



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GOVERNOR PAYS TRIBUTE TO SIR PIERS

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, THIS EVENING (WEDNESDAY) PAID TRIBUTE TO THE OUTGOING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, FOR HIS 29 YEARS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

SPEAKING BEFORE CLOSING OF THE LAST LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION BEFORE THE SUMMER RECESS, SIR DAVID SAID:

"WITH THIS MEETING (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING) HE COMPLETES 29 YEARS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE HAVING STARTED IN THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT AND HAVING BECOME FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND JOIN THIS COUNCIL IN 1986."

SIR DAVID SAID IT WAS NO EASY JOB FOR BEING THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF HONG KONG AT TIMES LIKE THIS.

"AND TODAY HAS BEEN NO EASY DAY FOR THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY. BUT WHEN HE LOOKS BACK ON HIS TIME IN HONG KONG, WHEN THE COUNCIL LOOKS BACK ON HIS TIME IN HONG KONG, I HOPE THAT THEY WILL REMEMBER A GREAT MANY NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS.

"THERE CANNOT BE MANY FINANCIAL SECRETARIES OR MINISTERS OF FINANCES AROUND THE WORLD WHO CAN LOOK BACK ON FIVE CONSECUTIVE SURPLUS BUDGETS. SOMETIMES THE SURPLUSES HAVE BEEN LARGER THAN THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS EXPECTED," THE GOVERNOR SAID.

"THIS COUNCIL HAS BENEFITTED GREATLY FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S CAREFUL WORK, HIS PATIENCE, HIS PERSEVERANCE AND HIS HUMOUR. AND I THINK WE OWE HIM A DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR THAT," HE ADDED.

SIR DAVID SAID THE DEEP COMMITMENT OF SIR PIERS TO HONG KONG WAS SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT HE WOULD BE STAYING ON IN HONG KONG AFTER HIS RETIREMENT.

"AND I AM SURE THAT MEMBERS WOULD WISH TO JOIN WITH ME IN WISHING BOTH SIR PIERS AND LADY JACOBS A VERY LONG AND A VERY HAPPY RETIREMENT," HE SAID.

SENIOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON ALLEN LEE, SAID FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, SIR PIERS HAD HELPED STEER HONG KONG THROUGH A VERY SIGNIFICANT PERIOD OF ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

"HE HAS ALSO WORKED HARD TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE MAJOR FINANCIAL CENTRES IN THE WORLD.

"I WOULD LIKE TO PUT ON RECORD OUR APPRECIATION OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG. HIS WISDOM, HIS WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN, HIS SENSE OF HUMOUR AND ENORMOUS PATIENCE."

NOTING THAT IT WAS THE FINAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION BEFORE ITS DISSOLUTION ON AUGUST 22, THE GOVERNOR TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LEGISLATORS FOR THE GREAT DEAL OF HARD WORK THEY HAD DONE OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS.

"EACH TIME I MADE ONE OF THESE FINAL ADDRESSES, I HAVE TO NOTE RECORDS WHICH HAVE BEEN SET BY THIS COUNCIL," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT THE 1990/91 SESSION HAD RECORDED A RECORD AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN THE LEGCO CHAMBER - A TOTAL OF 156 HOURS - WHICH WAS ABOUT 40 HOURS LONGER THAN ANY PREVIOUS RECORD.

"AND I WILL LEAVE IT TO MEMBERS HOW THEY EVALUATE THAT SORT OF RECORD.

BUT THERE WAS ONE OTHER SORT OF RECORD WHICH MEMBERS COULD LOOK AT WITH UNALLOYED PRIDE, SIR DAVID SAID, AND THAT WAS A RECORD NUMBER OF BILLS PASSED - 123 BILLS - INCLUDING A NUMBER OF COMPLEX BILLS AND IMPORTANT PIECES OF REFORMING LEGISLATION.

HE ALSO WISHED THE HON JOHN SWAINE WHOM HE APPOINTED AS DEPUTY PRESIDENT FOR THE NEXT LEGCO SESSION, EVERY GOOD FORTUNE SITTING IN THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAIR.

"I SHALL SIT HERE OCCASIONALLY MYSELF AND ALTHOUGH I SHALL MISS THE LATE NIGHT NOODLES I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL THAT WHETHER I AM HERE PERSONALLY OR NOT, I SHALL CONTINUE TO PAY A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION TO EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THIS COUNCIL," SIR DAVID SAID.

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PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT TABLED
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DESPITE EARLIER UNCERTAINTIES, THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (PAA) HAD HAD A PRODUCTIVE YEAR AND COULD LOOK FORWARD TO A FAR MORE ACTIVE SECOND YEAR.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN TABLING THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE PAA FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1991 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAA IN APRIL LAST YEAR TO THE END OF MARCH THIS YEAR, THE REPORT NOTED THAT THE PAA HAD TAKEN FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS DETERMINING THE SHAPE OF THE AIRPORT IN THE PAST YEAR.

"IT HAS DETERMINED THE OVERALL ENGINEERING APPROACH TO THE FORMATION OF THE AIRPORT PLATFORM WHICH, AT 1,270 HECTARES, IS ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE KOWLOON PENINSULA," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

"IT HAS ALSO DETERMINED THE LENGTH AND DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARALLEL RUNWAYS," HE ADDED.

MEANWHILE, WORK HAD COMMENCED ON SITE SINCE FEBRUARY THIS YEAR WITH THE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY'S FIRST CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT TO FORM 30 HECTARES OF LAND FOR AN ADVANCE WORKS AREA ON NORTH CHEK LAP KOK.

SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE ADDITIONAL FUNDING CURRENTLY BEING SOUGHT FOR THE AUTHORITY, THE NEXT 12 MONTHS SHOULD SEE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ORGANISATION AND STAFFING, TOGETHER WITH AN INTENSIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY, AS THE MAIN CONTRACT FOR FORMATION OF THE AIRPORT SITE GOT UNDERWAY, HE NOTED.

HE ADDED THAT WORK ON DRAFTING THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY BILL WAS IN FULL SWING AND THE BILL WOULD BE PUT TO THE COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE COMING SESSION.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PAA, SAID GIVEN THE EARLIER UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING THE FUTURE OF THE AIRPORT PROJECT, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS THE END OF THAT PERIOD, THE AUTHORITY DID NOT HAVE AN EASY START IN LIFE.

DURING ITS FIRST YEAR, THE AUTHORITY HAD RELIED HEAVILY ON GOVERNMENT STAFF SECONDED TO IT AND ON THE AIRPORT MASTER PLAN CONSULTANTS WHO WERE STEERED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF THE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY BY THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, SIR PIERS SAID.

HOWEVER, ITS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MR RICHARD ALLEN, WHO ARRIVED IN MARCH THIS YEAR, HAD BEGUN RAPIDLY TO CREATE A SEPARATE IDENTITY FOR THE AUTHORITY WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE UNCERTAINTY PREVAILING PRIOR TO THE INITIALLING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SINCE HIS ARRIVAL.

"NOTWITHSTANDING THE EARLIER PROBLEMS NOW HAPPILY BEHIND US, I AM HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO ASSURE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL THAT THE BOARD OF THE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY AND ALL OTHERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AIRPORT PROJECT HAVE SHOWN GREAT DEDICATION AND ENTHUSIASM," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED.

"I AM CONVINCED THAT THE AUTHORITY WILL SUCCEED IN DEVELOPING A NEW AIRPORT IDEALLY SUITED TO OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGIC NEEDS AND ONE THAT WILL PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN SECURING OUR CONTINUED PROSPERITY," HE ADDED.

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BCCHK TO WIND UP

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WILL BE APPROACHING THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON FRIDAY (JULY 19) FOR THE AUTHORITY TO DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE LIQUIDATOR TO PAY OFF DEPOSITORS UP TO 25 PER CENT OF THEIR DEPOSITS, SUBJECT TO A LIMIT, FOLLOWING A DECISION TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO WIND UP THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED.

SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ANNOUNCE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL.

/THE FINANCIAL

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THIS IN A STATEMENT HE MADE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY REGARDING THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED.

SIR PIERS EMPHASISED THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION THAT RELIEF SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID AFTER CONSIDERING THE REPORT MADE BY THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING THIS MORNING TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL AND TAKING THE ADVICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS, THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAD DIRECTED HIM TO PETITION THE HIGH COURT FOR THE WINDING UP OF THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED AND ITS SUBSIDIARY DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY, BCCI FINANCE INTERNATIONAL LTD (WHICH WOULD BE REFERRED TO HEREAFTER TOGETHER AS "THE INSTITUTIONS").

THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING SUCH STEP BECAUSE IT BELIEVED IT TO BE IN THE ULTIMATE INTERESTS OF DEPOSITORS, SIR PIERS EXPLAINED.

"THEIR INTERESTS REMAIN OUR PRIME CONCERN.

"WE HAD HOPED THAT, OVER THE PERIOD SINCE THE BCCI GROUP'S PROBLEMS FIRST BECAME KNOWN, A SUITABLE PURCHASER WOULD BE FOUND," HE SAID.

REGRETTABLY, SIR PIERS SAID DESPITE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS OVER THE LAST WEEK OR SO, THIS HAD NOT HAPPENED.

SIR PIERS POINTED OUT THAT PETITIONING FOR LIQUIDATION DID NOT PRECLUDE THE EVENTUAL SALE OF THE INSTITUTIONS, BUT HE DID NOT SEE ANY IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF THAT.

SIR PIERS SAID IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THIS UNHAPPY AFFAIR AND AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THIS WAS NOT A SUITABLE CASE FOR USE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TO RESCUE THE BANK.

FURTHERMORE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ADDED THAT A DECISION TO OPEN THE BANK WITHOUT SATISFACTORY FINANCIAL SUPPORT WOULD NOT HAVE WORKED.

"THOSE DEPOSITORS FIRST IN THE QUEUE TO GET THEIR MONEY WOULD HAVE BENEFITTED AT THE COST OF THE LESS FORTUNATE WHO MIGHT HAVE GOT NOTHING.

"ONLY AN ORDERLY LIQUIDATION WILL ENSURE FAIRNESS TO ALL," SIR PIERS SAID.

SIR PIERS ALSO SAID IT WAS A MATTER OF THE GREATEST REGRET THAT THESE INSTITUTIONS, DESPITE PERFECTLY ADEQUATE SUPERVISION IN HONG KONG, SHOULD HAVE BEEN PUT IN JEOPARDY BY EVENTS OUTSIDE HONG KONG OVER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO CONTROL.

ELSEWHERE BRANCHES AND SUBSIDIARIES HAD CLOSED AND PROCEEDINGS HAD BEEN TAKEN OR WERE IN CONTEMPLATION LEADING TO LIQUIDATION, SIR PIERS NOTED.

"ALTHOUGH THIS PROVIDES SCANT CONSOLATION, WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THE PROBLEMS FROM WHICH WE ARE SUFFERING," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ADDED.

SHW ON CHILD CARE

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON CHILD CARE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WEDNESDAY) TONIGHT:

SIR,

TODAY'S MOTION DEBATE STARTED WITH THE REFERENCE TO THE HO MAN TIN TRAGEDY. THE SAD AND SHOCKING TRAGEDY OF THE MAK FAMILY IN JANUARY THIS YEAR FILLED US ALL WITH A TREMENDOUS FEELING OF LOSS, OF OUTRAGE AND A WHOLE MYRIAD OF EMOTIONS. TRAGEDIES LIKE THIS AND OTHERS AS MENTIONED SO LURIDLY BY SOME MEMBERS HAVE UNFORTUNATELY HAPPENED ALL TOO OFTEN BUT ONCE IS ONCE TOO MANY!

WHILST ONE'S REACTION TO ANY HORRENDOUS ACCIDENT IS ALWAYS INSTINCTIVE AND EMOTIONAL, THIS REACTION NEVERTHELESS IMPLIES A JUDGMENT AND A SENSIBILITY. TODAY'S DEBATE GIVES US A CHANCE TO CHECK OUR JUDGMENT AGAINST THAT OF OTHERS AND PROVIDES SAFEGUARD TO A REASONED VIEW. HOWEVER, OUR CAPACITY TO RECOGNISE THE PROBLEM, AND FIND SOLUTIONS TO RESOLVE IT WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY IMPAIRED WOULD IT NOT IF WE WERE TO LOSE SIGHT OF OUR OBJECTIVES ON CHILD CARE.

I WOULD LIKE THEREFORE TO EVINCE SOME FACTS AND FIGURES; TO EXPLAIN POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE, AND TO SHARE WITH THIS COUNCIL WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING AND PLANS TO DO; SO THAT WE CAN ALL BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990S AND BEYOND, TABLED IN THIS COUNCIL ON 13 MARCH THIS YEAR, CLEARLY CONFIRMS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND CHILD CARE SERVICES AND TO ADOPT NEW APPROACHES TO MEET CHANGING NEEDS.

THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO PARENTS TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE HOME ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD UNDERLINES OUR SOCIAL WELFARE CHILD CARE POLICY. WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ARE BEST CARED FOR AT HOME BY THEIR PARENTS. MY FIRM BELIEF IS THAT STEREOTYPES ARE BEST AVOIDED AND THAT PARENTHOOD SHOULD INVOLVE BOTH THE FATHER AND THE MOTHER. AND I HEAR NOTHING BUT WOMEN SHOULD GO OUT TO WORK WHILE MEN STAY AT HOME. SO THERE IS A STEREOTYPING PROBLEM HERE WHICH NEEDS TO BE OVERCOME. A FAMILY COULD BECOME TOTALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL IF CHILDREN WERE NEGLECTED WHILE PARENTS WERE OUT THERE CHASING THE BUCK OR PASSING IT, OR BOTH. PARENTING IS A 24 HOUR RESPONSIBILITY. HERE I MUST ECHO AGREEMENT WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MANY MEMBERS BEFORE ME ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL CARE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

/THE CURRENT

THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY IS THAT CHILD CARE SERVICES SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO PRESERVE THE HARMONY AND INTEGRITY OF THE FAMILY SO THAT PARENTS CAN CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN. AS SO ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED BY MY HONOURABLE FRIEND MRS ELSIE TU, IT IS CLEAR THAT TRADITIONAL FAMILY TIES ARE WEAKENED IN HONG KONG AS A RESULT OF MODERNISATION, AND THE SHARING OF THE BURDEN OF TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN BY GRANDMOTHERS AND AUNTS IS NOW NO LONGER AVAILABLE. FURTHERMORE, SOCIAL ISOLATION, IGNORANCE ON THE PART OF PARENTS, NUCLEAR FAMILIES UPROOTED FROM THEIR FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT, ALL COULD RESULT IN INADEQUATE NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT AND OTHER SOCIAL REINFORCEMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THIS AND INNOVATIVE SERVICES ARE DEVELOPED AND CONSTANTLY MONITORED TO CATER TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF SOCIETY. SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE TO PARENTS WHO CANNOT TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE DAY INCLUDE DAY CRECHES, DAY NURSERIES, HOME HELP, FAMILY AIDE SERVICES, OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE SERVICE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE SERVICE.

MEMBERS WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE AT PRESENT 1,000 SUBVENTED AND NON-PROFIT MAKING DAY CRECHE PLACES AND 20,650 AIDED AND NON-PROFIT MAKING NURSERY PLACES. WE PLAN TO EXPAND THE DAY CRECHE SERVICE, PARTICULARLY IN THE NEW TOWNS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE PLAN TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL 1,400 AIDED NURSERY PLACES EVERY YEAR UNTIL THE DEMAND IS MET IN FULL. FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES WITH SOCIAL NEEDS WHO CANNOT AFFORD THE FEE, A FEE ASSISTANCE SCHEME IS IN PLACE TO HELP THEM. SEPARATELY, THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOW PROVIDING SOME 10,600 NURSERY PLACES, NOT TO MENTION OTHER KINDERGARTEN PLACES WHICH DON'T COME UNDER MY PURVIEW.

ADDITIONALLY, 150 OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE PLACES ARE PROVIDED IN 50 EXISTING DAY NURSERIES FOR CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS HAVE TO STAY AWAY FROM HOME OCCASIONALLY DUE TO URGENT COMMITMENTS. PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES WITH SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL NEEDS ARE PROVIDED WITH AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAMMES WHICH INCLUDE HOMEWORK GUIDANCE, MEALS, GROUP ACTIVITIES, PLAY ACTIVITIES AND COUNSELLING SERVICES. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ARE NOW RUNNING ABOUT 30 SUCH PROGRAMMES, AND FIVE OF THEM ARE RECEIVING GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS. THESE PROGRAMMES HELP TO MINIMISE THE RISK TO YOUNG CHILDREN BEING LEFT UNATTENDED AT HOME.

SIR, WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ARE BEST TAKEN CARE OF BY THEIR PARENTS, THERE MIGHT BE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A CHILD HAS TO BE TEMPORARILY PUT INTO A RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME. AT PRESENT, WE HAVE A TOTAL OF 2,386 PLACES OF RESIDENTIAL CARE, INCLUDING FOSTER CARE, SMALL GROUP HOMES, CHILDREN'S HOMES, BOYS' HOMES, GIRLS' HOMES AND HOSTELS. ADDITIONAL FOSTER CARE AND SMALL GROUP HOME PLACES ARE BEING PLANNED.

FOR DISABLED CHILDREN, AND I AM VERY DISAPPOINTED NOBODY MENTIONED DISABLED CHILDREN, SPECIAL CHILD CARE CENTRES ARE PROVIDED. THE PROGRAMMES OFFERED THERE AIM TO DEVELOP THE CHILDREN'S PERCEPTUAL MOTOR COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL SKILLS AND GENERAL WELL-BEING. AGAIN, THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THESE SERVICES IS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR PARENTS WHO NEED THEM.

/AS REGARDS

AS REGARDS TRAINING TO ENSURE QUALITY, IT IS A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT THAT ALL CHILD CARE WORKERS MUST HAVE RECEIVED SPECIAL CHILD CARE TRAINING BEFORE THE END OF THEIR FIRST YEAR OF SERVICE. EXCEPT THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED PRE-SERVICE CHILD CARE TRAINING, ALL CHILD CARE WORKERS ARE PROVIDED WITH AN 8-WEEK IN-SERVICE TRAINING BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT ORGANISED BY THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC. EIGHT SUCH COURSES ARE PROVIDED THIS YEAR. AT PRESENT, ABOUT 80% OF ALL OUR CHILD CARE WORKERS ARE TRAINED. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR, IN 1992/93, ALL CHILD CARE WORKERS WILL HAVE HAD SPECIAL TRAINING BEFORE THE END OF THEIR FIRST YEAR OF SERVICE THEREBY GUARANTEEING A STANDARD OF SERVICE LAID DOWN BY LAW. MOREOVER, THE CHILD CARE CENTRE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES ADVICE AND GUIDANCE TO THESE CENTRES THROUGH REGULAR VISITS AND CONSULTATIONS.

IN ORDER TO ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE CHILD CARE FIELD, THEIR SALARY STRUCTURE HAS RECENTLY BEEN REVIEWED. I AM SORRY TO SAY MY HONOURABLE FRIEND MR PETER WONG'S FIGURE WAS SLIGHTLY OUT OF DATE. BOTH THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND SWAC HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND AN IMPROVED SCALE, COMPARABLE TO OTHER GRADES WITH SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE, HAS BEEN ADOPTED. FUNDS ARE ALREADY MADE AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT THEM FROM OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR. THIS, I HOPE, WILL HELP TO RETAIN EXPERIENCED STAFF AS WELL AS IMPROVE RECRUITMENT.

I THINK IT IS ALSO APPROPRIATE HERE, SIR, TO EXPRESS RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY ALL WORKERS, MOSTLY WOMEN, I MIGHT ADD, WHO HAVE WORKED SILENTLY BEHIND THE SCENE LOOKING AFTER CHILDREN IN THE CHILD CARE CENTRES DEVOTING THEIR LIVES AND THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO BRING UP CHILDREN IN A GOOD ENVIRONMENT. IT IS OUR HONG KONG CHILDREN, OUR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FUTURE. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THE CHILDREN WILL REAP THE BENEFIT OF THE CARE WE GIVE AND GIVEN BY THE WORKERS. THEREFORE I THINK WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN ARE BROUGHT UP IN SAFE, HEALTHY AND CARING CONDITIONS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE FAMILY SURROUNDINGS BY THEIR PARENTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

TO PROVIDE MORE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ENABLE LOW INCOME FAMILIES TO MAKE USE OF CHILD CARE CENTRE FACILITIES, THE FEE ASSISTANCE SCHEME WAS IMPROVED IN LAST SEPTEMBER, ONLY NINE MONTHS AGO, BY RELAXING THE INCOME CRITERIA BY ABOUT 33%. A FAMILY OF FOUR WITH INCOME NET OF RENT BELOW \$3,000 WILL BE ASSISTED WITH FULL FEE ASSISTANCE. THOSE WITH NET INCOME AT ABOUT \$6,100 WILL RECEIVE HALF FEE ASSISTANCE. THIS ENSURES THAT NO FAMILY WITH SOCIAL NEEDS WILL BE PREVENTED FROM MAKING USE OF CHILD CARE CENTRE FACILITIES BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR CHILD CARE POLICY. "RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD" HAS BEEN THE MAIN THEME OF OUR FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN SINCE 1989. A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES ON PARENTING ARE ALSO CONDUCTED REGULARLY AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL. I MUST CONFESS THAT I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE MANY INNOVATIVE IDEAS GIVEN BY MEMBERS IN THIS DEBATE WHICH MY COLLEAGUES AND I WILL TAKE REFERENCE FROM.

/DURING THIS

DURING THIS DEBATE, ALSO, THERE HAVE BEEN CALLS FOR LEGISLATION, OR SOMETHING TO BE DONE, AGAINST LEAVING CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME. I AM GRATEFUL FOR MY HONOURABLE FRIEND MRS ROSANNA TAM'S, AND ALSO MRS PEGGY LAM'S, ADMIRABLE ANALYSES OF THE PROS AND CONS OF A LEGISLATIVE APPROACH. SOCIAL ATTITUDES GUIDE OUR POLICY. SOCIAL VALUES GOVERN OUR BEHAVIOUR. WHETHER WE NEED LEGISLATION, I SHALL DEFER TO THE VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY. AS MENTIONED BY MRS TAM, A CONSULTATIVE PAPER WILL BE ISSUED SHORTLY FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS.

SIR, AS EVERY WOMAN WELL KNOWNS, AND I AM SURE SOME MEN TOO, CHILD CARE IS TOO IMPORTANT A SUBJECT TO BE TACKLED WITH SPORADIC ATTENTION OR AT EVERY LEAP YEAR OR ONLY AFTER EVERY TRAGEDY. A DEEP COMMITMENT IS CALLED FOR; SO IS A SUSTAINED EFFORT, FROM THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

IN THANKING MR MARTIN LEE FOR THIS TIMELY MOTION, I AM GRATEFUL TO THIS COUNCIL, SIR, FOR TAKING THE LEAD. I LOOK FORWARD TO THIS COUNCIL, SIR, FOR FURTHER INITIATIVES. WITH THESE REMARKS, SIR, I SUPPORT THE MOTION.

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IMPORTANT JOB POSITIONS OCCUPIED BY WOMEN: SHA

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MANY IMPORTANT POSITIONS AT ALL RANKS OF THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS ARE OCCUPIED BY WOMEN, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST (WEDNESDAY) NIGHT.

"IN ALL SPHERES OF ACTIVITY, BE IT EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT, RECREATION OR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE EQUAL FOR MEN AND WOMEN," HE STRESSED.

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE "ENHANCEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN", MR LAM CITED EVIDENCE AND STATISTICS TO SUPPORT HIS ARGUMENT.

CITING HEALTH AS AN EXAMPLE, MR LAM POINTED OUT THAT WOMEN IN THE TERRITORY ACTUALLY ENJOYED A HIGHER LIFE EXPECTANCY THAN MEN: 80.3 FOR WOMEN, 74.7 FOR MEN.

AS TO EDUCATION, MR LAM NOTED THAT IN THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS FEMALE STUDENTS DOMINATED IN CERTAIN AREAS OF STUDY, SUCH AS MASS COMMUNICATION (77 PER CENT), ARTS (68 PER CENT) AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (54 PER CENT).

ON WOMEN'S STANDING IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR LAM EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPLOYMENT POLICY DID NOT DISCRIMINATE ON GROUNDS OF SEX.

AS TO MEMBERS' CONCERN OVER THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR LAM AGREED THAT THERE WERE CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS THERE WHICH TENDED TO PERPETUATE THE INHERITANCE OF ANCESTRAL LAND ALONG THE MALE LINE.

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HOWEVER, HE SAID THESE CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS WERE WELL ENSHRINED AND WERE "IN LINE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ORDINANCE (CAP. 97) APPROVED BY THIS COUNCIL".

THE GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FROM THE RURAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE WOMEN, AS TO HOW THE SITUATION MAY BE IMPROVED.

AS REGARDS THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN, MR LAM SAID THE LEGAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS WERE COMPLEX AND, FOR THIS REASON, A CAREFUL STUDY WAS REQUIRED BEFORE A CONCLUSION COULD BE REACHED AS TO ITS APPLICATION TO HONG KONG.

IN CONCLUSION, MR LAM STATED THAT IN VIEW OF THE HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ENJOYED BY HONG KONG WOMEN, A WORKING PARTY OR CONSULTATIVE BODY TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF WOMEN "DOES NOT SEEM TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, AND CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED AS A LONG-TERM POLICY".

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SEM ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR
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THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TRANSLATION OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST (WEDNESDAY) NIGHT IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON IMPORTATION OF LABOUR:

TODAY'S DEBATE PROVIDES ME WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOUND THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THIS ISSUE AND TO EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE BEHIND IT.

HONG KONG HAS EXPERIENCED A GENERAL SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IN RECENT YEARS. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS REMAINED BELOW 3% FOR A LONG TIME. VACANCY ADVERTISEMENTS, NORMALLY CONSISTING OF SOME 80-90 OR EVEN OVER HUNDRED PAGES, REGULARLY APPEAR IN CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS. THERE ARE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR SUCH A SITUATION.

FIRSTLY, AS HONG KONG HAS SEEN RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR IN VARIOUS TRADES AND INDUSTRIES HAS INCREASED. WITH INSUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF LABOUR TO FILL THESE VACANCIES, MANY EMPLOYERS HAVE INTRODUCED ADVANCED SYSTEM OF AUTOMATION OR PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THEIR EMPLOYEES AND TO REDUCE THE DEMAND ON MANPOWER. IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, MANY MANUFACTURERS HAVE, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, EITHER MOVED THEIR LABOUR INTENSIVE PRODUCTION PROCESSES TO MAINLAND CHINA AND OTHER NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, OR EXTENDED THEIR PRODUCTION LINES IN THESE AREAS. MOREOVER, RAPID EXPANSION OF THE LOCAL SERVICE SECTOR HAS LED TO A GREATER DEMAND FOR MANPOWER.

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SECONDLY, THE SUPPLY OF MANPOWER IN RECENT YEARS HAS FOLLOWED A DOWNWARD TREND RATHER THAN ON THE RISE. SUCCESSFUL CONTROL OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND THE GROWTH OF A SMALLER FAMILY STRUCTURE IN SOCIETY HAVE RESULTED IN ONLY A SLIGHT GROWTH OF POPULATION IN THE PAST YEARS. FURTHERMORE, THE POPULARISATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A GRADUAL EXTENSION OF THE AVERAGE STUDY YEARS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. HENCE, THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT BUT GRADUAL DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF LOCAL RESIDENTS JOINING THE WORKFORCE.

THIRDLY, THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE GROWTH DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LEAVING THE TERRITORY TO SETTLE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. AMONG THOSE LEAVING HONG KONG EACH YEAR, ABOUT 12,000 TO 15,000 ARE PROFESSIONALS, MANAGERS AND TECHNICIANS. THEY ARE ALL IN THE PRIME OF LIFE. THE LOSS OF THESE TALENTS HAS INTENSIFIED OUR LABOUR SHORTAGE PROBLEM.

THERE BEING SCARCELY ANY NATURAL RESOURCES IN HONG KONG, WE HAVE TO RELY MAINLY ON OUR LABOUR FORCE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINED SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER WILL LIMIT THE POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SCRAMBLE FOR TALENTS BY OFFERING HIGHER WAGES IN CERTAIN TRADES AND INDUSTRIES CONFRONTED WITH SERIOUS MANPOWER SHORTAGE HAS ALSO FUELLED OUR INTERNAL INFLATION IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. IF WE DO NOT THINK OF A WAY TO RECTIFY THE IMBALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE LABOUR MARKET, THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG WILL BE IMPEDED, AND LOCAL AND FOREIGN NEW INVESTMENT AS WELL AS REINVESTMENT WILL ALSO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE CONTINUOUS GROWTH OF OUR ECONOMY, AND TO STIMULATE AND CO-ORDINATE NEW INVESTMENT AND REINVESTMENT, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO ADOPT A NEW POLICY IN 1989, ALLOWING EMPLOYERS TO IMPORT WITH RESTRAINTS UP TO 3,000 FOREIGN CRAFTSMEN, TECHNICIANS AND SUPERVISORS IN A SYSTEMATIC MANNER. IN 1990, IT WAS DECIDED TO FURTHER EXPAND THE LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME BY APPROVING FURTHER ADMISSION OF 2,700 CRAFTSMEN AND 10,000 SKILLED WORKERS. MOREOVER, IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE NEW AIRPORT AND AIRPORT-RELATED PROJECTS, THE GOVERNMENT APPROVED IN 1990 A SEPARATE QUOTA OF 2,000 FOREIGN WORKERS INITIALLY TO FACILITATE THE EARLY STAGES OF THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECTS. IN VIEW OF THE SIZE AND UNIQUENESS OF THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECTS, THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THAT THE PROVISION OF LABOUR FOR THESE PROJECTS SHOULD BE HANDLED SEPARATELY FROM THE GENERAL LABOUR IMPORTATION ISSUE.

I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THE EXISTING LABOUR IMPORTATION SCHEME IS BEING CARRIED OUT SYSTEMATICALLY AND WITH RESTRAINT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO ALLOW MASSIVE AND UNRESTRAINED IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS, WHICH WILL SEVERELY UNDERMINE THE INTEREST OF LOCAL WORKERS. I TRUST THAT NO GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD WOULD HOPE TO SEE A LARGE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED LOCAL WORKERS, LET ALONE TAKING POSITIVE ACTIONS TO DEPRIVE WORKERS OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES. THIS IS BECAUSE SUCH ACTIONS WILL NOT IN ANY WAY BE BENEFICIAL TO ECONOMIC GROWTH BUT WOULD INSTEAD CAUSE SOCIAL INSTABILITY, BRINGING GREAT TROUBLES TO THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF.

ACTUALLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS, BECAUSE WE RECOGNISE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WORK FORCE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT WORKERS HAVE A RIGHT TO SHARE IN THE FRUITS OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT. THEREFORE, IN REGARD TO THE IMPORTATION OF LABOUR, EMPLOYERS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY IMPORTED WORKERS A SALARY NOT LESS THAN THE MEDIAN WAGE OF LOCAL WORKERS OF THE SAME LEVEL SO AS TO ENSURE THAT WAGES OF LOCAL WORKERS ARE NOT CURBED. MOREOVER, IT IS STIPULATED THAT IF THERE IS A NEED TO CUT STAFF, IMPORTED WORKERS SHOULD FIRST BE DISMISSED.

FURTHERMORE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN POSITIVE MEASURES OVER THE YEARS TO SAFEGUARD THE WELFARE OF LOCAL WORKERS AND BETTER THEIR REMUNERATION. LET US HAVE A LOOK AT SOME RECENT EXAMPLES. ON THE CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN 1988 TO THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME FIRST INTRODUCED IN 1986. A BILL TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE SCHEME WAS INTRODUCED IN MAY THIS YEAR. WITH THESE AMENDMENTS, THE SCHEME GUARANTEES A REWARD IN CASH TO WORKERS WITH FIVE YEAR'S SERVICE WHO ARE DISMISSED, OR ARE RETIRED EITHER BECAUSE OF OLD AGE OR ON MEDICAL GROUNDS. TWO MAJOR AMENDMENT WERE MADE TO THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE IN 1990. FIRSTLY, EMPLOYEES' STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT TO ANNUAL PAID LEAVE HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM SEVEN DAYS TO 14 DAYS; SECONDLY, THE ORDINANCE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO COVER ALL EMPLOYEES, WHILE THE DEFINITION OF "LAY-OFF" HAS ALSO BEEN AMENDED. THE PROTECTION OF WAGES ON INSOLVENCY FUND SET UP TO PROTECT THE EMPLOYEES FROM BEING AFFECTED BY EMPLOYERS' INSOLVENCY WAS EXTENDED IN 1989 TO INCLUDE SEVERANCE PAYMENT. THE AMOUNT OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT GUARANTEED BY THE FUND HAS BEEN INCREASED CONSIDERABLY SINCE MAY THIS YEAR. REGARDING THE SAFETY OF WORKERS, THE GOVERNMENT AMENDED THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING ORDINANCE IN 1989 TO STRENGTHEN INDUSTRIAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES. IN 1990, THE ORDINANCE WAS FURTHER EXTENDED TO THE FOOD BUSINESS. IN REGARD TO COMPENSATION TO WORKERS WHO HAVE SUSTAINED INJURIES ARISING FROM WORK, THE GOVERNMENT HAS INTRODUCED THE EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION INSURANCE LEVIES SCHEME IN 1990, REQUIRING EMPLOYERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FUND ESTABLISHED TO MAKE PAYMENT TO WORKERS WHO MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION DUE TO THE EMPLOYERS HAVING BECOME INSOLVENT OR DISAPPEARED, OR DUE TO SOME OTHER REASONS, OR DUE TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY CONCERNED HAVING GONE INTO INSOLVENCY. THE ORDINANCE INTRODUCING THE COMPENSATION SCHEME WAS PASSED BY THIS COUNCIL IN THIS YEAR. IN THE YEARS TO COME, THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE RELEVANT LABOUR LEGISLATIONS AND UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

BACK TO THE LABOUR IMPORTATION ISSUE. JUST NOW, I MENTIONED FOUR SCHEMES INTRODUCED IN 1989 AND 1990. APART FROM THE AIRPORT-RELATED SCHEME, ALL THE OTHER THREE SCHEMES HAVE ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED, AND MOST OF THE FOREIGN WORKERS IMPORTED FOR THESE PURPOSE HAVE STARTED TO WORK, WHILE OTHERS ARE IN THE COURSE OF APPLYING TO COME TO HONG KONG. THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW REVIEWING THE OPERATION OF THESE SCHEMES. WE WILL INVESTIGATE ALL COMPLAINTS THAT THE SALARIES BEING PAID WERE BELOW STANDARD, AND ARE CLOSELY MONITORING ANY CHANGES IN THE LOCAL LABOUR MARKET. OUR ATTENTION FOCUSES NOT ONLY ON THE CHANGES IN THE OVERALL SITUATION, BUT ALSO ON THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR LABOUR IN INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES AND POSTS. AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF ALL RELEVANT FACTORS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL, IF NECESSARY, CONTINUE ON THE IMPORTATION OF LABOUR IN A SYSTEMATIC MANNER AND WITH RESTRAINT.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 1991

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RENT CONTROL TO REMAIN UNTIL 1994: SHA

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED A RESOLUTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF PART II OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE BY THREE YEARS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT PART II OF THE ORDINANCE WHICH CONTROLLED RENT INCREASES OF CERTAIN POST-WAR PREMISES WAS DUE TO EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 18 THIS YEAR.

ALTHOUGH RENTS WERE REVIEWED EVERY TWO YEARS, MR LAM SAID IF PART II CONTROLS WERE ALLOWED TO LAPSE ON THAT DAY, TENANTS OF AFFECTED PREMISES COULD BE FACED WITH AVERAGE INCREASE OF OVER 60 PER CENT IN 1992 AND 1993.

"SUCH INCREASES ARE CONSIDERED EXCESSIVE AND SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE," HE EMPHASISED.

AND FOR THIS REASON, MR LAM PROPOSED EXTENDING RENT CONTROL UNDER PART II TO UNTIL DECEMBER 1994.

HOWEVER, HE ALSO STRESSED THAT GOVERNMENT REMAINED COMMITTED TO PHASING OUT RENT CONTROLS PROVIDED THAT THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT ADVERSE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES.

EARLIER, MR LAM EXPLAINED THAT AMENDING LEGISLATION HAD BEEN PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL EACH YEAR SINCE 1981 WITH A VIEW TO BRINGING CONTROLLED RENTS PROGRESSIVELY CLOSER TO PREVAILING MARKET RATES AND EVENTUALLY TO ALLOW FOR DECONTROL.

HE SAID IN PURSUIT OF GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO EVENTUAL DECONTROL, GREAT CARE HAD BEEN TAKEN TO DETERMINE AN APPROPRIATE PERIOD FOR EXTENDING PART II.

"TENTATIVELY, PROPOSALS ARE BEING FORMULATED TO ADJUST THE RELEVANT CONTROL MECHANISM TO ALLOW PART II RENTS TO RISE TO WITHIN 10 PER CENT OF THE PREVAILING MARKET RENTS BY THE END OF 1994," MR LAM SAID.

PART II OF THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES FOR SECURITY OF TENURE AND CONTROLS INCREASES IN RENT IN RESPECT OF DOMESTIC PREMISES COMPLETED BEFORE JUNE 19, 1981, TENANCIES CREATED BEFORE JUNE 10, 1983, AND TENANCIES OF PREMISES WITH A RATEABLE VALUE OF LESS THAN \$30,000 IN 1983.

MR LAM SAID AS AT JANUARY 1, 1991, THERE WERE ABOUT 43,000 UNITS PROTECTED BY PART II BUT THAT THIS NUMBER WAS DIMINISHING AT THE RATE OF 5,000 UNITS A YEAR THROUGH REPOSSESSION BY THEIR OWNERS, LET OUT AT MARKET RENTAL RATES, OR DEMOLISHED FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

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RESOLUTION TO RAISE LIMIT OF INDEBTEDNESS

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED A RESOLUTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO RAISE THE STATUTORY LIMIT OF INDEBTEDNESS FOR THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRIES SPECIAL SUSPENSE ACCOUNT FROM \$40 MILLION TO \$80 MILLION, WITH EFFECT FROM AUGUST 1.

SIR PIERS SAID THE INCREASE TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION INFLATION SINCE 1986 WHEN THE PRESENT LEVEL OF INDEBTEDNESS WAS SET, AND THE 100 PER CENT INCREASE IN BUSINESS VOLUME OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRIES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE REVISED STATUTORY LIMIT WAS BASED ON THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S PROJECTED NEEDS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

A PRUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE LIMIT, WITHIN THE REVISED STATUTORY LIMIT, WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SET FROM TIME TO TIME, HE ADDED.

EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OPERATED A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIES TO KEEP INMATES PURPOSEFULLY OCCUPIED.

THE GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDED WERE SUPPLIED TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AT THE COST OF MATERIALS USED AND TO QUASI-GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS AT MARKET PRICES DECIDED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, HE SAID.

ON JANUARY 29, 1986, BY A RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, A SPECIAL SUSPENSE ACCOUNT WAS ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 30(1) OF THE PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRIES.

"UNDER THE ACCOUNTING ARRANGEMENTS, ALL PAYMENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF MATERIALS FOR THE INDUSTRIES ARE DEBITED TO THE ACCOUNT, AND ALL PAYMENTS MADE BY CLIENT DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE GOODS AND SERVICES SUPPLIED BY THE INDUSTRIES ARE CREDITED TO THE ACCOUNT, EXCEPT RECOVERIES ABOVE THE COST OF MATERIALS USED WHICH ARE CREDITED TO GENERAL REVENUE," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED.

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEBIT AND CREDIT ENTRIES REPRESENTS THE STOCK BALANCE, OR THE LEVEL OF INDEBTEDNESS," HE ADDED.

SIR PIERS SAID UNDER CLAUSE 6 OF THE ORIGINAL RESOLUTION WHICH ESTABLISHED THE ACCOUNT, THE MAXIMUM CEILING (THE STATUTORY LIMIT) OF INDEBTEDNESS MIGHT NOT EXCEED \$40 MILLION OR SUCH LESSER SUM AS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MIGHT DETERMINE (THE ADMINISTRATIVE LIMIT).

HE NOTED THAT OWING TO THE STEADY GROWTH IN THE VOLUME OF BUSINESS CONDUCTED BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRIES OVER THE YEARS, THE LEVEL OF INDEBTEDNESS HAD REACHED \$36.5 MILLION AS AT OCTOBER 1 LAST YEAR.

AS BUSINESS CONTINUED TO INCREASE, A REVISION OF THE LIMIT WAS NEEDED IN ORDER TO PERMIT THE GROWTH TO CONTINUE IN ORDERLY FASHION, SIR PIERS SAID.

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BILL TO MAINTAIN COMPETITIVE EDGE OF KNITWEAR
INDUSTRY PASSED

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NO SECTOR OF HONG KONG'S ECONOMY SHOULD BE SUBJECTED TO REGULATION BEYOND WHAT IS NECESSARY.

THIS PRINCIPLE WAS, INDEED, THE BEDROCK OF HONG KONG'S SUCCESS BECAUSE IT ENSURED THAT HONG KONG ECONOMY WAS COMPETITIVE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, WHEN WINDING UP THE SECOND READING DEBATE OF THE TRADE DESCRIPTIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT HAS ALLOWED US TO MAXIMISE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF OUR GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION, SO THAT WE CAN CONCENTRATE OUR LIMITED RESOURCES ON WHATEVER WE DO BEST IN HONG KONG, WHILE OTHER ACTIVITIES CAN MOVE ELSEWHERE," SIR PIERS SAID.

HE SAID THE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE BILL FELL SQUARELY WITHIN THIS PRINCIPLE.

"THEY ADDRESS A PRACTICAL PROBLEM.

"OUR KNITWEAR INDUSTRY CURRENTLY HAS TO MEET BOTH THE UNITED STATES REQUIREMENTS FOR KNITTING AND THE HONG KONG REQUIREMENTS FOR LINKING AND LOOPING IN ORDER TO EXPORT RELEVANT KNITWEAR TO THE UNITED STATES WITH A HONG KONG ORIGIN LABEL.

"EACH OF THESE REQUIREMENTS IS SUBSTANTIAL," THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

TAKEN TOGETHER, HE SAID, THEY CONSTITUTED AN UNNECESSARY REGULATORY BURDEN ON THE INDUSTRY.

"OUR EXPORTS MUST COMPLY WITH U.S. RULES IN ORDER TO GAIN ENTRY INTO THE U.S. BECAUSE THE U.S. CAN DETERMINE ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS FOR GOODS IMPORTED INTO ITS TERRITORY.

"WE HAVE THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS BOTH UNNECESSARY AND UNFAIR TO CONTINUE TO REQUIRE THE INDUSTRY TO MEET OUR RULE AS WELL," SIR PIERS SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S OVERSEAS KNITWEAR MARKET WAS AN EXTREMELY COMPETITIVE ONE.

"THE KNITWEAR INDUSTRY, LIKE ANY OTHER SECTOR IN HONG KONG, SHOULD BE ALLOWED AND REQUIRED TO ADJUST TO MARKET FORCES, OTHERWISE IT WILL LOSE OUT FOR WANT OF MAINTAINING ITS COMPETITIVE EDGE," HE SAID.

HE WARNED THAT IN THE LONG RUN, IT COULD ONLY LEAD TO DAMAGE TO THE INDUSTRY, AND CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGE TO ITS WORKFORCE AND LOSS OF JOBS..

/HE ASSURED

HE ASSURED THAT THE BILL WOULD ENSURE THAT THE INDUSTRY WAS NOT UNDULY FETTERED AS IT COMPETED IN THE U.S. MARKET.

HE SAID THE BILL WAS INTENDED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO ENABLE HONG KONG TO IMPLEMENT A SPECIAL LICENSING SCHEME TO REMOVE AN UNNECESSARY DOUBLE REQUIREMENT ON THE KNITWEAR INDUSTRY.

THAT WAS TO SAY, HE ADDED, IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN PIECE KNITTED GARMENTS FOR EXPORT TO THE U.S., ONLY THE PANEL-KNITTING PROCESS, AS AGAINST LINKING-AND-LOOPING AS WELL, MUST BE DONE IN HONG KONG.

IN RESPONSE TO MEMBERS QUERIES AS TO WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE THE CHANGE NOW, SIR PIERS EXPLAINED THAT HONG KONG FACED SEVERE COMPETITION FROM CHINA, SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN AS WELL AS FROM OTHER EMERGING SUPPLIERS.

"AT A TIME WHEN THE UNITED STATES MARKET IS FACING UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS, AVERAGE HONG KONG PRICES OF SWEATERS ARE 10 TO 20 PER CENT HIGHER THAN THOSE OF OUR MAJOR COMPETITORS," HE NOTED.

EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES IN VOLUME OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS DECLINED BY MORE THAN 10 PER CENT, ALTHOUGH IT MUST BE RECOGNISED THAT HALF OF THAT DECLINE MIGHT BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE UNITED STATES ANTI-DUMPING DUTIES ON MAN-MADE FIBRE SWEATERS.

"TAKING ALL THESE FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS CONCLUDED THAT WE SHOULD ACT NOW TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S COMPETITIVENESS," SIR PIERS SAID.

IN REACHING THIS CONCLUSION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD TAKEN CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THESE PROPOSALS ON LOCAL EMPLOYMENT.

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE PRECISELY THE NUMBERS INVOLVED, HE SAID, BUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S BEST ESTIMATE WAS THAT ABOUT 2,500 LINKERS MIGHT BE AFFECTED.

"THAT IS WHY WE HAVE EMPHASISED IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INDUSTRY THE IMPORTANCE OF DEALING FAIRLY WITH ANY PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

"WE HAVE ASKED THEM TO CONSIDER REDEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT ANY PROBLEMS, INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF UNFAIR TREATMENT, CAN BE DEALT WITH," SIR PIERS SAID.

"I BELIEVE THE INDUSTRY IS FULLY APPRISED OF THE NEED TO DEAL REASONABLY WITH THIS ISSUE, AND IN PARTICULAR WITH ANY HARDSHIP CASES WHICH MAY ARISE," HE ADDED.

HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TWO MAIN KNITWEAR ASSOCIATIONS HAD UNDERTAKEN TO MEMBERS NOT TO RETRENCH ANY LINKING WORKERS IF THE BILL WAS PASSED.

HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ASSOCIATIONS HAD ALSO DECIDED TO SET UP A SERVICE CENTRE TO HELP RESOLVE ANY LABOUR PROBLEMS.

HE SAID THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY WOULD HELP MEET ANY TRAINING DEMANDS, AND THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD ALSO CONTACT THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL FOR ASSISTANCE IF THE NEED AROSE. ALSO, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TOO STOOD READY TO RENDER ASSISTANCE TO WORKERS.

SOME LEGISLATORS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT WORKERS WHO WERE ENGAGED IN MANUFACTURING PROCESSES THAT CAME AFTER LINKING AND LOOPING MIGHT ALSO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED CHANGES.

SIR PIERS SAID SUCH MANUFACTURING PROCESSES COULD OF COURSE ALREADY BE PERFORMED ELSEWHERE. HE SAID SOME MANUFACTURERS WERE ALREADY FOLLOWING THIS OPTION.

SIR PIERS BELIEVED THAT BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF WORK, MOST WORKERS WOULD BE ABLE TO FIND A NEW JOB WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY, GIVEN THAT THERE WERE SOME 14,000 REPORTED VACANCIES IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY.

RESPONDING TO SOME LEGISLATORS' DEMANDS TO PRESS THE U.S. TO REVERT TO THE OLD RULES, HE SAID: "BUT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PERSUADE THEM TO REVERT TO THE OLD RULES.

"IN THE END, WE HAVE TO TURN TO THE PRESENT PROPOSALS TO REDRESS THE PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL."

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD RECOGNISED THAT THE CHANGES INTRODUCED BY THE BILL WOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL CONTROL OF ARRANGEMENTS TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXTILE EXPORT CONTROL SCHEME, WHICH HAD BEEN WIDELY RECOGNISED BY HONG KONG'S TRADING PARTNERS AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE IN THE WORLD.

"WE INTEND TO INTRODUCE A SPECIAL LICENSING AND CONTROL SCHEME DESIGNED TO ENFORCE DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO DIFFERENT MARKETS," HE SAID.

THE NEW SCHEME WOULD BE MODELLED ON EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS WHILE THE TRADE DEPARTMENT AND THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT WOULD CLOSELY MONITOR THIS SPECIAL CONTROL SCHEME AND INTRODUCE IMPROVEMENTS IF NECESSARY.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

TELEVISION AMENDMENT BILL PASSED

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THE TELEVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, WHICH PROPOSES A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR NOMINEE SHAREHOLDINGS IN TELEVISION LICENSEE COMPANIES, WAS PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, SAID IT WAS, BROADLY SPEAKING, TO PERMIT SHARES IN TELEVISION LICENSEE COMPANIES TO BE TRANSFERRED TO, AND HELD IN THE NAMES OF NOMINEES.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE ADDED, IT WOULD ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG OVER A PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS, AND COMPANIES ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG, RETAIN THE POTENTIAL TO CONTROL THESE LICENSEES.

"IN THE BILL WE SEEK TO DO THIS BY CONFERRING POWERS ON THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE VOTING CONTROL AND TO MAKE DIRECTIONS WHERE NECESSARY.

"IN INVESTIGATING SUSPECTED BREACHES OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON UNQUALIFIED VOTING CONTROLLERS, THE AUTHORITY MAY, IN THE PROPOSED SECTION 17G, TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CONTROL BY ASSOCIATES AND, IF NECESSARY, DIRECT SUCH ASSOCIATED VOTING CONTROLLERS TO TERMINATE THEIR CONTROL.

"WE THEREFORE PROPOSE TO EMPOWER THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH A DIRECTION TO ANY VOTING CONTROLLER, WHETHER QUALIFIED OR UNQUALIFIED," MR LAM SAID.

MR LAM SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP'S CONCERN THAT THE POWERS GIVEN TO THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY TO PLACE RESTRICTIONS ON SHARES, EFFECTIVELY TO "FREEZE" SUCH SHARES, SHOULD NOT CAUSE INNOCENT THIRD PARTIES TO BE PREJUDICED.

"THE ADMINISTRATION UNDERSTANDS THIS CONCERN AND, HAS EXPLORED VARIOUS WAYS OF INCREASING THE PROTECTION OFFERED TO INVESTORS IN TELEVISION LICENSEE COMPANIES," MR LAM SAID.

IN VIEW OF THE POSSIBLE INCREASED POTENTIAL FOR ABUSE BY UNSCRUPULOUS INVESTORS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONCLUDED THAT ANY FURTHER MODIFICATION TO THE BILL WOULD BE INADVISABLE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A MINOR AMENDMENT TO THE PROPOSED SECTION 17-0 MOVED AT COMMITTEE STAGE.

OFFICIAL SOLICITOR BILL AMENDED

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THE OFFICIAL SOLICITOR BILL 1991 WAS AMENDED DURING COMMITTEE STAGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), DELETING THE REFERENCES TO "BARRISTER" AND "SOLICITOR" AND SUBSTITUTING "LEGAL PRACTITIONER" IN CLAUSES 2 AND 7.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, ALSO MOVED AMENDMENTS TO CLAUSES 3 AND 6.

ON CLAUSE 3, MR MATHEWS SAID THE CLAUSE REQUIRED THE OFFICIAL SOLICITOR TO KEEP PROPER ACCOUNTS AND TO SUBMIT A STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT EVERY YEAR FOR AUDITING AND CERTIFICATION.

"THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 3 IS TO FOLLOW THE GENERAL PRACTICE THAT AN AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATION IS SUBJECT TO ANY REPORT OR VIEWS THAT HE MAY HAVE ON THE AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS," HE SAID.

TURNING TO CLAUSE 6, MR MATHEWS SAID IT EMPOWERED THE OFFICIAL SOLICITOR TO CHARGE FOR HIS SERVICES AND TO RECOVER COSTS WHICH MIGHT BE ASSESSED BY THE COURT IN A TAXATION PROCESS.

"WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CLAUSES 2 AND 7, IT WOULD BE MEANINGLESS TO RETAIN CLAUSE 6(2) INASMUCH AS THE REFERENCE TO HER MAJESTY'S COUNSEL IS CONCERNED," HE EXPLAINED.

THE DELETION OF CLAUSE 6(2) HAD THE LEGAL EFFECT OF REINSTATING THE TAXATION OF THE OFFICIAL SOLICITOR'S ENTITLEMENT TO COSTS ON THE NORMAL BASIS, MR MATHEWS SAID.

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PETROL DUTY WAIVED FOR DISABLED MOTORISTS

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION TO WAIVE THE DUTY ON FUEL FOR USE IN PRIVATE CARS OWNED AND DRIVEN BY DISABLED PERSONS.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT THE WAIVER WOULD COST THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT \$8 MILLION IN REVENUE A YEAR. THE NEW MEASURE WILL TAKE EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1.

THE MOTION, MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, WAS AIMED AT REDUCING THE BURDEN OF FUEL COST ON DISABLED MOTORISTS SO THAT THEIR MOBILITY WOULD BE ENHANCED.

THIS WOULD IN TURN FACILITATE THEIR INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF DISABLED PERSONS HAD NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY MET BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

"IT IS HOPED THAT THE NEW MEASURE WILL ENCOURAGE MORE DISABLED PEOPLE TO USE PRIVATE CARS AS A MEANS TO RESOLVE THEIR TRANSPORT PROBLEM.

"CURRENTLY, ABOUT 1,100 DISABLED PERSONS ARE HOLDING A VALID DRIVING LICENCE. OF THESE, 600 OWN A PRIVATE CAR," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

AFTER THE NEW MEASURE COMES INTO EFFECT, MOTORISTS LISTED AS DISABLED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT CAN APPLY TO THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT FOR A WAIVER OF THE PETROL DUTY.

THE WAIVER IS SUBJECT TO THE LIMIT OF 200 LITRES OF PETROL PER MONTH FOR EACH DISABLED PERSON. THIS LIMIT IS CALCULATED ON A MONTHLY BASIS AND IS NOT CUMULATIVE. THE GOING MARKET RATE WILL BE CHARGED ON ANY AMOUNT IN EXCESS OF THE MONTHLY LIMIT OF 200 LITRES.

APPLICANTS FOR THE WAIVER WILL HAVE TO OPEN A PETROL CARD ACCOUNT WITH ANY ONE OF THE OIL COMPANIES TAKING PART IN THIS SCHEME.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR CUSTOMS AND EXCISE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO ORDER THE SUSPENSION OF THE WAIVER TO ANY RECIPIENTS WHO BREACH THE CONDITIONS.

APPLICATION FORMS FOR THE WAIVING OF THE PETROL DUTY CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE LICENSING OFFICES OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT AND THE DISABLED DRIVERS CLUB.

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NO 'CLOSED SHOP' SITUATION DUE TO REGISTRATION
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THE PROPOSALS RESTRICTING PERSONS FROM USING THE TITLE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL" WILL NOT LEAD TO A "CLOSED SHOP" SITUATION TO THE PROFESSIONS OF SURVEYORS AND PLANNERS BECAUSE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF REGISTRATION UNDER TWO RELATED BILLS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, WHEN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE SURVEYOR REGISTRATION BILL 1991 AND THE PLANNERS REGISTRATION BILL 1991 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES NOTED THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE TWO BILLS CAME FROM THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS AND THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS.

THE TWO INSTITUTES FELT THAT THE STATUS OF THE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL" WOULD BE ENHANCED IF THE POTENTIAL TO RESTRAIN INDIVIDUAL MISUSING THE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL" TITLE WAS ALSO EXTENDED TO FIRMS AND COMPANIES MISUSING THE TITLE, AND ALSO TO PERSONS WHO IN ANY WAY MISLED THEIR CLIENTS OR THE PUBLIC INTO BELIEVING THAT THEY WERE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL" WHEN THEY ACTUALLY WERE NOT.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES EXPLAINED THAT THE AMENDMENT, ALTHOUGH RESTRICTING PERSONS FROM USING THE TITLE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL" IF THEY WERE NOT SO ENTITLED, IN NO WAY BREACHED ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE BILLS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO "CLOSED SHOP" BECAUSE OF REGISTRATION.

"ANY PERSON, PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT CLAIM TO BE A 'REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR' WHEN THEY ARE NOT, CAN STILL PRACTISE IN HONG KONG WITHOUT HINDRANCE, AND THE REGISTER IS OPEN TO ALL APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED, EXPERIENCED, PRACTISING PROFESSIONALS, WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT REGISTRATION OF THOSE QUALIFIED WOULD NOT BE COMPULSORY, BUT THERE WOULD BE OBVIOUS BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM THE USE OF THE TITLE "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR" OR "REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER".

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

THE BILLS WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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APPEAL BOARD TO BE CHAIRED BY MEMBER OF LEGAL PROFESSION

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THE ADMINISTRATION WILL SEEK TO APPOINT A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO ACT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE TOWN PLANNING APPEAL BOARD PANEL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, WHEN HE WOUND UP THE DEBATE ON THE TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES SAID THE ADMINISTRATION DID CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP'S PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A JUDGE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE APPEAL BOARD PANEL AND ALSO CONSULTED THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT ON THE MATTER.

"THE ADVICE WAS THAT BECAUSE OF THE VERY CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON THE COURTS RELATING TO JUDICIAL WORK, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THIS REQUEST TO BE MET," HE SAID.

MR BARNES ALSO GAVE ASSURANCE THAT THE APPEAL BOARD WOULD HAVE THE SAME POWERS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE AS THOSE OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL UNDER THE EXISTING SECTION 17(7) OF THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE.

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NEW AIRPORT FULLY COMPLIES WITH INT'L SAFETY STANDARD

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THE NEW AIRPORT IS BEING PLANNED TO OPERATE IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED SAFETY STANDARDS.

THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON ANSON CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON POON CHI-FAI.

MRS CHAN SAID NO FACTOR WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SAFETY IN PLANNING AND OPERATING AN AIRPORT, ADDING THAT IT WAS ON THIS FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE THAT THE PLANNING OF CHEK LAP KOK AND THE OPERATION OF KAI TAK WAS BASED.

MRS CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON AVIATION SAFETY STANDARDS AND PRACTICES WAS THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANISATION (THE ICAO).

"UNDER THE RELEVANT ICAO TECHNICAL GUIDELINES, THE HILLS IMMEDIATELY TO THE SOUTH OF THE NEW AIRPORT COULD CONSTITUTE AN OBSTACLE IF FLIGHT OPERATIONS WERE TO TAKE PLACE IN THAT AREA.

"BUT WITH EXCELLENT ACCESS TO THE NORTH, EAST AND WEST OF THE AIRPORT THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY FLIGHT OPERATIONS TO TAKE PLACE THERE; THE HIGH GROUND INVOLVED DOES NOT, THEREFORE, CONSTITUTE ANY THREAT TO THE SAFE OPERATION OF THE AIRPORT," MRS CHAN SAID.

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT SOME MINOR TERRAIN REMOVAL MIGHT BE NECESSARY FROM HIGH GROUND MUCH FURTHER AWAY AND TO THE EAST OF THE AIRPORT ON NORTH LANTAU AND IN THE TAI LAM CHUNG COUNTRY PARK.

"THIS WILL BE CARRIED OUT IF THE AIRPORT MASTER PLANNERS RECOMMEND THAT IT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO COMPLY FULLY WITH THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL SAFETY GUIDELINES," MRS CHAN SAID.

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ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION UNDER STUDY

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THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO REACH AN INFORMED POLICY POSITION ON ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION ON THE BASIS OF DETAILED STUDIES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON J.D. MCGREGOR, SIR DAVID SAID HE HAD INFORMED THE COUNCIL WHEN CONCLUDING THE SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE HONG KONG BILL OF RIGHTS BILL 1991 ON JUNE 5, 1991 THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY STARTED CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION FOR HONG KONG.

/HOWEVER, THE

HOWEVER, THE LEGAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF DETAILED ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION WERE COMPLEX, THE CHIEF SECRETARY NOTED.

HE ADDED THAT THEY NEEDED TO BE CAREFULLY STUDIED BEFORE A MATURE DECISION COULD BE TAKEN.

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LAND RESUMPTION ONLY AFTER ORDINANCE COMPLIANCE

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO RESUME LAND FOR THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) WILL ONLY BE MADE WHEN THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ORDINANCE ARE FULLY COMPLIED WITH.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, IN A WRITTEN REPLY AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON MARTIN LEE.

MR BARNES EXPLAINED THAT SECTION 15 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ORDINANCE PROVIDED THAT THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS MIGHT RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL THE RESUMPTION OF LAND UNDER THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE IN RESPECT OF THE LDC'S REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

THE SECTION ALSO PROVIDES THAT THE SECRETARY SHOULD NOT SO RECOMMEND UNLESS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE LDC HAD TAKEN ALL REASONABLE STEPS TO OTHERWISE ACQUIRE THE LAND, INCLUDING NEGOTIATING FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY ON TERMS THAT WERE FAIR AND REASONABLE, MR BARNES ADDED.

"IN PRACTICE; THE SECRETARY IS ADVISED BY THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS, WHO WILL ASSESS IN DETAIL THE TERMS OFFERED BY THE CORPORATION TO ACQUIRE THE PROPERTIES, HAVING REGARD TO THE MARKET VALUE OF THE PROPERTY INTEREST CONCERNED AND THE TOTAL PACKAGE OF COMPENSATION AND ALLOWANCES IN OTHER GOVERNMENT CLEARANCES.

"UPON RECEIVING THE DIRECTOR'S ADVICE, THE SECRETARY MAY ALSO CONSULT ANY PERSON NOT BEING A PUBLIC OFFICER WHOM HE CONSIDERS MAY ASSIST HIM IN FORMING AN OPINION ON WHETHER THE OFFER MADE BY THE CORPORATION WAS FAIR AND REASONABLE," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD OFFER COMPENSATION TO THE OWNERS AND TENANTS AFFECTED BY SUCH RESUMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CROWN LANDS RESUMPTION ORDINANCE, UNDER WHICH THERE WAS A RIGHT OF APPLICATION TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL IF THE OFFER WAS NOT AGREED.

IN ADDITION, EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES SUCH AS REMOVAL ALLOWANCES WOULD BE PAYABLE TO THOSE ELIGIBLE.

/REHOUSING WOULD

REHOUSING SHOULD BE OFFERED WHERE APPROPRIATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LDC'S ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND TERMS AS AGREED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS.

REFERRING TO A CASE WHICH INVOLVED PREMISES ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF 189 QUEEN'S ROAD EAST, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE OWNER HAD AGREED TO SURRENDER THE PREMISES AND SOME OTHERS AT 187-193 QUEEN'S ROAD TO THE GOVERNMENT WITH VACANT POSSESSION AS PART OF AN AGREED LAND EXCHANGE TO THE GOVERNMENT.

"NO RESUMPTION IS INVOLVED AND HENCE THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TENANTS OF THESE PREMISES.

"ANY ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPENSATION ARE MATTERS BETWEEN THE TENANTS AND THE PRESENT OWNER OF THE PREMISES," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OWNER AND TENANTS OF THE CASE WAS SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE AND NORMAL COMMERCIAL PRACTICE, OF WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD LITTLE CAUSE TO INTERVENE.

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GOVT SETS EXAMPLE TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
BY IMPOSING A MORATORIUM

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IT IS CLEAR THAT BY IMPOSING A MORATORIUM ON FEE REVISIONS UNTIL THE END OF FEBRUARY 1992, A CLEAR EXAMPLE HAS BEEN SET BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO TAKE STEPS TO CURB INFLATIONARY EXPECTATIONS.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID THIS WHEN GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

IN THAT CONNECTION, SIR PIERS SAID HE WAS GRATIFIED TO SEE THAT THE LEAD HAD ALREADY GAINED THE SUPPORT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID WHILE IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S NORMAL POLICY TO REVISE FEES AND CHARGES ANNUALLY, HE ANNOUNCED ON MAY 29 THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PLACE A MORATORIUM ON FEE REVISIONS UNTIL THE END OF FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR.

"AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THAT WAS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A LEAD THUS ALTERING THE PERCEPTION THAT THE RISE IN THE RATE OF INFLATION WAS INEXORABLE," HE SAID.

SO FAR, THE PROPOSED REVISION OF 2,249 FEES AND CHARGES HAD BEEN HELD UP, SIR PIERS NOTED.

"WHILE THE INFLATIONARY IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN GREAT EVEN IF THEY HAD GONE AHEAD, IT IS CLEAR THAT BY IMPOSING THE MORATORIUM A CLEAR EXAMPLE HAS BEEN SET TO BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS," SIR PIERS SAID.

/SIR PIERS

SIR PIERS SAID CLEARLY IT WAS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE IF THOSE IN A POSITION TO DO SO COULD RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO RAISE PRICES IN THE EXPECTATION OF FURTHER INFLATION.

ON HOW THE UPWARD REVISION OF INTEREST RATE BY ONE PERCENT HAD AFFECTED THE PUBLIC COFFER, SIR PIERS SAID THE INCREASE IN INTEREST RATES BY ONE PER CENT HAD BENEFITTED THE GOVERNMENT'S GENERAL REVENUE DEPOSITS IN THE EXCHANGE FUND BY A MARGINAL INCREASE IN INTEREST EARNINGS.

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CONTINGENCY PLANS EXIST FOR TRANSPORT BREAKDOWNS
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAS CONTINGENCY MEASURES TO COPE WITH MASS TRANSIT BREAKDOWNS AND ACCIDENTS IN ORDER TO MINIMISE INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC AND IS CLOSELY MONITORING AND REVIEWING CONTINGENCY PROCEDURES IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE.

THIS WAS THE ASSURANCE GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CONTINGENCY MEASURES INCLUDE PROCEDURES FOR RAPID DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION DURING EMERGENCIES, STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH DIFFERENT EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, AND CO-ORDINATION OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT TO RELIEVE PASSENGER CONGESTION AT POTENTIAL PROBLEM LOCATIONS.

HOWEVER, MR LEUNG STRESSED THAT WHILE CONTINGENCY MEASURES HELPED MINIMISE THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF TRANSPORT EMERGENCIES ON THE PUBLIC, SOME DELAYS AND INCONVENIENCE CAUSED BY BREAKDOWNS AND ACCIDENTS IN THE MASS TRANSIT SERVICES WERE INEVITABLE.

"HONG KONG'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS ARE FULLY UTILISED DURING THE PEAK PERIODS. PEAK HOUR FLOWS ON THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY ARE ABOUT 50,000 AND ON THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY 72,000 IN ONE DIRECTION.

"IT WOULD THEREFORE NOT BE REALISTIC TO EXPECT PASSENGERS DISPLACED FROM A MASS TRANSIT SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED WITH IMMEDIATE AND COMPLETE RELIEF BY OTHER TRANSPORT MODES," MR LEUNG SAID.

THE SECRETARY ADDED THAT ANY INCIDENT AFFECTING A BREAKDOWN OF A MASS TRANSIT SERVICE USUALLY INVOLVED A RAPID BUILD-UP OF PASSENGERS AT POINTS OF DISRUPTION.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAD IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM LOCATIONS, INCLUDING RAILWAY STATIONS AND WAS DEVELOPING DETAILED PLANS FOR PASSENGERS MANAGEMENT AT THOSE LOCATIONS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE POLICE AND THE TRANSPORT OPERATORS.

/THE DEPARTMENT

THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO DEVELOPED A VARIETY OF CONTINGENCY STRATEGIES TO MEET A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, SUCH AS RAILWAY BREAKDOWNS AND TUNNEL CLOSURES, AND WAS NOW REFINING THEM.

"BECAUSE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TRANSPORT EMERGENCIES ARE COMPLEX, VARIED AND RAPIDLY CHANGING, THESE PLANS ARE MEANT TO PROVIDE ONLY THE BROAD FRAMEWORK FOR AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE.

"DECISIONS AS TO THE EXACT CONTINGENCY MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED ON THE SPOT WILL HAVE TO BE FLEXIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH PARTICULAR INCIDENT," HE SAID.

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LICENSING SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE CONTROL ON POLLUTION

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THE PROPOSED LIVESTOCK KEEPING LICENSING SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL ON POLLUTION CAUSED BY INDISCRIMINATE DISCHARGE OF LIVESTOCK WASTES TO THE ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS ALLOW FOR A MORE SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIVESTOCK KEEPING INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ANDREW WONG, MR. BARNES SAID THE PROPOSED LICENSING SYSTEM WOULD CONTAIN CONDITIONS WHICH REQUIRED THE LICENSEE TO OBSERVE ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS ORDINANCE, THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE, AND THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE.

THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES WOULD BE THE LICENSING AUTHORITY, HE SAID.

"THE LICENCE WOULD BE ISSUED TO ANY PIG OR POULTRY FARM WHICH IS EQUIPPED WITH A WASTE DISPOSAL METHOD ACCEPTABLE UNDER A CODE OF PRACTICE OR CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN A CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION," HE SAID.

"METHODS INVOLVING DISCHARGES WOULD REQUIRE TWO LICENCES: THE LIVESTOCK KEEPING LICENCE AND A DISCHARGE LICENCE UNDER THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE, MR. BARNES SAID.

"FARMS OPERATING WITHOUT A PROPER SYSTEM COULD BE PROSECUTED FOR OPERATING WITHOUT A LICENCE AND PERSISTENT BREACHES OF THE LICENSING CONDITIONS WOULD RESULT IN CANCELLATION OF THE LICENCE," HE SAID.

MR. BARNES POINTED OUT THAT LIVESTOCK KEEPING HAD FOR MANY YEARS BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF POLLUTION OF THE BEACHES AND STREAMS OF THE TERRITORY, BUT UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO, LITTLE WAS DONE OFFICIALLY EITHER TO DISCOURAGE THE POLLUTING DISCHARGE OF WASTE OR TO ENCOURAGE WASTE TREATMENT TO DISCHARGES FROM LIVESTOCK FARMS.

IN 1988, A SCHEME WAS ESTABLISHED WHICH INVOLVED BANNING LIVESTOCK KEEPERS WITH COMPENSATION FROM SOME AREAS AND BUYING OUT THOSE WHO WISHED TO ABANDON IT VOLUNTARILY IN OTHERS. WHERE LIVESTOCK BREEDERS REMAINED THEY WERE OBLIGED TO COMPLY WITH THE WASTE DISPOSAL ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

"THIS HAS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS OF PIG AND POULTRY BREEDERS LEAVING THE INDUSTRY AND SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN WATER QUALITY IN THE WATER CATCHMENTS AND BEACHES AFFECTED BY THEM.

"THIS POLICY WITH SOME MODIFICATION WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ALL AREAS OF THE TERRITORY HAVE BEEN BROUGHT WITHIN THE CONTROL NET.

"NEVERTHELESS, PIG AND POULTRY FARMING IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, AND IT IS IMPORTANT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT THERE SHOULD BE AN ADEQUATE SYSTEM OF CONTROL.

"THE GOVERNMENT FEELS THAT THIS CAN BEST BE DONE BY A LICENSING SYSTEM UNDER WHICH PROPER WASTE TREATMENT FACILITIES ARE REQUIRED AND CONSISTENTLY MONITORED, HE SAID.

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PROVISION OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITIES GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY
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THERE IS STILL NOT ENOUGH SPECIALIST TECHNICAL STAFF AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE WATER CONTROL ZONES AS FAST AS WAS EARLIER PLANNED, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTIONS BY THE HON PETER WONG HONG-YUEN, MR BARNES SAID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION AND THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR SEWAGE DISPOSAL MUST GO HAND-IN-HAND.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, IT WAS NOT THE TIMING OF THE PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITIES WHICH DETERMINED THE PACE OF IMPLEMENTING WATER CONTROL ZONES.

RATHER, IT WAS THE SUFFICIENCY OF ENFORCEMENT STAFF IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND THE DIFFICULTY IN ESTIMATING HOW LONG EACH PROGRAMME OF ENFORCEMENT WOULD TAKE, MR BARNES SAID.

"ENFORCEMENT IS AN ACTIVITY THAT NEEDS A GREAT DEAL OF LABOUR, BECAUSE EVERY FACTORY MUST BE VISITED, SAMPLES MUST BE TAKEN AND ANALYSED, AND ADVICE AND WARNINGS GIVEN.

"THESE ARE ALL JOBS THAT CAN BE DONE ONLY BY SPECIALIST TECHNICAL STAFF," HE SAID.

/MR BARNES

MR BARNES SAID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WAS BEING DONE TO FIND WAYS TO REDUCE THE LABOUR DEMAND AND THE SIMPLIFICATIONS IN THE CONTROL SYSTEM THAT WERE INTRODUCED IN DECEMBER 1990 HAD HELPED.

"THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAS HAD AN INCREASE IN STAFF THAT IS GENEROUS IN RELATIVE TERMS - BUT IT IS STILL NOT ENOUGH TO IMPLEMENT THE CONTROLS AS FAST AS WAS EARLIER PLANNED.

"NEVERTHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT STILL GAVE VERY HIGH PRIORITY TO THE PROVISION OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL FACILITIES. APPROXIMATELY \$1.7 BILLION WAS NOW ALLOCATED FOR SEWERAGE IMPROVEMENTS," HE SAID.

THIS YEAR, MR BARNES SAID, A FURTHER COMMITMENT OF FUNDS WOULD BE SOUGHT FOR REPAIR AND REFURBISHMENT OF SEWERS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME.

"WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO MAINTAIN THE PROGRAMME AS SET OUT IN THE 1991 REVIEW OF THE WHITE PAPER ON POLLUTION." HE SAID.

REFERRING TO ANOTHER PART OF THE QUESTION BY MR WONG CONCERNING THE CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT CENTRE (CWTC), MR BARNES SAID THE CAPITAL COST WOULD BE \$1.3 BILLION AND THE OPERATING COSTS WERE EXPECTED TO AVERAGE ABOUT \$313 MILLION ANNUALLY OVER 15 YEARS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS TO RECOVER THE FULL COSTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF THE NEW FACILITIES AND IS SEEKING TO GENERATE AROUND \$340 MILLION PER ANNUM IN REVENUE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

"THE SUM IS CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF RECOVERING THE FULL CAPITAL COST OF THE TREATMENT FACILITIES OVER A PERIOD OF 15 YEARS TOGETHER WITH ESTIMATED OPERATING COSTS OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

"THE METHOD THAT GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO RECOVER THESE COSTS IS A BROAD BASED AD VALOREM LEVY OF APPROXIMATELY 0.75 PER CENT ON CHEMICAL IMPORTS, A CHARGE ON LOCALLY MANUFACTURED CHEMICALS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH GATT REQUIREMENTS, AND A CHARGE ON MARPOL WASTES. THESE LATTER TWO CHARGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ESTIMATED," HE SAID.

MR BARNES SAID FULL DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL TO RECOVER THE COSTS OF THE CWTC WERE INCLUDED IN A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT RELEASED TO INDUSTRY LAST MONTH.

AS PART OF THE CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, STAFF FROM THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH AND THE EPD HAD NOW COMPLETED BRIEFING KEY INDUSTRIAL GROUPS ON THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT, HE SAID.

"I CANNOT PRESENTLY SAY THAT OUR PROPOSED METHOD OF RECOVERING COSTS IS ACCEPTABLE TO INDUSTRY, BECAUSE ADDITIONAL COSTS ARE NEVER EASY TO ACCEPT, BUT WE ARE EXPECTING INDUSTRY TO SUBMIT THEIR WRITTEN VIEWS BY AUGUST 1.

"ON THE BASIS OF THESE VIEWS, THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER ACTION, IF ANY, IT NEEDS TO TAKE ON ITS PROPOSALS FOR THE RECOVERY OF COSTS BEFORE MAKING A SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL," HE SAID.

ELDERLY NEEDS UNDER CONTINUOUS REVIEW

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUOUSLY REVIEW THE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JIMMY MCGREGOR, MRS WONG SAID EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE CURRENT PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WITHIN THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND GUIDED BY THE ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES DETAILED IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE 1990'S AND BEYOND.

MRS WONG STRESSED THAT THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN HONG KONG WAS TO PROVIDE FOR THE BASIC AND PARTICULAR NEEDS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY, WHO WERE IN NEED OF FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL ASSISTANCE.

THEREFORE, CONTRIBUTORY OLD AGE PENSION SCHEMES WOULD BE SIMILAR TO A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND SCHEME OR OTHER COMPULSORY RETIREMENT SCHEMES: THE MOTION FOR WHICH HAD BEEN DEFEATED IN THE COUNCIL LAST WEEK.

MRS WONG EXPLAINED THAT THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WERE NON-CONTRIBUTORY SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS.

THE FORMER PROVIDED A FLAT-RATE ALLOWANCE TO THOSE AGED 65 AND ABOVE TO MEET SPECIAL NEEDS ARISING FROM OLD AGE, WHILE THE LATTER HELPED THOSE PERSONS, INCLUDING ELDERLY PERSONS, WHO DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN A BASIC STANDARD OF LIVING.

"IN OCTOBER 1987, PROPOSALS WERE ANNOUNCED IN THIS COUNCIL FOR A PACKAGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MAIN SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES, INCLUDING THE PHASED EXTENSION OF THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE TO PERSONS IN THE 65-69 AGE GROUP.

"ONE ELEMENT OF THIS PROPOSED PACKAGE WAS THAT ALL NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO DECLARE THAT THEIR INCOME AND ASSETS DID NOT EXCEED SPECIFIED LEVELS," MRS WONG SAID.

HOWEVER, MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC VIEWS, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO PROCEED WITH THE INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION FOR NEW APPLICANTS AGED OVER 70, WHILE RETAINING IT FOR THOSE BETWEEN 65 AND 69.

"AT PRESENT, THERE IS STILL AN UNRESOLVED DEBATE AS TO WHETHER TO EXTEND THIS REQUIREMENT OF AN INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION TO PERSONS AGED 70 AND OVER," SHE ADDED.

GOVT'S PROGRAMMES FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED EXPLAINED

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS INTRODUCED HOME-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMMES AS AN INTERIM MEASURE FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS AWAITING PLACEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON RONALD ARCULLI, MRS WONG SAID THE AIM WAS TO ENABLE THEM TO RECEIVE TRAINING IN SELF-CARE AND OTHER MAINTENANCE OR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

MRS WONG EXPLAINED THAT THE PROGRAMMES WERE TO MINIMISE THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF SCHOOL LEAVERS STAYING IDLY AT HOME AND TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE SKILLS WHICH THEY ACQUIRED FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION TO FACILITATE THEIR FUTURE PLACEMENT.

SHE ALSO SAID THERE WAS A SHORTFALL OF 2,176 DAY ACTIVITY CENTRES (DAC) PLACES.

"PROVISION OF AN ADDITIONAL 1,000 PLACES BY 1994-95 IS PLANNED," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG STRESSED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF DAC WAS TO HELP MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT IN THEIR DAILY LIVING AND PREPARED THEM FOR SHELTERED OR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT WHERE POSSIBLE.

THE SECRETARY SAID ONE ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR DAC'S WAS AS DAC'S CATERED FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS, AGED 15 AND ABOVE, WHO LACKED THE ABILITY TO BENEFIT FROM VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND SHELTERED OR OPEN EMPLOYMENT, THE APPLICANT SHOULD HAVE POTENTIAL TO LEARN AND BE ABLE TO RECEIVE AND FOLLOW SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS.

HOWEVER, MRS WONG POINTED OUT THAT DAC'S DID NOT ACCEPT PEOPLE WHO WERE BED-RIDDEN OR REQUIRED INFIRMARY CARE OR OTHER FORMS OF MEDICAL CARE.

SHE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE CRITERIA DID NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST SEVERELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

"ALL APPLICANTS MEETING THE CRITERIA ARE TREATED EQUALLY WHEN THEY SEEK ADMISSION.

"TO FACILITATE THE PLACEMENT OF PUPILS, INCLUDING THE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED PUPILS, FROM SPECIAL SCHOOLS INTO VARIOUS POST-SCHOOL SERVICES FOR DISABLED ADULTS, THE PLACEMENT PROCEDURES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN REVIEWED AND STREAMLINED," MRS WONG SAID.

IN ADDITION, A SET OF STANDARDISED ADMISSION CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR ADULT SERVICES HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY ALL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, SHE ADDED.

SUFFICIENT LEGAL POWERS FOR DEMOLITION OF DANGEROUS SIGNBOARDS

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THE GOVERNMENT POLICY IS TO ENSURE THAT SIGNBOARDS WHICH MAY POSE A THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY ARE REMOVED EITHER BY THE OWNERS THEMSELVES OR, WHERE NECESSARY, BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THERE WERE SUFFICIENT LEGAL POWERS FOR THE NECESSARY ACTION TO BE CARRIED OUT SPEEDILY, MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID : "BY OCTOBER 1989, A DEDICATED TEAM IN THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT HAD COMPLETED THE TASKS OF SEEKING OUT DANGEROUS SIGNBOARDS AND CARRYING OUT SURVEYS ON SIGNBOARDS IN DENSELY POPULATED URBAN AREAS.

"SINCE THEN, THE WORK OF IDENTIFYING DANGEROUS SIGNBOARDS HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT AS PART OF THE SURVEY ON BUILDINGS.

HE SAID DEMOLITION ORDERS WERE ISSUED WHEREVER DANGEROUS SIGNBOARDS WERE FOUND AND FROM OCTOBER 1989 TO JUNE 30 THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 393 SUCH ORDERS WERE MADE.

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VISUAL EQUIPMENT TRADE CONSULTED ON NICAM

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ADEQUATE CONSULTATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE VISUAL EQUIPMENT TRADE BEFORE NICAM TECHNOLOGY WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE BROADCASTING SYSTEM, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON ALBERT LAM, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HO SAI-CHU, MR LAM SAID THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT IT WAS REALLY A MATTER OF "COMMERCIAL JUDGEMENT" FOR EACH TRADE TO DECIDE WHAT THE MARKET DEMAND FOR NEW EQUIPMENT MIGHT BE WHEN NEW TECHNOLOGY WAS INTRODUCED.

"IN A FREE ECONOMY, THESE MATTERS ARE BEST LEFT TO COMMERCIAL DECISIONS," HE STRESSED.

EARLIER, MR LAM SAID THE TIMING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NICAM BROADCAST WAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY.

"THE QUESTION OF EQUIPMENT SUPPLY WAS GIVEN DUE CONSIDERATION BEFORE A DECISION WAS TAKEN TO ALLOW FORMAL INTRODUCTION OF NICAM ON JULY 1 - MORE THAN FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE.

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"THIS IS A REASONABLE PERIOD FOR THE TRADE TO RESPOND TO ANY NEW DEMAND, AND ADJUST ACCORDINGLY," MR LAM SAID.

CITING EXAMPLES TO ILLUSTRATE THAT THE VISUAL TRADE HAD BEEN GIVEN AMPLE NOTICE OF NICAM'S INTRODUCTION, MR LAM SAID IN MAY 1985, A DEMONSTRATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY WAS GIVEN BY THE TWO TELEVISION BROADCASTERS FOR THE PRESS, SALES AGENTS AND MANUFACTURERS OF TELEVISION SETS.

IN DECEMBER 1986, THE SPECIFICATION FOR THE EQUIPMENT WAS DISTRIBUTED BY TVB TO SALES AGENTS AND MANUFACTURERS.

IN MAY 1987, A TECHNICAL SEMINAR WAS ORGANISED JOINTLY BY TVB AND THE RADIO ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG.

IN JUNE 1988, THE POST OFFICE CONTACTED THE RADIO ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG AND CONSULTED THEM ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF INTRODUCING NICAM BROADCAST.

IN MAY 1989, THE POST OFFICE WROTE TO ALL KNOWN SUPPLIERS OF TELEVISION EQUIPMENT, AND CONSULTED THEM ABOUT THE PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF NICAM-COMPATIBLE TELEVISION SETS.

IN FEBRUARY 1990, TVB HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AND ANNOUNCED THEIR PLAN FOR TEST TRANSMISSIONS.

"WITH ALL THESE CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLICITY, IT CAN HARDLY BE SAID THAT THE TRADE WAS CAUGHT BY SURPRISE BY THE FEBRUARY 1991 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF NICAM BROADCASTS," MR LAM SAID.

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GOVT FORMULATES PROPOSALS ON PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

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THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW FORMULATING PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PUBLIC COMMENTS ON WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING FOR UPPER PRIMARY CLASSES (MIXED MODE OPERATION) AND THE EDUCATION COMMISSION'S FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN SAID THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE CLASS-TEACHER RATIO TO 1:1.4 WAS PART OF THE PACKAGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE EDUCATION COMMISSION IN ITS FOURTH REPORT TO ENCOURAGE THE MIXED MODE OPERATION.

UNTIL A DECISION WAS REACHED IN THIS REGARD, THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT INTEND TO REVISE THE CLASS-TEACHER RATIO FOR EXISTING WHOLE-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOLS, HE ADDED.

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HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT UNDER EXISTING POLICY, ENCOURAGEMENT WAS GIVEN TO WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLS IN THE FORM OF AN ENHANCEMENT GRANT OF \$950 PER CLASS PER ANNUM AND A ONE-OFF SUBSIDY, UP TO A MAXIMUM OF \$20,700 PER SCHOOL, FOR THE PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM FURNITURE.

"THESE MEASURES WILL BE REVIEWED, AND OTHER FORMS OF ENCOURAGEMENT MAY BE ADDED, WHEN THE LONG-TERM POLICY FOR WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING IS DECIDED," HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE SUGGESTION OF PROVIDING ONE ADDITIONAL CLERICAL STAFF TO SCHOOLS, MR CHAN SAID THERE WAS NO CLEAR CORRELATION BETWEEN WHOLE-DAY OPERATION AND INCREASED CLERICAL WORK IN SCHOOLS.

"THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESENT WORKLOAD OF CLERICAL STAFF IN SCHOOLS IS TOO HEAVY.

"THE GOVERNMENT IS THEREFORE CONSIDERING MEANS OF ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM," HE SAID.

ONE POSSIBILITY UNDER EXAMINATION WAS THE PROVISION OF A MICRO-COMPUTER FOR EACH SCHOOL SO THAT SOME OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION WORK COULD BE COMPUTERISED.

"WE BELIEVE THAT THIS WILL BE MORE COST-EFFECTIVE IN THE LONG RUN THAN PROVIDING ADDITIONAL MANPOWER.

"THIS STUDY ON ENHANCING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF CLERICAL STAFF COVERS ALL TYPES OF SCHOOLS AND IS NOT CONFINED TO WHOLE-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOLS," HE ADDED.

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TRANSPORT POLICY APPLIED WITH FLEXIBILITY
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THE GOVERNMENT'S INTER-MODAL TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION POLICY HAS ALWAYS BEEN APPLIED FLEXIBLY TO MEET CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS SHIFTS IN PASSENGER DEMAND, THE UTILISATION AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF VARIOUS MODES, AS WELL AS TRAFFIC PATTERNS.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON CHAN YING-LUN'S QUESTION ON THE FLEXIBILITY OF SUCH A POLICY AS APPLIED TO THE TRANSPORT SERVICES BETWEEN SIU SAI WAN AND CHAI WAN MTR STATION.

MR LEUNG POINTED OUT THAT SIX FRANCHISED BUS ROUTES NOW SERVED SIU SAI WAN WHICH ALL PASS CLOSE TO THE CHAI WAN MTR STATION EN ROUTE, PROVIDING A CAPACITY FOR OVER 4,000 PASSENGERS AN HOUR.

THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME DURING THE MORNING PEAK IS SIX MINUTES.

/AS PART

AS PART OF A PLANNED SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, MR LEUNG SAID A DEDICATED CMB SERVICE BETWEEN SIU SAI WAN AND THE CHAI WAN MTR STATION WOULD SHORTLY BE INTRODUCED DURING THE MORNING PEAK TO REDUCE THE AVERAGE WAITING TIME TO FIVE MINUTES.

THE NEED TO COMPLEMENT EXISTING CMB SERVICES WITH GREEN MINIBUS ROUTES WAS ALSO BEING CONSIDERED.

MR LEUNG ADDED THAT THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT INTENDED TO INVITE TENDERS LATER THIS YEAR FOR A GREEN MINIBUS SERVICE LINKING SIU SAI WAN WITH THE CHAI WAN MTR STATION BETWEEN MIDNIGHT AND 6 AM.

THERE WERE PLANS ALSO TO ENHANCE SERVICES IN EARLY 1993 WHEN THE NEXT MAJOR INTAKE OF POPULATION WAS EXPECTED.

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CONTRACT OUT OF CIVIL SERVANTS' HEALTH CARE SERVICES UNLIKELY
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IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS WILL BE CONTRACTED OUT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-HUNG, SIR DAVID SAID THE ADMINISTRATION DID CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTRACTING OUT THE PROVISION OF SUCH SERVICES IN AN OVERALL REVIEW OF MEDICAL FACILITIES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS CONDUCTED IN 1989.

"HOWEVER, THIS WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, WHICH WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME, NOR IS IT LIKELY THAT THEY WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE MEDICAL INSURANCE STUDY GROUP HAD ADDED NEW DIMENSIONS TO THE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD REVIEW ITS POSITION IN RESPECT OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE LIGHT OF THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS, HE ADDED.

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EPD ACTED TO REDUCE CONFUSION

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAD ACTED CORRENTLY IN TRYING TO REDUCE THE CONFUSION SURROUNDING A PRODUCT CLAIMED IN ADVERTISEMENT TO BE ABLE TO REDUCE POLLUTING EMISSION, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES SAID THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON MRS ELSIE TU ON A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT REFUTING THE PRODUCT'S CLAIMED ABILITY TO REDUCE EXHAUST EMISSIONS AND ENABLE ALL PETROL ENGINE VEHICLES TO OPERATE ON UNLEADED PETROL.

MR BARNES SAID: "THE GOVERNMENT WAS, AND REMAINS CONCERNED THAT MOTORISTS, ALREADY PERHAPS A LITTLE ANXIOUS AND CONFUSED WHEN FACED WITH A CHANGE, WOULD BE MISLED INTO BELIEVING THAT THEIR VEHICLE NEEDED THIS SPECIAL DEVICE, WHEREAS IN REALITY 70 PER CENT OF VEHICLES NEED NO ADJUSTMENT TO RUN PERFECTLY WELL ON UNLEADED PETROL AND ANOTHER 17 PER CENT ONLY REQUIRE SOME SMALL ADJUSTMENT.

"THE PROMOTERS OF THE DEVICE, WHO SOUGHT TO LINK IT IN THE ADVERTISEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S UNLEADED PETROL PROGRAMME, WOULD LEAD TO MOTORISTS BEING UNJUSTIFIABLY CONSERVATIVE AND CONTINUING TO RUN LEADED PETROL FOR THE WRONG REASONS."

MR BARNES WAS REFERRING TO A TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT OF A PRODUCT WHICH APPEARED IN EARLY FEBRUARY THIS YEAR IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT'S GREEN BOOKLET "THE MOTORISTS GUIDE TO UNLEADED PETROL" WAS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED.

THE ADVERTISEMENT MADE CLAIMS THAT THE PRODUCT COULD REDUCE POLLUTING EMISSIONS BY 60 PER CENT AND ENABLE ALL PETROL ENGINED VEHICLES TO SWITCH TO THE USE OF UNLEADED PETROL WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.

MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT WAS NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF TESTING OR RECOMMENDING PRODUCTS.

"HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENT MADE A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE PRODUCT BASED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF ITS PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROCESSES INVOLVED IN PETROL ENGINE COMBUSTION, AND CONCLUDED THAT TO THE BEST OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE, THERE WAS NO HARD SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO BACK UP THE CLAIMS MADE FOR THIS PRODUCT.

"THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT ALSO CHECKED THE STATUS OF A DOCUMENT BEARING THE LETTER-HEAD OF THE ROYAL AEROSPACE ESTABLISHMENT (RAE), FARNBOROUGH, UK, WHICH WAS OFFERED BY THE FIRM IN QUESTION TO SUBSTANTIATE ITS CLAIMS," HE SAID.

"ADVICE RECEIVED FROM THE UK MINISTRY OF DEFENCE'S (MOD) RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT ON THE STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT STATED THAT THE ASSESSMENT DID NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFICIAL TRIAL AND WAS NOT CONDUCTED ON A SOUND SCIENTIFIC BASIS.

/ "THE RESULTS

"THE RESULTS QUOTED REPRESENT THE OBSERVATIONS OF NON-SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL AND THEIR FINDINGS HAVE NO FORMAL RECOGNITION WITH RAE OR MOD."

MR BARNES ADDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT DID NOT COMMENT ON THE CLAIMS MADE FOR THIS SPECIFIC PRODUCT. RATHER THE COMMENTS WERE RELATED TO THE CLAIMS MADE FOR THIS TYPE OF PRODUCT GENERALLY.

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SETTLEMENT ALLOWED FOR IN BUILDINGS ON RECLAIMED LAND

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THE CRACKS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN SOME GROUND FLOOR SLABS AND PARTITIONS IN THREE BLOCKS IN ON NING GARDENS, A PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME ESTATE IN TSEUNG KWAN O, ARE NOT IN THE STRUCTURAL PARTS OF THE BUILDING.

"THEY ARE DUE TO SLIGHTLY GREATER SETTLEMENT UNDER THE SLABS THAN ANTICIPATED," THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAM WAI-KEUNG, MR. BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT THE STRUCTURAL STABILITY OF THE BLOCKS AS A WHOLE SINCE IN THE STRUCTURAL DESIGN THE FOUNDATION RESTED ON PILES DRIVEN THROUGH TO THE BED ROCK.

HE EXPLAINED THAT WHEN A BUILDING WAS BUILT ON RECLAIMED LAND, THE DEVELOPER AND HIS ARCHITECT MUST DESIGN FOR A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SETTLEMENT, WHICH WAS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR SOME YEARS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT REMEDIAL WORKS ON THE AFFECTED SLABS AND PARTITIONS WERE BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE DEVELOPER.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS VERY EXPERIENCED IN RECLAMATION PROJECTS IN HONG KONG AND STAFF OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT MONITORED BOTH THE PLACING OF RECLAMATION FILL AND THE SUBSEQUENT SETTLEMENT VERY CAREFULLY AND WITH HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL METHODS.

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GOVT TO ADD FAX MACHINE TO SCHOOL EQUIPMENT LIST

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO ADD A FAX MACHINE TO THE STANDARD EQUIPMENT LIST FOR GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON JOHN CHAN, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID CHEUNG CHI-KONG, MR CHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXAMINING THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING THIS DECISION IN SEPTEMBER 1992 THROUGH A REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.

"IN THE MEANTIME, IF ANY SCHOOL IS ABLE TO IDENTIFY SAVINGS FROM WITHIN ITS SCHOOL AND CLASS GRANT, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WILL NOT OBJECT TO ITS PURCHASING A FAX MACHINE, THE LIMITATION OF THE STANDARD EQUIPMENT LIST NOTWITHSTANDING," MR CHAN ADDED.

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NINE-HOUR LEGCO SESSION ENDS

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A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE ON CHILD CARE WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL YESTERDAY (WEDNESDAY).

SEVENTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE TWO-HOUR MOTION DEBATE, WITH THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON ELIZABETH WONG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THREE OTHER MOTIONS WERE ALSO PASSED: ONE WAS MOVED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY UNDER THE PUBLIC FINANCE ORDINANCE, ANOTHER WAS MOVED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE UNDER THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE AND THE LAST ONE BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE.

MEANWHILE, 11 MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, SPOKE IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON "THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN" RAISED BY THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG.

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT IN ANOTHER ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE IMPORTATION OF LABOUR RAISED BY THE HON PANG CHUN-HOI. A TOTAL OF NINE MEMBERS TOOK TURN TO SPEAK.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, EIGHT BILLS WERE PASSED BY THE COUNCIL. THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991, TRADE DESCRIPTIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991, OFFICIAL SOLICITOR BILL 1991, SURVEYORS REGISTRATION BILL 1991, PLANNERS REGISTRATION BILL 1991, TOWN PLANNING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1991 AND TELEVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS WHILE THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1990-91) BILL 1991 WAS PASSED WITHOUT AMENDMENT.

A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL - ELECTORAL PROVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 - RAISED BY THE HON MARTIN LEE WAS NOT CARRIED.

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LIQUIDATION HELPS TO PRESERVE BANK ASSETS

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IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING THAT A LIQUIDATION ACTUALLY HELPS TO PRESERVE ASSETS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR PIERS JACOBS, SAID TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY) AFTER A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF DEPOSITORS OF THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED.

"IT'S VERY UNCOMFORTABLE. IT'S VERY WORRYING BUT WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO GET MONEY INTO THE HANDS OF THE DEPOSITORS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. AND BY THAT I MEAN WITHIN ABOUT A WEEK, IF WE POSSIBLY CAN.

"BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS WE NOW HAVE A SITUATION IN WHICH WE ARE SAFEGUARDING, PRESERVING ASSETS," HE SAID.

SIR PIERS ALSO APPEALED TO DEPOSITORS TO REMAIN CALM AS DISTURBANCES WOULD NOT HELP MATTERS.

"I AND MY COLLEAGUES ARE WORKING VERY HARD. TO TRY AND GET PEOPLE SOME MONEY BACK QUICKLY SO I DO HOPE PEOPLE COULD BE PATIENT HOWEVER WORRIED THEY ARE.

"I HAVE JUST SEEN SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPOSITORS," SIR PIERS SAID.

"THEY HAVE BEEN VERY, VERY HELPFUL, VERY UNDERSTANDING. WE SHALL BE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THEM."

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BARONESS DUNN ON BCCHK

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THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, BARONESS DUNN, SAID THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING THAT THE DECISION TO LIQUIDATE THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED WAS THE BEST OPTION TAKEN TO SAFEGUARD THE INTEREST OF DEPOSITORS.

THE WINDING UP OF THE BANK DID NOT RULE OUT ITS POSSIBLE SALE, SHE ADDED.

IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE THE DEPOSITORS' RECOVERY WE MUST HAVE SOME TIME TO ESTABLISH THE VALUE OF THE BANK'S ASSETS AND REALISE THE VALUE OF THESE ASSETS, OR TO MAKE A SALE, SHE SAID.

"WHAT IS NEEDED NOW IS COOL HEADS," SHE STRESSED.

SHE ADDED THAT NO BUYER WAS GOING TO COME IN IN A MATTER OF DAYS TO CONCLUDE A DEAL ON AN INTERNATIONAL BANK, WHICH WAS SUSPECTED TO BE INVOLVED IN MASSIVE FRAUD.

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"ALL OF THIS TAKES TIME AND WE THINK THAT THE BEST COURSE IS FOR THE LIQUIDATOR TO GO IN AND ALL HE DOES IS TO FREEZE THE POSITION, AND HE'LL HAVE TIME TO STUDY THE ASSETS AND THE ACCOUNTS CAREFULLY, AND THIS DOESN'T PRECLUDE A SALE.

"AT THE SAME TIME WE REALISE THAT WE MUST PROVIDE SOME SHORT-TERM RELIEF TO DEPOSITORS AND SO A SCHEME WAS DEvised WITH A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO ALLOW DEPOSITORS TO DRAW UP TO 25 PER CENT OF THEIR DEPOSITS WITH A CEILING, WHAT THAT CEILING IS I THINK IS STILL BEING CONSIDERED," SHE SAID.

BARONESS DUNN ADDED THAT TWO HONG KONG BANKS, WHICH WERE THE SUBJECT OF SOME CONCERN AMONG A NUMBER OF DEPOSITORS TODAY, WERE TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE BCCI.

SHE STRESSED THAT THE TWO BANKS WERE COMPLETELY VIABLE AND THAT MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR FULL SUPPORT FOR THEIR OPERATIONS.

THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY SUPPORT OF THE TWO BANKS ON NORMAL COMMERCIAL TERMS, SHE ADDED.

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WINDING UP IS BEST SOLUTION FOR BCCHK
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COMMENTING ON THE DECISION TO PETITION THE HIGH COURT FOR WINDING UP THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED, MR WILLIAM PURVES, CHAIRMAN OF THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION, SAID THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING THAT IT WAS THE BEST SOLUTION IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

MR PURVES POINTED OUT THAT REGULATORS ELSEWHERE HAD CLAIMED THAT THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT FRAUD IN THE BANK AND HAD MOVED TO LIQUIDATE IT.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE WAS GREAT UNCERTAINTY WHETHER OR NOT THE SUBSIDIARIES HERE MIGHT HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS AND THEREFORE PEOPLE DID NOT KNOW FOR SURE WHAT THE POSITION WAS, HE SAID.

"IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE AUTHORITIES HERE HAVE MOVED TO APPOINT A LIQUIDATOR, AND THE LIQUIDATOR WILL FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT THE POSITION IS," HE ADDED.

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PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR OF BCCHK, BCCI FINANCE APPOINTED
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THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BY THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, MR NOEL GLEESON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY):

"AS ANNOUNCED EARLIER BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HIGH COURT, ON A PETITION PRESENTED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE, TODAY APPOINTED ME, AS OFFICIAL RECEIVER, TO BE PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR OF BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LIMITED (BCCHK) AND ITS SUBSIDIARY DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY, BCCI FINANCE INTERNATIONAL LIMITED.

"HAVING REGARD TO THE NATURE AND SIZE OF BCCHK'S BUSINESS I WAS SATISFIED THAT THE SERVICES OF SPECIAL MANAGERS WITH EXTENSIVE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES WERE REQUIRED TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF CREDITORS.

"UPON MY APPLICATION THE COURT HAS THEREFORE APPOINTED MR MARVIN K.T. CHEUNG AND MR NICHOLAS P. ETCHES, BOTH OF KPMG PEAT MARWICK, TO BE SPECIAL MANAGERS OF THE COMPANY FOR THE TIME BEING UNDER THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

"AT THIS EARLY STAGE I CAN ONLY SAY THAT THE SPECIAL MANAGERS HAVE ALREADY MOVED TO SECURE THE ASSETS OF THE COMPANY IN ALL OF ITS 25 BRANCHES IN HONG KONG.

"THE SPECIAL MANAGERS WILL NOW CARRY OUT A THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE BOOKS AND ACCOUNTS OF THE COMPANY AND WILL LET ME HAVE THEIR OPINION OF ITS FINANCIAL STATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

"OUR PRIME OBJECTIVES WILL BE, IF POSSIBLE, TO SELL THE BANKING BUSINESS OF THE COMPANY AS A GOING CONCERN AND, IN ANY CASE, TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL PAYMENT TO THE CREDITORS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

"THE EARLY PAYMENT WILL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS ARE AGREED WITH THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IT IS EXPECTED THAT A FURTHER STATEMENT REGARDING THE EARLY PAYMENT CAN BE MADE AT ABOUT THE END OF THIS WEEK.

"IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT I, AS PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR, AND THE SPECIAL MANAGERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO DIRECTION FROM THE HOLDING COMPANY IN LUXEMBURG AND REGULATORS IN VARIOUS OVERSEA JURISDICTIONS, BUT THIS IS NOT SO.

"MY POWERS AS PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR AND THE POWERS OF THE SPECIAL MANAGERS COME FROM THE HIGH COURT IN HONG KONG, AND OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO THE COURT AND THE CREDITORS, INCLUDING THE DEPOSITORS, UNDER THE WINDING-UP PROVISIONS OF THE HONG KONG COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

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"THEY ARE ASSURED THAT WE SHALL DO OUR BEST FOR THEM.

"A FURTHER GENERAL STATEMENT WILL BE MADE WHEN A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE OVERALL FINANCIAL STATE OF THE COMPANY IS AVAILABLE.

"IN THE MEANTIME, I WOULD ASK DEPOSITORS TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS OR OTHER ACTION THAT MAY ONLY HINDER US IN PROTECTING THEIR BEST INTERESTS.

"PERSONS WISHING TO KNOW HOW A CLAIM CAN BE MADE SHOULD CALL ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TELEPHONE NUMBERS AT THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE:

877 6771
877 6775
877 6779"

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INTERNATIONAL BANK OF ASIA LIMITED (IBA)
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INTERNATIONAL BANK OF ASIA LIMITED (IBA) HAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ISSUED A STATEMENT REFUTING ANY RUMOURS CONCERNING ITS LIQUIDITY POSITION.

THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING, MR DAVID CARSE, SEES NO REASON FOR A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN IBA, IN THE WAY WHICH HAS AFFECTED BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LTD. THE POSITION OF THE TWO BANKS IS VERY DIFFERENT.

COMMENTING ON IBA'S FINANCIAL CONDITION, MR CARSE NOTED THAT THE BANK RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A STRONG PROFITS GROWTH FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1991, WITH FURTHER PROGRESS ANTICIPATED DURING THE REST OF THE YEAR.

THE COMMISSIONER SAID THE BANK MEETS ALL EXISTING PRUDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS.

IBA'S SHAREHOLDER, ARAB BANKING CORPORATION (ABC), HAS TOTAL ASSETS OF US\$21 BILLION AND CAPITAL RESOURCES OF US\$1.4 BILLION.

MR CARSE WELCOMES ABC'S REAFFIRMATION OF FULL SUPPORT FOR IBA.

MOREOVER THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY SUPPORT TO IBA ON NORMAL COMMERCIAL TERMS.

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STATEMENT ON DAO HENG BANK LTD

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IN RESPONSE TO THE CONCERN OF DEPOSITORS, DAO HENG BANK HAS ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE CLARIFYING ITS PRESENT POSITION.

THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING SEES NO REASON FOR A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN DAO HENG. THE BANK IS NOT IN ANY WAY CONNECTED TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE HONG KONG LTD. THE COMMISSIONER NOTES THE BANK'S COMMENTARY ON ITS PRESENT FINANCIAL STANDING, ITS LIQUIDITY POSITION AND COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER BUSINESS.

THE BANK'S MAJORITY SHAREHOLDERS HAVE REAFFIRMED THEIR FULL SUPPORT FOR ITS OPERATIONS. THIS IS STRONGLY WELCOMED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING.

TO SUPPLEMENT THE BANK'S OWN RESOURCES, THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY SUPPORT TO DAO HENG ON NORMAL COMMERCIAL TERMS.

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TWO GOVERNMENT LOTS FETCH \$1,031 MILLION

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TWO PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND WERE SOLD FOR A TOTAL OF \$1,031 MILLION BY THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT AT A PUBLIC AUCTION HELD THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

BOTH LOTS ARE LOCATED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

THE FIRST LOT IS LOCATED AT AREA 47A IN FANLING. IT HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 13,530 SQUARE METRES AND IS FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL (EXCLUDING GODOWN) PURPOSES, BUT RESIDENTIAL ONLY ABOVE LEVEL THREE.

IT WAS BOUGHT BY WORLD EMPIRE INVESTMENT LTD FOR \$1,010 MILLION. BIDDING OPENED AT \$400 MILLION.

ACCORDING TO THE BUILDING COVENANT, A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 43,269 SQUARE METRES IS TO BE COMPLETED ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 1994.

THE OTHER LOT, LOCATED AT AREA 26D, KWAI CHUNG, IS A 1,536-SQUARE-METRE SITE DESIGNATED FOR INDUSTRIAL AND/OR GODOWN PURPOSES, EXCLUDING OFFENSIVE TRADES.

BIDDING OPENED AT \$15 MILLION AND THE LOT WAS SOLD TO GRAND MILLION INTERNATIONAL LTD FOR \$21 MILLION.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 4,608 SQUARE METRES WITHIN 36 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF AGREEMENT.

THE AUCTION, HELD IN THE CITY HALL THEATRE, WAS CONDUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT LAND AGENT, MR NIGEL BURLEY.

MR BURLEY SAID HE WAS ASTOUNDED AT THE SPIRITED BIDDING AND ULTIMATE HIGH PRICES ACHIEVED.

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DEPOSIT-TAKING CO REGISTRATION REVOKED

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THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE REGISTRATION OF NORD SECURITIES HONG KONG LIMITED AS A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY HAS BEEN REVOKED AS AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON JULY 17 AT ITS OWN REQUEST UNDER SECTION 31(2) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

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TWO ROUNDS OF FREE MAILING FOR LEGCO CANDIDATES

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CANDIDATES STANDING FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER WILL BE ALLOWED TWO ROUNDS OF FREE MAILING OF THEIR ELECTION LETTERS TO VOTERS.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID UNDER THE EXISTING POST OFFICE REGULATIONS, CANDIDATES IN ANY ELECTION TO A DISTRICT BOARD, THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ARE EACH ENTITLED TO SEND ONE ELECTION LETTER FREE OF POSTAGE TO EACH REGISTERED VOTER IN THE CANDIDATE'S CONSTITUENCY.

"A REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1990 ON THE LEVEL OF ELECTION EXPENSES AND THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO CANDIDATES FOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS RECOMMENDED THAT CANDIDATES SHOULD BE GIVEN AN ADDITIONAL ROUND OF FREE MAILING," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IN LINE WITH THIS FINDING, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ANNOUNCED IN JULY LAST YEAR THE INTENTION TO PROVIDE TWO ROUNDS OF FREE MAILING TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATES.

THIS HAS NOW BEEN PUT INTO EFFECT BY THE POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) REGULATIONS 1991, WHICH WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (JULY 19).

THE PROVISION FOR A SECOND ROUND OF FREE MAILING WOULD APPLY TO BOTH CANDIDATES FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS WELL AS CANDIDATES FOR FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY ELECTIONS, BUT WILL NOT BE APPLIED TO ELECTIONS TO ANY OTHER BODY, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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SIX LOTS TO LET BY TENDER

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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCY OF SIX LOTS.

THE FIRST LOT IS A 1,250-SQUARE-METRE SITE AT KAI TIN ROAD, LAM TIN, FOR PLANT NURSERY.

THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE SECOND LOT, MEASURING ABOUT 8,000 SQUARE METRES, IS LOCATED AT THE JUNCTION OF CHEUNG SHA WAN ROAD AND HING WAH ROAD, CHEUNG SHA WAN.

IT IS FOR FEE-PAYING PUBLIC PARKING AREA FOR LICENSED LORRIES AND COACHES (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES WITH THEIR CHASSIS/TRAILERS ATTACHED).

THE TENANCY IS FOR TWO YEARS AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

TWO OTHER LOTS, BOTH LOCATED OFF HOI YU STREET, QUARRY BAY, MEASURED ABOUT 2,940 AND 2,300 SQUARE METRES RESPECTIVELY.

BOTH OF THEM ARE FOR OPEN STORAGE (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS) AND/OR WASTE PAPER COLLECTING AND SORTING AND/OR OPEN PARKING OF VEHICLES (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES AND TRAILERS) AND/OR CARGO HANDLING (EXCLUDING THE USE OF CONTAINERS).

THE TENANCY FOR BOTH LOTS IS FOR THREE YEARS AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE REMAINING TWO LOTS, LOCATED AT ON LAI STREET AND ON YIU STREET, AREA 11, SHA TIN, MEASURED ABOUT 4,700 AND 4,900 SQUARE METRES RESPECTIVELY.

THE FORMER ONE IS FOR STORAGE OF TENANT'S GOODS (EXCLUDING STORAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS AS DEFINED IN THE DANGEROUS GOODS ORDINANCE AND CONTAINER VEHICLES, CONTAINERS AND CONTAINERS ON TRAILERS) ONLY.

THE LATTER ONE IS FOR PARKING OF TENANT'S MOTOR VEHICLES (INCLUDING LORRIES, BUSES, PRIME MOVERS, TRAILERS, TRACTORS AND CHASSIS) BUT EXCLUDING CONTAINERS AND CONTAINERS ON TRAILERS.

THE TENANCY FOR BOTH LOTS IS FOR 30 MONTHS AND RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON AUGUST 2.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES IN HONG KONG EAST, KOWLOON AND SHA TIN AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD.

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127 VM'S RETURNED TODAY
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A GROUP OF 127 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 56 MEN, 26 WOMEN, 21 BOYS AND 24 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 59TH BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS GROUP BROUGHT TO 7,806 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY.

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SIX FILIPINOS ARRESTED FOR UNAPPROVED EMPLOYMENT
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ACTING ON INFORMATION, IMMIGRATION INVESTIGATORS ARRESTED SIX FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS WHO WERE SUSPECTED OF TAKING UP UNAPPROVED EMPLOYMENT IN A RESTAURANT IN QUEENSWAY YESTERDAY (TUESDAY).

THE SIX FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS INCLUDED A MALE AND FIVE FEMALES. THEY WERE FOUND WORKING AS CLEANSING WORKERS AT THE RESTAURANT. ONE OF THEM WAS ALSO FOUND TO BE AN OVERSTAYER.

THE PERSON-IN-CHARGE OF THE RESTAURANT IS ASSISTING WITH THE INVESTIGATION.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT REMINDED THAT THOSE WHO BREACH THEIR CONDITION OF STAY HERE ARE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION AND UPON CONVICTION TO A FINE OF \$5,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR TWO YEARS.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO REMINDED THAT ALL EMPLOYERS SHOULD CHECK THE IDENTITY OF THEIR RECRUITS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR NATIONALITY AND THEY WILL BE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION IF THEY DO NOT OBSERVE THIS LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT.

EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE COME ACROSS DOUBTFUL PROOF OF IDENTITY MAY CALL THE INVESTIGATION HOTLINE ON TEL. 824 1551 DURING OFFICE HOURS.

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OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE ON MOVE

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THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE WILL MOVE TO NEW ACCOMMODATION ON THE 21ST FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 66 QUEENSWAY, HONG KONG ON SATURDAY (JULY 20).

IN VIEW OF THE MOVE, ITS OFFICE ON 12TH FLOOR, QUEENSWAY GOVERNMENT OFFICES, WILL NOT BE OPEN FOR PUBLIC SEARCH ON THAT DAY.

FULL SERVICES WILL BE RESUMED AT THE NEW ACCOMMODATION AS FROM NEXT MONDAY (JULY 22).

THE ENQUIRY NUMBER WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED ON TEL. 867 2565.

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FC MEETING ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING ON FRIDAY (JULY 19) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER. IT WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

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

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ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR CAREERS TEACHERS

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CAREERS TEACHERS WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF CAREERS EDUCATION IN HONG KONG AT AN ANNUAL CAREERS SEMINAR ON FRIDAY (JULY 19).

ENTITLED "EXPLORATION OF APPROACHES IN CAREERS EDUCATION", THE SEMINAR IS ORGANISED JOINTLY FOR THE 13TH YEAR RUNNING BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF CAREERS MASTERS AND GUIDANCE MASTERS.

"MORE THAN 110 SECONDARY SCHOOL CAREERS TEACHERS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE SEMINAR WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG IN SHA TIN," THE SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER (CAREERS ADVISORY SERVICE), MRS CLARE SIU, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

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"THERE WILL BE TALKS BY EXPERTS IN THE FIELD ON TOOLS IN CAREERS EDUCATION, PERSONAL AND FAMILY FACTORS IN CAREERS CHOICES AND APPROACHES IN CAREERS EDUCATION IN HONG KONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS, FOLLOWED BY PANEL DISCUSSIONS," MRS SIU SAID.

"THE SEMINAR ALSO PROVIDES A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND SHARE EXPERIENCE IN CAREERS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING," SHE ADDED.

IT WILL BE OPENED BY THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR ALFRED CHAN, AND THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MRS GRACE YUNG.

ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SEMINAR ON CAREERS EDUCATION AT 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JULY 19) AT THE Y.C. LIANG HALL, THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, SHA TIN.

TRANSPORT HAS BEEN ARRANGED TO PICK UP MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES AT THE KCR UNIVERSITY STATION, SHA TIN, BETWEEN 9.15 AM AND 9.30 AM.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	DATE	\$ MILLION
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CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON	16.7.91	480
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	17.7.91	-253
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+253
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		+60

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 113.8 **+0.0* 17.7.91

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

CLOSING YIELDS OF EXCHANGE FUND BILLS

	16.7.91	17.7.91
MATURING IN 1 WEEK	5.85 PCT	5.56 PCT
1 MONTH	5.99 PCT	5.78 PCT
3 MONTHS	6.13 PCT	6.10 PCT
6 MONTHS	6.19 PCT	6.10 PCT
12 MONTHS	6.61 PCT	6.60 PCT
TOTAL BILLS TRANSFERRED	4,652 MN	5,967 MN

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