCHEME WAS FIRST INTRODUCED, AND THE TIME THE MOST RECENT PHASE OF HOS FLATS WAS PUT ON SALE; HOW MANY OF THESE FLATS HAVE NOT BEEN SOLD AND WHAT MEASURES DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE TO ENSURE THAT FULL USE IS MADE OF THOSE FLATS WHICH REMAIN UNSOLD;
- (B) OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC RENTAL FLATS REPOSSESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE SAME PERIOD, AND WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN MEASURES TO CLOSELY MONITOR THE OPERATION OF THE WHOLE SET OF PROCEDURES AND FORMALITIES RELATING TO THE SURRENDER OF SUCH FLATS; AND

/(C) WHETHER THE

- (C) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF ANY GREEN FORM APPLICANTS WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN HOS FLATS FOR YEARS WITHOUT SURRENDERING THEIR PUBLIC RENTAL FLATS AND WHO CONTINUE TO PAY MONTHLY RENTS TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT?

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME (HOS) IN 1978 UP TO THE MOST RECENT PHASE 16A, A TOTAL OF SOME 200,800 FLATS HAVE BEEN PUT UP FOR SALE, INCLUDING HOS, PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME, AND THE MIDDLE INCOME HOUSING SCHEME. ALL THE FLATS HAVE BEEN SOLD.
- (B) A TOTAL OF SOME 73,400 FLATS HAVE BEEN SOLD TO SITTING TENANTS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO SURRENDER THEIR RENTAL UNITS TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY. THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT CLOSELY MONITORS THE SITUATION WHEN A TENANT IS SUCCESSFUL IN HIS APPLICATION TO BUY A HOS/PSPS FLAT TO ENSURE THAT THE RENTAL FLAT WILL BE RECOVERED. THE TENANT PURCHASER IS REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE TO SURRENDER HIS RENTAL UNIT WITHIN TWO MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF TAKING OVER THE HOS FLAT.
- (C) NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS AWARE OF ANY SUCCESSFUL GREEN FORM APPLICANTS WHO HAVE BEEN LIVING IN HOS FLATS FOR YEARS WITHOUT SURRENDERING THEIR PUBLIC RENTAL FLATS.

TRANSPARENT VOTER REGISTER FACILITATES PUBLIC SCRUTINY

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG YING-YEN AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR NICHOLAS NG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION WILL BE INTRODUCING NEW REGULATIONS REGARDING REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS FOR THE NINE ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES IN THE 1995 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTION. UNDER THESE NEW REGULATIONS, THE PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF REGISTERED ELECTORS WILL BE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, EMPLOYERS AND OTHER GROUPINGS AND WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION SO THAT THE ACCURACY OF THE PARTICULARS OF ELECTORS CAN BE MONITORED BY THE PUBLIC. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL HOW IT CAN ON THE ONE HAND ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC TO FULFIL THEIR CIVIC DUTY AND COME FORWARD TO REGISTER AS ELECTORS, AND ON THE OTHER ENSURE THAT IN MAKING PUBLIC THE PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF ELECTORS, THE INDIVIDUAL ELECTORS' RIGHT TO PRIVACY IS SAFEGUARDED?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT, IN CONNECTION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER 1995, THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION HAS TO DEVISE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS FOR THE NINE NEW FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES. THE COMMISSION'S OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AS SIMPLE AND USER-FRIENDLY AS POSSIBLE, SO AS TO ENCOURAGE AND ENABLE ELIGIBLE PERSONS TO FULFIL THEIR CIVIC DUTY AND REGISTER AS ELECTORS IN THE NINE NEW FCS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE COMMISSION HAS TO ENSURE THAT THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THE VOTER REGISTER IS TRANSPARENT ENOUGH TO FACILITATE PUBLIC SCRUTINY IN ORDER TO PREVENT ABUSE.

THE SIMPLE REGISTRATION PROCESS INVOLVES THE REGISTRATION OFFICER (RO) WRITING TO EMPLOYERS REQUESTING THEM TO PROVIDE HIM WITH THE NAMES AND IDENTITY CARD NUMBERS OF THEIR EMPLOYEES AS OF A CERTAIN DATE. THE RO WOULD ALSO SEEK CONFIRMATION FROM THE EMPLOYERS ABOUT THEIR MAIN LINE OF BUSINESS. HE WOULD THEN SEND A NOTIFICATION TO INFORM ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ALREADY REGISTERED ON THE GENERAL ELECTORAL ROLL THAT THEY WOULD BE REGISTERED IN ONE OF THE NINE NEW FCS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MAIN LINE OF BUSINESS OF THEIR EMPLOYERS.

AN EMPLOYEE WHO RECEIVES A NOTIFICATION CAN DECLARE ANY CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR EXAMPLE, CHANGE OF EMPLOYER OR TO MAKE A CHOICE OF HIS FC IF HE IS ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTRATION IN MORE THAN ONE FC. HE MAY CHOOSE NOT TO REGISTER AS A FC ELECTOR.

/AS REGARDS

AS REGARDS THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO ARE NOT ALREADY REGISTERED ON THE GER, REGISTRATION FORMS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO REGISTER BOTH AS A GENERAL ELECTOR AND AS A FC ELECTOR WILL BE SENT TO THE EMPLOYERS CONCERNED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THEIR EMPLOYEES WHO CAN THEN RETURN THE COMPLETED FORMS TO THE RO DIRECT. SELF-EMPLOYED AND OTHER ELIGIBLE PERSONS CAN BECOME ELECTORS IN A NEW FC BY MAKING AN APPLICATION DIRECTLY TO THE RO. REGISTRATION FORMS CAN BE OBTAINED IN MANY PLACES.

THE ACTUAL REGISTRATION PROCESS WILL BE EXPLAINED IN GREATER DETAILS TO THE PUBLIC FROM JANUARY 1995 ONWARDS BY A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN CO-ORDINATED BY THE BEC. ELIGIBLE PERSONS HAVE UNTIL 1 JUNE 1995 TO BECOME REGISTERED.

TO ADDRESS MR TANG'S POINT ABOUT STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN ENCOURAGING THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER AND SAFEGUARDING THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY, I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THE ELECTORS REGISTER WILL INCLUDE ONLY INFORMATION WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN ESTABLISHING THE IDENTITY OF AN ELECTOR AND IN INDICATING THE APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY TO WHICH HE SHOULD BELONG. THE ELECTOR'S INFORMATION WILL THUS BE LISTED UNDER THE APPROPRIATE NEW FC AND WILL CONSIST OF INFORMATION IDENTICAL TO THAT ALREADY EXISTED IN THE GENERAL ELECTORAL ROLL, I.E. NAME, SEX, ID CARD NUMBER AND RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS. THE ONLY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED WILL BE THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE COMPANY IN WHICH THE ELECTOR IS EMPLOYED.

THE INCLUSION OF THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE EMPLOYER HAS IN FACT BEEN PUT FORWARD BY THE BILLS COMMITTEE SET UP BY THIS COUNCIL TO STUDY THE SECOND STAGE BILL ON ELECTORAL MATTERS FOR THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTION COMMITTEE. THE BEC AGREES WITH MEMBERS OF THE BILLS COMMITTEE THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL CONSIDERABLY ENHANCE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE REGISTRATION PROCESS. IT FACILITATES PUBLIC SCRUTINY OF THE REGISTER AND DISCOURAGES ABUSES. SUCH TRANSPARENCY IS ESSENTIAL IN ENSURING THE INTEGRITY, OPENNESS AND FAIRNESS OF THE VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

THE BEC REGULATION WHICH PROVIDES A STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE VOTER REGISTRATION EXERCISE WILL BE INTRODUCING SAFEGUARDS AND LEGAL SANCTIONS AGAINST ANY MISUSE OF THE INFORMATION ON THE REGISTERS, WHICH MAY ONLY BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF VOTERS REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS.

LOK MA CHAU CROSSING NOISE MITIGATION MEASURES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY DR THE HON TANG SIU-TONG AND A REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE INTRODUCTION OF 24-HOUR CLEARANCE SERVICE FOR GOODS VEHICLES AT THE LOK MA CHAU BORDER CROSSING POINT AS FROM 3 NOVEMBER THIS YEAR, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER:

- (A) THE DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER IN THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THE ABOVE MEASURE;
- (B) SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO PREVENT CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND DAWN WHEN FEWER OFFICERS ARE ON DUTY;
- (C) CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO EXTENDING THE 24-HOUR SERVICE TO THE PASSENGERS CLEARANCE COUNTERS AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINT; IF SO, WHEN WILL THIS TAKE EFFECT; IF NOT, WHAT THE REASONS ARE; AND
- (D) THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE NOISE NUISANCE WHICH THE INTRODUCTION OF 24-HOUR SERVICE AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINT WILL CAUSE TO THE RESIDENTS NEARBY; IF SO, WHAT ARE THE MEASURES TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) THE NECESSARY MANPOWER HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR THE 24 HOUR OPENING OF THE LOK MA CHAU CONTROL POINT. TWO IMMIGRATION AND TWO CUSTOMS KIOSKS ARE OPERATED OVERNIGHT, FROM 10:00 IN THE EVENING TO 7:00 IN THE MORNING. THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT HAS CREATED NINE ADDITIONAL POSTS FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT 16 POSTS. THE POLICE DEPLOY FOUR EXTRA MEN AT LOK MA CHAU TO PROVIDE COVERAGE ROUND THE CLOCK.
- (B) THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT MAINTAIN THE SAME LEVEL OF CONTROL, DAY AND NIGHT, OVER THE CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENT OF VEHICLES AND CARGO. THE PRESENT MANPOWER IS ADEQUATE FOR THE PRESENT VOLUME OF TRAFFIC.

/(C) THE CROSSING

- (C) THE CROSSING POINT IS CLOSED TO BUSES FROM NINE O'CLOCK EACH EVENING, AND THERE IS NO DEMAND FOR PASSENGER SERVICES THROUGH THE NIGHT. HOWEVER, THE SITUATION IS KEPT UNDER REVIEW AND WE WILL CONSIDER PROVIDING A 24-HOUR SERVICE AT THE PASSENGER KIOSKS/PASSENGER COUNTERS IF A DEMAND EXISTS.
- (D) THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTED CONSULTANTS LAST YEAR TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL NOISE IMPACT OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE 24-HOUR OPENING OF THE LOK MA CHAU CROSSING. THE STUDY INDICATED THAT SOME RESIDENTS AT LOK MA CHAU, CHUK YUEN TSUEN AND CHOI YUEN ESTATE WOULD BE AFFECTED. THE NOISE MITIGATION MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY THE CONSULTANTS INCLUDE:
- (I) LAYING OF A QUIET ROAD SURFACING NEAR CHOI YUEN ESTATE;
 - (II) INSTALLING NOISE BARRIERS ON THE FLYOVER NEAR CHOI YUEN ESTATE;
 - (III) INSTALLING NOISE BARRIERS ON SAN SHAM ROAD; AND
 - (IV) INSTALLING NOISE BARRIERS ON THE SECTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES CIRCULAR ROAD NEAR CHUK YUEN TSUEN.

THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE NOISE MITIGATION MEASURES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. THESE MEASURES HAVE HELPED TO MITIGATE NOISE PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE INITIAL PHASE OF 24-HOUR OPENING OF LOK MA CHAU CROSSING.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO COMMISSIONED ANOTHER CONSULTANCY STUDY TO LOOK INTO THE POTENTIAL NOISE IMPACT OF INCREASED CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC AT NIGHT IN THE LONGER TERM. THE STUDY WILL IDENTIFY THE NECESSARY NOISE MITIGATION MEASURES ALONG THE ROAD NETWORK LEADING TO THE CROSSING POINTS, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE SECTION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES CIRCULAR ROAD FROM LOK MA CHAU TO SHA TIN.

CENTRALISED INCINERATION FACILITY

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : REGARDING THE STUDIES ON THE BUILDING OF A CENTRALISED INCINERATION FACILITY FOR TREATING CLINICAL WASTE, WILL THE ADMINISTRATION INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) OF THE PROGRESS OF THE STUDIES;
- (B) WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED COST, THE SCHEDULED TIME FOR COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATION, AND THE AMOUNT OF CLINICAL WASTE TO BE INCINERATED BY THIS FACILITY;
- (C) WHETHER THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ADOPTED ANY DEFINITION OF CLINICAL WASTE AND CATEGORIZATION OF THE TYPES OF CLINICAL WASTE THAT NEED TO BE INCINERATED; IF SO, WHAT ARE THE DETAILS; AND
- (D) WHETHER THERE IS ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEFINITION AND CATEGORIZATION REFERRED TO IN (C) AND THOSE IN THE CODE OF PRACTICE ADOPTED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION?

ANSWER:

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) THE STUDIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CENTRALISED INCINERATION FACILITY (CIF) STARTED IN JUNE 1991. PHASE I OF THE CONSULTANCY STUDY COVERED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FEASIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED SITE FOR THE CIF, AN OUTLINE DESIGN, A COMPARISON OF CONTRACT OPTIONS, FINANCIAL ASSESSMENTS AND A REVIEW OF THE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE ON CLASSIFICATION AND DISPOSAL OF CLINICAL WASTE. PHASE II OF THE STUDY, COMMENCING IN JULY 1993, INCLUDES A CLINICAL WASTE ARISING SURVEY, AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT, TENDER PREPARATION AND ASSESSMENT, AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LEGISLATIVE CONTROL FRAMEWORK. THE CONSULTANTS HAVE COMPLETED THE WASTE ARISING SURVEY AND A DRAFT REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE CIF. THEY ARE NOW PREPARING THE NECESSARY TENDER DOCUMENTATION.

/(B) THE LATEST

- (B) THE LATEST ESTIMATED CAPITAL COST OF THE CIF IS \$259 MILLION (OCT 94 PRICES). CONSTRUCTION WORK FOR THE CIF IS SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE IN LATE 1995 AND THE FACILITY WOULD BECOME OPERATIONAL IN EARLY 1997. THE ESTIMATED QUANTITY OF CLINICAL WASTE TO BE INCINERATED AT THE CIF WILL BE 21 TONNES PER DAY WHEN THE FACILITY IS COMMISSIONED IN 1997.
- (C) UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION'S CATEGORISATION, THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF WASTE WILL BE CLASSIFIED AS CLINICAL WASTE REQUIRING INCINERATION:
1. CONTAMINATED SHARPS INCLUDING SYRINGES, CARTRIDGES, CONTAMINATED BROKEN GLASS AND ANY OTHER SHARP INSTRUMENTS.
 2. UNSTERILISED LABORATORY STOCKS AND CULTURES OF INFECTIOUS AGENTS.
 3. ALL HUMAN TISSUES AND ANIMAL CARCASSES, WHETHER INFECTED OR NOT, AND ITEMS HEAVILY CONTAMINATED WITH BLOOD OR BLOOD PRODUCTS.
 4. INFECTIOUS MATERIAL FROM PATIENTS UNDER STRICT ISOLATION.
 5. SOILED SURGICAL DRESSINGS, SWABS AND ALL OTHER CONTAMINATED WASTE FROM TREATMENT AREAS AND ISOLATION ROOMS, ASSESSED TO BE OF SIGNIFICANT RISK BY HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.
 6. CYTOTOXIC DRUGS IN BULK AND ALL CYTOTOXIC DRUG AMPOULES OR BOTTLES AFTER USE.
 7. PHARMACEUTICAL AND CHEMICAL WASTES ARISING FROM CLINICAL SOURCES.
- (D) THE DEFINITION AND CATEGORISATION DETAILED IN (C) IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THOSE ADOPTED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION EXCEPT THAT THE LATTER DOES NOT INCLUDE PHARMACEUTICAL AND CHEMICAL WASTE.

PHASE II OF THE CONSULTANCY STUDY COVERS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LEGISLATIVE CONTROL FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING THE CATEGORISATION OF CLINICAL WASTE. THIS FRAMEWORK IS EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT PARTIES BY MID-1995.

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : THE GOVERNMENT HAS EARLIER INDICATED SUPPORT FOR THE REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ELECTION OF VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, INCLUDING SUCH ASPECTS AS ADVOCATING VOTING RIGHTS FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, LOWERING THE VOTING AGE TO 18 AND IMPOSING A TENURE LIMIT FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) OF THE PROGRESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM PROPOSALS SINCE THEN;
- (B) WHETHER THE REFORM WILL BE COMPLETED AS SCHEDULED BY THE END OF MARCH NEXT YEAR, WHEN THE RURAL COMMITTEES OF ALL DISTRICTS WILL BE RE-ELECTED FOR A NEW TERM; IF NOT, WHAT THE REASONS ARE AND WHO SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE; AND
- (C) HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATION MONITOR THAT THE REFORM IS CARRIED OUT PROMPTLY IN ALL VILLAGES AND WHETHER IT WILL CONSIDER INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THAT THE THREE PRINCIPLES MENTIONED ABOVE MUST BE FOLLOWED IN THE ELECTION OF VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES, SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THE ELECTION WILL BECOME MORE DEMOCRATIC?

REPLY :

THE EXISTING VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE (VR) SYSTEM HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR OVER 40 YEARS. IT HAS EVOLVED FROM A SYSTEM OF SELECTION BY NOMINATION AMONG HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM WHERE BASICALLY VRS ARE ELECTED, ALBEIT ON A LIMITED FRANCHISE. HITHERTO, IT HAS BEEN WIDELY ACCEPTED AMONG THE RURAL SECTOR.

NEVERTHELESS, THE HEUNG YEE KUK (HYK), WHICH IS A STATUTORY ADVISORY BODY TO THE GOVERNMENT ON NEW TERRITORIES AFFAIRS, RECOGNISES THAT THE SYSTEM OF VR ELECTION WILL HAVE TO CHANGE TO MEET PRESENT DAY CIRCUMSTANCES. AND THE HYK ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS YEAR THE ADOPTION OF NEW RULES FOR VR ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON THE BASIS OF ONE-PERSON-ONE-VOTE, WITH VOTER'S AGE BEING LOWERED TO 18 AND WITH ALL VRS SERVING A FOUR-YEAR TERM. WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION WELCOME THE HYK'S INITIATIVE IN THIS REGARD, WE RECOGNISE THAT TO EFFECT THIS CHANGE, THE HYK NEEDS THE COOPERATION OF THE VILLAGERS CONCERNED, BECAUSE IT TAKES TIME TO CHANGE ATTITUDE AND TRADITION. WE RECOGNISE ALSO THAT THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH PERSUASION AND EDUCATION TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS WILLING ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW RULES, IF THE CHANGE IS TO BE EFFECTED SMOOTHLY.

/THE HYK

THE HYK HAS MADE A GOOD START IN PERSUADING VILLAGERS TO ADOPT THE NEW RULES. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE SPECIFIC REPLIES TO THE QUESTION ARE AS FOLLOWS -

- (A) WE UNDERSTAND FROM THE HYK THAT MORE THAN HALF OF A TOTAL OF 555 VILLAGES UNDER THE 25 RURAL COMMITTEES (RCS) HAVE CONDUCTED ELECTIONS OR WILL CONDUCT ELECTIONS ACCORDING TO THE NEW RULES BEFORE MARCH 31, 1995. THE ABOVE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE VILLAGES COMING UNDER THE TAI PO AND SHATIN RCS AS AT THE TIME OF THE HYK'S ANNOUNCEMENT, THE TWO RCS WERE ALREADY IN THE PROCESS OF ARRANGING FOR THE ELECTIONS OF VRS WITHIN THEIR DISTRICTS. THE HYK IS WORKING RIGOROUSLY TO PERSUADE THE REST TO ADOPT THE NEW RULES.
- (B) AS IT TAKES TIME TO CHANGE ATTITUDE AND TRADITION, AND AS THE HYK HAS ALREADY MADE A GOOD START IN EFFECTING THE CHANGE AS INDICATED IN (A) ABOVE, THE KUK IS STEPPING UP ITS EFFORT TO EXTEND THE NEW RULES TO THE REMAINING VILLAGES. THE HYK HAS NOT MADE ANY COMMITMENT REGARDING THE TIMING FOR EXTENDING THE NEW RULES TO ALL THE ELECTIONS.
- (C) THE HYK IS TAKING A LEAD IN PROMOTING THE NEW RULES AMONGST VILLAGES. THE ADMINISTRATION WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE HYK PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF PROMOTION TO GET THE NEW RULES ADOPTED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. TO ENCOURAGE THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW RULES, THE ADMINISTRATION, THROUGH THE DISTRICT OFFICES, HAS PUT UP POSTERS AND DISTRIBUTED HANDBILLS IN ALL VILLAGES. IN ADDITION, THE DISTRICT OFFICES HAVE ASSISTED AND WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST ANY VILLAGE WHICH WISHES TO HOLD AN ELECTION UNDER THE NEW RULES. SUCH ASSISTANCE INCLUDES POSTING THE ELECTORAL ROLLS, HELPING WITH NEW VOTER REGISTRATIONS, AND SUPERVISING THE ELECTION. THE QUESTION OF INTRODUCING LEGISLATION FOR FUTURE VR ELECTIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACTUAL OUTCOME OF THE COMING ELECTIONS.

HEALTH SERVICES IN TIN SHUI WAI ADEQUATE

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON TANG SIU-TONG AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : CURRENTLY, TIN SHUI WAI ALREADY HAS A POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 100,000 AND YET THERE IS ONLY ONE HEALTH CENTRE PROVIDING DAYTIME OUT-PATIENT SERVICE IN THE DISTRICT. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) WHAT IS THE DAILY QUOTA FOR OUT-PATIENT SERVICE AT THE TIN SHUI WAI HEALTH CENTRE AND WHETHER SUCH QUOTA IS SUFFICIENT TO CATER FOR THE NEED OF THE RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT; AND
- (B) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANY PLAN TO INTRODUCE EVENING OUT-PATIENT SERVICE AT THE CENTRE; IF SO, WHEN WILL SUCH SERVICE COMMENCE; IF NOT, WHY NOT?

REPLY :

- (A) THE DAILY QUOTA FOR OUT-PATIENT CONSULTATION AT THE TIN SHUI WAI HEALTH CENTRE IS 215. THIS QUOTA IS NOT ALWAYS FULLY UTILISED. THE EXISTING LEVEL OF PROVISION OF SERVICE IS CONSIDERED ADEQUATE. NEVERTHELESS, THE SITUATION IS BEING CLOSELY MONITORED AND APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE WHERE NECESSARY.
- (B) THE PROVISION OF EVENING OUT-PATIENT SERVICE FOR A DISTRICT OR REGION IS DEPENDENT ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS INCLUDING UTILISATION OF EXISTING SERVICES, AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES IN THE VOLUNTARY AND PRIVATE SECTORS AS WELL AS OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS. AS EVENING CLINIC SERVICE IS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN TUEN MUN CLINIC AND YUEN LONG JOCKEY CLUB HEALTH CENTRE, THERE IS AT PRESENT NO PLAN TO INTRODUCE EVENING OUT-PATIENT SERVICE AT THE TIN SHUI WAI HEALTH CENTRE.

PROGRAMME TO MONITOR DUST LEVELS AT GREENFIELD GARDEN

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : AS THE CEMENT FACTORY ADJACENT TO GREENFIELD GARDEN ON TSING YI ISLAND WILL BE RELOCATED SOON, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- (A) WHEN WILL THE CEMENT FACTORY BE RELOCATED;
- (B) WHETHER ITS RELOCATION DATE IS BEHIND SCHEDULE; IF SO, WHAT THE REASONS ARE; AND
- (C) WHAT MEASURES HAS THE GOVERNMENT PUT IN PLACE TO EFFECTIVELY MONITOR THE POLLUTION CAUSED BY THE CEMENT FACTORY PRIOR TO ITS RELOCATION SO AS TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON THE NEARBY RESIDENTS OF GREENFIELD GARDEN?

REPLY :

- (A) UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE EXECUTED ON NOVEMBER 19, 1993, THE CEMENT FACTORY HAS TO BE DECOMMISSIONED BY JUNE 30, 1996.
- (B) AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE RELOCATION EXERCISE IS BEHIND SCHEDULE.
- (C) THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAS ISSUED FIVE AIR POLLUTION ABATEMENT NOTICES AND ONE NOISE ABATEMENT NOTICE TO THE CEMENT PLANT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE AND THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE. THESE ABATEMENT NOTICES REQUIRE THE PLANT OWNERS TO IMPLEMENT CERTAIN DUST AND NOISE CONTROL MEASURES TO CONTAIN POLLUTION. THE ABATEMENT NOTICES ARE STILL IN FORCE AND ANY VIOLATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS STIPULATED IN THE NOTICES WILL RESULT IN PROSECUTION ACTIONS.

A DUST MONITORING PROGRAMME HAS BEEN IN PLACE SINCE 1991 TO MEASURE THE AMBIENT DUST LEVELS AT GREENFIELD GARDEN. THE PURPOSE IS TO MONITOR THE IMPACT OF EMISSIONS FROM THE PLANT ON THE AIR QUALITY. THE PROGRAMME WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE PLANT IS RELOCATED.

IN ADDITION, AND STARTING FROM NOVEMBER 26, 1994, THE CEMENT PLANT IS REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE UNDER THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE. THE LICENCE WILL SET DOWN TERMS AND CONDITIONS WHICH MUST BE MET IF THE OPERATOR IS TO AVOID BEING LIABLE FOR PROSECUTION.

POLICE RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU WAI-HING AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER :

- (A) THE RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICE OFFICERS SPECIFY THAT APPLICANTS SHOULD NOT HAVE CRIMINAL RECORDS;
- (B) THERE ARE SERVING POLICE OFFICERS WHO HAVE CRIMINAL RECORDS; IF SO, WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF SUCH OFFICERS BY RANK, WHAT ARE THE TUPES OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES COMMITTED BY THESE OFFICERS AND WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS UNDER EACH TYPE OF OFFENCE?

REPLY :

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) IT IS THE POLICY OF THE POLICE FORCE NOT TO RECRUIT PERSONS WITH A RECORD OF CRIMINAL CONVICTION, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT STATED EXPLICITLY IN PUBLISHED RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS.
- (B) FIVE SERVING OFFICERS HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES. THESE INCLUDE ONE SENIOR INSPECTOR, ONE INSPECTOR AND THREE POLICE CONSTABLES. THE DETAILS ARE :

TYPE OF OFFENCE -----	NUMBER OF OFFICERS (RANK) -----
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	ONE (SENIOR INSPECTOR)
COMMON ASSAULT	TWO (INSPECTOR AND POLICE CONSTABLE)
SHOP THEFT	ONE (POLICE CONSTABLE)
AIDING AND ABETTING THE MAKING OF A FALSE STATEMENT TO AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER	ONE (POLICE CONSTABLE)

CLEARANCE OF SQUATTERS ON PRIVATE LAND

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON STEVEN POON KWOK-LIM AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN HIS RECENT POLICY ADDRESS, THE GOVERNOR STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO REHOUSING ALL URBAN SQUATTERS ON GOVERNMENT LAND BEFORE 1997. HOWEVER, NO MENTION WAS MADE OF ANY PLAN FOR REHOUSING THOSE LIVING IN SQUATTER AREAS ON PRIVATE LAND. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING :

- (A) HOW MANY SQUATTER AREAS ARE LOCATED ON PRIVATE LAND;
- (B) WHAT IS THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THESE SQUATTER AREAS;
- (C) WHETHER THERE IS ANY PLAN FOR REHOUSING THESE SQUATTERS; AND
- (D) WHETHER LAI CHI YUEN, HAU WONG MIU NEW VILLAGE AND HO KA YUEN IN KOWLOON TONG ARE REGARDED AS SQUATTER AREAS ON PRIVATE LAND; IF SO, WHEN WILL THE SQUATTERS LIVING IN THESE AREAS BE REHOUSED?

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

IN HIS 1992 POLICY ADDRESS, THE GOVERNOR PLEDGED TO REHOUSE ALL URBAN SQUATTERS ON GOVERNMENT LAND BY 1996. AS REGARDS SQUATTERS ON PRIVATE LAND :

- (A) THERE ARE NOW 22 SQUATTER AREAS ON PRIVATE LOTS MINGLED WITH GOVERNMENT LAND - NINE IN KOWLOON AND 13 ON HONG KONG ISLAND,
- (B) THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THESE SQUATTER AREAS IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 22,000;
- (C) CLEARANCE OF THESE SQUATTER AREAS COULD NOT PROCEED UNTIL THE PRIVATE LOTS HAVE BEEN RESUMED FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE; AND
- (D) LAI CHI YUEN, HAU WONG MIU NEW VILLAGE AND HO KAR YUEN ARE SITUATED ON PRIVATE LAND MINGLED WITH GOVERNMENT LOTS. THEIR CLEARANCE AND REHOUSING WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE PRIVATE LOTS HAVE BEEN RESUMED FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE.

PUBLIC HOUSING CORRIDOR RAILINGS

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN FALLING FROM HEIGHTS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES HAVE BEEN OF FREQUENT OCCURRENCE, AND RESIDENTS IN THESE ESTATES HAVE PERSISTENTLY QUESTIONED THE HEIGHT OF CORRIDOR RAILINGS BEING TOO LOW WHICH MAKES IT EASY FOR CHILDREN TO CLIMB OVER THEM. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE AUTHORITY CONCERNED TO PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF SUCH ACCIDENTS;
- (B) WHETHER THE AUTHORITY CONCERNED WILL STEP UP MEASURES TO CLEAR SUNDRY ARTICLES SUCH AS FURNITURE ITEMS DISCARDED ALONG THE RAILINGS, OR ADVISE RESIDENTS NOT TO PLACE ANY ARTICLES SUCH AS BICYCLES ALONG THE RAILINGS SO AS TO AVOID CAUSING POTENTIAL DANGER; AND
- (C) WHETHER, IN THE LONG RUN, THE HEIGHT OF RAILINGS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES WILL BE RAISED; IF SO, WHAT THE SPECIFIC PLAN IS, IF NOT, WHAT THE REASONS ARE?

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

IN ALL PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING BLOCKS, THE HEIGHT OF THE CORRIDOR RAILINGS IS HIGHER THAN OR IN LINE WITH THE STATUTORY BUILDING REGULATION STANDARD OF 1.1 METRES.

AT PRESENT, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT'S ESTATE STAFF PATROL THE COMMON AREAS INSIDE HOUSING BLOCKS AS PART OF THEIR DAILY MANAGEMENT DUTIES AND CLEANSING CONTRACTORS WILL DISPOSE OF ANY ABANDONED FURNITURE FOUND IN THE CORRIDORS. MOREOVER, TENANTS ARE ADVISED NOT TO PLACE ANY ARTICLES IN CORRIDORS THROUGH THE HELP OF MACS; REGULAR NOTICES DISPLAYED ON NOTICE BOARDS; AD HOC CLEANSING CAMPAIGNS; ESTATE NEWSLETTERS AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS. TENANTS ARE ALSO ADVISED TO REMOVE ANY ARTICLES INCLUDING BICYCLES LEFT IN THE CORRIDORS. IF THE OWNER CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED, WARNING NOTICES WILL BE POSTED ON THE ARTICLES REQUIRING THE REMOVAL OF THE ARTICLE WITHIN A SPECIFIED PERIOD, FAILING WHICH THE ARTICLE WILL BE REMOVED BY THE MANAGEMENT. THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO STEPPED UP OPERATIONS TO CLEAR OBSTRUCTION IN CORRIDORS OF RENTAL HOUSING BLOCKS. THE ABOVE MEASURES WILL HELP TO PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN FALLING FROM HEIGHTS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

NOTWITHSTANDING THESE MEASURES, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY SHARES TENANTS' CONCERN AND HAVE PLANS EITHER TO RAISE THE HEIGHT OF RAILINGS OR TO INSTALL LOUVRES AND WINDOWS AT CORRIDOR ENDS AND STAIRCASE LANDINGS WHERE IT IS PRACTICAL TO DO SO. AN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS BIOTECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON STEVEN POON KWOK-LIM AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE PUBLICLY REPORTED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES FACING THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY (HKIB) OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER :

- (A) THE GOVERNMENT HAS EVALUATED THAT THE FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TO THE HKIB HAVE BEEN WELL SPENT;
- (B) THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE PUBLIC FUNDS TO ASSIST HKIB IN RESOLVING ITS CURRENT DIFFICULTIES;
- (C) THE GOVERNMENT HAS A SUPERVISING OR MONITORING ROLE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY; AND
- (D) THIS INCIDENT WILL AFFECT ANY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME REGARDING BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TERRITORY?

REPLY:

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR GOVERNMENT TO EVALUATE WHETHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TO THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF BIOTECHNOLOGY (HKIB), WHICH IS A NON-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION, WERE WELL SPENT. IT IS ALSO IN THE NATURE OF RESEARCH INSTITUTES THAT THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS SHOULD BE MEASURED WITH A LONGER TERM PERSPECTIVE.
- (B) THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLAN TO SUBSIDISE THE NORMAL RECURRENT EXPENSES OF THE HKIB. THE HKIB IS A PRIVATELY-FUNDED INSTITUTION AND THE ACCOUNTS OF THE INSTITUTE ARE SEPARATE FROM THOSE OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

/(C) THERE IS

- (C) THERE IS A BOARD OF OVERSEERS WHOSE MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY. BOTH THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER AND THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY SERVE AS EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ON THE BOARD. THE BOARD ADVISES ON THE GENERAL DIRECTION, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY OF THE INSTITUTE AND HELPS ENSURE THAT THE FUNDS SOLICITED ARE DISBURSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSES.
- (D) THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF BIOTECHNOLOGY THROUGH PROJECT FUNDING FROM THE INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT SCHEME. IN 1994/95, 12 BIOTECHNOLOGY AND RELATED PROJECTS WERE SUPPORTED, INVOLVING EXPENDITURE OF \$24 MILLION OVER A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS. IN ADDITION, THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE AND THE RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL ARE ALSO PROVIDING FUNDING SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS, INCLUDING BIOTECHNOLOGY. THE HKIB CAN, THEREFORE, COMPETE THROUGH THESE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS FOR MORE FUNDS.

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PUBLIC HOSPITALS ADOPT GOOD INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : AS THE CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE, WHICH IS A FORM OF SEVERE DEGENERATIVE BRAIN DISEASE, CAN BE TRANSMITTED TO SOME PATIENTS UNDERGOING PITUITARY HORMONE TREATMENT, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL :

- (A) HOW MANY PATIENTS HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH PITUITARY HORMONE IN HOSPITALS MANAGED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS RESPECTIVELY IN THE PAST THREE YEARS;
- (B) WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN UP THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT SUCH PATIENTS ARE ADEQUATELY FOLLOWED UP SO THAT THOSE DEVELOPING CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE CAN BE DETECTED; AND
- (C) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER FOLLOWING THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE U.K. FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD OPERATIONS OR PITUITARY HORMONE TREATMENT?

/REPLY

REPLY

- (A) IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 85 PATIENTS EACH YEAR IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS RECEIVING PITUITARY HORMONE TREATMENT. SIMILAR DATA AT PRIVATE HOSPITALS IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE.
- (B) ALL PITUITARY HORMONES USED IN HONG KONG ARE PRODUCED BY SYNTHETIC TECHNIQUES AND ARE THUS FREE FROM CONTAMINATION WITH THE TRANSMISSIBLE AGENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE. PATIENTS UNDERGOING PITUITARY HORMONE THERAPY WILL CONTINUE TO BE FOLLOWED UP IN ENDOCRINE CLINICS.
- (C) THE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ARE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH THE SAFE HANDLING OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL TISSUES, CATEGORISATION AND CONTAINMENT OF HAZARDS, CONTROL AND CONTAINMENT OF THE INFECTION, HEALTH SURVEILLANCE, DECONTAINMENT AS WELL AS WASTE DISPOSAL. THESE PRECAUTIONS WILL BE ADHERED TO IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS AS PART OF THE GOOD INFECTION CONTROL AND MEDICAL WASTE DISPOSAL PRACTICES.

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CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS
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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON ALFRED TSO SHIU-WAI AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN HIS 1994 POLICY ADDRESS, THE GOVERNOR TOUCHED ON THE STRENGTHENING OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION ON INFRASTRUCTURE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT PLANS FOR HONG KONG'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT BE DRAFTED IN ISOLATION FROM GUANGDONG. IT WAS ALSO LEARNT THAT THE CITY OF ZHUHAI IN GUANGDONG ANNOUNCED IN 1993 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "ZHUHAI-TUEN MUN BRIDGE". IN VIEW OF THE TREMENDOUS BENEFITS WHICH THE PROJECT WILL BRING TO THE TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES PARTICULARLY IN TUEN MUN, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL:

- (A) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS OFFICIALLY APPROACHED THE CHINESE SIDE FOR DETAILS OF THE PROJECT; IF SO, WHETHER THE PROJECT IS FEASIBLE AND WHETHER IT WILL BE CONDUCTIVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TERRITORIES; AND
- (B) WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCORPORATED THE PROJECT INTO THE DISTRICT PLANNING AND THE ROAD NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

/ANSWER

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

- (A) WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY FORMAL PROPOSALS FROM THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES REGARDING THE PROJECT SO FAR. UNTIL THE STATUS OF THE PROJECT IS MORE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AND MORE DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE, WE ARE UNABLE TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT AND EXAMINE ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TERRITORIES. AS MEMBERS ARE PROBABLY AWARE, WE ARE NOW DISCUSSING WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON THE MODE OF IMPROVING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION REGARDING MAJOR CROSS-BORDER INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS. WE HOPE TO ARRIVE AT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE MECHANISM SOON.
- (B) FOR THE REASONS EXPLAINED ABOVE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO INCORPORATE THE PROJECT INTO THE DISTRICT AND TRANSPORT PLANNING OF THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES. SINCE THE PROJECT WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG, WE WILL CONDUCT COMPREHENSIVE STUDIES TO EXAMINE ITS VIABILITY IF AND WHEN DETAILS OF THE PROJECT ARE AVAILABLE.

TAX DISPUTES

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU WONG-FAT AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR DONALD TSANG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : AT PRESENT, IF THERE IS A DISPUTE BETWEEN A TAXPAYER AND A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OVER THE AMOUNT OF TAX TO BE PAID, THE TAXPAYER IS REQUIRED TO PAY THE AMOUNT FIRST, OTHERWISE A SURCHARGE MAY BE IMPOSED FOR LATE PAYMENT. IN VIEW OF THIS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL OF THE FOLLOWING -

- (A) IN CASES OF DISPUTE BETWEEN TAXPAYERS AND THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT AND THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT OVER THE AMOUNT TO BE PAID, WHAT IS THE AVERAGE TIME TAKEN FOR THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT AMOUNT PAYABLE;
- (B) WHAT IS THE TIME REQUIRED FOR THE DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED TO REFUND THE AMOUNT OVERPAID BY TAXPAYERS; AND

/(C) WHETHER CONSIDERATION

- (C) WHETHER CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO PAYING TAXPAYERS WHO ARE OVERCHARGED AN AMOUNT AS COMPENSATION CALCULATED ACCORDING TO THE INTEREST RATE PAID ON BANK DEPOSITS PREVAILING DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE DATE OF PAYMENT AND THE DATE OF REFUND?

REPLY:

AT THE OUTSET, I SHOULD CLARIFY THAT IF A TAXPAYER DISPUTES HIS TAX LIABILITIES, THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT (IRD) DOES NOT IN ALL CASES REQUIRE HIM TO SETTLE THE TAX PAYMENT FIRST AND IMPOSE A SURCHARGE ON LATE PAYMENT. IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN TAX TYPES, E.G. SALARIES TAX AND PROFITS TAX, IRD HAS A WELL-ESTABLISHED SYSTEM OF ALLOWING HOLDOVER OF TAX IN DISPUTE. IN BRIEF -

- (I) WHERE IRD CONSIDERS THAT THE TAXPAYER HAS A PRIMA FACIE CASE FOR OBJECTION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT, IRD WILL ORDER A HOLDOVER OF THAT PORTION OF THE TAX DEMAND UNDER DISPUTE UNTIL A REVISED ASSESSMENT IS AVAILABLE. MOST OBJECTIONS FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.
- (II) WHERE AN OBJECTION DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE ANY MERIT ON THE BASIS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION, IRD WILL NOT ALLOW ANY HOLDOVER OF TAX PAYMENT. THIS SEEKS TO PREVENT TAXPAYERS FROM MAKING USE OF THE OBJECTION CHANNEL TO DEFER PAYMENT OF TAX.
- (III) WHERE IRD CONSIDERS THAT THE OBJECTION HAS SOME MERIT, BUT THAT THE BALANCE OF PROBABILITY BASED ON AVAILABLE INFORMATION DOES NOT WEIGH DEFINITELY IN FAVOUR OF THE TAXPAYER, IRD WILL ALLOW A HOLDOVER ON THE CONDITION THAT THE TAXPAYER PURCHASES TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES TO COVER THE AMOUNT OF TAX IN DISPUTE. WHEN A DECISION IS MADE ON THE DISPUTE, THE TAXPAYER WILL SETTLE THE TAX PAYABLE WITH THE TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES PURCHASED. IRD WILL REFUND ANY EXCESS AMOUNT TO THE TAXPAYER, TOGETHER WITH THE INTEREST THEREON.

FOR SOME OTHER MINOR TAXES AND CHARGES SUCH AS RATES, WE MAINTAIN A SIMPLE SYSTEM WHEREBY TAXPAYERS PAY THE TAX OR CHARGES DUE PENDING THE RESOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE.

ON (A)

IN THE CASE OF IRD, THERE IS NO STATUTORY TIME-LIMIT FOR PROCESSING TAX OBJECTIONS. HOW LONG IT TAKES TO RESOLVE A TAX DISPUTE DEPENDS, TO A LARGE EXTENT, ON THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED AND THE COOPERATION OF THE TAXPAYERS AND THIRD PARTIES IN FURNISHING RELEVANT INFORMATION. FOR SIMPLE CASES WHERE TAXPAYERS DISPUTE THE ESTIMATED ASSESSMENTS MADE BY IRD IN THE ABSENCE OF TAX RETURNS, IRD WILL REQUIRE THE TAXPAYERS TO SUBMIT A FRESH RETURN, ON THE BASIS OF WHICH THE DEPARTMENT WILL IMMEDIATELY DECIDE WHETHER TO UPHOLD THE ORIGINAL ASSESSMENT. IRD CAN SETTLE THESE CASES QUICKLY. FOR INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS WHOSE OBJECTIONS MAKE UP OVER 60% OF ALL OBJECTIONS, IRD'S RECORDS INDICATE THAT OF THE OBJECTIONS SETTLED DURING THE PERIOD APRIL TO OCTOBER 1994, 70% WERE SETTLED WITHIN FOUR MONTHS AND 92% WITHIN EIGHT MONTHS.

/BY CONTRAST,

BY CONTRAST, THE RATING ORDINANCE STIPULATES THE PERIOD WITHIN WHICH THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT (RVD) MUST PROCESS OBJECTIONS BY RATEPAYERS TO THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF RATEABLE VALUES. A RATEPAYER MAY MAKE AN OBJECTION IN APRIL AND MAY OF ANY YEAR. FOR OBJECTIONS LODGED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A GENERAL REVALUATION, RVD MUST ISSUE ITS DECISIONS BEFORE DECEMBER OF THAT YEAR. FOR OBJECTIONS MADE IN OTHER YEARS, RVD MUST FINISH PROCESSING THEM BEFORE SEPTEMBER OF THE SAME YEAR.

ON (B)

IRD WILL REFUND ANY OVERPAID TAX TO THE TAXPAYER CONCERNED UPON SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE. AS REGARDS RATES, IF THE DECISION ON THE RATES OBJECTION RESULTS IN A REDUCTION IN RATES PAYMENT, RVD WILL REFUND THE OVERPAYMENT EITHER BY MEANS OF A CREDIT ADJUSTMENT IN THE NEXT QUARTERLY RATES DEMAND OR, UPON REQUEST, BY CHEQUE IMMEDIATELY.

ON (C)

AS MENTIONED ABOVE, TAXPAYERS WHO OBTAIN PERMISSION FROM IRD FOR CONDITIONAL HOLD-OVER OF TAX ARE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES TO COVER THE TAX IN DISPUTE. IF IN THE LIGHT OF THE DECISION ON THE DISPUTE, THE AMOUNT OF TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES PURCHASED EXCEEDS THE OUTSTANDING TAX PAYABLE TO IRD, IRD WILL RETURN THE BALANCE TOGETHER WITH THE INTEREST THEREON TO THE TAXPAYER. AT PRESENT, THE INTEREST RATE FOR TAX RESERVE CERTIFICATES IS PEGGED TO THE SIX-MONTH DEPOSIT RATE OFFERED BY MAJOR BANKS. AS FOR RATES, WE DO NOT SEE A NEED FOR ANY CHANGE TO THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS IN VIEW OF THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENT FOR RVD TO RESOLVE DISPUTES WITH RATEPAYERS WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

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INDOOR RADON CONCENTRATION LEVEL

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : IN VIEW OF THE FINDING THAT RADON GAS EMITTED FROM CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS MAY POSE A THREAT TO THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE INSIDE ARTIFICIALLY VENTILATED SEALED BUILDINGS, WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHETHER:

- (A) ANY SAFETY STANDARD HAS BEEN SET REGARDING THE EFFECT OF RADON GAS ON HUMAN HEALTH;
- (B) ANY TESTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT TO MEASURE THE RADON GAS CONCENTRATION IN ARTIFICIALLY VENTILATED SEALED BUILDINGS IN THE TERRITORY; IF SO, WHETHER THE CONCENTRATION IS AT A LEVEL THAT MAY AFFECT THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE INSIDE SUCH BUILDINGS; AND

/(C) THERE ARE

- (C) THERE ARE ANY REGULATIONS REQUIRING THE CENTRAL VENTILATION SYSTEMS OF SUCH BUILDINGS TO BE REGULARLY INSPECTED TO ENSURE THAT THEIR OPERATION AND THE INTERFLOW BETWEEN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR AIR ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY STANDARDS; IF SO, WHETHER THE EFFECT OF RADON GAS ON HUMAN HEALTH HAS BEEN TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN THE FORMULATION OF SUCH REGULATIONS?

REPLY :

- (A) THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION HAS ADOPTED A GUIDELINE OF 200 BECQUERELS PER CUBIC METRE (BQ/M3) FOR INDOOR RADON CONCENTRATION LEVEL. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT FOLLOWS THIS STANDARD.
- (B) IN 1993, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT CONDUCTED A SURVEY ON INDOOR RADON CONCENTRATION LEVELS IN HONG KONG. THE AVERAGE RADON CONCENTRATION LEVEL FOR THE 829 PREMISES COVERED BY THE SURVEY WAS 98 BQ/M3. IT WAS ALSO DISCOVERED THAT ABOUT 5% OF THE RESIDENTIAL AND 10% OF THE NON-RESIDENTIAL PREMISES COVERED BY THE SURVEY HAD RADON LEVELS EXCEEDING 200 BQ/M3. OVERSEAS RESEARCH SUGGESTS A LINK BETWEEN EXPOSURE TO HIGH RADON CONCENTRATION AND LUNG CANCER. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT WILL SOON ISSUE AN INFORMATION LEAFLET ADVISING ON SIMPLE MITIGATION MEASURES TO REDUCE RADON LEVEL IN PREMISES.
- (C) UNDER THE BUILDING (VENTILATING SYSTEMS) REGULATIONS OF THE BUILDING ORDINANCE, BUILDING OWNERS ARE REQUIRED TO KEEP THE VENTILATION SYSTEMS IN SAFE AND EFFICIENT WORKING CONDITIONS AT ALL TIMES AND TO ENGAGE A REGISTERED VENTILATION CONTRACTOR TO INSPECT THE VENTILATION SYSTEMS AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR. AS THE EFFECT OF RADON GAS ON HUMAN HEALTH WAS NOT THE MAIN CONCERN WHEN THE REGULATIONS WERE PREPARED, THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES TO CARRY OUT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON INDOOR AIR QUALITY, INCLUDING THE PROBLEM OF RADON CONCENTRATION, NEXT YEAR.

LAND FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

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FOLLOWING IS A QUESTION BY THE HON FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE AND A WRITTEN REPLY BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR CANICE MAK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

QUESTION : THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE AN EXTRA 58 HECTARES OF LAND FOR DEVELOPING 50,000 PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS, AND SO FAR 30 HECTARES HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED BY THE GOVERNMENT. WILL THE GOVERNMENT INFORM THIS COUNCIL WHEN THE REMAINING 28 HECTARES WILL BE ALLOCATED TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY?

ANSWER

MR PRESIDENT,

IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO PROVIDE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WITH SUFFICIENT LAND FOR PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. IN 1993 ALONE, THE GOVERNMENT APPROVED THE ALLOCATION OF OVER 50 HECTARES OF ADDITIONAL LAND TO MEET AN IDENTIFIED SHORTFALL OF THAT ORDER. EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE TASK FORCE ON LAND SUPPLY AND PROPERTY PRICES RECOMMENDED GRANTING AN EXTRA 30 HECTARES OF LAND TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR BUILDING 20,000 ADDITIONAL FLATS BETWEEN 1998 AND 2000. THESE SITES, TOGETHER WITH THOSE ALREADY ALLOCATED TO THE AUTHORITY, WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS MEETING THE HOUSING DEMAND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S REQUEST FOR MORE PUBLIC HOUSING LAND IS BEING EXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING DEMAND. AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING DEMAND LED BY PLANNING DEPARTMENT IS ACTIVELY WORKING ON THIS ASSESSMENT. THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, THROUGH ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE WORKING GROUP, IS PROVIDING MAJOR INPUT INTO THIS EXERCISE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN EARLY 1995. SUBJECT TO THE FINDINGS OF THE WORKING GROUP AND THEIR ACCEPTANCE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL IDENTIFY AND ALLOCATE SUFFICIENT SITES TO HA TO MEET THE ASSESSED DEMANDS.

MOTION ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPEDITE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR LAM WOON-KWONG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE MOTION.

A MOTION MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, SEEKING AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES ORDINANCE TO TRANSFER SOME OF HIS FUNCTIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS WAS ALSO PASSED.

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

THE FOUR BILLS WERE THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1994, THE DUMPING AT SEA BILL AND THE MARINE PARKS BILL.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS KATHERINE FOK, PRESENTED THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 1993-1994 AND THE PRINCE PHILIP DENTAL HOSPITAL HONG KONG REPORT BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 1993 - MARCH 31, 1994.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS PRESENTED THE SIR EDWARD YOUBE MEMORIAL FUND REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 1993 TO MARCH 31, 1994.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, PRESENTED THE REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE WELFARE FUND FROM APRIL 1, 1993 TO MARCH 31, 1994 PREPARED BY THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION.

DURING THE SITTING, MEMBERS ASKED 20 QUESTIONS, SIX OF WHICH CALLED FOR ORAL ANSWERS.