



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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BILL SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROFESSION

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THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN HONG KONG BY IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT OF UNITED KINGDOM LAWYERS TO PRACTISE HERE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR MATHEWS NOTED THAT SOME RESTRICTIONS WOULD BE IMPOSED ON THE PRESENT UNFETTERED RIGHT OF UNITED KINGDOM BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS TO COME HERE TO PRACTISE.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE BILL WOULD PERMIT A SMALL NUMBER OF LAWYERS WHO HAD WORKED FOR A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF YEARS IN JUDICIAL OR GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE TO BECOME HONG KONG BARRISTERS OR SOLICITORS.

"THE BILL RECOGNISES THE FACT THAT THESE ARE EXPERIENCED LAWYERS WHO HAVE BEEN PRACTISING LAW IN HONG KONG FOR MANY YEARS," HE SAID.

EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND, MR MATHEWS SAID THAT IN MAY 1986, THE THEN UMELCO STANDING PANEL ON SECURITY RECOMMENDED THAT THE LAW BE AMENDED TO ALLOW CERTAIN COMMONWEALTH QUALIFIED BARRISTERS TO BE ADMITTED TO THE HONG KONG BAR ON SPECIFIED CONDITIONS.

THIS FOLLOWED CONSIDERATION OF A PETITION FROM A NUMBER OF AUSTRALASIAN LAWYERS EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

ON AUGUST 9, 1986, THE GOVERNOR APPOINTED A COMMITTEE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE TO CONDUCT AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE ADMISSION AND PRACTISING CRITERIA FOR BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG AND TO MAKE PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UMELCO PANEL.

THEY WERE ALSO ASKED TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE LEGAL OFFICERS ORDINANCE AND TO CONSIDER WHAT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE WERE DESIRABLE FOR A LEGAL OFFICER.

MR MATHEWS SAID THAT A LAWYER JOINING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS WAS, UNDER THE LEGAL OFFICERS ORDINANCE, APPOINTED AS A LEGAL OFFICER AND, BY VIRTUE OF THAT APPOINTMENT, HAD ALL OF THE RIGHTS OF A BARRISTER AND SOLICITOR IN HONG KONG.

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS, IN FACT, NO REQUIREMENT IN THE LEGAL OFFICERS ORDINANCE THAT HE BE A QUALIFIED LAWYER, IN PRACTICE, ONLY QUALIFIED LAWYERS WERE APPOINTED AS LEGAL OFFICERS.

"THE AIM OF THE BILL IS TO GIVE EFFECT, WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS, TO MOST OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS

MR MATHEWS SAID THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY THE BILL HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO BROADEN AND STRENGTHEN THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON LEGAL EDUCATION, TO INCREASE THE FINES PRESCRIBED FOR OFFENCES UNDER THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE WHICH HAD REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1968, TO MAKE A TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO ENSURE THAT WHERE A SOLICITOR WAS DECLARED BANKRUPT HE OR SHE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE IN PRACTICE AND TO MAKE A NUMBER OF MINOR AMENDMENTS FOUND TO BE NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE.

ON THE PROVISIONS CONCERNING THE ADMISSION OF SOLICITORS, MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT A SOLICITOR QUALIFIED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS CURRENTLY ENTITLED TO BE ADMITTED AS A HONG KONG SOLICITOR AND THEREAFTER TO PRACTISE ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT OR IN PARTNERSHIP REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG HE HAD LIVED IN HONG KONG AND WITHOUT FURTHER EXAMINATION OR QUALIFICATIONS.

BY COMPARISON, A NEWLY ADMITTED HONG KONG SOLICITOR MUST HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED FOR TWO YEARS BEFORE BEING SO ENTITLED TO SO PRACTISE.

"THE COMMITTEE THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE TO IMPOSE A MINIMUM RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR UNITED KINGDOM SOLICITORS WISHING TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG AS SUCH A REQUIREMENT WOULD, IN THE WORDS OF THE COMMITTEE, 'ACCORD WITH THE WIDER PUBLIC INTEREST WHICH ARGUES THAT THOSE PRACTISING LAW IN HONG KONG MUST FIRST OBTAIN THE KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL CONDITIONS AND DEMONSTRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG', " HE SAID.

CLAUSES 3 AND 4 OF THE BILL PROVIDED THAT A UNITED KINGDOM SOLICITOR SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO HAVE RESIDED IN HONG KONG FOR AT LEAST THREE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HE COULD APPLY FOR ADMISSION AS A HONG KONG SOLICITOR AND FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS (WHICH COULD INCLUDE THE PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS) BEFORE HE COULD APPLY FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE.

AS FOR THE ADMISSION OF BARRISTERS, MR MATHEWS SAID A BARRISTER QUALIFIED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS CURRENTLY ENTITLED TO BE ADMITTED TO THE HONG KONG BAR REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG HE HAD LIVED IN HONG KONG AND WITHOUT FURTHER EXAMINATION OR QUALIFICATION.

"THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMITTEE RECOGNISED THE APPARENT CONCERN OF THE UMELCO PANEL OF THE DANGER THAT THE ADMISSION OF SUCH BARRISTERS, IF SO READILY GRANTED AND PARTICULARLY IN LARGE NUMBERS, MIGHT DETER YOUNG HONG KONG PEOPLE FROM BECOMING BARRISTERS AND THUS INHIBIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG, INDEPENDENT LOCAL BAR," HE SAID.

"IT IS ALSO RECOGNISED THAT, DUE IN PART TO THE PRESSURE ON PLACES IN THE LAW FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, THERE IS A NUMBER OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO, WITH A VIEW TO RETURNING TO AND PRACTISING AS BARRISTERS IN HONG KONG, OBTAIN THEIR QUALIFICATIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ARE CALLED TO THE BAR THERE.

"THEY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO RETURN TO HONG KONG."

CLAUSE 9 OF THE BILL PROPOSED TO RESTRICT ADMISSION TO THE HONG KONG BAR BY UNITED KINGDOM BARRISTERS BY REQUIRING AN APPLICANT:

- * TO HAVE HAD THREE YEARS' PRACTICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM; OR
- * TO BE A HONG KONG PERMANENT RESIDENT; OR
- * TO HAVE HONG KONG AS HIS NATURAL PLACE OF DOMICILE; OR
- * TO HAVE BEEN ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG FOR SEVEN YEARS.

ON THE ISSUE OF COMMONWEALTH QUALIFIED LAWYERS, MR MATHEWS SAID THAT WITHIN THE JUDICIAL AND THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE (SERVICE IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS, THE LEGAL AID AND REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENTS) THERE WERE LAWYERS QUALIFIED IN COMMONWEALTH JURISDICTIONS WHO, BY VIRTUE OF THE LEGAL OFFICERS ORDINANCE, AND THE LEGAL AID ORDINANCE, WERE ENTITLED TO PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

THIS ARRANGEMENT WAS LONGSTANDING AND UNDER IT SOME LAWYERS QUALIFIED IN THE COUNTRIES LISTED IN THE SCHEDULE IN CLAUSE 19 OF THE BILL HAD PRACTISED HONG KONG LAW FOR MANY YEARS.

UNLESS THEY OBTAINED A POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF LAWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND SERVED AS ARTICLED CLERKS THEY WERE NOT, HOWEVER, ENTITLED TO BE ADMITTED AS HONG KONG SOLICITORS TO PRACTISE OUTSIDE THE JUDICIAL AND THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE.

"AS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF LAWS AND SERVICE IN ARTICLES ARE DESIGNED TO TEACH THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN HONG KONG AND TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR PRACTICE, THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT IT IS UNNECESSARY TO APPLY THOSE REQUIREMENTS TO LAWYERS WHO ALREADY HAVE SUBSTANTIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF HONG KONG LAW," MR MATHEWS SAID.

THE BILL PROVIDED THAT THESE LAWYERS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO BE ADMITTED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE AS HONG KONG SOLICITORS, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS BEING MET.

THESE CONDITIONS WERE SET OUT IN CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL AND INCLUDED A REQUIREMENT OF SEVEN YEARS' EMPLOYMENT IN JUDICIAL OR GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE, THREE OF WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SPENT ON WORK APPROPRIATE TO THE PRACTICE OF A HONG KONG SOLICITOR.

CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL IMPOSED, IN EFFECT, AN ANNUAL QUOTA OF 10 ON THE NUMBER OF SOLICITORS WHO COULD ENTER PRIVATE PRACTICE BY THIS ROUTE.

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED THAT CERTAIN LAWYERS WITHIN THE JUDICIAL AND THE GOVERNMENT LEGAL SERVICE WHO HAD, IN EFFECT, BEEN PRACTISING IN HONG KONG AS BARRISTERS SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO BE ADMITTED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE AS BARRISTERS WITHOUT BEING REQUIRED FIRST TO OBTAIN THE POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF LAWS, SUBJECT TO SIMILAR CONDITIONS TO THOSE REQUIRED IN THE CASE OF SOLICITORS. THESE WERE SET OUT IN CLAUSE 10 OF THE BILL.

AS WITH SOLICITORS, THE BILL SET AN ANNUAL QUOTA FOR THE NUMBER OF LAWYERS WHO MIGHT BECOME HONG KONG BARRISTERS UNDER THIS PROVISION. CLAUSE 11 OF THE BILL FIXED THE QUOTA AT FIVE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE LEGAL OFFICERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

HE SAID THAT THE THEN UMELCO PANEL RECOMMENDED THAT THE LEGAL OFFICERS ORDINANCE SHOULD BE REVIEWED TO SPECIFY THE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF A LEGAL OFFICER.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S COMMITTEE ENDORSED THAT RECOMMENDATION, WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED.

ACCORDINGLY, THE BILL, WHEN READ WITH THE PROPOSED NEW SCHEDULE TO THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE, WOULD PROVIDE THAT ONLY LAWYERS QUALIFIED IN HONG KONG, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AUSTRALIA, CANADA (EXCEPT QUEBEC), NEW ZEALAND, THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND ZIMBABWE WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR APPOINTMENT AS LEGAL OFFICERS.

DEBATES ON BOTH BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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AMENDMENTS TO LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO AMEND THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF SUCH INSTALLATIONS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID LIFTS AND ESCALATORS IN BUILDINGS PREVIOUSLY NOT SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL OF THE ORDINANCE WOULD BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

"IT IS PROPOSED IN CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL THAT SECTION 3 OF THE ORDINANCE BE AMENDED, SO THAT LIFTS AND ESCALATORS OF THE GOVERNMENT, COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENTS, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, HER MAJESTY'S NAVAL, MILITARY OR AIR FORCE SERVICES, AND CONSULAR OFFICERS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES WOULD BE BROUGHT WITHIN PARTS I, II, IIA AND IIIA AND MOST OF PARTS V AND VI OF THE ORDINANCE," MR BARNES SAID.

/"THIS WOULD

"THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT CONTROLS OVER REGISTERED LIFT AND ESCALATOR ENGINEERS, AND REGISTERED LIFT AND ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS, APPLY IN RELATION TO WORK DONE BY THEM ON THOSE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS."

IN ADDITION, CLAUSE 7 OF THE BILL PROPOSED THAT SECTION 32 OF THE ORDINANCE BE AMENDED TO ENABLE THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES TO PROHIBIT THE USE AND OPERATIONS OF SERVICE LIFTS WHEN THE OWNER FAILED TO SEND HIM A PLAN OF THE LIFTS.

PRESENT LEGISLATION REQUIRED THAT WHERE MORE THAN ONE LIFT OR ESCALATOR WAS INSTALLED IN A BUILDING, THE OWNER OF THE LIFTS OR ESCALATORS MUST SEND TO THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES A PLAN SHOWING THEIR POSITION, AND THE IDENTIFYING NUMBERS MARKED ON THEM.

"ALTHOUGH THIS REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO SERVICE LIFTS, THERE IS PRESENTLY NO EFFECTIVE SANCTION FOR FAILING TO SEND A PLAN RELATING TO SERVICE LIFTS," MR BARNES SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LEGAL BASIS FOR CONTROLLING IMPORTATION OF 'GAME'

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A BILL THAT PROVIDES FOR A FIRM LEGAL BASIS FOR CONTROLLING THE IMPORTATION OF "GAME" INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF SUCH CONTROL BY MEANS OF CONDITIONS AND DIRECTIONS OF A HEALTH OFFICER.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL SOUGHT TO AMEND SECTION 55 OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE TO ENABLE THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS:

- (A) EMPOWERING A HEALTH OFFICER TO PERMIT THE IMPORTATION OF SUCH FOOD AS MAY BE PRESCRIBED SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS;
- (B) ENABLING THE INSPECTION OF IMPORTED FOOD BY A HEALTH INSPECTOR; AND
- (C) EMPOWERING A HEALTH OFFICER TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS OR ISSUE SUCH DIRECTIONS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THEIR FITNESS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

/MR CHAU

MR CHAU SAID THAT AFTER THE BILL HAD BEEN ENACTED, THE IMPORTED MEAT AND POULTRY REGULATIONS WOULD BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROPOSED STATUTORY CONTROL OVER THE IMPORTATION OF GAME.

THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRADE HAD ENDORSED THESE PROPOSALS, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL PROVIDES FOR CONTINUITY IN HEARING PHARMACY APPEALS
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THE PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, WHICH RELATES TO THE OPERATION OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS APPEAL TRIBUNAL, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, EXPLAINED THAT THE APPEAL TRIBUNAL WAS SET UP UNDER SECTION 30 OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE.

THE TRIBUNAL'S PURPOSE WAS TO HEAR AND DETERMINE APPEALS AGAINST A DECISION OR DIRECTION OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD OR ITS COMMITTEES.

THE ORDINANCE ALSO REQUIRED THAT THE CHAIRMAN AND NOT LESS THAN TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL SHOULD SIT TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE HEARING AND DETERMINATION OF AN APPEAL.

"THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO PROVISION UNDER THE ORDINANCE TO DEAL WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH THE TERM OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL EXPIRES BEFORE THE HEARING OF AN APPEAL HAS BEEN CONCLUDED," MR CHAU SAID.

"IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE APPEAL WILL HAVE TO BE HEARD AFRESH BY THE INCOMING MEMBERS.

"IT IS CLEARLY UNREASONABLE THAT AN APPELLANT BE REQUIRED, AT HIS OWN COST, TO RE-PRESENT HIS CASE TO A NEW TRIBUNAL SIMPLY BECAUSE THE LEGAL CAPACITY OF THE FORMER TRIBUNAL TO HEAR THE APPEAL HAS EXPIRED."

MR CHAU SAID CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL THEREFORE SOUGHT TO ENABLE A MEMBER WHO HAD RESIGNED OR WHOSE TERM HAD EXPIRED TO CONTINUE TO ACT AS A MEMBER TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY FOR HEARING AN OUTSTANDING APPEAL TO ITS CONCLUSION.

/A SIMILAR

A SIMILAR PROVISION EXISTED IN THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (REGISTRATION AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE) REGULATIONS, IN RELATION TO THE TERM OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE.

HE ADDED THAT CLAUSE 3 CONTAINED A TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY AN APPEAL WHICH WAS OUTSTANDING BEFORE THE PRESENT AMENDMENT WAS MADE COULD CONTINUE AND BE DETERMINED BY THE ORIGINAL TRIBUNAL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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CLOSE WATCH ON DEVELOPMENT OF EEC SINGLE MARKET

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SINGLE EUROPEAN MARKET, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON NGAI SHIU-KIT, MR JACOBS SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS OFFICES, TOGETHER WITH THE TRADE DEPARTMENT, HAD BEEN MONITORING PROGRESS.

"WE HAVE KEPT MEMBERS OF THE TRADE ADVISORY BOARD AND THE TEXTILES ADVISORY BOARD INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS," HE SAID.

"IT IS, OF COURSE, INCUMBENT UPON BUSINESSMEN CONCERNED TO KEEP THEMSELVES INFORMED OF THE IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE CREATION OF A SINGLE MARKET FOR THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN 1992.

"THEY ARE IN THE BEST POSITION TO JUDGE THE EFFECT OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS ON THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES. THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT TAKE ON THAT RESPONSIBILITY," HE ADDED.

MR JACOBS SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ENABLE HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN TO HAVE A MORE THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES, THE TRADE DEPARTMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE BRUSSELS-BASED CENTRE OF EUROPEAN POLICY STUDIES AND THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, HAD ORGANISED THE "CONFERENCE ON EUROPE 1992" ON NOVEMBER 4 LAST YEAR.

"THIS CONFERENCE, HELD IN HONG KONG, WAS CO-SPONSORED BY SIX TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND WAS WELL ATTENDED BY OVER 400 PARTICIPANTS," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS ALSO SAID THAT CIRCULARS ON TECHNICAL MATTERS SUCH AS PRODUCT LIABILITY LEGISLATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS HAD BEEN ISSUED TO INDUSTRIAL AND TRADE ORGANISATIONS.

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION AS AND WHEN IT BECOMES AVAILABLE," HE ADDED.

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CO-OPERATION IN CONTROL OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS

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BUILDING OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS HAVE SHOWN GREATER WILLINGNESS TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN THE CONTROL OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN.

MR BARNES SAID THE IMPROVEMENT SOUGHT IN INTRODUCING THE "HIGH/LOW" SYSTEM OF ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES IN MARCH LAST YEAR WAS TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR ENFORCEMENT ACTION, WHICH WERE GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC.

"STAFF OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE NOW HAVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY CASES," HE SAID.

"THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS NEW SYSTEM ALSO HELPED THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE TO PLAN FOR A SERIES OF COMPREHENSIVE CLEARANCE PROGRAMMES OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS ON A DISTRICT BY DISTRICT BASIS."

ACTION UNDER THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDED DEMOLITION OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES, IMPROVING STAIRCASES AND EXIT ROUTES, STRUCTURAL REPAIRS, REMOVAL OF DANGEROUS SIGNBOARDS, RECTIFICATION OF DEFECTIVE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND REPAINTING OF EXTERNAL WALLS.

"AS FAR AS I CAN GATHER, THE NUMBER OF DEMOLITIONS OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS HAS NOT INCREASED, BUT COULD DO SO WHEN MORE OF THE PLANNED PROGRAMMES OF IMPROVEMENTS MENTIONED ABOVE HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

"THE RATE SHOULD FURTHER IMPROVE WHEN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE RECRUITS SOME 18 ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR WHICH POSTS HAVE BEEN EARMARKED IN 1989-90," MR BARNES SAID.

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CLOSED AREA RESTRICTIONS KEPT UNDER REVIEW

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THE GOVERNMENT KEEPS THE NEED FOR CLOSED AREA RESTRICTIONS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW AND CHANGES WILL BE MADE WHERE POSSIBLE TO MINIMISE INCONVENIENCE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING A QUESTION FROM THE HON LAU WONG-FAT, WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER RELAXING THE STRINGENT RESTRICTIONS ON THE MOVEMENTS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS IN AND OUT OF THE SHA TAU KOK CLOSED AREA.

MR BARNES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE CONCERN OF SHA TAU KOK RESIDENTS, AND THE RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF THE CLOSED AREA HAD BEEN MADE AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE.

"ANY COMPLAINTS OR CASES WHERE APPLICANTS FOR PERMITS EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY WILL BE INVESTIGATED PROMPTLY BY THE POLICE," HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT SOME DEVELOPMENT HAD TAKEN PLACE WITHIN THE CLOSED AREA AND SHA TAU KOK TOWN WAS BEING GREATLY IMPROVED.

"BUT THIS REDEVELOPMENT IS INTENDED ONLY TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR EXISTING RESIDENTS AND NOT TO OPEN UP THE AREA FOR GENERAL DEVELOPMENT," MR BARNES ADDED.

HE STRESSED THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT INTO AND OUT OF SHA TAU KOK WERE PART OF THE GENERAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE FRONTIER CLOSED AREA WHICH RAN ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE BORDER WITH CHINA.

THE FRONTIER CLOSED AREA WAS THEREFORE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE SYSTEM FOR PREVENTING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION.

"ALTHOUGH PRESENT LEVELS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ARE RELATIVELY LOW, THE PROBLEM STILL PERSISTS AND WE NEED TO GUARD AGAINST ANY RESURGENCE," HE SAID.

"IN 1988, A TOTAL OF 20,987 II'S WERE ARRESTED, OF WHICH OVER 9,000 WERE ARRESTED ON THE LAND BORDER.

"WITHOUT THE FRONTIER CLOSED AREA, THE DIFFICULTIES OF INTERCEPTING II'S WOULD BE VERY MUCH GREATER."

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NEW TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME BEING ASSESSED

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS RECENTLY BEGUN AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEW STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RITA FAN, MR BRIDGE SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD CONDUCT A SAMPLE SURVEY OF THOSE STUDENTS WHO APPLIED FOR TRAVEL SUBSIDIES LAST YEAR AND CONSULT THE SCHOOL COUNCILS.

"WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ENSURE THAT THE ASSESSMENT IS COMPLETED WITHIN THREE OR FOUR MONTHS SO THAT ANY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SCHEME CAN BE INTRODUCED BEFORE THE NEXT ROUND OF APPLICATIONS IS INVITED IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR," HE SAID.

MR BRIDGE POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW STUDENT TRAVEL SUBSIDY SCHEME WAS INTRODUCED LAST OCTOBER FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE CRITICISMS OF THE OLD SCHEME, AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS.

THE FIRST ROUND OF APPLICATIONS AND PAYMENTS UNDER THE NEW SCHEME HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN DECEMBER.

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WAYS TO EASE SHORTAGE OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

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THE PROBLEM OF "SPIRALLING OFFICE RENTALS" HAS ALREADY ENCOURAGED THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICES IN SECONDARY AREAS INCLUDING SITES ALONG THE MTR LINE AND IN SHA TIN AND THE RELOCATION OF FIRMS WHICH DO NOT REALLY REQUIRE A PRESENCE IN MORE CENTRAL AREAS.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON EDWARD HO.

HE SAID THIS WAS A BENEFICIAL SPIN-OFF AS IT HELPED TO DECENTRALISE OFFICE JOBS, AND THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD HAD TAKEN SOME PAINS TO ACCOMMODATE THIS TREND.

"ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON THE MARKET WOULD NEED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND INITIATED EVEN FURTHER BACK," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD JUST SOLD A SITE IN WAN CHAI WHICH SHOULD YIELD ABOUT 108,000 SQUARE METRES OF NEW OFFICE SPACE AND PLANNED TO SELL ANOTHER SITE IN CENTRAL WHICH WOULD YIELD ABOUT A FURTHER 110,000 SQUARE METRES, MR BARNES SAID, WHILE POINTING OUT THAT THIS ACCOMMODATION WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR SOME YEARS.

"AGAIN, GOVERNMENT IS REVIEWING ITS OWN LAND HOLDINGS WITH A VIEW TO PUTTING WHATEVER SITES IT CAN ON THE MARKET, BUT AGAIN THE EFFECT WILL BE SOME YEARS OFF," HE SAID.

"MORE IMMEDIATELY, A RECENT MINOR ADJUSTMENT OF THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD'S POLICY NOW AUTOMATICALLY PERMITS UP TO 30 PER CENT OF FACTORY ACCOMMODATION TO BE USED AS ANCILLARY OFFICE SPACE AND HAS AVOIDED CERTAIN INDUSTRIAL AND TRADING FIRMS HAVING TO ENTER THE MARKET FOR SEPARATE OFFICE PREMISES.

"AND SEVERAL APPLICATIONS FOR A GREATER PERCENTAGE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL WHEN JUSTIFIED.

"HOWEVER, A GENERAL RELAXATION OF CONDITIONS OF INDUSTRIAL LOTS WOULD PRODUCE CONFLICTS WITH BUILDINGS REGULATIONS AND WOULD RESULT IN RENTAL PRESSURE BEING TRANSFERRED TO THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR," MR BARNES SAID.

HE SAID IN THE MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM THERE WERE OF COURSE LAND FORMATION PROGRAMMES TO PROVIDE LAND FOR OFFICE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL DISTRICT AND OTHER PLACES, BUT THESE WOULD PROVIDE LITTLE RELIEF IN THE IMMEDIATE RENT CYCLE.

"THEY ARE HOWEVER STILL VITAL TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND IN FACT THE BEST DIRECT ACTION THAT GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE TO HELP THE ECONOMY AT ANY TIME," MR BARNES SAID.

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POLICE OPERATIONAL WORK NOT AFFECTED

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POLICE OPERATIONAL TASKS ARE NOT BEING AFFECTED BY CURRENT MANPOWER WASTAGE AND VACANCIES WITHIN THE POLICE FORCE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEUNG WAI-TUNG, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT THE WASTAGE AND RECRUITMENT SITUATION DID NOT COMPARE UNFAVOURABLY WITH OTHER DISCIPLINED SERVICES AND THE CIVIL SERVICE AS A WHOLE.

/"BUT WE

"BUT WE SHALL BE WATCHING THE SITUATION CAREFULLY OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD, BOTH IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT TIGHT LABOUR MARKET, AND THE EFFECT OF THE NEW PAY AWARDS ON RECRUITMENT, WHICH HAVE YET TO BE SEEN," HE SAID.

"MEANWHILE, VACANCY FIGURES REMAIN CONSTANT AND POLICE OPERATIONAL TASKS ARE NOT BEING AFFECTED."

MR BARNES NOTED THAT 1,639 OFFICERS LEFT THE POLICE FORCE LAST YEAR, COMPRISING 180 OFFICERS AT THE INSPECTORATE LEVEL OR ABOVE, AND 1,459 MEMBERS OF THE RANK AND FILE.

THE WASTAGE RATE STOOD AT SIX PER CENT IN 1988 COMPARED WITH A RATE OF 5.4 PER CENT IN THE REST OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"THE VACANCY RATE AT PRESENT IS LESS THAN ONE PER CENT COMPARED WITH A FIGURE OF FIVE PER CENT FOR THE REST OF THE CIVIL SERVICE," MR BARNES SAID.

"THERE ARE CURRENTLY 31 VACANT INSPECTORATE POSTS OUT OF A TOTAL OF 2,362, AND 130 VACANT JUNIOR OFFICER POSTS OUT OF A TOTAL OF 27,395."

ON RECRUITMENT, MR BARNES SAID THE TARGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 88-89 HAD BEEN SET AT 2,535 OFFICERS, TO COPE WITH EXPANSION NEEDS AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS OF THE POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL.

THE FIGURE COMPRISED 225 INSPECTORS AND 2,310 CONSTABLES, AN INCREASE OF 12.5 PER CENT FOR INSPECTORS AND 50 PER CENT FOR CONSTABLES COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR'S LEVELS.

"FOR INSPECTORS THE REQUIRED NUMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE MET, BUT FOR CONSTABLES THERE MAY BE A SHORTFALL OF OVER 100, OR 4 PER CENT OF THE RECRUITMENT TARGET," MR BARNES SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT APPLICATIONS TO JOIN THE FORCE INCREASED DURING 1988 DUE TO STEPPED UP PUBLICITY AND RECRUITING EFFORTS.

"THERE ARE CURRENTLY SIX QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR EACH VACANCY," MR BARNES SAID.

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KCRC FREE TO DESIGN PAY PACKAGES

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THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION WAS CREATED TO OPERATE ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS INCLUDING THE FLEXIBILITY IN DETERMINING STAFF PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE UNDER A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MICHAEL CHENG.

MR LEUNG SAID THE CORPORATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1982 AS AN INDEPENDENT STATUTORY ORGANISATION TO PROVIDE A FLEXIBLE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH COULD RESPOND TO RAPID CHANGES IN THE MARKET DEMAND AND MEET THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES EXPECTED OF A MODERN RAILWAY.

HE SAID THAT TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF INDIVIDUAL STAFF MEMBERS, WHO WERE NOT CIVIL SERVANTS, WERE A MATTER FOR THE CORPORATION AND WERE NOT MONITORED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HOWEVER, THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CORPORATION'S MANAGING DIRECTOR HAD TO BE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR AND HIS TERMS OF APPOINTMENT WERE SUBJECT TO DETERMINATION BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR LEUNG SAID.

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OBJECTIVES OF VBP SCREENING POLICY EXPLAINED

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THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW SCREENING POLICY FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE ARE TO DETER ARRIVALS FROM VIETNAM AND TO FORM A BASIS FOR LONG TERM DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR BOTH REFUGEES AND NON-REFUGEES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO BE JUDGED IN TERMS OF DETERRING PEOPLE FROM TRAVELLING TO HONG KONG, THE LEVEL OF REPATRIATION AND THE LEVEL OF RESETTLEMENT," MR BARNES SAID IN REPLY TO A SIX-POINT QUESTION FROM THE HON DANIEL TSE.

"IT IS FAR TOO EARLY AT THIS STAGE TO FORM A JUDGEMENT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY AND WE MUST WAIT TO SEE THE LEVEL OF ARRIVALS OVER THE SUMMER OF 1989 AND THE OUTCOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE TO FIND LONG TERM SOLUTIONS TO THIS PROBLEM."

MR BARNES

MR BARNES SAID THAT IN USING THE TERMS "REFUGEE" AND "BOAT PEOPLE" IN HIS REPLY HE WISHED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT "REFUGEE" MEANT SOMEONE WHO ARRIVED FROM VIETNAM WITHOUT NORMAL DOCUMENTATION BEFORE JUNE 16, 1988, OR SUCH A PERSON WHO ARRIVED AFTER THAT DATE WHO HAD BEEN CLASSIFIED AS A REFUGEE AS A RESULT OF SCREENING.

"BOAT PEOPLE" WAS A MORE GENERIC TERM MEANING THOSE WHO ARRIVED ON OR AFTER JUNE 16, 1988 WHO HAD EITHER NOT BEEN SCREENED OR HAD BEEN SCREENED-OUT AS NON-REFUGEES.

MR BARNES SAID REPATRIATION WAS THE ONLY LOGICAL DURABLE SOLUTION AVAILABLE FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT QUALIFY FOR REFUGEE STATUS. THIS COVERED BOTH VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY RETURNS.

"WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE IN ESTABLISHING ARRANGEMENTS WITH UNHCR AND WITH THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FOR REPATRIATION," HE SAID.

"WE HAVE MADE A START WITH THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPRESSED A WISH TO RETURN AND WE HOPE THAT MORE WILL VOLUNTEER TO RETURN ONCE THIS CHANNEL BECOMES ESTABLISHED."

MR BARNES SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED TO ADOPT A LIBERALISATION PROGRAMME FROM JUNE LAST YEAR APPLYING ONLY TO THE CLOSED CAMPS FOR REFUGEES LEADING TO THE UNHCR TAKING OVER THE MANAGEMENT ROLE THROUGH ITS OPERATIONAL AGENCIES.

THERE WERE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR THE ADOPTION OF THIS POLICY. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY WAS INTRODUCED IN 1982 AND WAS INTENDED TO ACT AS A DETERRENT TO PEOPLE WHO WERE CONSIDERING LEAVING VIETNAM FOR HONG KONG.

BY EARLY 1988, WITH INCREASING NUMBERS OF BOAT PEOPLE ARRIVING FROM VIETNAM, IT HAD BECOME CLEAR THAT THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY WOULD NO LONGER SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AND WOULD INDEED BE POSITIVELY DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR RESETTLEMENT PROSPECTS, AND THAT A NEW INITIATIVE WAS REQUIRED.

IT WAS THEREFORE DECIDED TO EMBARK ON THE PRESENT SCREENING POLICY FOR DETERMINING REFUGEE STATUS.

"FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS, THE ONLY PRACTICAL DURABLE SOLUTION IS RESETTLEMENT," MR BARNES SAID.

"THE INTENTION OF THE PROGRAMME OF LIBERALISATION I.E. ALLOWING PEOPLE TO TAKE UP OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOLING, IS TO IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY THE RESETTLEMENT PROSPECTS OF THE REFUGEE POPULATION AND THUS TO HASTEN THEIR DEPARTURE FROM HONG KONG."

MR BARNES SAID THE LIBERALISATION PROGRAMME WOULD BE FINANCIALLY BENEFICIAL FOR HONG KONG.

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"ONCE THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CAMPS HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE UNHCR ALL OPERATIVE COSTS WILL BE MET FROM UNHCR FUNDS," HE SAID.

"THIS WILL SAVE THE GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE OF ABOUT \$150 MILLION PER YEAR."

MR BARNES SAID THAT SINCE 1975, A TOTAL OF 816 REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM HAD BEEN ACCEPTED FOR PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN HONG KONG.

OF THESE, 701 HAD BEEN ACCEPTED ON THE GROUNDS OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION.

THE REMAINING 115 HAD BEEN ACCEPTED UNDER A LOCAL SETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR ETHNIC CHINESE INTRODUCED IN APRIL 1986.

IN ADDITION, MR BARNES POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG ALSO RESETTLED OVER 13,000 DISPLACED PERSONS FROM INDOCHINA IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE 1970'S FOLLOWING THE FALL OF SAIGON.

THEY INCLUDED FORMER HONG KONG RESIDENTS AND DEPENDENTS OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO RETURNED BY SPECIAL CHARTERED FLIGHTS.

WHILE THERE WAS NO QUOTA ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION CASES, THERE WAS A SET QUOTA OF 250 UNDER THE LOCAL SETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR ETHNIC CHINESE WHO MET CERTAIN CRITERIA.

HE SAID THAT UNDER CURRENT LEGISLATION, VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WERE NOT CONSIDERED TO BE ORDINARILY RESIDENT HERE.

IT WAS THEREFORE NOT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO QUALIFY AS PERMANENT RESIDENTS EVEN IF THEY STAYED IN HONG KONG FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS, UNLESS THEY QUALIFIED UNDER THE LOCAL SETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR ETHNIC CHINESE.

HOWEVER, CHILDREN BORN TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PARENTS IN HONG KONG PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1983 AUTOMATICALLY ACQUIRED BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORY CITIZENSHIP (BDTC) BY VIRTUE OF THEIR BIRTH AND WERE ELIGIBLE FOR RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG.

"THERE ARE 138 CHILDREN IN THIS CATEGORY REMAINING IN HONG KONG AND NO FURTHER ADDITIONS ARE POSSIBLE," HE SAID.

MR BARNES EXPLAINED THAT ON JANUARY 1, 1983, THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981 CAME INTO FORCE AND ABOLISHED THE PRINCIPLE WHEREBY CHILDREN BORN IN HONG KONG AUTOMATICALLY ACQUIRED BDTC STATUS.

"CHILDREN BORN OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG SINCE JANUARY 1, 1983 DO NOT ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN HONG KONG AT BIRTH AND HAVE THE SAME STATUS AS THEIR PARENTS," HE SAID.

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RESTRICTION PLANNED ON VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOPS
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VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOPS, WHICH OFTEN ARE THE SOURCE OF NOISE POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE SET UP NEAR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS UNDER FUTURE LAND-USE PLANNING.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT WAS A "PERENNIAL PROBLEM", MR BARNES SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MR POON CHI-FAI.

A PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO RELOCATE THESE SHOPS IN DESIGNATED SITES IN CHEUNG SHA WAN, LAI CHI KOK ROAD, SHA TIN AND YUEN LONG HAD FAILED BECAUSE WORKSHOP OPERATORS HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO MOVE INTO THE BUILDINGS.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAD BEEN ASKED TO COME UP WITH A BETTER SOLUTION, "NOT LEAST BECAUSE URBAN RENEWAL SCHEMES ARE LIKELY TO DISPLACE A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF SUCH REPAIR SHOPS WHOSE SERVICES, THOUGH UNWELCOME AS NEIGHBOURS, ARE NEEDED," MR BARNES SAID.

"IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO PREVENT SMALL WORKSHOPS OPERATING, PARTICULARLY IN THE OLDER URBAN DISTRICTS. THIS IS BECAUSE THE LEASE CONDITIONS IN THESE OLDER AREAS ARE OFTEN NOT FRAMED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EXCLUDE THIS USE.

"IN THE NEW TOWNS AND WHERE A LEASE MODIFICATION OR CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE CAN BE IMPOSED ON REDEVELOPMENT IN THE OLDER URBAN AREAS, CONDITIONS ARE OR CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE LEASE TO PREVENT THE PREMISES BEING USED FOR A VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOP."

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ACTION TAKEN ON SAFETY AT SCHOOL ATHLETIC MEETS
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ACTION TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN AWARENESS AMONG SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND TEACHERS OF THE NEED FOR SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT ATHLETIC MEETS WAS OUTLINED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR BRIDGE SAID SAFETY MEASURES HAD BEEN REVIEWED FOLLOWING A SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT A SCHOOL ATHLETIC MEET IN JANUARY LAST YEAR.

/THE FOLLOWING

THE FOLLOWING ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN:

- (A) A REVISED CIRCULAR ON SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOL ATHLETIC MEETS WAS ISSUED TO ALL SCHOOLS IN NOVEMBER;
- (B) THE BOOKLET ON SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION HAD BEEN REVISED, AND THE UPDATED VERSION WAS ISSUED TO ALL SCHOOLS IN NOVEMBER;
- (C) A 20-MINUTE TELEVISION PROGRAMME ON SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION HAD BEEN PRODUCED.

THIS WAS BROADCAST FOUR TIMES IN NOVEMBER. VIDEO TAPES OF THE PROGRAMME WERE AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOLS TO BORROW;

- (D) THREE SEMINARS WERE HELD IN JULY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, AND WERE ATTENDED BY 212 PRIMARY AND 187 SECONDARY TEACHERS;
- (E) THE DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGED SCHOOLS TO TAKE PART IN THE LAND SPORTS SAFETY CAMPAIGN AND CONFERENCE ORGANISED IN NOVEMBER BY THE COUNCIL FOR RECREATION AND SPORT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

MR BRIDGE SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ADVISE SCHOOLS ON SAFETY MEASURES, AND IT WOULD CONTINUE TO CHECK DURING SCHOOL VISITS AND INSPECTIONS THAT THIS ADVICE WAS BEING FOLLOWED.

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HIGHWAYS DEPT TO CO-ORDINATE CLEANSING OF FOOTBRIDGES, SUBWAYS

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THE CLEANSING OF THE TERRITORY'S 338 PUBLIC FOOTBRIDGES AND 183 SUBWAYS, WHICH AT PRESENT IS CARRIED OUT BY SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, WILL BECOME THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT FROM EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ELSIE TU.

AT PRESENT, THE URBAN AND REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANUAL SWEEPING OF PAVED SURFACES, INCLUDING RAMPS AND STAIRS, AND FOR THE REMOVAL OF POSTERS, MR BARNES SAID.

"THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT, IN TURN, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REMOVING DIRT OR GRAFFITI FROM THE WALLS AND CEILING."

AS TO THE SAFETY OF PUBLIC ESCALATORS, MR BARNES SAID THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE MAINTENANCE OF ALL PUBLIC ESCALATORS BY SPECIALIST ESCALATOR CONTRACTORS, WHO WERE REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT WEEKLY SERVICING AND ATTEND TO FAULT CALLS ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.

"THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE PUBLIC ESCALATORS IS MONITORED THROUGH TELEPHONE LINKS TO A MONITORING CONTROL CENTRE WITH BREAKDOWNS RECORDED AND RELAYED TO THE RESPECTIVE CONTRACTORS FOR IMMEDIATE RECTIFICATION," HE SAID.

"BUT NONE OF THE DEPARTMENTS HAS THE STAFF RESOURCES TO CLEAN THESE FACILITIES SUFFICIENTLY REGULARLY, AND NO SINGLE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CO-ORDINATING THE WORK DONE BY EACH OF THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

"SO IT HAS NEWLY BEEN DECIDED THAT HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT SHOULD ASSUME TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANSING AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR WHEN IT HAS OBTAINED THE NECESSARY STAFF TO ORGANISE AND SUPERVISE A FULL CLEANSING CONTRACT."

MR BARNES ALSO SAID THAT THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE OF FOOTBRIDGES AND SUBWAYS AND ADDED THAT AS FAR AS SAFETY WAS CONCERNED, THE SITUATION WAS SATISFACTORY.

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NEW DESIGN FOR BUS STOP SHELTERS

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THE TWO FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES COULD NOW PROCEED TO BUILD BUS STOP SHELTERS WITH AN IMPROVED DESIGN ENDORSED BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SINCE MID-1987, IMPROVED DESIGNS FOR PASSENGER SHELTERS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES, MR LEUNG SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHAN YING-LUN.

VARIOUS DESIGN PROPOSALS HAD BEEN EXAMINED IN DETAIL BUT FOUND UNSATISFACTORY.

LAST MONTH, THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY HAD PRODUCED A REVISED SHELTER DESIGN WHICH OFFERED GREATER PROTECTION TO PASSENGERS.

THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY HAD AGREED TO ADOPT THE SAME DESIGN AFTER IT HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND WOULD SOON RESUME ITS SHELTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, MR LEUNG ADDED.

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EFFORTS MADE TO DEAL WITH DEMAND FOR AIRCRAFT SEATS

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BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE AIRLINES HAVE MADE EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH INCREASING DEMAND FOR AIRCRAFT SEATS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIRS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"TO MEET DEMAND, HONG KONG'S AIRLINES HAVE EXPANDED THEIR SCHEDULED SERVICES ON THE ROUTES IN QUESTION, WHERE THE RIGHTS TO DO SO WERE AVAILABLE," MR JACOBS SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON DAVID CHEUNG.

"THIS HAS ALSO MEANT THAT THE AIRLINES OPERATING THE ROUTES FROM THE OTHER END HAVE ALSO INCREASED THE NUMBER OF THEIR SERVICES CORRESPONDINGLY."

A CASE IN POINT WAS THE EXPANSION OF SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND JAPAN, HE SAID.

ADDITIONALLY, MR JACOBS SAID BOTH HONG KONG AND FOREIGN AIRLINES HAD OPERATED EXTRA SCHEDULED SERVICES TO MEET DEMAND, AN EXAMPLE BEING THE HONG KONG-AUSTRALIA ROUTES IN RECENT MONTHS.

"MOREOVER, ONE HONG KONG AIRLINE HAS INCREASED ITS CHARTER OPERATIONS, IN PARTICULAR TO POINTS IN CHINA FOR WHICH THERE ARE NO RIGHTS TO SCHEDULED OPERATIONS," HE SAID.

"THIS AIRLINE HAS ALSO INAUGURATED CHARTER SERVICES IN CERTAIN CASES WHERE CAPACITY ON SCHEDULED SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THOSE CITIES WAS, FOR THE TIME BEING, INADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND."

MR JACOBS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG'S PASSENGER AIRLINES HAD EXPANDED THEIR FLEETS, AND THERE WERE PLANS TO ACQUIRE MORE AIRCRAFT THIS YEAR.

MEANWHILE, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SEEKING, THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, RIGHTS FOR ADDITIONAL CAPACITY ON CERTAIN ROUTES.

"IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, IN SOME CASES, MORE CAPACITY COULD HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN WILLING TO CONCLUDE UNBALANCED ARRANGEMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THOSE NEGOTIATING PARTNERS CONCERNED," MR JACOBS SAID.

"BUT THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN DETRIMENTAL TO HONG KONG'S OVERALL, LONGER-TERM INTERESTS, AND CONTRARY TO NORMAL PRINCIPLES OF RECIPROCITY GOVERNING SCHEDULED SERVICES."

ON MR CHEUNG'S SUGGESTION THAT MORE THAN ONE HONG KONG AIRLINE SHOULD BE DESIGNATED "TO OPERATE ON THOSE ROUTES WHERE THE DEMAND OUTSTRIPS EXISTING CAPACITY", MR JACOBS SAID THAT MIGHT APPEAR TO BE A SIMPLE, SPEEDY AND EASY SOLUTION.

/"BUT IT

"BUT IT IGNORES THAT COMPLEXITIES OF THE SITUATION," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS OUTLINED THE FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED, WHICH INCLUDED, FIRSTLY, WHETHER THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE HONG KONG AIRLINE LICENSED FOR THE ROUTE.

HE POINTED OUT THERE WERE ONLY TWO ROUTES, PEKING AND SHANGHAI, FOR WHICH MORE THAN ONE HONG KONG AIRLINE WAS CURRENTLY LICENSED.

THE SECOND FACTOR, HE SAID, WAS WHETHER THE RIGHT EXISTED UNDER THE RELEVANT AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR A SECOND HONG KONG AIRLINE TO BE DESIGNATED.

THIRDLY, WHETHER, IF THERE WAS SUCH A RIGHT, THERE WAS AVAILABLE UNDER THE RELEVANT AGREEMENT ANY UNUSED CAPACITY FOR THE SECOND AIRLINE TO TAKE UP.

FOURTHLY, WHETHER ADDITIONAL RIGHTS COULD BE OBTAINED FROM THE BILATERAL PARTNER, AT A PRICE THAT HONG KONG COULD REASONABLY AFFORD IN EXCHANGE FOR THOSE ADDITIONAL RIGHTS.

AND FINALLY, WHETHER, ASSUMING THAT CAPACITY WAS AVAILABLE AND IT WAS IN THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG THAT A SECOND AIRLINE BE DESIGNATED, THAT AIRLINE HAD THE AIRCRAFT CAPABLE OF OPERATING THE ROUTE.

"IN OTHER WORDS, HONG KONG DOES NOT HAVE FULL AND UNILATERAL FREEDOM OF ACTION," MR JACOBS SAID.

"NOR DOES DESIGNATING MORE THAN ONE AIRLINE BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AUTOMATICALLY LEAD TO MORE CAPACITY."

ON THE QUESTION OF SEEKING ADDITIONAL RIGHTS, MR JACOBS REFERRED TO THE STATEMENT MADE ON THE SUBJECT BY HIS PREDECESSOR ON NOVEMBER 20, 1985 AND HIS OWN STATEMENT ON FEBRUARY 18, 1987 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN EASY TO OBTAIN SEATS AT SHORT NOTICE ON FLIGHTS ON CERTAIN ROUTES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND OTHER CITIES IN RECENT TIMES," MR JACOBS NOTED.

THIS HAD BEEN A RESULT OF THE RAPID AND UNEXPECTED INCREASE IN PASSENGER DEMAND IN THE PAST TWO YEARS OR SO, WHICH AFFECTED NOT ONLY HONG KONG BUT ALSO MANY OTHER PLACES, HE SAID.

"I WISH TO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT ON THE BASIS OF NORMAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING EXCHANGES OF RIGHTS, AND ASSUMING THAT AIRLINES ARE IN A POSITION TO OPERATE EXTRA SERVICES, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO OBTAIN THE EXTRA TRAFFIC RIGHTS NEEDED TO PROVIDE THE RIGHT AIR TRANSPORT NETWORK ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAIN THE TERRITORY'S ECONOMY AND TO ENABLE RESIDENTS TO TRAVEL ABROAD FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE," MR JACOBS CONCLUDED.

IMPROVED MEDICAL COVERAGE AT VBP DETENTION CENTRES

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MEDICAL COVERAGE AT THE CHI MA WAN AND HEI LING CHAU DETENTION CENTRES FOR VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WILL BE IMPROVED FROM THIS MONTH, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAU SAID THAT THIS FOLLOWED THE RECOMMENDATION MADE BY THE JURY AT A RECENT CORONER'S INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF A BABY GIRL AT THE CHI MA WAN CENTRE.

FROM FEBRUARY 27, CLINICS AT THE TWO CENTRES WOULD BE MANNED BY AT LEAST ONE REGISTERED NURSE 24 HOURS A DAY, EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK, AND ANOTHER NURSE WOULD BE ON-CALL IN EACH CENTRE TO PROVIDE BACK-UP SERVICE IF NECESSARY, MR CHAU SAID.

THE SECRETARY WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD CHOW.

"THE PRESENCE OF AN EXPERIENCED REGISTERED NURSE ON DUTY, ON A 24-HOUR BASIS, WILL ENSURE THAT POTENTIAL EMERGENCIES ARE IDENTIFIED PROMPTLY AND IMMEDIATE TREATMENT ARRANGED, IF NECESSARY," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID IT WAS NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO STATION A DOCTOR IN THE CENTRES ON A 24-HOUR BASIS.

AS AT PRESENT, A DOCTOR WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ON DUTY DURING NORMAL CLINIC HOURS AND AVAILABLE ON AN "ON-CALL" BASIS AT OTHER TIMES.

MR CHAU SAID THAT TO IMPLEMENT THE ABOVE IMPROVEMENTS IN NURSING SERVICES, THE CURRENT SIX NURSING STAFF IN EACH CENTRE WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED TO NINE.

"AS A NUMBER OF NURSING STAFF CAN BE RELEASED FROM THE THREE REFUGEE CENTRES WHICH ARE BEING TAKEN OVER BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, THESE ADDITIONAL POSTS CAN BE PROVIDED WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE OVERALL NURSING SERVICE IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT," HE SAID.

"OTHER CENTRES ACCOMMODATING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES OR BOAT PEOPLE ARE SITUATED IN AREAS SERVED BY HOSPITALS OR CLINICS WITH A 24-HOUR ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICE.

"FOR THESE CENTRES, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A 24-HOUR COVERAGE BY DOCTORS BUT CONSIDERATION IS AT PRESENT BEING GIVEN TO STRENGTHENING THE NURSING COVERAGE OF ONE OF THEM," HE ADDED.

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EXIT PERMITS A MATTER FOR CHINESE AUTHORITIES

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THE ISSUE OF ONE-WAY EXIT PERMITS FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT MOTHERS REPATRIATED FROM HONG KONG IS ENTIRELY A MATTER FOR THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BARNES WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT CONCERNING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT MOTHERS WHO WERE REPATRIATED TO CHINA LAST YEAR, AND WHETHER ANYTHING HAD BEEN DONE TO EXPEDITE, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THE ISSUE OF ONE-WAY PERMITS TO THESE WOMEN.

"MEMBERS WILL UNDERSTAND THEREFORE THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT CAN DO NO MORE THAN DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO THESE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT MOTHER CASES, AND IN THE COURSE OF LAST YEAR THIS HAS BEEN DONE," MR BARNES SAID.

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HK POLYTECHNIC'S MISSION IS TO SERVE COMMUNITY

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THE INCOMING CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG, RESTATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE FIRM BELIEF OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MANAGEMENT THAT THE POLYTECHNIC EXISTS TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

"IN THIS CONTEXT, YOU CAN BE ASSURED OF OUR CONTINUED ALERTNESS TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY," HE SAID IN TABLING THE POLYTECHNIC'S 1987-88 ANNUAL REPORT.

THE POLYTECHNIC HAD AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP CLOSE AND USEFUL INTERACTIONS WITH VARIOUS COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SECTORS SO AS TO PROVIDE THE SUITABLE KIND OF TRAINING FOR STUDENTS IN PREPARING THEM TO MEET POST-GRADUATION CHALLENGES, MR CHEONG SAID.

EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE POLYTECHNIC'S FUTURE PROGRAMMES FULLY DEMONSTRATED MORE INTENSE EFFORTS IN WORKING CLOSELY WITH COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

FIRSTLY, PLANS WERE ALREADY IN HAND TO INTRODUCE A SURFACE MOUNT TECHNOLOGY FACILITY AS WELL AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MICRO ELECTRONIC DESIGN AND FABRICATION CENTRE. THESE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT WORKING CLOSELY WITH INDUSTRY.

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SECONDLY, IN RECOGNISING THAT THE MORE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COUNTRIES HAD MOVED TOWARDS DEVELOPING INTEGRATED SYSTEM MANUFACTURING AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND THEREBY COMPETITIVENESS, THE POLYTECHNIC WAS ACTIVELY EXPLORING WAYS OF COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK TO FACILITATE THE INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED COURSES IN MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING TO HONG KONG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

"THE AVAILABILITY OF SUCH CONCEPTS AND COURSES IN HONG KONG WILL NO DOUBT BE OF TREMENDOUS VALUE TO HELP FURTHER DEVELOP THE COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY," HE SAID.

THIRDLY, THE POLYTECHNIC RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR HONG KONG TO MAINTAIN HIGH PROFICIENCY IN THE USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

ACCORDINGLY, THE POLYTECHNIC WOULD BE CO-OPERATING WITH THE FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BUSINESS ENGLISH CENTRE.

MR CHEONG SAID THE POLYTECHNIC RECOGNISED THAT IT COULD CONTINUE TO SERVE ONLY WITH SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING FROM ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY AND, IN PARTICULAR, FROM THE POLICY BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

"WE EARNESTLY HOPE THAT SUCH SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING WILL CONTINUE TO BE FORTHCOMING SO THAT TOGETHER WE CAN CONTRIBUTE, EACH IN OUR OWN LITTLE WAY, TOWARDS BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR HONG KONG IN THE YEARS TO COME," HE SAID.

MR CHEONG PAID TRIBUTE TO THE HON ALLEN LEE, WHO STOOD DOWN FROM THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL AT THE END OF LAST YEAR.

HE SAID MR LEE'S LEADERSHIP OF THE POLYTECHNIC HAD BEEN DECISIVE, INCISIVE AND CHARACTERISED BY OPENNESS.

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CITY POLYTECHNIC MAKES EXCITING PROGRESS

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THE CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG HAS MADE EXCITING AND CHALLENGING PROGRESS IN ITS FORMATIVE YEARS AND IS NOW APPROACHING A STAGE OF STRENGTH AND MATURITY, THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING THE POLYTECHNIC'S 1987-88 ANNUAL REPORT, MR CHENG SAID THAT COURSES OF DIVERSE ACADEMIC INTERESTS AT BOTH UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE LEVELS WOULD BE OFFERED TO MEET THE GROWING NEED FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION IN HONG KONG IN THE NEXT DECADE.

/MR CHENG

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MR CHENG, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL, SAID THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW WAS MARKED BY A CONTINUED GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF COURSES ON OFFER AND IN THE STUDENT POPULATION, AN ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH WORK AS WELL AS REMARKABLE PROGRESS IN CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION WORK.

DURING THE YEAR, TOTAL STUDENT ENROLMENT INCREASED BY 24 PER CENT TO ABOUT 5,200, AND HALF THE STUDENTS WERE ON FULL-TIME COURSES.

THE YEAR ALSO SAW THE ACTIVE PREPARATION TO ADMIT THE FIRST CANDIDATES FOR THE RESEARCH DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN OCTOBER. THIS HERALDED AN ERA OF ADVANCED STUDY AND RESEARCH WORK TO WHICH THE YOUNG AND THRIVING INSTITUTION WAS COMMITTED, MR CHENG SAID.

ON CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION WORK, MR CHENG SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAIN PART OF THE CAMPUS WAS WELL ON SCHEDULE TO MEET THE TARGET DATE OF FULL OCCUPATION IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR.

MR CHENG ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO HIS TWO PREDECESSORS -- SIR S.Y. CHUNG AND DR S.L. CHEN, FOR THE PROGRESS MADE UNDER THEIR CHAIRMANSHIP.

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FIVE BILLS INTRODUCED

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FIVE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, LEGAL OFFICERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989, PHARMACY AND POISONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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POPULATION OF HK ESTIMATED AT 5.7 MILLION
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THE ESTIMATED POPULATION OF HONG KONG AT THE END OF DECEMBER 1988 WAS 5,736,100, ACCORDING TO FIGURES RELEASED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS IS AN INCREASE OF 77,300 PEOPLE OR 1.4 PER CENT OVER END-1987.

THE BALANCE OF TOTAL ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES SHOWED A NET INFLOW OF 28,800 DURING 1988.

THERE WERE 76,100 BIRTHS LAST YEAR. DEATHS TOTALLED 27,600.

NATURAL INCREASE, THAT IS THE SURPLUS OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS, AMOUNTED TO 48,500, WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR 63 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION GROWTH.

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RESIDENTS PRAISED FOR THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE
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A LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE KWAI TSING DISTRICT BOARD AND DISTRICT OFFICE WAS HELD TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT.

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN, PRESENTED CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION TO THREE LOCAL PEOPLE ALL OF WHOM HAD SERVED THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 10 YEARS.

THEY ARE MR FAN SAI-CHUNG, A PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH KWAI CHUNG SCOUT ASSOCIATION AND SPORTS ASSOCIATION; MR LEE CHUNG-FAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE OF KWAI FONG ESTATE BLOCK ONE; AND MR LAU CHEONG, A DOCKYARD OPERATOR ON TSING YI ISLAND.

SPEAKING AT THE CELEBRATION, KWAI TSING DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PAUL TANG, NOTED THAT WITH THE CONTINUOUS EXPANSION OF POPULATION AND INDUSTRIES SINCE THE 1960'S, DEVELOPMENTS IN KWAI TSING DISTRICT HAD BROUGHT TO LIGHT MANY PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT.

THE CONCERN RESIDENTS SHOWED TOWARDS THESE PROBLEMS INDICATED THEIR COMMON AIM IN DEVELOPING KWAI TSING INTO A BETTER COMMUNITY.

THE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION TODAY WAS ATTENDED BY DISTRICT BOARDS MEMBERS, STAFF OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND ABOUT 200 GUESTS.

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SAI KUNG DB TO BE CONSULTED ON FESTIVAL ARRANGEMENTS

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THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE CONSULTED ON THIS YEAR'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TIN HAU FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS IN SAI KUNG TOWN. THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRISTOPHER MUNN, SAID.

THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DMC) HAD DISCUSSED THE ISSUE AT ITS MEETING ON MONDAY (FEBRUARY 13).

MR MUNN SAID CONSULTATION WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE SITE PROPOSED BY THE FESTIVAL'S ORGANISERS, THE SAI KUNG KAIFONG ASSOCIATION, WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE TRAFFIC RE-ROUTEING WHICH MIGHT CAUSE INCONVENIENCE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

THE DISTRICT BOARD WOULD BE ASKED TO ADVISE ON THE EXTENT OF DISRUPTION WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE FROM THE COMMUNITY'S POINT OF VIEW, HE ADDED.

MR MUNN SAID THE DMC HAD CONSIDERED A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE SITES FOR PUTTING UP THE MATSHED FOR THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES TO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL, EACH OF WHICH HAD ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES.

THE ORGANISERS OF THE FESTIVAL HAD, HOWEVER, STRESSED THAT THE SITE MOST ACCEPTABLE TO THEM WOULD BE THE PLOT OF LAND IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF THE TIN HAU TEMPLE - THIS SITE WAS TRADITIONALLY USED FOR THE FESTIVAL UNTIL 1986.

MR MUNN POINTED OUT THAT USE OF THIS SITE WOULD REQUIRE THE CLOSURE OF A SECTION OF YI CHUN STREET FROM NEAR THE SAI KUNG MARKET TO WAN KING PATH.

HE SAID THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ROAD CLOSURE, SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AND THE FOLLOWING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME WAS PROPOSED AT THE MEETING ON MONDAY :

- (A) THE SECTION OF YI CHUN STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTIONS WITH MAN NIN STREET AND WAN KING PATH WOULD BECOME TWO WAY. VEHICLES WOULD TURN AROUND IN THE HAMMER HEAD OF THIS SECTION OF ROAD, WHICH WOULD ONLY BE USED FOR LOADING AND UNLOADING PURPOSES;
- (B) THE SECTION OF MAN NIN STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTIONS WITH YI CHUN STREET AND ROAD L7 WOULD BECOME TWO WAY AND THE ON-STREET PARKING SPACES ALONG THIS SECTION WOULD BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED;
- (C) THE TRAFFIC FLOW ON ROAD L7 WOULD BE REVERSED;
- (D) THE GREEN MINIBUS (GMB) STANDS FOR ROUTES 2, 3 AND 4 ON YI CHUN STREET AND ROAD L7 WOULD BE RELOCATED TO THE FUK MAN ROAD GMB TERMINUS; AND

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(E) THE TAXI STAND ON YI CHUN STREET WOULD BE RELOCATED TO AN EXISTING LAY-BY AT THE WATERFRONT SECTION OF MAN NIN STREET.

"FURTHERMORE, THE SITE WOULD HAVE TO BE OCCUPIED FOR 30 DAYS FROM MAY 11 TO JUNE 9 FOR PUTTING UP AND REMOVING THE MATSHED BEFORE AND AFTER STAGING THE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE," MR MUNN SAID.

"THE TIN HAU FESTIVAL IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE DISTRICT'S CULTURAL TRADITION AND THE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES ATTRACT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE EVERY YEAR.

"THE DMC HAS WORKED HARD TO DEVISE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS SO THAT THE ORGANISERS WOULD BE ABLE TO USE THEIR PREFERRED SITE FOR HOLDING FESTIVAL CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES.

"HOWEVER, AS THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE DISRUPTION AND WILL PROBABLY WORSEN THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN SAI KUNG TOWN ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, IT IS UP TO THE DISTRICT BOARD TO ADVISE WHETHER OR NOT THIS SORT OF DISRUPTION IS ACCEPTABLE," HE SAID.

MR MUNN SAID THE DISTRICT BOARD WOULD DISCUSS THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PART OF YI CHUN STREET AND THE PROPOSED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME AT ITS MEETING ON FEBRUARY 25 AND THAT VIEWS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS WERE WELCOME.

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NORTH DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON DB AGENDA
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THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS THE REVISED NORTH DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE PROGRAMME IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE, AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, A BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOUSING, JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

THE CHIEF TOWN PLANNER OF THE NEW TERRITORIES NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, MR RICHARD CHENG, WILL BRIEF BOARD MEMBERS ON THE PROGRAMME.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO CONSIDER PROCEDURES FOR THE NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS ON COMMITTEES APPOINTED BY THE BOARD.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE REPORTS FROM THE NORTH DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE NORTH DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS A STATEMENT ON THE BOARD'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE, JOCKEY CLUB ROAD, FANLING. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 AM.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1989

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ILLEGAL STRUCTURE AT JOHNSTON ROAD TO BE CLOSED

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS TO SEEK THE CLOSEURE OF THE ILLEGAL STRUCTURE AT THE REAR LANE OF 144-146 JOHNSTON ROAD, HONG KONG SO THAT IT CAN BE DEMOLISHED WITHOUT DANGER TO THE OCCUPANTS OR TO THE PUBLIC.

THE CLOSURE IS PART OF AN EXERCISE TO ENFORCE AN ORDER ISSUED UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR REQUIRING THE DEMOLITION OF THE ILLEGAL STRUCTURE. THE OWNER HAD FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE ORDER.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR CLOSURE ORDER FROM THE HONG KONG DISTRICT COURT ON JUNE 15 WAS POSTED ON A CONSPICUOUS PART OF THE STRUCTURE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT IS INTENDED THAT DEMOLITION WILL START ONCE THE CLOSURE ORDER IS OBTAINED.

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ROAD CLOSURES AT NIGHT

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT HOI SHING ROAD IN TSUEN WAN BETWEEN ITS EAST AND WEST JUNCTIONS WITH YUEN TUN CIRCUIT WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BETWEEN 1 AM AND 5 AM DAILY FROM SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 18) FOR TWO NIGHTS FOR FOOTBRIDGE CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

DURING THE CLOSURE, MOTORISTS HEADING FOR HOI SHING ROAD ARE ADVISED TO USE TAI CHUNG ROAD. ALSO, VEHICLES ON EASTBOUND HOI SHING ROAD WILL BE DIVERTED VIA YUEN TUN CIRCUIT, TAI PA STREET AND HEUNG WO STREET TO JOIN SHA TSUI ROAD.

MEANWHILE, THE WINSLOW STREET VEHICULAR UNDERPASS IN HUNG HOM WILL ALSO BE CLOSED BETWEEN 1 AM AND 5 AM ON SATURDAY FOR CLEANSING OF THE VEHICULAR UNDERPASS.

VEHICLES ON WINSLOW STREET HEADING FOR TO KWA WAN ARE ADVISED TO TRAVEL VIA CHATHAM ROAD NORTH, COOKE STREET, GILLIES AVENUE AND WUHU STREET.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1989

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN KWUN TONG

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 18), SEVERAL ROAD SECTIONS IN KWUN TONG WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS BECAUSE OF ROADWORKS.

THE FOLLOWING ROAD SECTIONS WILL BE MADE URBAN CLEARWAYS ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS:

- * WAI YIP STREET BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 80 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH LAI YIP STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 80 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF LAI YIP STREET BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 65 METRES NORTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH WAI YIP STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND
- * THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF LAI YIP STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH WAI YIP STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 30 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

MOREOVER, THE FOLLOWING 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAYS WILL BE EFFECTIVE FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS:

- * WAI YIP STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH TSUN YIP STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 80 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION;
- * THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSUN YIP STREET BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH WAI YIP STREET AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND
- * THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TSUN YIP STREET BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 55 METRES SOUTH OF ITS JUNCTION WITH WAI YIP STREET AND ITS JUNCTION WITH HOI BUN ROAD.

NO VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE RESTRICTED AREAS.

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