



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1992

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S FOR T ON TAXI POLICY

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN THE MOTION DEBATE ON TAXI POLICY REVIEW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY):

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

THE ADMINISTRATION, THROUGH THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING OUR TAXI POLICY. MEMBERS' VIEWS ARE THEREFORE MOST TIMELY AND WE WILL CONSIDER THEM THOROUGHLY.

ACCORDING TO THE LATEST CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT SURVEYS, OVER 60% OF TAXI TRIPS ARE USED FOR SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL PURPOSES. TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK REPRESENTS ABOUT 13% OF ALL TRIPS, AND SPECIAL URGENT TRIPS ABOUT 5%. THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION USE TAXIS ON IRREGULAR OCCASIONS ONLY. OUR CURRENT POLICY RECOGNISES TAXIS AS A PERSONAL DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE. THOUGH NOT ECONOMIC ROAD USERS, TAXIS ARE ALLOWED TO GROW IN LIMITED NUMBER BECAUSE OF THEIR ROLE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PRIVATE CARS. THIS POLICY IS REAFFIRMED IN THE 1990 WHITE PAPER ON TRANSPORT POLICY IN HONG KONG.

OUR TAXI POLICY HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY REVIEWED TO MEET CHANGING TRANSPORT, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS. THERE WERE TWO MAJOR REVIEWS, ONE IN 1983 AND ANOTHER IN 1988. THE 1983 REVIEW PRIMARILY STUDIED THE ROLE OF TAXIS. IT CONCLUDED THAT TAXIS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO WHAT THE ROADS COULD BEAR. THE 1988 REVIEW COVERED THE ROLE AND CLASSIFICATION OF TAXIS, FARE POLICY, LICENSING SYSTEMS, QUALITY OF SERVICE AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF TAXI SERVICES. THE REVIEW REAFFIRMED GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THE ROLE AND CLASSIFICATION OF TAXIS, AND RECOMMENDED A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO IMPROVE TAXI SERVICES AND THE LICENSING SYSTEM.

SINCE THE LAST REVIEW, THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE TAXI LICENCE PREMIUM. THIS PHENOMENON, COUPLED WITH CONCERN OVER TAXI MALPRACTICES, HAS PROMPTED A FRESH LOOK AT THE SUBJECT. OUR CURRENT REVIEW COVERS THREE ASPECTS OF TAXI SERVICES, NAMELY, THE LICENSING SYSTEM, FARE STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OF SERVICE. I WILL FOCUS ON THESE ASPECTS, ADDRESS MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN AND CLARIFY SOME MISCONCEPTIONS.

TAXI LICENSING SYSTEM

IT IS WIDELY PERCEIVED THAT THE LIMITED QUOTA SYSTEM IS THE CAUSE OF THE RISING PREMIUM AND THAT THIS IN TURN WILL FUEL TAXI FARE INCREASES. SOME THINK THAT THE CURRENT SYSTEM SHOULD BE IMPROVED. OTHERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT IT SHOULD BE ABANDONED ALTOGETHER.

THE ANNUAL ROADSIDE AND TAXI STAND SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SHOW THAT THE OVERALL AVAILABILITY OF URBAN/NT TAXI SERVICE REMAINED RELATIVELY STABLE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS. HOWEVER, NOTWITHSTANDING A GENERAL REDUCTION IN PASSENGER WAITING TIME AT TAXI STANDS, THE HEADWAY BETWEEN VACANT TAXIS AT SOME LOCATIONS HAS INCREASED. THIS SUGGESTS THAT MORE TAXIS MAY CONTINUE TO BE NEEDED TO MEET DEMAND.

AS TAXIS ARE UNECONOMIC ROAD USERS, THERE IS A NEED TO REGULATE THEIR SUPPLY. WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER MORE TAXIS WILL ADD TO ROAD CONGESTION AND UNDERMINE THE VIABILITY OF THE TAXI TRADE.

SOME ARE CONCERNED THAT A HIGH TAXI LICENCE PREMIUM WILL LEAD TO INCREASE IN TAXI FARES. I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT LICENCE PREMIUM IS NOT A FACTOR FOR ASSESSING TAXI FARE INCREASES. NOR IS IT EVER INCLUDED AS OPERATING COST IN THE ASSESSMENT. THIS IS BECAUSE THE LICENCE PREMIUM IS ESSENTIALLY A CAPITAL INVESTMENT. MOREOVER, NOT ALL TAXI DRIVERS ARE LICENCE HOLDERS AND THE LATTER BOUGHT THEIR LICENCES AT DIFFERENT PRICES. SOME EXPECT THAT AS LICENCE PREMIUM GOES UP, THERE WOULD BE GREATER PRESSURE TO DEMAND HIGHER RENTAL WHICH WOULD IN TURN TRANSLATE INTO PRESSURE FOR HIGH FARES. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, NO DATA TO PROVE ANY DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN A RISE IN PREMIUM AND AN INCREASE IN TAXI RENTAL.

SOME THINK THAT TAXI SERVICES HAVE BECOME INADEQUATE BECAUSE A LARGE NUMBER OF LICENCES ARE KEPT BY TAXI TRADING COMPANIES PURELY FOR SPECULATION. THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. A FEW TAXI TRADING COMPANIES HAVE RECENTLY SUCCEEDED IN BIDDING FOR MANY NEWLY-ISSUED LICENCES. BUT THERE IS LITTLE ROOM FOR WITHHOLDING OF LICENCES. THIS IS BECAUSE SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS ARE OBLIGED TO APPLY FOR REGISTRATION OF THE NUMBER OF TAXIS ALLOCATED WITHIN SIX MONTHS. THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT STATISTICS SHOW THAT 90% OF THE TAXI LICENCES ARE OWNED BY INDIVIDUALS.

SOME HAVE CRITICIZED THE ROLES PLAYED BY TAXI TRADING COMPANIES IN THE TAXI LICENCE MARKET. THE 1988 REVIEW REVEALED THAT MANY PROSPECTIVE TAXI OWNERS PREFERRED TO DEAL WITH THESE COMPANIES INSTEAD OF BIDDING IN THE TENDER EXERCISE. THE COMPANIES SERVED AS MIDDLEMEN TO PROVIDE A PACKAGE OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ACTING AS GUARANTORS IN ARRANGING LOANS WITH FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. WE WILL EXAMINE THE ROLES OF THESE COMPANIES AGAIN AND CONSIDER MEASURES TO PREVENT ANY MANIPULATION OF THE LICENCE MARKET TO THE DETRIMENT OF GENUINE TAXI OPERATORS.

WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PREMIUM LEVEL HAS RECENTLY RISEN SHARPLY BEYOND THE PROFITABILITY OF THE TAXI TRADE. THERE IS REASON TO SUSPECT THAT TAXI LICENCES HAVE BECOME A PROFITEERING COMMODITY TO SOME SPECULATORS WHO ARE NOT END-USERS. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE WITH INVESTMENT IN A FREE MARKET, WE SHOULD PREVENT MANIPULATIVE SPECULATION WHICH UNDERMINES THE HEALTH OF THE TAXI TRADE. THIS PROBLEM IS BEING CRITICALLY EXAMINED IN OUR CURRENT REVIEW.

SOME CONSIDER THE FREE TRANSFER OF TAXI LICENCES AS CONDUCTIVE TO SPECULATION. IT HAS BEEN PROPOSED THAT ALL LICENCES SHOULD IN FUTURE BE SUBJECT TO TRANSFER RESTRICTIONS. PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD INCLUDE SETTING A NON-TRANSFERABLE PERIOD, IMPOSING STAMP DUTY AND REQUIRING LEGAL EXECUTION ON TRANSFER. THESE PROPOSALS WILL BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN OUR REVIEW.

OTHERS HAVE PROPOSED A "TAXI OWNERSHIP SCHEME" WHEREBY TAXI-DRIVERS WOULD BE ABLE TO ACQUIRE LICENCES AT A FIXED DISCOUNT PRICE. THE 1988 REVIEW CONCLUDED THAT THE PROPOSAL TO ISSUE FIXED PREMIUM LICENCES WOULD AMOUNT TO SUBSIDIZING TAXI OPERATION. THIS RUNS COUNTER TO OUR ESTABLISHED POLICY THAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SHOULD BE SELF-FINANCING. THERE IS ALSO NO REASON FOR GOVERNMENT TO SUBSIDISE THE TAXI TRADE OUT OF ALL TRADES IN THE ECONOMY.

QUALITY OF TAXI SERVICE

MOVING TO THE QUALITY OF TAXI SERVICE, VARIOUS MEASURES HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN RECENT YEARS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF MALPRACTICES. THESE INCLUDE INCREASING THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR TAXI OFFENCES FROM \$3,000 TO \$5,000 AND REGULATING THE DISPLAY OF FARE TABLES INSIDE TAXIS. IN ADDITION, THE TAXI DRIVING LICENCE WRITTEN TEST HAD BEEN MADE MORE STRINGENT. A GUIDE ON TAXI SERVICE WAS PUBLISHED IN 1989 TO HELP DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

TAXI MALPRACTICES, IN PARTICULAR, TAXIMETER TAMPERING, ARE A CONTINUING CAUSE OF CONCERN. THE SEALING OF TAXIMETERS WILL BE IMPROVED TO MAKE BREAKING MORE DIFFICULT AND COUNTERFEITING MORE READILY DETECTABLE. BESIDES, ALL TAXIS WILL BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL SHEATHED AND VISIBLE METER CABLES TO DETER INTERFERENCE AND TO FACILITATE INSPECTION. THESE MEASURES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF ANNUAL VEHICLE EXAMINATIONS LATER THIS YEAR. ALL TAXIS WILL HAVE TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENT IN A YEAR'S TIME. THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HELP PREVENT TAXIMETER TAMPERING.

WE ARE ALSO ACTIVELY PURSUING THE COMPULSORY DISPLAY OF TAXI DRIVER IDENTITY PLATES. THE SCHEME IS EXPECTED TO ENCOURAGE TAXI DRIVERS TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO SELF-DISCIPLINE. IT WILL ALSO FACILITATE THE EASY IDENTIFICATION OF TAXI DRIVERS BY PASSENGERS WHEN LODGING COMPLAINTS. WE INTEND TO INTRODUCE THE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS IN THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN LATE 1992.

WE AGREE THAT MORE PUBLIC EDUCATION IS LIKEWISE NECESSARY FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TAXI SERVICES. THE SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED ON THIS WILL ALSO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN OUR REVIEW.

FARE POLICY

TURNING TO TAXI FARE POLICY, OUR TAXI FARES, ON AVERAGE \$4.5 PER KILOMETER FOR URBAN TAXIS, COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH MANY OTHER MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CITIES. HOWEVER, A BALANCE MUST BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE USE OF TAXIS AND MASS CARRIERS IN OUR CROWDED CITY. AS TAXI DEMAND IS GENERALLY PRICE ELASTIC, THE 1988 REVIEW RECOMMENDED A DIFFERENTIAL WITH FARES OF MASS CARRIERS TO REGULATE TAXI DEMAND. THIS POLICY WAS REAFFIRMED IN THE 1990 WHITE PAPER ON TRANSPORT POLICY. WE SUBSEQUENTLY AIM AT MAINTAINING A DIFFERENTIAL, ON A PER PASSENGER BASIS, OF 5 TO 7 TIMES FOR URBAN TAXIS AND 3 TO 4 TIMES FOR NT TAXIS. THIS HAS HELPED TO MAINTAIN THE ROLE OF TAXIS AS A FORM OF PERSONALIZED TRANSPORT.

SOME ARE HOWEVER CONCERNED THAT THIS FARE DIFFERENTIAL WILL ADD TO INFLATION. WE MUST REALISE THAT SPENDING ON TAXI SERVICES REPRESENTS ONLY 0.8% OF THE AVERAGE EXPENDITURE OF HOUSEHOLDS COVERED BY THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A). THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT SUCH FARE DIFFERENTIAL PUTS PRESSURE ON INFLATION.

SOME HAVE PROPOSED TO CHANGE THE METER CHARGE STRUCTURE TO REGULATE THE USE OF TAXIS FOR SHORT JOURNEYS AND TO REDUCE REFUSALS OF HIRE. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CONSENSUS ON THE PART OF THE TAXI TRADE OR THE PUBLIC ON THESE PROPOSALS. THE PROS AND CONS WILL BE CRITICALLY EXAMINED IN OUR REVIEW.

ANY APPLICATION FOR TAXI FARE INCREASES IS OF COURSE ALWAYS CAREFULLY ASSESSED ON GROUNDS OF COSTS, VIABILITY OF THE TRADE, ADEQUACY OF TAXI SERVICES AND PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY. THE TAXI ASSOCIATIONS AND TAC ARE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY DECISION IS TAKEN. THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT THE FARE NOT ONLY REFLECTS OUR TAXI POLICY, BUT ALSO THE INTERESTS OF OPERATORS, DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS.

AMALGAMATION OF URBAN AND NT TAXIS

WITH THE CONTINUED URBANISATION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES, THERE HAVE BEEN REQUESTS FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF URBAN AND NT TAXIS. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS YET NO PLANS TO CHANGE THE EXISTING CLASSIFICATION OF TAXIS. THERE ARE STILL RESIDENTS LIVING IN REMOTE AREAS NOT WELL SERVED BY OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT. TO REMOVE THE CURRENT DEMARCATION MAY RESULT IN NT TAXIS OPERATING ONLY IN THE URBAN AREAS. THIS WILL DEPRIVE THE NT RESIDENTS OF THE NEEDED TRANSPORT SERVICE.

HOWEVER, WE WILL COMMISSION A GENERAL CONSULTANCY STUDY LATER THIS YEAR TO EXAMINE THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS ARISING FROM THE NEW AIRPORT. THE FUTURE ROLE AND CLASSIFICATION OF TAXIS WILL, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, BE PART OF THIS REVIEW.

THE WORKING GROUP ON TAXI POLICY REVIEW WILL FORWARD ITS FINDINGS TO THE TAC THIS SUMMER. THE PUBLIC VIEWS RECEIVED SO FAR ARE RATHER DIVERGENT AND SOMETIMES REPRESENT COMPETING OR CONFLICTING INTERESTS. ALL VIEWS WILL BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT. THE PUBLIC WILL BE CONSULTED AGAIN BEFORE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE FINALIZED. THANK YOU.

STI ON INDUSTRIAL POLICIES

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T.H. CHAU, IN A MOTION DEBATE ON INDUSTRIAL POLICIES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY):

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUOUSLY REVIEWS ITS POLICIES AND SERVICES FOR INDUSTRY TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EFFECTIVE IN ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS AND DEVELOPMENT. DURING A TIME OF RAPID STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY, IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THIS PROCESS OF REVIEW IS RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY AND TO THE ECONOMY GENERALLY.

RESTRUCTURING AND ITS EFFECTS ON INDUSTRY

THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ECONOMY OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS OR SO - ESPECIALLY IN SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES - HAVE BEEN DRAMATIC. MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES' SHARE OF TOTAL GDP DECLINED FROM 21.9% IN 1985 TO 16.7% IN 1990. THE MANUFACTURING LABOUR FORCE HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM 849,000 TO 655,000 BETWEEN 1985 AND 1991. SINCE THE OPENING OF CHINA IN 1979, HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIALISTS HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE USE OF LOWER LABOUR AND LAND COSTS IN SOUTHERN CHINA FOR THE MANUFACTURING - ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE - OF GOODS THAT USED TO BE PRODUCED IN HONG KONG AND FOR THE OUTWARD PROCESSING OF GOODS WHICH ARE ULTIMATELY FINISHED IN HONG KONG.

A NUMBER OF MEMBERS HAVE PRESENTED THESE CHANGES IN SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE TERMS. BUT IN REALITY, THE EVIDENCE INDICATES CLEARLY THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE MAKING POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMY GENERALLY AND TO ITS MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN PARTICULAR. THE REDUCTION IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES' SHARE IN HONG KONG'S GDP IS BALANCED BY RAPID ADVANCES IN OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, SUCH AS TRADING, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND ONE OF THE MAIN IMPETUS FOR THE ADVANCES IN OTHER SECTORS IS THE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR MUCH ENLARGED PRODUCTION BASE IN SOUTHERN CHINA. IN REAL TERMS, INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT IN HONG KONG INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY AT AN AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF ABOUT 9% IN ALMOST THE WHOLE OF THE 1980'S AND HAS REMAINED STABLE ONLY SINCE 1989. THIS MEANS THAT, IN SPITE OF THE CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF OUR ECONOMY, HONG KONG STILL HAS A SUBSTANTIAL MANUFACTURING SECTOR WHICH IS TODAY PRODUCING, IN REAL TERMS, 80% MORE THAN IT DID 10 YEARS AGO.

SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH THE MANUFACTURING LABOUR FORCE HAS DECLINED IN NUMBERS, PRODUCTIVITY PER PERSON ENGAGED - LARGELY THE RESULT OF GREATER AUTOMATION, MORE EFFICIENT PRODUCTION PROCESSES, AND A CONCENTRATION ON HIGHER-VALUE PRODUCTS - HAS GROWN AT AN IMPRESSIVE RATE : IN QUANTITATIVE TERMS, PRODUCTIVITY PER PERSON HAS INCREASED BY AN AVERAGE 10.5% PER ANNUM BETWEEN 1986 AND 1991. THIS FIGURE COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH THE EQUIVALENT RATES FOR DEVELOPED INDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES AND FOR NEWLY-INDUSTRIALISED ECONOMIES IN THE REGION.

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THIRDLY, THE MOVEMENT OF INDUSTRIES TO SOUTHERN CHINA HAS OFTEN BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN 'EXODUS'. BUT IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO VIEW IT AS AN EXPANSION OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL BASE. THE CONTINUED RELIANCE OF MANY OF SOUTHERN CHINA'S INDUSTRIES ON HONG KONG FOR INVESTMENT, MANAGEMENT, LINKAGE MATERIALS, FINISHING, AND RE-EXPORTING DEMONSTRATES THIS. THE RESTRUCTURING OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL BASE IN THIS WAY HAS RELEASED LABOUR IN HONG KONG FOR OTHER EXPANDING SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY AND HAS ENABLED THE INDUSTRIES THAT REMAIN IN HONG KONG TO CONCENTRATE ON HIGHER-VALUE, HIGHER-QUALITY PRODUCTS.

FOURTHLY, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THESE STRUCTURAL CHANGES HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO DIMINISH HONG KONG'S PRICE COMPETITIVENESS IN WORLD MARKETS. THIS HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BOTH BY IMPROVEMENTS IN PRODUCTIVITY AND BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUTWARD PROCESSING ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE BORDER. THUS HONG KONG PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR COMPETITIVENESS IN WORLD MARKETS.

THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY

THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT ITS POLICIES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS. THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THESE POLICIES HAVE BEEN THOSE THAT HAVE UNDERPINNED OUR FREE MARKET ECONOMY : MINIMUM INTERVENTION, BUT MAXIMUM SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT ATTEMPTS TO FRUSTRATE OR OTHERWISE INTERFERE WITH THE OPERATION OF MARKET FORCES WILL TEND TO DAMAGE THE HEALTHY GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY. UNDER THIS PHILOSOPHY, INDUSTRIES - OR INDEED ANY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY - NOT KEEPING PACE WITH THEIR COMPETITORS DECLINE; THOSE MAINTAINING A COMPETITIVE EDGE REAP THE FULL BENEFITS OF THEIR SUCCESS. THIS BOTH ENSURES AN EFFICIENT ALLOCATION OF LIMITED RESOURCES WITHIN THE ECONOMY AND ENABLES INDUSTRIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR RETURNS.

MINIMUM INTERVENTION MEANS THAT WE LET BUSINESSMEN, NOT CIVIL SERVANTS, MAKE BUSINESS DECISIONS; THAT WE DO NOT PROTECT OR SUBSIDISE INDUSTRIES WHICH ARE UNABLE TO SURVIVE THROUGH FREE COMPETITION; AND THAT WE DO NOT PROVIDE DISCRIMINATORY INCENTIVES, SUCH AS TAX BREAKS. GIVEN HONG KONG'S SIMPLE TAX SYSTEM AND LOW TAX RATES, TAX CONCESSIONS OR TAX HOLIDAYS WOULD, IN ANY CASE, BE UNLIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE IN ENCOURAGING OVERSEAS MANUFACTURERS TO ESTABLISH THEMSELVES HERE. MOREOVER, EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT INVESTORS PREFER A SIMPLE, STABLE LOW TAX STRUCTURE TO SHORT-TERM INCENTIVES.

MAXIMUM SUPPORT MEANS THAT WE SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST POSSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE IS AVAILABLE TO ENABLE INDUSTRIES TO SURVIVE; THAT WE IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS TO GROWTH AND SUGGEST WAYS OF BUILDING ON STRENGTHS AND OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES; AND THAT WE PROVIDE THE SERVICES NEEDED TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PRODUCT INNOVATION.

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ALL THESE ELEMENTS OF SUPPORT RELY FOR THEIR EFFECTIVENESS ON A CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF REVIEW. IN THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT CRITICALLY EXAMINES THE POLICIES AND SERVICES IN OTHER PROGRAMME AREAS - SUCH AS EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC SERVICES - TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY. THROUGH ITS REGULAR TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES ON EACH OF THE FOUR MAJOR MANUFACTURING SECTORS, THE DEPARTMENT COMMISSIONS OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS TO REPORT IN DETAIL ON THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY, HOW IT HAS CHANGED, AND WHAT ACTIONS ARE NEEDED TO HELP IT DEVELOP FURTHER. DIRECT SERVICES TO INDUSTRY - FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT'S STANDARDS AND CALIBRATION LABORATORY OR THROUGH SUCH ORGANISATIONS AS THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL - ARE CONTINUOUSLY REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THE CAPABILITY AND EXPERTISE TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF MANUFACTURERS.

THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY HAS SEVEN CONSULTANCY STUDIES EITHER IN PROGRESS OR DUE TO BEGIN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR. THEY INCLUDE THREE TECHNO-ECONOMIC STUDIES, A STUDY TO EXAMINE THE IMPACT ON INDUSTRIES OF THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE WHITE PAPER ON THE ENVIRONMENT, A STUDY ON WHETHER A SCIENCE PARK SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN HONG KONG, AND STUDIES ON INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION AND INDUSTRIAL DATABASES.

SUCH REVIEWS AND CONSULTANCIES ARE NOT EMPTY, THEORETICAL EXERCISES. THEY HAVE IN RECENT YEARS LED TO A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT INITIATIVES. FOR EXAMPLE:

- THE INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, DUE FOR COMPLETION IN 1994 BUT ALREADY PROVIDING SOME SERVICES, WILL PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES FOR SMALL HIGH TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSES IN HONG KONG.
- THE APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, TO BEGIN LATER THIS YEAR, WILL PROVIDE \$200 MILLION OF GOVERNMENT MONEY FOR INVESTING IN R & D BY INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG.
- A THIRD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE IS BEING DEVELOPED IN TSEUNG KWAN O, AND WILL BE READY IN 1993. THIS WILL ADD TO THE LAND ALREADY AVAILABLE AT THE TAI PO AND YUEN LONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES FOR THE DIVERSIFICATION AND UPGRADING OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIES.

THESE INITIATIVES ARE COMPLIMENTED BY ACTIONS IN OTHER POLICY AREAS, SUCH AS THE CREATION OF THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, THE NEW TECHNOLOGY TRAINING SCHEME, AND THE INCREASING PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR ACADEMIC R & D WHICH HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLE OVER THE LAST TWO ACADEMIC YEARS. ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING THE TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1992

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HONG KONG HAS BENEFITTED FROM THE IMPORT OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE PAST, AND IS BOUND TO CONTINUE TO RELY ON THE ADAPTATION OF OVERSEAS TECHNOLOGIES IN THE FUTURE. THROUGH THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT'S INWARD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME, THE GOVERNMENT STRIVES TO ATTRACT OVERSEAS INVESTORS WHO CAN BRING IN USEFUL TECHNOLOGIES. THE PROGRAMME TAKES A PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TO SELECTED COMPANIES IN A RANGE OF TARGETTED INDUSTRIES. THE TARGETS ARE IDENTIFIED AND REVIEWED REGULARLY HAVING REGARD TO THE FINDINGS OF HONG KONG'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE TECHNO-ECONOMIC REPORTS AND THE ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT OFFICERS ON THE GROUND. THE CONTINUED FLOW OF OVERSEAS INVESTMENTS INTO HONG KONG SUGGESTS BOTH THAT THE PROGRAMME IS ACHIEVING SOME SUCCESS AND THAT HONG KONG CONTINUES TO HAVE MUCH TO OFFER TO NEW AND DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS FROM OVERSEAS. IN AN AGE IN WHICH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES ARE RAPID AND COMPLEX, AND IN A WORLD WHERE COMPETITIVENESS DEPENDS INCREASINGLY ON TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW, THE GOVERNMENT HAS A DEFINITE ROLE TO PLAY IN PROVIDING SUPPORT TO HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY IN RESPONDING TO TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AROUND THE WORLD.

TO UNDERLINE THE VITAL CONNECTION BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED THIS YEAR A NEW INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, WHICH HAS REPLACED THE OLD INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD AND THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. WITH ITS EXPANDED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND A MORE FOCUSED AND CO-ORDINATED APPROACH, THIS NEW COUNCIL WILL BE BETTER PLACED TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY IN HONG KONG. THE COUNCIL, TOGETHER WITH THE COMMITTEE ON THE APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UNDER IT WILL HELP THE GOVERNMENT TO ADMINISTER THE NEW APPLIED R & D SCHEME. FURTHERMORE, UNDER THE COUNCIL, WE WILL SET UP A TECHNOLOGY REVIEW BOARD, WHOSE MEMBERSHIP WILL INCLUDE DISTINGUISHED SCIENTISTS FROM OVERSEAS AS WELL AS FROM HONG KONG AND WHICH WILL PROVIDE ADVICE ON BROAD STRATEGIES IN TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT HAVING REGARD TO GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY TRENDS AND HONG KONG'S CIRCUMSTANCES. THE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WILL, OVER THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR, BE EXAMINING ITS OWN ROLE AND WORK METHODS TO ENSURE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS. SOME MEMBERS HAVE RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE ITDC SHOULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO A BODY ALONG THE LINE OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD IN SINGAPORE. THIS QUESTION WAS CONSIDERED BY THE FORMER INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD WHICH CONCLUDED THAT HAVING REGARD TO HONG KONG CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE INVESTMENT PROMOTION ACTIVITIES ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT, SUCH A CHANGE WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE.

/CCCLUSION

CONCLUSION

THE GOVERNMENT SHARES THE VIEWS EXPRESSED TODAY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG INDUSTRIAL BASE IN HONG KONG: IT CREATES WEALTH THROUGH EXPORTS; IT PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT FOR MORE THAN 23% OF OUR WORKING POPULATION; IT CONTRIBUTES TO THE DIVERSIFICATION OF OUR ECONOMY, ALLOWING FOR FLEXIBILITY AND ADJUSTMENT; IT IS AN IMPORTANT USER OF SERVICES IN OTHER SECTORS; AND, IN PROVIDING A STIMULUS TO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ECONOMIES WITHIN THE REGION, IT CREATES NEW USERS OF HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL AND EXPORT SERVICES. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT, IN AN INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, THE VARIOUS MAJOR SECTORS ARE IN FACT FUNCTIONING IN A HIGHLY COMPLEMENTARY MANNER. OUR AIM FOR THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE SUPPORT AND SERVICES THEY NEED TO FLOURISH.

I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SHOW THAT, WITHIN THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF MINIMUM INTERVENTION AND MAXIMUM SUPPORT, OUR INDUSTRIAL POLICIES HAVE BEEN - AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE - SUBJECTED TO A VIGOROUS PROCESS OF CRITICAL REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT, RESULTING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT NEW INITIATIVES AND THE GREATER FOCUSING ON LINKING TECHNOLOGY WITH INDUSTRY. THESE INITIATIVES ARE THE RESULTS OF BOTH CAREFUL RESEARCH AND OF LISTENING TO THE ADVICE AND REQUESTS OF INDUSTRIALISTS. THE SUCCESS OF THESE POLICIES IS EVIDENT FROM THE LARGE INCREASES IN PRODUCTIVITY PER PERSON, THE CONTINUED COMPETITIVENESS OF HONG KONG'S PRODUCTS IN OVERSEAS MARKETS, AND THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTION METHODS IN THE REGION. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF ALTERING THE PRINCIPLE OF ALLOWING FREE PLAY TO MARKET FORCES, ON WHICH OUR POLICIES ARE BASED : THAT PRINCIPLE HAS WORKED WELL, AND HAS ALLOWED HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIES THE SCOPE, FLEXIBILITY AND IMAGINATION THEY NEED TO FLOURISH IN AN EXPORT-LED ECONOMY.

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, THIS DEBATE HAS PROVIDED A VERY TIMELY AND WELCOME FOCUS OF ATTENTION ON AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY. LET ME ASSURE MEMBERS FIRST THAT THE MANY AND VARIED VIEWS EXPRESSED TODAY WILL BE BORNE IN MIND IN OUR CONTINUING REVIEW OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND SECONDLY, THAT THE GOVERNMENT FULLY ACCEPTS THE THRUST OF TODAY'S DEBATE WHICH IS THAT WHATEVER OUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS, WE CANNOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE COMPLACENT. IT IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE HELP OF THE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, SHOULD CONTINUE TO REVIEW THE ADEQUACY AND NATURE OF ITS INDUSTRIAL POLICIES AND SERVICES IF HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES - AND INDEED ITS ECONOMY GENERALLY - ARE TO REMAIN HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE, AND COMPETITIVE.

SPEL ON LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY):

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

THE ADMINISTRATION IS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO BALANCE THE WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF URBAN RENEWAL WITH THE INTERESTS OF THOSE WHOSE PROPERTIES, BUSINESSES AND HOMES ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY IT. THIS CONCERN GUIDED OUR APPROACH IN CREATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND DEVISING THE INTRICATE STATUTORY PROCESSES WHICH GOVERN ITS OPERATIONS. SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN STRIKING THIS BALANCE HAVE BEEN TOUCHED UPON BY MEMBERS TODAY.

URBAN RENEWAL IS NOT NEW TO HONG KONG. INDEED IT IS AN ACTIVITY WHICH HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR MANY YEARS LARGELY THROUGH THE OPERATION OF MARKET FORCES AND THE INITIATIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR. AN EXTENSIVE PILOT SCHEME CARRIED OUT ON HONG KONG ISLAND IN THE 1960'S AND 70'S SHOWED US HOW SLOW AND CUMBERSOME THE PROCESS BECOMES WHEN CONDUCTED THROUGH A FORMAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME COMPETING WITH OTHER PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC FUNDS. APART FROM THE RELATIVELY LIMITED SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN BY THE HOUSING SOCIETY, NOTHING FURTHER WAS ATTEMPTED ON A FORMAL BASIS UNTIL, AFTER LENGTHY STUDIES AND CAREFUL PREPARATION OVER A PERIOD OF EIGHT YEARS, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WAS CREATED IN 1988.

URBAN DECAY IS NOT UNIQUE TO HONG KONG. IT AFFECTS MATURE CITIES EVERYWHERE AND IS BROUGHT ON BY A COMBINATION OF FACTORS: OVER-RAPID DEVELOPMENT TO OFTEN INADEQUATE STANDARDS IN TERMS OF PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION; RAPID AND UNCONTROLLED POPULATION INCREASE AND MOVEMENT; FRAGMENTED AND UNCO-ORDINATED PROPERTY OWNERSHIP; AND UNATTRACTIVE REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS. DECAY IS ALSO SELF-PERPETUATING AND BRINGS ABOUT INTRACTABLE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS IN CITIES.

HONG KONG, LIKE MANY OTHER PLACES THEREFORE, HAVING WRESTLED WITH THESE DIFFICULTIES, DECIDED TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THEM, CHOOSING THE URBAN RENEWAL MECHANISM OF WHICH THE LDC IS AN IMPORTANT PART AS THE MEANS. AND, ALTHOUGH THE SOLUTION ITSELF HAS NOT PROVED TROUBLE FREE, WE MUST PRESS ON, IMPROVING BY APPLYING THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE AS WE PROCEED. THE ALTERNATIVE IS INACTION AND CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN CONDITIONS IN SOME OF OUR OLDER URBAN AREAS WITH NO PROSPECT OF REGENERATION.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LDC WAS INTENDED TO DEAL WITH OTHERWISE INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS OF LAND ASSEMBLY, WHERE OWNERSHIP IS FRAGMENTED AND ACTS AS A DEAD-HAND ON TIMELY REDEVELOPMENT; AND OF RELOCATING RESIDENTS, WHO WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IF LEFT TO FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS. THE AIM WAS TO PROVIDE AN AGENCY ABLE TO FUND AND IMPLEMENT REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ON A LARGER SCALE THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY POSSIBLE. IT ALSO PROVIDED A FOCAL POINT WHERE DIFFERENT INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES IN THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES COULD BE COORDINATED.

THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ORDINANCE DEFINES THE PURPOSES OF THE CORPORATION, AS WELL AS ITS POWERS AND OBLIGATIONS, IN DETAIL. THE BROAD GOAL IS TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE OLDER PARTS OF HONG KONG BY - AND HERE I QUOTE FROM SECTION 4(A) OF THE ORDINANCE - "UNDERTAKING, ENCOURAGING, PROMOTING AND FACILITATING URBAN RENEWAL". IN OTHER WORDS, THE LDC IS NOT SUPPOSED TO GO IT ALONE, BUT TO EXPLORE WAYS OF MAKING THINGS HAPPEN IN THE MARKET PLACE. THUS, FOR ITS OWN PROJECTS, IT IS EXPECTED TO ACQUIRE LAND AND BUILDINGS BY PRIVATE NEGOTIATION AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. ITS PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL INITIALLY BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS AND SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD. WHERE PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS FAIL, THE LDC MAY APPLY TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE RESUMPTION OF PROPERTY. HOWEVER, SECTION 16 OF THE ORDINANCE SPECIFICALLY REQUIRES THAT A RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR RESUMPTION WILL ONLY BE MADE ON THE FULFILMENT OF A NUMBER OF CONDITIONS, NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS THAT THE "THE CORPORATION HAS TAKEN ALL REASONABLE STEPS TO OTHERWISE ACQUIRE THE LAND INCLUDING NEGOTIATING FOR THE PURCHASE THEREOF ON TERMS THAT ARE FAIR AND REASONABLE". IN ADDITION, SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REHOUSING OF RESIDENTS WHO WILL BE DISPLACED MUST BE MADE.

TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF THE LDC BECOMING DEPENDENT ON PUBLIC FUNDS, THE ORDINANCE REQUIRES THAT ITS BUSINESS BE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO PRUDENT COMMERCIAL PRINCIPLES. SO, WHILE THE ORDINANCE SETS THE PARAMETERS WITHIN WHICH THE LDC MUST OPERATE, IT ALSO ALLOWS WIDE FLEXIBILITY FOR THE CORPORATION TO RUN ITS DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES ON ITS OWN AND TO HARNESS THE AMPLE RESOURCES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR THROUGH JOINT VENTURES AND THE LIKE. OBVIOUSLY, WHILE THE LDC WILL PLOUGH ANY PROFITS BACK INTO FURTHER URBAN RENEWAL, ITS PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS REQUIRE SOME INCENTIVE FOR THEIR CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT. THIS SORT OF PARTNERSHIP CAN WORK IN HONG KONG IN A WAY WHICH CANNOT HAPPEN IN OTHER PLACES.

IN ITS FIRST FOUR YEARS THE LDC HAS SOUGHT TO IMPLEMENT SEVERAL COMPREHENSIVE SCHEMES TO BRING ABOUT OVERALL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NEIGHBOURHOODS AFFECTED. THESE SCHEMES HAVE BEEN BASED ON A SERIES OF DETAILED STUDIES ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT STUDIES, WHICH EXAMINED NOT ONLY THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE BUILDINGS CONCERNED BUT THE ADEQUACY OF INFRASTRUCTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND THE SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AS WELL. THE AIM IS TO ENSURE THAT REDEVELOPMENT WILL ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY BY IMPROVING THE FACILITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE AREA.

AS I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED, LDC PROJECTS ARE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SCRUTINY BY BOTH THE ADMINISTRATION AND THEN THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD. THE STATUTORY PROCEDURES REQUIRE PROPOSED SCHEMES TO BE PUBLICISED. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY DISTRICT BOARDS ARE REPORTED TO THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD WHEN OBJECTIONS TO THE LDC'S PROPOSED SCHEME PLANS ARE CONSIDERED. ANY UNWITHDRAWN OBJECTIONS, TOGETHER WITH THE VIEWS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE NORMAL WAY. THE LDC IS CURRENTLY PUTTING IN HAND EIGHT COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES. THESE INCLUDE THE WING LOK STREET, THE JUBILEE STREET AND THE LI CHIT STREET SCHEMES.

I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT RESUMPTION WILL ALWAYS BE A LAST RESORT IN IMPLEMENTING LDC SCHEMES. THE LDC MUST ATTEMPT TO ACQUIRE PROPERTIES BY NEGOTIATION WITH THE OWNERS THROUGH THE OFFER OF FAIR AND REASONABLE COMPENSATION ASSESSED BY INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS. OWNERS OF DOMESTIC PREMISES ARE OFFERED AN ADDITIONAL EX-GRATIA AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO ENABLE THEM TO PURCHASE A REPLACEMENT FLAT OF SIMILAR SIZE IN THE LOCALITY. PROPERTY OWNERS WHO ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH LDC'S OFFERS AND WHOSE INTERESTS ARE RESUMED HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFER THE VALUATION OF ASSESSMENTS MADE UPON RESUMPTION TO THE LAND TRIBUNAL FOR A DETERMINATION.

AS REGARDS REHOUSING FOR THOSE AFFECTED, THE LDC HAS A POLICY OF PROVIDING FLAT-FOR-FLAT EXCHANGES FOR OWNER-OCCUPIED DOMESTIC PREMISES. RENTAL REHOUSING IN PROPERTIES ALREADY OWNED BY THE LDC CAN BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE DOMESTIC TENANTS AT CONCESSIONARY RENTALS. PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO LOWER INCOME EARNERS WHO HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION. WHERE CASH COMPENSATION IS OFFERED, THE AMOUNT USUALLY EXCEEDS THAT STATUTORILY PAYABLE UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE. THE LDC ALSO TRIES TO ACCOMMODATE SINGLETONS AND DOUBLETONS, PARTICULARLY THE ELDERLY. FINALLY, ALL ELIGIBLE DOMESTIC OWNERS AND TENANTS ARE GIVEN AN OPTION TO PURCHASE NEW FLATS FROM THE LDC AT A CONCESSIONARY PRICE.

WITH THE FIRST BATCH OF LDC PROJECTS NOW WELL UNDER WAY, IT IS AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO TAKE STOCK IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXPECTATIONS. MEMBERS HAVE REFERRED TO THE NEED TO ALLOW OWNERS' PARTICIPATION IN REDEVELOPMENT, FOR EXAMPLE. THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE LDC'S INITIAL PROJECTS BECAUSE OF THE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS ENTERED INTO WITH JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS WHICH WERE AIMED AT MAKING IT A FINANCIALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT ORGANISATION FROM THE OUTSET. OTHERWISE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE LITTLE OR NOTHING. HOWEVER, THE POSITION WILL BE RE-EXAMINED IN RELATION TO FUTURE PROJECTS. ISSUES SUCH AS WHETHER OWNERS ARE PREPARED TO FOREGO COMPENSATION, BEAR DEVELOPMENT RISKS, PROVIDE REHOUSING FOR THEIR TENANTS, AND HELP FUND PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE COST OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES, WILL NEED TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. THERE MAY ALSO BE A NEED TO STREAMLINE COMPENSATION PROCEDURES SO THAT OFFERS CAN BE ASSESSED AND MADE MORE PROMPTLY, PARTICULARLY IN A QUICKLY MOVING PROPERTY MARKET.

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WAS CONCEIVED AND PUT IN PLACE AFTER LONG AND CAREFUL DELIBERATION TO TACKLE THE PROBLEMS OF LAND ASSEMBLY AND RELOCATING RESIDENTS WHICH ARE AN INESCAPABLE PART OF THE URBAN RENEWAL PROCESS. TO DO ITS JOB THE CORPORATION REQUIRES EXPERTISE IN THE PLANNING, PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL, SOCIAL AND OTHER-RELATED FIELDS, BOTH AMONG ITS PERMANENT STAFF AND ON ITS MANAGING BOARD. THE PRESENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION, WHICH IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO MEET REQUIREMENTS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN SECTION 7 OF THE ORDINANCE, PROVIDES THE NECESSARY RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE. THE LAWS AND PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH THE CORPORATION OPERATES PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE MIXTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY.

LDC'S TASK IS A DIFFICULT ONE BUT ITS SUCCESS WILL BRING TREMENDOUS BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY. THE ADMINISTRATION IS SATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LDC SO FAR AND IS CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO DISCHARGE ITS FUNCTIONS CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND WITH INTEGRITY. NEVERTHELESS, THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO REVIEW ITS OWN AND THE LDC'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE URBAN RENEWAL FIELD SO FAR, TO SEE WHETHER THERE ARE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED. THE VIEWS MEMBERS HAVE PUT FORWARD TODAY WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THIS PROCESS. IN THE MEANTIME, I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE CORPORATION TO MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

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POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL INTRODUCED

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT THE POLICE FORCE ORDINANCE WILL BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE AND THE LETTERS PATENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 SPECIFIES CLEARLY THE SITUATIONS IN WHICH POLICE POWERS TO STOP, SEARCH, DETAIN AND ARREST CAN BE EXERCISED IN ORDER TO REMOVE UNCERTAINTY AND TO AVOID THE POSSIBLE ARBITRARY EXERCISE OF POWERS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT NOT TO BE SUBJECTED TO ARBITRARY ARREST OR DETENTION, OR UNLAWFUL INTERFERENCE WITH HIS PRIVACY, WERE PROTECTED.

THE BILL PROVIDES THAT THE POWER TO ARREST A PERSON REASONABLY SUSPECTED OF BEING GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE WILL EXIST IF THE OFFENCE IS ONE FOR WHICH THE SENTENCE IS FIXED BY LAW OR FOR WHICH A PERSON MAY BE SENTENCED TO ANY PERIOD OF IMPRISONMENT.

THE POWER TO ARREST CAN ALSO BE EXERCISED IF IT APPEARS TO THE POLICE OFFICER THAT SERVICE OF A SUMMONS IS IMPRACTICABLE.

THE POWER TO ARREST A PERSON WHO MAY BE CHARGED WITH ANY OFFENCE IS REPLACED AND RESTRICTED.

ON THE POWER TO SEARCH AN ARRESTED PERSON, HE SAID THE BILL PROVIDES THAT A POLICE OFFICER MAY SEARCH FOR AND TAKE POSSESSION OF THINGS WHICH HE REASONABLY SUSPECTS WILL BE OF VALUE TO THE INVESTIGATION OF ANY OFFENCE THAT THE PERSON HAS COMMITTED OR IS REASONABLY SUSPECTED OF HAVING COMMITTED.

MR STRACHAN ADDED THAT THE GENERAL POWER OF SEARCH AND SEIZURE UNDER A MAGISTRATE'S WARRANT IS AMENDED ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

IN ADDITION, A MAGISTRATE MAY AUTHORISE THE TEMPORARY DETENTION OF A PERSON WHO POSSESSES ANYTHING THAT MAY BE SEIZED AND WHO, IF NOT DETAINED, MIGHT PREJUDICE THE PURPOSE OF THE SEARCH.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES THAT THE POWER TO STOP AND SEARCH CAN BE EXERCISED IN TWO SCENARIOS.

THE FIRST RELATES TO A PERSON FOUND IN A PUBLIC PLACE WHO ACTS IN A SUSPICIOUS MANNER.

THE SECOND SCENARIO RELATES TO A PERSON FOUND IN A PUBLIC PLACE WHO IS SUSPECTED OF HAVING COMMITTED, OR INTENDING TO COMMIT, ANY OFFENCE.

"WE BELIEVE THE BILL STRIKES A SENSIBLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEED FOR PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS' RIGHTS ON THE ONE HAND AND ADEQUATE POWERS FOR THE POLICE TO FIGHT CRIME ON THE OTHER," MR STRACHAN SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION WOULD GIVE COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSALS ON THE WHOLE AREA OF LAW RELATING TO ARREST WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

HE EXPECTED THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS TO FURTHER ADVANCE THE CLARIFICATION AND DELINEATION OF POLICE POWERS BEGUN IN THE BILL.

THE POLICE FORCE ORDINANCE WILL BECOME SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE ON JUNE 8 THIS YEAR.

MR STRACHAN SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ENACT THE BILL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

"A PROLONGED PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY WILL BE UNHELPFUL TO POLICE OFFICERS ON THE STREETS AS THEY SEEK TO MAINTAIN THE LAW," HE SAID.

IN THE EVENT THAT THE BILL WAS NOT ENACTED BEFORE JUNE 8, HE SAID HE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HOW BEST TO ENSURE THAT POLICE OFFICERS WERE INSTRUCTED TO EXERCISE THEIR POWERS AT PRESENT CONFERRED UNDER SUB-SECTION 1 AND 6 OF SECTION 50 IN A WAY WHICH ACCORDED WITH THE PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS OF THE BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

BILL TO HELP ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

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THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1992 INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WOULD ASSIST IN THE BETTER ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE BY ALLOWING AN APPEAL JUDGE TO REJECT A CRIMINAL APPEAL FROM A MAGISTRATE WHICH WAS MADE ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS ONLY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS SAID THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE PROVIDED FOR ORDERS WHICH MIGHT BE MADE BY THE COURT OF APPEAL UPON CRIMINAL APPEAL FROM HIGH COURT OR DISTRICT COURT TRIALS.

WHERE AN APPELLANT SUCCEEDED UPON A TECHNICAL POINT ONLY, THE COURT OF APPEAL MIGHT AFFIRM THE CONVICTION IF IT CONSIDERED THAT NO MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE HAD ACTUALLY OCCURRED.

IN A CASE OF CRIMINAL APPEALS FROM A MAGISTRATE, THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE GAVE THE APPEAL JUDGE A RESIDUAL DISCRETION TO 'MAKE SUCH OTHER ORDER AS HE THINKS JUST'.

MR MATHEWS POINTED OUT THAT FOR MANY YEARS IT WAS ASSUMED THAT THIS PERMITTED THE JUDGE TO REFUSE APPEALS WHERE THERE WAS NO MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE, ON A SIMILAR BASIS TO THAT ALLOWED IN THE CASE OF DISTRICT COURT AND HIGH COURT CRIMINAL APPEALS.

HOWEVER, IN A CASE IN DECEMBER 1988, THE COURT OF APPEAL HELD THAT THIS ASSUMPTION WAS WRONG.

THE COURT REACHED ITS CONCLUSIONS RELUCTANTLY, AND RECOMMENDED THAT THE LAW BE AMENDED SO AS TO PERMIT THE REJECTION OF APPEALS MADE ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS.

THE COURT SAID THE EXPEDITIOUS AND FAIR DISPATCH OF APPEALS FROM MAGISTRATES IN HONG KONG WOULD GREATLY BE FACILITATED THEREBY.

"THE CURRENT LAW ALLOWS APPEALS TO BE BROUGHT AND SUCCEED ON TECHNICAL ISSUES, AND COMPELS JUDGES TO ORDER NEW TRIALS WITH THE ATTENDANT COSTS OF TIME AND MONEY," MR MATHEWS SAID.

AS SUGGESTED BY THE COURT OF APPEAL, HE SAID, THE PROPOSED BILL WOULD ADD THE PROVISIO CONTAINED IN SECTION 83(1) OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE TO SECTION 119(1)(D) OF THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE.

HE SAID HIGH COURT JUDGES ENGAGED IN CRIMINAL WORK HAD BEEN CANVASSED AND CONSIDERED THAT THERE WAS A PRESSING NEED FOR AMENDMENT.

THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID ALSO SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL.

THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND LAW SOCIETY HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SUCH A PROVISIO COULD OPERATE UNFAIRLY AGAINST AN ACCUSED PERSON.

THEY FELT THAT A MAGISTRATE'S RECORD MIGHT BE INSUFFICIENT FOR AN APPEAL JUDGE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE WHEN CONSIDERING THE USE OF THE PROPOSED PROVISIO.

"I HAVE GIVEN THE LEGAL PROFESSION'S CONCERN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, BUT I AM SATISFIED THAT JUDGES WILL HAVE NO SUCH DIFFICULTY," MR MATHEWS SAID.

"THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE OBLIGES MAGISTRATES TO TAKE, IN WRITING, A FULL MINUTE OF THE EVIDENCE, AND OBJECTIONS TO AND RULINGS ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE.

"IF A DEFENDANT APPEALS, THE MAGISTRATE MUST SUPPLY A STATEMENT OF HIS FINDINGS ON THE FACTS AND OTHER GROUNDS OF HIS DECISION," HE SAID.

MR MATHEWS SAID PURSUANT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT, A JUDGE WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO DISMISS AN APPEAL IF HE WAS SATISFIED THAT NO MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE ACTUALLY OCCURRED BY THE VERDICT OF THE MAGISTRATE.

"IN PRACTICE, APPELLANTS ARE ALREADY ALLOWED CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE TO EXPLAIN ALLEGED MISCARRIAGES WHICH THEY CLAIM ARE NOT APPARENT FROM THE RECORD OR THE MAGISTRATE'S STATEMENT OF FINDINGS.

"I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT IN THE MANNER OF RECORDING A CASE, THE MAGISTRATES' COURT DOES NOT DIFFER FROM THE DISTRICT COURT.

LIKE MAGISTRATES, DISTRICT JUDGES TAKE THEIR OWN HANDWRITTEN NOTES. A PROVISIO APPLIES IN APPEALS FROM DISTRICT COURT, AND IS ADMINISTERED SUCCESSFULLY BY THE COURT OF APPEAL."

MR MATHEWS SAID JUDGES WOULD BE WELL ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY CASE WHERE A MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE COULD OCCUR BY THE USE OF THE PROPOSED PROVISIO.

HE SAID HE HAD REGARD TO THE FACT THAT THE AMENDMENT DID NO MORE THAN TO RESTORE TO JUDGES A POWER WHICH THEY HAD EXERCISED FOR MANY YEARS PRIOR TO THE COURT OF APPEAL CASE IN DECEMBER 1988.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS PROPOSED

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS SO THAT ONLY THOSE PROPERLY TRAINED WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR. S.H. LEE, SAID CHIROPRACTIC WAS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TREATMENT DISTINCT FROM ALLOPATHIC PRACTICE OF WESTERN MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

HE NOTED THAT CHIROPRACTORS HAD BEEN OPERATING IN HONG KONG FOR SOME 20 YEARS AND THAT THERE WERE AT PRESENT 26 OF THEM, ALL TRAINED OVERSEAS.

"IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, IT HAS BEEN OUR POLICY TO PROGRESSIVELY REGISTER KEY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS: TO ENSURE HIGH STANDARD OF SERVICE AND TO ENHANCE THE STATUS OF OUR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS," DR LEE STRESSED.

"THIS BILL IS PART OF OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THOSE OBJECTIVES."

UNDER THE PROPOSED BILL, A CHIROPRACTORS COUNCIL WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REGISTRATION, SETTING OF STANDARDS, REGULATION OF CONDUCT AND ADMINISTRATION OF DISCIPLINE FOR CHIROPRACTORS.

THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE AN EQUAL NUMBER OF CHIROPRACTORS AND NON-CHIROPRACTORS.

DR LEE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD MAINTAINED CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIROPRACTIC PROFESSION THROUGH THE HONG KONG CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION.

THE ASSOCIATION SUPPORTED THE BILL BUT EXPRESSED CONCERNS THAT THE PROPOSED CHINESE TITLE FOR CHIROPRACTORS WOULD PLACE THEM IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS "THERAPISTS" OR SUB-PROFESSIONALS.

IT FURTHER CONTENDS THAT AS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS ON A PAR WITH PRACTITIONERS OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY, THEY SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO USE THE TERM "YSANG" AND BE ADDRESSED AS EITHER "JET QUAT SAN GENG FOR YSANG" OR "JET YI".

"WE IN THE ADMINISTRATION RECOGNISE THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF CHIROPRACTORS," DR LEE EXPLAINED.

"WE APPRECIATE THEIR ROLE IN OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. WE ARE, HOWEVER, CONCERNED THAT PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE MISLED INTO THINKING THAT CHIROPRACTORS ARE QUALIFIED TO PRACTISE MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

/"ACCORDINGLY, WE

"ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE PROPOSED THE CHINESE TITLE 'JET QUAT CHE LIU HOK KA' FOR CHIROPRACTORS."

DR LEE ADDED THAT THE PROPOSED TITLE DISTINGUISHED CHIROPRACTORS FROM "THERAPISTS" AND SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND THAT IT WAS A WELL RESPECTED DESIGNATION IN USE BY OTHER PRIMARY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO FORM NEW GOVT FLYING SERVICE INTRODUCED

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THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE (RHKAAF), A CIVILIAN DISCIPLINED SERVICE, IS TO BE RECONSTITUTED TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT FLYING SERVICE (GFS).

A BILL TO THE EFFECT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF GOVERNMENT FLYING SERVICE BILL 1992 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID THE GFS WOULD BE A FULL-TIME CIVILIAN DISCIPLINED FORCE PERFORMING THE FUNCTIONS AT PRESENT CARRIED OUT BY THE RHKAAF.

"THIS BILL WILL ESTABLISH THE GOVERNMENT FLYING SERVICE IN ITS INTENDED ROLES, PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONDUCT OF ITS MEMBERSHIP AND PROVIDE FOR DISCIPLINE," MR STRACHAN SAID.

HE SAID THE GFS WILL BE BOUND BY CIVIL AVIATION LEGISLATION.

"WE ARE CURRENTLY COMPLETING ALL THE FORMALITIES TO MAKE THIS TRANSITION," HE ADDED.

THESE INCLUDED APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN CERTIFICATION FOR THE AIRCREW, GROUND CREW AND AIRCRAFT AND THE FINALISATION OF THE CIVIL OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE GFS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ANTICIPATED THAT THESE WOULD ALL BE COMPLETED BY APRIL 1, NEXT YEAR, THE DATE INTENDED FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ORDINANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO BETTER BUILDING SAFETY INTRODUCED

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A BILL TO IMPROVE BUILDING SAFETY WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1992, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO EMPOWER THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO SERVE AN ORDER ON THE OWNER OF A BUILDING IN SUSPECT CONDITION, REQUIRING HIM TO APPOINT AN AUTHORISED PERSON TO CARRY OUT DETAILED INVESTIGATION OF HIS BUILDING AND TO PROPOSE REMEDIAL WORK.

THEREAFTER, THE SECRETARY SAID THE CARRYING OUT OF THE WORK WILL BE ORDERED.

"IF THE OWNER FAILS TO COMPLY WITH THE INITIAL ORDER, THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WILL BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE INVESTIGATION WORK AND RECOVER THE COSTS FROM THE OWNER," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THE PROPER MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF BUILDINGS LAY WITH THEIR OWNERS.

MR EASON SAID THE BILL WILL ALSO HELP MAKE OWNERS MORE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF THEIR BUILDINGS.

THIS IS DONE BY ENABLING THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE AN OWNER OF A BUILDING IN SUSPECT CONDITION TO HAVE IT INVESTIGATED TO ESTABLISH WHAT REMEDIAL WORK IS NEEDED.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO GIVE THE BUILDING AUTHORITY SIMILAR POWERS TO DEAL WITH DEFECTIVE BUILDING DRAINAGE WORKS.

"IN PLANNING THE DIVISION OF BUILDING INVESTIGATION WORK BETWEEN THE BOO (BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE) AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WE INTEND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE ABILITY OF BUILDING OWNERS IN PARTICULAR CASES TO ORGANISE AND TO PAY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REQUIRED," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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ICAC COMMITTED TO CONTINUING REVIEW OF LEGISLATION

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THE COMMISSIONER OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION WAS COMMITTED TO A CONTINUING REVIEW OF THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE AND THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ORDINANCE IN THE LIGHT OF LEGAL ADVICE AND DECISIONS OF THE COURTS REGARDING THEIR COMPATIBILITY WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

THIS WAS STATED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, IN THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR MATHEWS SAID AMENDMENT TO SECTION 30 OF THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE WOULD PERMIT DISCLOSURE OF THE IDENTITY OF A PERSON UNDER INVESTIGATION AND DETAILS OF AN INVESTIGATION AFTER THE ARREST OF THAT PERSON.

HE SAID SOME WERE OF THE VIEW THAT THE AMENDMENT WAS TOO CAUTIOUS; THAT THE SCOPE OF SECTION 30 SHOULD BE MUCH MORE SEVERELY LIMITED; OR THAT THE SECTION SHOULD BE DISPENSED WITH ALTOGETHER.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN THE DETECTION OF CORRUPTION OFFENCES, COVERT INVESTIGATION WAS FREQUENTLY ESSENTIAL AT AN EARLY STAGE.

"IN THE COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATIONS, OFFICERS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION OFTEN SEEK INFORMATION, IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR STATUTORY POWERS, FROM INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS BANKS.

"DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THOSE INVESTIGATIONS PRIOR TO THE ARREST OF THE PERSON UNDER INVESTIGATION WOULD, IN MANY CASES, THWART TOTALLY THE INVESTIGATION.

"THE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY AND ADVERSELY AFFECTED. THAT, IN MY VIEW, IS NOT WHAT THE COMMUNITY DESIRES," MR MATHEWS SAID.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SECTION 30 WAS ONE WHICH SOUGHT TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEED TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF INVESTIGATIONS, AND ALSO THE REPUTATIONS OF THOSE AGAINST WHOM ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION WERE MADE BUT AGAINST WHOM NO CRIMINAL CHARGES WERE SUBSEQUENTLY BROUGHT, AND OF WHAT SOME WOULD CALL THE COMMUNITY'S RIGHT TO KNOW.

"I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT SUCCEEDS IN STRIKING THAT BALANCE AND WILL ENSURE SECTION 30'S COMPATIBILITY WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE," HE SAID.

THERE WERE OTHER PROVISIONS IN THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY ORDINANCE ABOUT WHICH MEMBERS OF AN AD HOC GROUP HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS AND CONCERNS. MANY OF THESE PROVISIONS CONCERNED THE COMMISSION'S POWERS OF INVESTIGATION.

MR MATHEWS SAID: "IN THE ABSENCE OF AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS BY THE COURTS IN RELATION TO THE COMMISSION'S LEGISLATION, SWEEPING CHANGES TO THE COMMISSION'S POWERS ARE THOUGHT TO BE NEITHER SENSIBLE NOR APPROPRIATE.

"THE COMMISSIONER OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION HAS NEVERTHELESS ASKED ME TO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT IT IS NOT HIS INTENTION, WITH THE ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL, THEN TO PUT ASIDE FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMISSION'S LEGISLATION AND ITS COMPATIBILITY WITH THE BILL OF RIGHTS ORDINANCE.

"HE IS COMMITTED TO A CONTINUING REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION IN THE LIGHT OF LEGAL ADVICE AND DECISIONS OF THE COURTS. THIS COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP WILL BE KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF THE PROGRESS OF THAT REVIEW."

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER HAD ALSO ASKED HIM TO REASSURE THIS COUNCIL THAT THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED IN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 WOULD NOT HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT UPON THE OPERATION OF THE COMMISSION.

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KCRC OPERATES SUCCESSFULLY

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THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION (KCRC) IS TO SPEND \$4.6 BILLION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

TABLING THE KCRC'S ANNUAL REPORT 1991 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID MAJOR PROJECTS INCLUDED THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE HO TUNG LAU DEPOT AND MAINTENANCE CENTRE TO PROVIDE BETTER MAINTENANCE AND MORE STABLING AREA FOR THE KCR FLEET.

OTHER PROJECTS INCLUDED ARE IMPROVEMENT TO SIGNALLING SYSTEM AND STATION FACILITIES; EXPANSION OF THE KOWLOON GOODS YARD FOR BETTER CARGO HANDLING; AND PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES AND NOISE ABATEMENT MEASURES.

"THE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT DEMONSTRATES CLEARLY THE CORPORATION'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO UPGRADE ITS SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES," HE SAID.

MR MACLEOD SAID THE KCRC CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION IN 1991.

OPERATING REVENUE STOOD AT \$1,849 MILLION, AN INCREASE OF 16% OVER 1990. INCLUDING INCOME FROM PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR WAS \$449 MILLION.

/A DIVIDEND

A DIVIDEND OF \$140 MILLION WAS PAID TO THE GOVERNMENT. THIS REPRESENTS A RETURN TO THE TAXPAYERS ON THE SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE CORPORATION.

"IT ALSO UNDERLINES THE CORPORATION'S ABILITY TO OPERATE ON A PRUDENT COMMERCIAL BASIS," HE SAID.

AT THE END OF 1991, TOTAL ASSETS OF THE CORPORATION STOOD AT \$5.4 BILLION AND BORROWINGS AT LESS THAN \$1 BILLION. THE YEAR-END DEBT TO EQUITY RATIO WAS 1:4.3. CASH GENERATED BY THE OPERATING DIVISIONS WAS SUFFICIENT TO COVER ONGOING CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND DEBT REPAYMENT.

THE KCRC CARRIED 189 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 1991, AN INCREASE OF 5% OVER 1990. PASSENGERS TO AND FROM LO WU INCREASED BY 13% TO 31 MILLION, WHILE THROUGH TRAIN TRAFFIC BETWEEN KOWLOON AND GUANGZHOU ROSE BY 7% TO 2.5 MILLION.

MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE DURING THE YEAR TO ENHANCE SERVICES.

NINETY-SIX NEW TRAIN CARS WERE DELIVERED BY OCTOBER 1991. THE NEW TRAIN TIMETABLE ACHIEVED AN AVERAGE PUNCTUALITY OF 96%. A PROGRAMME TO INSTALL ADDITIONAL ESCALATORS AND REPLACE OLD ONES ALSO STARTED IN 1991.

ON THE OTHER HAND, FREIGHT BUSINESS DROPPED SLIGHTLY OWING TO KEEN COMPETITION IN THE HONG KONG/CHINA FREIGHT MARKET, RESULTING IN A 4% DECLINE IN OVERALL TRAFFIC.

A STUDY TO EVALUATE FUTURE OPTIONS FOR THE KCRC'S FREIGHT STRATEGY HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT.

MEANWHILE, THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM CARRIED 95.7 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 1991, AN INCREASE OF 11.6% OVER 1990.

THE THREE REGIONAL LINKS IN TUEN MUN WERE ALL COMMISSIONED BY FEBRUARY THIS YEAR.

WORK HAS STARTED ON THE TIN SHUI WAI EXTENSION FOR COMPLETION IN EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THIRTY NEW LIGHT RAIL VEHICLES WILL BE DELIVERED STARTING THIS OCTOBER. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COOLING CAPACITY OF THE EXISTING VEHICLES' AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM HAVE ALSO BEGUN.

"IN SUM, THE CORPORATION HAS CONTINUED TO OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY," MR MACLEOD SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1992

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TALKS ON IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE UNDER WAY

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TALKS ARE UNDER WAY WITHIN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP WITH A VIEW TO ALIGNING THE PROVISIONS OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE WITH THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE BASIC LAW, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EMILY LAU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID: "THE STATUS OF ETHNIC CHINESE WITH OTHER NATIONALITIES WILL BE CLARIFIED AS PART OF THAT PROCESS.

"WE HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE PROGRESS AS SOON AS THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE COMPLETED," HE ADDED.

MISS LAU ASKED WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO ARE OF CHINESE RACE WITH FOREIGN NATIONALITY AND WHO HAVE SATISFIED THE RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY ENJOY THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AFTER 1997.

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EPD PROMOTES QUIETER PILING METHODS

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT IS LIAISING WITH THE BUILDING INDUSTRY AND RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO PROMOTE THE USE OF QUIETER PILING METHODS IN THE URBAN AREAS.

THIS IS A MEANS TO FURTHER IMPROVE CONTROLS ON PERCUSSIVE PILING ACTIVITIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN ADDITION, MR EASON SAID FROM OCTOBER THIS YEAR, IT WAS PROPOSED TO STIPULATE IN THE GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS OF CONTRACTS FOR CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS (TO BE ISSUED BY THE WORKS BRANCH) THAT CONTRACTORS SHOULD REGULARLY CONDUCT NOISE MONITORING ON CONSTRUCTION SITES WHERE PILING WORKS WERE CARRIED OUT.

NOTING THAT SECTION 6 OF THE NOISE CONTROL ORDINANCE ENACTED IN 1989 PROVIDED FOR THE CONTROL OF PILING ACTIVITIES, MR EASON SAID SUCH ACTIVITIES WERE PROHIBITED BETWEEN 7 PM AND 7 AM ON WEEKDAYS OR AT ANY TIME ON GENERAL HOLIDAYS, AND WERE RESTRICTED TO SEVERAL PERIODS OF OPERATION ON WEEKDAYS.

CONSTRUCTION NOISE PERMITS ARE ISSUED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT FOR PERCUSSIVE PILING ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT ON WEEKDAYS.

/"THESE PERMITS

"THESE PERMITS RESTRICT SUCH PILING TO THREE, FIVE OR 12 HOURS OF OPERATION DEPENDING ON THE PROXIMITY OF NOISE SENSITIVE RECEIVERS, SUCH AS DOMESTIC PREMISES AND SCHOOLS.

"IN BUILT-UP URBAN AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS, PERCUSSIVE PILING IS RESTRICTED TO THREE HOURS DURING THE LESS SENSITIVE PERIODS OF THE DAY, NAMELY BETWEEN 8 AM AND 9 AM, BETWEEN 12.30 PM AND 1.30 PM AND BETWEEN 5 PM AND 6 PM," THE SECRETARY SAID.

LAST YEAR, 19 COMPLAINTS OF NOISE POLLUTION CAUSED BY PILING WORKS WERE RECEIVED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT AND THE POLICE.

"OF THESE, FOUR WERE DEALT WITH BY THE POLICE, AND 15 BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT," MR EASON SAID.

SIX SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS WERE BROUGHT AGAINST CONTRACTORS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH PERMIT CONDITIONS.

THE REMAINING 13 CASES WERE THE SUBJECT OF VERBAL WARNINGS AND THE CONTRACTORS TOOK IMMEDIATE STEPS TO REMEDY THE BREACH OF THE PERMITS.

IN ADDITION, 478 CONSTRUCTION NOISE PERMITS WERE ISSUED FOR PERCUSSIVE PILING ACTIVITIES LAST YEAR.

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LDC OFFERS MARKET PRICES TO AFFECTED PROPERTY OWNERS

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THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) OFFERS NO LESS THAN THE CURRENT MARKET VALUE OF THE PROPERTY INTERESTS TO OWNERS AFFECTED IN WING LOK STREET/QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON YEUNG SUM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE OFFERS, CONFIRMED BY THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS, WERE BASED ON VALUATIONS MADE BY AN INDEPENDENT FIRM OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS AND SUPPORTED BY A SECOND OPINION OBTAINED FROM A DIFFERENT FIRM, PLUS AN ADDED AMOUNT FOR INCENTIVES.

HE SAID 30 OUT OF THE ORIGINAL 66 INTERESTS REMAINED TO BE ACQUIRED AFTER ALMOST THREE YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

"SOME OWNERS SIMPLY REFUSED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LDC, SOME COUNTER-DEMANDED EXCESSIVE PRICES AND SOME HAD TITLE PROBLEMS," THE SECRETARY SAID.

HE SAID THE LDC ALSO INVITED THE OWNERS TO FIND THEIR OWN VALUERS TO ASSESS THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTIES, WITH PROFESSIONAL FEES TO BE COVERED BY THE EVENTUAL PURCHASE AMOUNT, BUT THIS CAME TO NO AVAIL.

TO ENABLE THE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME TO PROCEED, THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPROVED THE RESUMPTION OF THE OUTSTANDING INTERESTS LAST MONTH.

MR EASON SAID DETAILS OF THE OFFERS MADE BY THE LDC AND COUNTER-CLAIMS MADE WERE PRIVATE TO THE PARTIES CONCERNED AND IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO PUBLICISE THEM WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.

FOR NON-DOMESTIC PREMISES, HE SAID THE LDC HAD TO ASSESS BUSINESS LOSSES OR DISTURBANCE ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES.

HE SAID THE LDC'S OFFERS FOR NON-DOMESTIC PREMISES, INCLUDING SHOPS, WERE NOT LESS THAN THE CURRENT MARKET VALUE OF THE INTERESTS COMPARED WITH EVIDENCE OF SALES OF SIMILAR PREMISES IN SIMILAR LOCATIONS.

HE SAID THESE AMOUNTS SHOULD ENABLE THE AFFECTED SHOP OWNERS TO BUY SHOP PREMISES OF SIMILAR TRADING POTENTIAL.

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THAILAND SITUATION CLOSELY MONITORED

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NO ENQUIRIES OR REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE HAVE SO FAR BEEN RECEIVED IN WAKE OF THE RECENT POLITICAL UNREST IN THAILAND.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAU CHIN-SHEK, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR STRACHAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN CLOSELY MONITORING THE SITUATION IN THAILAND VIA THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN BANGKOK.

WITH THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE, THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE ADVISING PEOPLE TO AVOID CERTAIN AREAS IN BANGKOK AND TO TRAVEL THERE ONLY FOR ESSENTIAL VISITS.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO SET UP TWO HOT-LINES TO ANSWER ENQUIRIES.

HE SAID CALLERS WERE GIVEN ADVICE ON PROPOSED VISITS TO THAILAND AND WHERE HONG KONG RESIDENTS IN DISTRESS THERE COULD GET HELP.

HE ADDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO READY TO HANDLE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM RELATIVES OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS TRAVELLING OR WORKING IN THAILAND.

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VTC LOOKS AFTER TRAINING NEEDS OF RETAIL INDUSTRY

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THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (VTC) HAS SET ASIDE SOME \$10 MILLION IN 1992/93 TO PROVIDE TRAINING COURSES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE RETAIL INDUSTRY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION (HKTA), WHICH DERIVES MOST OF ITS INCOME FROM A GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION, SPENDS ABOUT \$1.4 MILLION ANNUALLY ON RETAIL TRADE TRAINING.

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

MR CHAN SAID THE MAIN ROLE OF THE COUNCIL WAS TO ADVISE ON THE MEASURES REQUIRED TO ENSURE A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING SUITED TO THE DEVELOPING NEEDS OF HONG KONG AND TO PUT IN PLACE SUCH MEASURES AS WERE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

"TO THIS END, THE VTC HAS OPERATED RELEVANT COURSES UNDER ITS WHOLESALE/RETAIL AND IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES TRAINING CENTRE AND EIGHT TECHNICAL INSTITUTES," MR CHAN SAID.

"REGULAR MANPOWER SURVEYS ARE CONDUCTED BY THE VTC TO ASSESS THE TRAINING NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRY."

THE COURSES RUN BY THE VTC FOR THE RETAIL SECTOR IN 1992/93 INCLUDE 2,140 FULL-TIME AND 980 PART-TIME PLACES IN THE RELEVANT TRAINING CENTRE AND 160 ONE-YEAR FULL-TIME AND 60 TWO-YEAR PART-TIME CERTIFICATE PLACES IN THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE PROVISIONAL RETRAINING FUND BOARD, IT WILL SOON PUT ON A RETRAINING COURSE ON BASIC RETAIL SALES TECHNIQUES FOR 120 LOCAL WORKERS.

MR CHAN NOTED THAT SUCH PROVISIONS SERVE TO COMPLEMENT THE TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE HKTA.

THESE INCLUDE TRAINING FOR IN-SERVICE TOUR OPERATORS AND GUIDES, RESTAURANT AND SALES PERSONNEL; AND CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTED TRAINING FOR SOME 650 PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE MOSTLY EMPLOYEES OF THE RETAIL TRADE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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TOO COSTLY FOR FULL CONTROL SYSTEM OF SIGNBOARDS

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A FULL SYSTEM OF CONTROL, PUTTING UP AND MAINTENANCE OF SIGNBOARDS IS NOT IN PLACE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE TOO COSTLY TO DO SO.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES WOULD BE INVOLVED IN SUCH PRACTICES WHICH WOULD NOT BE COMMENSURATE WITH THE RISK INVOLVED AND UNLIKELY TO BE RECOVERABLE THROUGH CHARGES.

"SIGNS WHICH ARE UNTIDY BUT DO NOT POSE A PUBLIC SAFETY HAZARD ARE TOLERATED AS THEIR REMOVAL ON AESTHETIC GROUNDS COULD, AGAIN, NOT COMMAND PRIORITY FOR RESOURCES," THE SECRETARY ADDED.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, BUILDING OWNERS, UNDER THE MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS (OWNERS INCORPORATION) ORDINANCE, MIGHT DO ANYTHING NECESSARY TO ENFORCE OBLIGATIONS CONTAINED IN THE DEED OF MUTUAL COVENANT FOR THE CONTROL OF THEIR BUILDING, INCLUDING THE REMOVAL OF UNSIGHTLY OR ABANDONED SIGNS.

UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES ORDINANCE, THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS HAS THE POWER TO REMOVE OR TO RENDER SAFE SIGNBOARDS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS OR LIKELY TO BECOME DANGEROUS.

AS PART OF ITS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES ON BUILDING SAFETY, STAFF OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE (BOO) SEEK OUT DANGEROUS SIGNS ON A DAILY BASIS AS WELL AS RELYING ON NOTIFICATION THROUGH PUBLIC COMPLAINTS.

SINCE APRIL 1987, WHEN THE BOO TOOK OVER THE CONTROL OF DANGEROUS SIGNS, 5,682 NOTICES HAD BEEN SERVED ON SIGN OWNERS AND 65% OF THESE SIGNS HAD BEEN REMOVED VOLUNTARILY.

THE REMAINING SIGNS WERE REMOVED BY THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTOR ON DÉFAULT BY THE OWNERS.

OBJECTIONABLE SIGNS ARE REMOVED BY THE POLICE UNDER THE OBJECTIONABLE PUBLICATIONS ORDINANCE.

AT PRESENT, THERE IS NO STATUTORY CONTROL ON THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF ADVERTISEMENT SIGNBOARDS.

"THE ADMINISTRATION'S PRIMARY CONCERN IS IN RELATION TO THE SAFETY OF OVERHANGING SIGNBOARDS," MR EASON SAID.

WHERE SIGNBOARDS POSED A THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY, HE SAID THEY WERE REMOVED EITHER BY THE OWNERS THEMSELVES OR, WHERE NECESSARY, BY THE BOO OF THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

/HE SAID

HE SAID APPROVAL FOR THE PUTTING UP OF SIGNBOARDS WAS REQUIRED FROM THE LAND AUTHORITY IF THE CONDITIONS OF THE LAND LEASE WOULD BE CONTRAVENED OR IF THE SIGN WOULD ENCROACH UPON GOVERNMENT LAND.

THE CONTENT OF SIGNBOARDS MAY BE CONTROLLED UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE LAND LEASE, THE CONTROL OF OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES ORDINANCE, THE OBJECTIONABLE PUBLICATIONS ORDINANCE, THE SMOKING (PUBLIC HEALTH) ORDINANCE AND THE UNDESIRABLE MEDICAL ADVERTISEMENTS ORDINANCE.

BUT THERE WAS NO REQUIREMENT THAT THE CONTENT MUST RELATE TO ANY PARTICULAR BUSINESS FUNCTION, THE SECRETARY ADDED.

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PARTICIPATION IN ADB UNDER REVIEW

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THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, SAID THERE WERE NO PRESENT PLANS TO INCREASE HONG KONG'S CAPITAL SHARE AND VOTING POWER IN THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK.

BUT THE OCCASION MAY ARISE IN A YEAR OR SO'S TIME IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEXT GENERAL CAPITAL INCREASE TO REPLENISH THE BANK'S CAPITAL STOCK, HE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI KWOK PO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR NENDICK SAID IN THE MEANTIME, THE GOVERNMENT WAS KEEPING UNDER REVIEW OTHER MEANS OF INCREASING HONG KONG'S PARTICIPATION IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE BANK'S ACTIVITIES.

HE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SHORTLY APPROACH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIFTH REPLENISHMENT OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND.

THIS IS USED FOR LOANS TO THE NEEDEST DEVELOPING COUNTRY MEMBERS OF THE BANK.

THE SIZE OF A MEMBER'S SUBSCRIPTION TO THE BANK'S CAPITAL STOCK IS BASICALLY DETERMINED BY REFERENCE TO A MEMBER'S ECONOMIC CAPACITY AS REFLECTED BY GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT FIGURES ADJUSTED FOR POPULATION, TAX REVENUES AND EXPORTS ON A WEIGHTED BASIS.

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GOVT IN CONTACT WITH ADB ON PADS FINANCING
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN INFORMAL CONTACT WITH THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK SINCE EARLY THIS YEAR TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF IT PARTICIPATING IN THE FINANCING OF SOME OF THE PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROJECTS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS, MR DAVID NENDICK, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI KWOK-PO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WERE STILL IN PROGRESS.

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MILDLY DISABLED CHILDREN ENCOURAGED TO ENROL IN ORDINARY SCHOOL
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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVIDES SPECIAL CLASSES IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS AND A RANGE OF REMEDIAL AND ADVISORY SERVICES FOR MILDLY DISABLED CHILDREN OR THEIR PARENTS TO ENABLE THE CHILDREN TO RECEIVE EDUCATION IN SUCH SCHOOLS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THESE INCLUDE THE INTEGRATED KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME FOR MILDLY DISABLED PRE-SCHOOLERS, RESOURCE CLASSES AND RESOURCE TEACHING CENTRES FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, PERIPATETIC ADVISORY SERVICES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS, AND RESOURCE TEACHERS FOR BLIND INTEGRATORS.

"THESE SERVICES ARE REGULARLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS AND TO ENSURE THAT THEY MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS," HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHENG HOI-CHUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAN SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT DISABLED CHILDREN SHOULD RECEIVE EDUCATION IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS, UNLESS THE DEGREE OF DISABILITY MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR A CHILD TO BE PLACED IN A SPECIAL SCHOOL.

"BY AND LARGE, MILDLY DISABLED CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM EDUCATION IN AN ORDINARY SCHOOL, GIVEN SOME EXTRA HELP IN THE FORM OF SPECIAL CLASSES AND OTHER SERVICE," HE ADDED.

TEACHERS IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO TEACH STUDENTS IN SPECIAL CLASSES MAY ATTEND THE TWO-YEAR PART-TIME IN-SERVICE COURSE OF TRAINING FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OPERATED BY THE SIR ROBERT BLACK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

IN ADDITION, THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ORGANISES SHORT INTRODUCTORY COURSES TWICE A YEAR FOR TEACHERS OF ORDINARY CLASSES TO FAMILIARISE THEM WITH THE GENERAL TECHNIQUES OF HANDLING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

MR CHAN STATED THAT AN ORDINARY SCHOOL IS NOT ENTITLED TO REJECT A MILDLY DISABLED STUDENT ON GROUNDS OF THAT STUDENT'S DISABILITY.

"WHERE A DISABLED CHILD IS CONSIDERED BY THE HEADMASTER OF AN ORDINARY SCHOOL TO BE UNDULY DISRUPTIVE OR INCAPABLE OF BENEFITING FROM EDUCATION IN THAT SCHOOL, THE CASE MUST BE REFERRED TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION FOR A RULING," HE SAID.

"IF THE RESULTS OF AN ASSESSMENT BY EXPERTS IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SECTION INDICATE THAT THE CHILD IS UNABLE TO BENEFIT FROM AN EDUCATION IN A ORDINARY SCHOOL BECAUSE OF HIS DISABILITY, THAT CHILD WILL BE RECOMMENDED FOR TRANSFER TO A SPECIAL SCHOOL."

MR CHAN ALSO NOTED THAT ONLY ONE COMPLAINT CONCERNING A MILDLY DISABLED CHILD STUDYING IN AN ORDINARY SCHOOL WAS RECEIVED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS.

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KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME TO BE IMPROVED

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THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO RELAX THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE KINDERGARTEN FEE REMISSION SCHEME OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS TO BRING IT MORE IN LINE WITH THE SCHEME FOR SENIOR SECONDARY PUPILS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT THE SAME TIME, MR CHAN ADDED, THE EDUCATION COMMISSION WAS EXPECTED TO PROPOSE FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SCHEME IN ITS FIFTH REPORT DUE TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT MONTH.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON STEPHEN NG MING-YUM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR CHAN NOTED THAT THE SCHEME WAS INTRODUCED IN THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR AND PROVIDED WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN 1991-92.

AS AT APRIL THIS YEAR, THE MONTHLY AVERAGE RATE OF ASSISTANCE FOR EACH PUPIL ATTENDING WHOLE-DAY CLASS WAS \$460 AND THAT FOR EACH PUPIL ATTENDING HALF-DAY CLASS WAS \$209.

THE PROVISION FOR KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION, INCLUDING RENT AND RATES REIMBURSEMENT TO NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS AND THE FEE REMISSION SCHEME, IS \$138.1 MILLION IN 1992-93.

THIS IS FORECAST TO RISE TO \$139.8 MILLION IN 1993-94 AND \$140.6 MILLION IN 1994-95, 1995-96 AND 1996-97 RESPECTIVELY.

AS REGARDS THE PROVISION OF KINDERGARTEN PLACES, MR CHAN NOTED THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY COMPLAINTS FROM PARENTS ABOUT INSUFFICIENT KINDERGARTEN PLACES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS.

CITING STATISTICS, HE SAID AS AT SEPTEMBER 1991, THERE WERE 223,376 KINDERGARTEN PLACES WHILE THE ACTUAL ENROLMENT AND THE SIZE OF THE POPULATION AGED BETWEEN THREE AND FIVE WERE 193,658 AND 225,000 RESPECTIVELY.

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URGENT CASES GIVEN PRIORITY AT CLINICS

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ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO FACILITATE PRIORITY TREATMENT OF URGENT CASES AT GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S.H. LEE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE NURSING OFFICERS AND MEDICAL OFFICERS IN-CHARGE HAVE FLEXIBILITY TO EXERCISE THEIR DISCRETION TO GRANT SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR SUCH CASES," HE SAID.

"AS REGARDS SPECIALIST CLINICS AND THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, PROFESSIONAL STAFF WILL SCREEN PATIENTS TO ASSESS THE SEVERITY OF THEIR INJURY OR ILLNESS AND ACCORD THEM WITH PRIORITY TREATMENT WHERE APPROPRIATE."

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN, DR LEE SAID THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAD A TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT OF 463 DOCTOR POSTS AND 1,247 NURSING POSTS WITH VACANCIES OF 17 AND 84 RESPECTIVELY AS AT MAY 1 THIS YEAR.

AS FOR HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 2,385 DOCTOR POSTS AND 16,809 NURSING POSTS WITH VACANCIES OF 121 AND 1,328 RESPECTIVELY.

TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS AND NURSES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE STRENUOUS EFFORTS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS TO IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT TERMS, CAREER DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, WORKING CONDITION, PROFESSIONAL STATUS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF DOCTORS AND NURSES, DR LEE SAID.

MEASURES INTRODUCED FOR DOCTORS INCLUDE REVISION OF SALARY STRUCTURE, ENHANCEMENT TO CAREER PROSPECTS, HONORARIUM FOR LONG WORKING HOURS AND BETTER MANNING OF CLINICAL UNITS, HE SAID.

MEASURES FOR NURSES INCLUDE REVISION OF PAY SCALE, IMPROVED CAREER PROSPECTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, RESIDENTIAL ALLOWANCE FOR STUDENT NURSES, INTENSIFIED RECRUITMENT DRIVE, OVERTIME ALLOWANCE FOR REGISTERED NURSES AND PART-TIME NURSES SCHEME.

ALSO INCLUDED ARE INTRODUCTION OF WARD STEWARDS AND CLINIC ASSISTANTS AND GREATER USE OF CHINESE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENT NURSES, HE SAID.

"IN THE LONG TERM, WE INTEND TO BUILD ON THE EXISTING FOUNDATION AND EXPLORE FURTHER WAYS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN DOCTORS AND NURSES," DR LEE SAID.

"VARIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WORKING PARTY ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE IN GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS AND THE CONCEPT OF HEALTH NURSE, WILL ALSO HELP ENHANCE THE PROFESSIONALISM AND STATUS OF NURSES."

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, PLANS ARE ALREADY IN HAND TO INTRODUCE THE NURSE SPECIALIST SCHEME AND ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO REVIEW THE MANPOWER SITUATION IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT WASTAGE AND RECRUITMENT RATES.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 23 COMPLAINTS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS ON FAILURE TO OBTAIN AN APPOINTMENT AT OUT-PATIENT CLINICS.

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NO INTENTION TO CHANGE 1992 BUDGET
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID HE DID NOT HAVE ANY INTENTION OF MAKING CHANGES TO THE 1992 BUDGET, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED AND PUT INTO EFFECT.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON SZETO WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR MACLEOD SAID THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THIS YEAR'S ADDITIONAL SURPLUS AND THE DECISION TO DEFER A GENERAL RATES INCREASE WAS THAT THE MEDIUM-TERM FISCAL POSITION REMAINED UNCHANGED.

"THE 1992 BUDGET TOOK ACCOUNT OF OUR EXPENDITURE COMMITMENTS, THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE RESERVES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGING FISCAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OVER THE PERIOD UP TO 1996-97," HE SAID.

AS A RESULT OF THE HIGHER THAN EXPECTED SURPLUS FOR 1991-92, THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE FORTUNATE POSITION OF BEING ABLE TO FORGO ONE OF THE MEASURES WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO RAISE THE REVENUE THAT THE GOVERNMENT NEEDED TO MEET ITS COMMITMENTS OVER THE COMING YEARS, HE ADDED.

"I REFER OF COURSE TO THE INCREASE IN GENERAL RATES."

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HANDLING OF FORCED EVICTIONS CASES EXPLAINED
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THERE IS NO OFFENCE BY ITSELF OF "FORCING OCCUPANTS OF PRIVATE PREMISES TO VACATE THEIR PREMISES BY UNLAWFUL MEANS" AND EACH CASE IS DEALT WITH BASED ON ITS OWN CIRCUMSTANCES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

IF A CLEAR CASE OF HARASSMENT IS ESTABLISHED, THE POLICE WILL FIRST CONDUCT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS.

IF THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED, A FULL INVESTIGATION WILL BE CARRIED OUT AND IF NECESSARY CRIMINAL CHARGES LAID.

"THE POLICE WILL ALSO ASSIST IN THE INVESTIGATION OF HARASSMENT CASES WHERE THE PARTIES INVOLVED ARE UN-COOPERATIVE OR BELIEVED TO BE CONNECTED TO TRIADS," MR STRACHAN.

IN HANDLING DISPUTES BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS INVOLVING ALLEGED HARASSMENT AND ILLEGAL EVICTION, HE SAID THE POLICE OFFICER WOULD BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CONCERNED PARTIES THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE.

ANY PERSON WHO UNLAWFULLY EVICTS THE TENANT OR SUB-TENANT OF OCCUPATION OF ANY PREMISES, OR COMMITS ANY ACT TO INTERFERE WITH THE PEACE OR COMFORT OF THE TENANT OR SUB-TENANT, IS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$500,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR 12 MONTHS ON SUBSEQUENT CONVICTIONS.

THE COURT MAY ALSO REQUIRE HIM TO COMPENSATE THE TENANT OR SUB-TENANT.

WHERE NO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY WAS INVOLVED, MR STRACHAN SAID THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT WOULD TRY TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE BY MEDIATION AND ADVICE.

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MEASURES TO PROTECT SPORTSMEN FROM CONTRACTING AIDS

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THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION HAS DEVELOPED A CONSENSUS STATEMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH INTERNATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO PROTECT SPORTSMEN FROM CONTRACTING AIDS THROUGH INJURY DURING SPORTS EVENTS.

THE ADVICE INCLUDES MEDICAL COUNSELLING FOR INFECTED SPORTSMEN, INTERRUPTION OF SPORTS FOR IMMEDIATE TREATMENT OF WOUNDS AND PROMPT REPORTING OF SKIN LESIONS TO RESPONSIBLE PERSONNEL.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, DR S.H. LEE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DR LEE SAID THESE PROCEDURES WERE PART OF THE GENERAL HYGIENE AND FIRST AID PRACTICE FOR ALL SPORTS AND WERE OBSERVED WORLDWIDE.

"ACCORDING TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, THERE IS NO MEDICAL OR PUBLIC HEALTH JUSTIFICATION FOR TESTING OR SCREENING FOR AIDS PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES," HE SAID.

"LOCAL SPORTS ORGANISATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONSULT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR ADVICE AND HEALTH EDUCATION ON AIDS."

DR LEE NOTED THAT AIDS WAS NORMALLY TRANSMITTED THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, BLOOD AND FROM AN INFECTED MOTHER TO HER CHILD.

IT IS NOT TRANSMITTED THROUGH SALIVA, SWEAT, TEARS, URINE, SWIMMING POOL WATER, COMMUNAL BATH WATER, TOILETS, FOOD OR DRINKING WATER.

HE SAID: "IN THEORY, THERE IS A POSSIBLE RISK OF TRANSMISSION WHEN ONE INFECTED ATHELETE WITH A BLEEDING WOUND OR A SKIN LESION OR EXPOSED MUCUOUS MEMBRANE THAT COULD SERVE AS A POSSIBLE PORTAL FOR ENTRY OF THE HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS.

"IN PRACTICE, THE RISK IS VERY LOW. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NO RISK IF ONE PARTY DOES NOT SUFFER BLEEDING WOUNDS OR OTHER SKIN LESIONS."

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SIGNAGE OUTSIDE AIRPORT DEPARTURE HALL WILL BE IMPROVED
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ACTION CAN AND WILL BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE SIGNAGE OUTSIDE THE DEPARTURE HALL AT KAI TAK.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"THIS IS A PROBLEM WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT OVER THE YEARS, BUT THE PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE DEPARTURE HALL FRONTAGE, COMBINED WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF AIRLINES WHICH WILL REQUIRE TO BE IDENTIFIED AT EACH DROPPING OFF POINT HAVE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO DESIGN A WORKABLE SOLUTION," MRS BOSHER SAID.

THE APPROACH WHICH IS NOW BEING PURSUED IS TO INDICATE THE LOCATION OF CHECK-IN ISLANDS BY MEANS OF REFERENCE LETTERS DISPLAYED ALONG THE FRONTAGE OF THE DEPARTURE HALL.

DEPARTING PASSENGERS WILL BE GUIDED AS TO WHICH AIRLINES OPERATE FROM WHICH CHECK-IN ISLANDS BY MEANS OF PROMINENT SIGNS ALONG THE APPROACH ROADS TO THE AIRPORT.

MRS BOSHER SAID THE CURRENT REFURBISHMENT OF THE DEPARTURE HALL HAD INVOLVED SOME RE-ALLOCATION OF AIRLINES TO DIFFERENT CHECK-IN ISLANDS.

"IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SIGNAGE OUTSIDE THE DEPARTURE HALL WILL THEREFORE BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THIS REFURBISHMENT EXERCISE," SHE ADDED.

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IRD COMPUTER ADEQUATE FOR REVENUE CALCULATION

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THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT'S COMPUTER SYSTEM IS PERFECTLY ADEQUATE FOR CALCULATING THE REVENUE GENERATED FROM DIRECT TAXES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K.C. KWONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ERIC LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ESTIMATED BUDGET SURPLUS MENTIONED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH, AND THE SURPLUS ACCORDING TO THE "FIRST CLOSING" OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOUNTS, MR KWONG SAID ONLY ABOUT 20% OF THE DIFFERENCE OF ABOUT \$6 BILLION WAS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INCREASED TAX REVENUE COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

HE SAID THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S "SHARE" OF THE ADDITIONAL SURPLUS WAS STAMP DUTY (ABOUT \$670 MILLION).

HE NOTED THAT THE ESTIMATED SURPLUS ANNOUNCED IN THE BUDGET WAS BASED ON THE REVISED ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE MADE AT THE END OF JANUARY.

THE DEPARTMENT HAD THEN TO MAKE AN ESTIMATE OF THE TOTAL TAX REVENUE IT WOULD COLLECT IN THE FOLLOWING TWO MONTHS, UP TO THE CLOSE OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR.

"IN THE CASE OF STAMP DUTY, COLLECTIONS FOR MARCH TURNED OUT TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH BECAUSE OF THE BUOYANT PROPERTY AND STOCK MARKETS," MR KWONG SAID.

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DEVELOPMENTS NO HARM TO TUEN MUN ENVIRONMENT

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIAL INDUSTRIES AREA (SIA) AND A RIVER TRADE TERMINAL (RTT) AT TUEN MUN WILL NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS TO THE EAST OR THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OFF THE NEW RECLAMATION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON STEPHEN NG MING-YUM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMMISSIONED CONSULTANTS TO INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF SUCH DEVELOPMENTS.

"THE INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT HAS SHOWN THAT, IF APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES ARE TAKEN AND MODERN STANDARDS OF POLLUTION CONTROL ARE APPLIED, THE SITE IS SUITABLE FOR THE PURPOSES DESCRIBED," MR EASON SAID.

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WHILE THE TRAFFIC NOISE PROBLEM FACED BY THE OCCUPANTS OF SOME RESIDENTIAL AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE AREA MIGHT BE WORSENERD BY FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN TUEN MUN WEST, THIS WOULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AREA 38 ALONE, HE ADDED.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION MEASURES RECOMMENDED IN THE STUDY INCLUDE THE REPROVISIONING AND EXTENSION OF THE SUBMARINE OUTFALL AND THE EMERGENCY BYPASS OF THE PILLAR POINT SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT.

RECOMMENDATIONS ALSO INCLUDE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BYPASS ALONG THE CASTLE PEAK FOOTHILLS BETWEEN BUTTERFLY ESTATE AND WONG CHU ROAD TO REDUCE TRAFFIC NOISE NEAR THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS ALONG LUNG MUN ROAD.

IN ADDITION, FUTURE OPERATORS AT THE SIA WILL BE SUBJECT TO SEPARATE, PROJECT SPECIFIC AND DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AT THE PROJECT PLANNING STAGE.

"THE TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS ASSESSED UNDER THE STUDY INDICATE THAT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS WOULD IMPACT MAINLY ON LUNG MUN ROAD, WONG CHU ROAD AND TUEN MUN ROAD EASTBOUND TOWARDS TSUEN WAN AS WELL AS NORTHBOUND TOWARDS YUEN LONG," MR EASON SAID.

HE SAID IMPROVEMENT MEASURES WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BEFORE THE SIA AND RTT FULLY DEVELOPED INCLUDED:

- * DUALLING OF THE SECTION OF LUNG MUN ROAD BETWEEN PILLAR POINT AND THE WESTERN PART OF AREA 38; AND
- * IMPROVING GRADE-SEPARATED INTERCHANGES AT KEY JUNCTIONS, INCLUDING THE ONES AT WONG CHU ROAD/LUNG MUN ROAD AND WONG CHU ROAD/TUEN MUN ROAD.

SUCH IMPROVEMENT WORKS ARE SCHEDULED TO START IN EARLY 1994. THE FIRST ONE IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED BY EARLY 1996 AND THE SECOND, TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN STAGES OVER FIVE YEARS.

MR EASON NOTED THAT THE LONG-TERM EXTERNAL TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AREAS 38 AND 47 (WHERE A RTT WILL BE BUILT) WERE BEING INVESTIGATED IN DETAIL UNDER THE TUEN MUN PORT DEVELOPMENT STUDY.

HE SAID A LONGER TERM IMPROVEMENT TO PROVIDE A BY-PASS FROM WONG CHU ROAD TO THE PART OF LUNG MUN ROAD SOUTH OF MELODY GARDEN WAS SCHEDULED TO START IN EARLY 1994 AND BE COMPLETED BY 1999.

"THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE ROUTE 3 COUNTRY PARK SECTION, SHOULD PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RELIEF FOR TUEN MUN ROAD," MR EASON SAID.

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT TO KCRC TERMINAL UNLIKELY

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IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO PASSENGER FACILITIES WILL BE POSSIBLE IN THE EXISTING KCR HUNG HOM TERMINAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PEGGY LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE ONLY IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS WE CAN MAKE ARE TO AIR-CONDITION THE CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION HALL," HE SAID.

HE SAID DISCUSSION WAS UNDER WAY WITH THE KCRC IN A HOPE TO DO IT BY MID NEXT YEAR.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE EXISTING TERMINAL WAS NOT DESIGNED TO COPE WITH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.

IT WAS BUILT IN 1975, FOUR YEARS BEFORE THE THROUGH-TRAIN SYSTEM WAS CONSIDERED, AT A TIME WHEN ALL PASSENGERS FOR CHINA HAD TO CHANGE AT LO WU.

"THEREFORE, NO PROVISION WAS MADE FOR CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION FACILITIES.

"THESE HAD TO BE IMPROVISED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE EXISTING BUILDING," MR STRACHAN SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING A PURPOSE-BUILT HALL WITH BETTER FACILITIES FOR THE COMFORT OF PASSENGERS.

"BUT THE EXISTING TERMINAL OFFERS LITTLE SCOPE FOR THIS AND IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE POSSIBLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE," HE SAID.

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COMMUNICATION CHANNELS EFFECTIVE IN NORTH AND TAI PO

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THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE ALREADY EFFECTIVE AND ADEQUATE IN NORTH AND TAI PO DISTRICTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEREFORE, THERE HAS BEEN NO NEED TO ESTABLISH AREA COMMITTEES (ACS) IN THESE DISTRICTS, NOR ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO FORM AC'S IN THE NEAR FUTURE, MR SUEN SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD, HE SAID HOWEVER, THE SITUATION WOULD BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW.

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ACS WERE FORMED ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A PERCEIVED NEED TO SUPPLEMENT EXISTING CHANNELS OF CONSULTATION WITHIN A DISTRICT, HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, ACS EXIST IN ALL THE DISTRICTS EXCEPT NORTH AND TAI PO.

BUT IN THESE TWO DISTRICTS, HE SAID, WHERE MANY AREAS WERE STILL PREDOMINANTLY RURAL, THE RURAL COMMITTEES PROVIDED A VERY EFFECTIVE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL RESIDENTS, INCLUDING BOTH THE INDIGENOUS VILLAGERS AS WELL AS NEW TOWN RESIDENTS.

"IN ADDITION, THERE IS A WELL BALANCED GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND THEIR COMMITTEES.

"FURTHERMORE, OTHER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES SUCH AS THE DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, THE CIVIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE COMPRISE OF MEMBERS WHO COME FROM A WIDE SPECTRUM OF SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND INTERESTS," MR SUEN SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT MANY MEMBERS OF THESE COMMITTEES WERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOCAL OWNERS CORPORATIONS AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES.

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S FOR S EXPLAINS BOAT INCIDENT

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR IAN STRACHAN, EXPLAINED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AN INCIDENT IN WHICH TWO HONG KONG BOATS WERE INTERCEPTED BY CHINESE PATROL VESSELS LAST MONTH.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON STEVEN POON KWOK-LIM, HE SAID WHEN THE MARINE POLICE AND AN AUXILIARY AIR FORCE HELICOPTER ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, BOTH THE BARGE AND THE TUG-BOAT WERE IN CHINESE WATERS.

"THE CHINESE SIDE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED THAT THEIR PATROL VESSELS FIRST INTERCEPTED THE BOATS IN CHINESE WATERS.

"AN NO TIME WERE ANY OF THE VESSELS OBSERVED BY THE HONG KONG AUTHORITIES INSIDE HONG KONG WATERS," HE SAID.

MR STRACHAN SAID THERE HAD BEEN NO NEGOTIATION WITH THE CHINESE SIDE OVER THE INCIDENT, ALTHOUGH IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS AND AGAIN ON MAY 7 THE GOVERNMENT HAD SOUGHT INFORMATION FROM THEM ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE CREW.

HE SAID WHETHER THE CREW COULD BE PERMITTED TO RECEIVE VISITORS WAS A MATTER FOR THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES.

"WE ARE AWAITING THEIR RESPONSE TO OUR ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE CREW," HE SAID.

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MOTION ON INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PASSED

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A MOTION ON INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER A TWO-AND-A-HALF HOUR DEBATE AT ITS MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIXTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE MOTION PROPOSED BY THE HON HENRY TANG WHICH URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF ITS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY. THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR CHAU TAK-HAY, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER MOTION ON TAXI POLICY MOVED BY THE HON MIRIAM LAU WAS ALSO PASSED.

TWELVE MEMBERS DEBATED THE MOTION. THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

IN ADDITION, 13 MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE RAISED BY THE HON K.K. FUNG ON LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, REPLIED FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

TWO BILLS - PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 - WERE PASSED.

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

THEY WERE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1992, POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, GOVERNMENT FLYING SERVICE BILL, BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1992 AND CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL.

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GOVERNOR VISITS QEH

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THE GOVERNOR, LORD WILSON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL WHERE HE WAS BRIEFED ON PROGRESS IN ELIMINATING CAMP BEDS FROM PUBLIC HOSPITALS.

HE CONGRATULATED THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ON ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE AT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL WELL AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

LORD WILSON SAID:

"IN MY ADDRESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LAST OCTOBER, I SAID THAT I HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE CAMP BEDS FROM OVERCROWDED HOSPITAL WARDS WITHIN A YEAR. I AM PLEASED TO HEAR THAT THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY WILL COME VERY CLOSE TO ACHIEVING THIS FORMIDABLE TARGET."

"WHEN I VISITED QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL IN AUGUST 1987 OVERCROWDING IN SOME OF THE WARDS WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

"OVER 100 CAMP BEDS WERE BEING USED IN THE WARDS. NOW THESE HAVE DISAPPEARED. THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IS ON TARGET TO ELIMINATE CAMP BEDS AT PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL BY OCTOBER.

"AT THAT STAGE, OVER 70% OF THE CAMP BEDS IN OUR HOSPITALS WILL HAVE BEEN REMOVED. ALL SHOULD HAVE GONE BY EARLY 1993.

"THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY WAS SET UP WITH THE CLEAR OBJECTIVE OF RAISING THE STANDARDS OF PATIENT CARE IN OUR PUBLIC HOSPITALS.

"THIS IS THE CRITERION BY WHICH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AUTHORITY WILL BE JUDGED. THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE. TO GET RID OF CAMP BEDS SHOWS THAT THIS QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT IS BEING ACHIEVED."

THE GOVERNOR WAS TOLD THAT THE ELIMINATION OF CAMP BEDS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF OVERFLOW WARDS TO PROVIDE A CENTRAL POOL OF BEDS FOR PATIENTS DISPLACED FROM THE SPECIALIST WARDS.

IN THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN COMPLEMENTED BY EIGHT ADDITIONAL OBSERVATION BEDS IN THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.

THE GOVERNOR WAS BRIEFED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, SIR S.Y. CHUNG; THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, DR E.K. YEOH; AND THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT, DR CHOY YUEN-CHUNG.

HE TOURED SOME OF THE OLD WARDS AND THE NEW B BLOCK EXTENSION, AND WAS BRIEFED ON THE HOSPITAL'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

THE GOVERNOR WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED TO HEAR ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE OLDER WARDS, INCLUDING CENTRAL AIR-CONDITIONING AND RENOVATION, AND THE INSTALLATION OF THE FIRST MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING SYSTEM IN THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY.

THIS NEW SYSTEM FOR SCANNING AND DIAGNOSIS WILL BE COMMISSIONED DURING THE AUTUMN OF THIS YEAR.

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PLAN FOR WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING PROGRESSING

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CARRY OUT A DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF THE FINANCIAL, ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF BIDS FOR THE WESTERN HARBOUR CROSSING (WHC) IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

THE SUCCESSFUL TENDERER WILL BE CHOSEN EARLY NEXT YEAR. CONSTRUCTION FOR WHC IS EXPECTED TO START BY MID-1993 FOR COMPLETION BY MID-1997.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR JOHN TELFORD, AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE HONG KONG HIGHWAYS ASSOCIATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TENDERS ARE BEING INVITED FOR A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT THE WHC ON A BUILD, OPERATE AND TRANSFER (BOT) BASIS UNDER AN OPEN AND COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS. THE CLOSING DATE WILL BE JULY 3.

THE SUCCESSFUL TENDERER WILL BE GRANTED THE RIGHT TO COLLECT TOLLS OVER A FRANCHISE PERIOD OF 30 YEARS.

MR TELFORD SAID THE FRANCHISE TO BE GRANTED BY LAW WOULD SET OUT THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FRANCHISEE IN CONSTRUCTING, OPERATING AND MAINTAINING THE TUNNEL.

"AS THE FRANCHISE WILL EXTEND BEYOND 1997, THERE WILL BE A NEED TO DISCUSS ITS TERM AND CONDITIONS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE OF THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE BEFORE IT IS AWARDED."

"THE CHINESE HAVE ALREADY BEEN BRIEFED ON THE PROJECT PRIOR TO THE ISSUE OF THE INVITATION TO TENDER," HE SAID.

MR TELFORD SAID THE WHC WOULD BE BUILT IN A DUAL THREE-LANE CONFIGURATION BECAUSE TRAFFIC IN THE TUNNEL WAS FORECAST TO INCREASE TO ABOUT 120,000 VEHICLES PER DAY BY 2001, ALREADY BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF A DUAL TWO-LANE TUNNEL.

APART FROM CONNECTING WITH THE NEW WEST KOWLOON EXPRESSWAY IN KOWLOON, MR TELFORD SAID THE CROSSING WOULD CONNECT WITH ROUTE 7 AT SAI YING PUN ON HONG KONG ISLAND, PROVIDING ACCESS EASTWARD VIA CONNAUGHT ROAD AND WESTWARD TO BELCHER BAY.

"AT THE TIME WHEN THE WHC OPENS, ROADS WILL BE UPGRADED IN WESTERN DISTRICT TO PROVIDE A CONNECTION BETWEEN BELCHER BAY AND POKFULAM ROAD, VIA KENNEDY TOWN, ROCKHILL AND SMITHFIELD TO SERVE TRAFFIC HEADING FOR THE SOUTH OF THE ISLAND," HE SAID.

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COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE ALL-TIME LOW SINCE 1986

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THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE LAST YEAR DROPPED TO AN ALL-TIME LOW SINCE 1986, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE FOR 1991.

ANNOUNCING DETAILS OF THE REPORT THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (PCC), DR DANIEL TSE, SAID A TOTAL OF 3,158 COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED IN 1991 COMPARED WITH 3,424 IN 1990, REPRESENTING A DROP OF ABOUT 8%.

THE NUMBER WAS 4,544 IN 1986, THE YEAR WHEN THE COMMITTEE WAS FIRST SET UP TO MONITOR AND REVIEW THE HANDLING BY THE POLICE OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS.

EARLIER IN THE AFTERNOON, THE COMMITTEE'S VICE-CHAIRMAN, MRS PEGGY LAM, PRESENTED THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT FOR 1991 TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ON THE REASON FOR THE DECLINE, DR TSE SAID: "WE HAVEN'T CARRIED OUT ANY STUDY ON THE QUESTION BUT I BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

"ON ONE HAND, THE QUALITY AND DISCIPLINE OF POLICE OFFICERS HAVE IMPROVED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CITIZENS HAVE HAD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF POLICE WORK," HE SAID.

DESPITE THE DECLINE IN THE OVERALL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS, THOSE ALLEGING ASSAULTS BY THE POLICE HAVE BEEN ON THE INCREASE.

IN 1991, 1,699 SUCH COMPLAINTS WERE REGISTERED, COMPARED WITH 1,645 IN 1990 AND 1,248 IN 1986.

"WE MUST NOT TAKE THESE FIGURES ON THEIR FACE VALUE," SAID DR TSE. "AS MRS LAM POINTED OUT IN HER STATEMENT AT LEGCO ABOUT HALF AN HOUR AGO, A VERY LARGE PERCENTAGE OF SUCH COMPLAINTS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN BY THE COMPLAINANTS OR THE COMPLAINTS WERE NOT PURSUABLE BECAUSE THE COMPLAINANTS REFUSED TO GIVE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION."

"IN THE REPORTS EXAMINED AND ENDORSED BY THE COMMITTEE IN 1986, 47.3% OF THESE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT ASSAULTS WERE WITHDRAWN OR NOT PURSUABLE. THIS HAS STEADILY INCREASED TO 85.3% IN 1991.

"SO, IF THE NUMBER OF WITHDRAWN AND NOT-PURSUABLE CASES IS DEDUCTED, THE NUMBER OF ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS HAVE IN FACT BEEN DECREASING," DR TSE ADDED.

ON THE CAUSE OF THE TREND OF INCREASING NUMBER OF ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS, WITHDRAWN AND NOT-PURSUABLE CASES, DR TSE SAID: "ONE THEORY IS THAT SOME OF THESE ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE BY CRIME SUSPECTS IN ORDER TO HELP THEIR DEFENCE IN THE COURT CASE AGAINST THEM.

/"SUCH COMPLAINANTS

"SUCH COMPLAINANTS, THEREFORE, DO NOT WISH TO PURSUE THE ALLEGATIONS FURTHER ONCE THE COURT CASE IS OVER.

"I CANNOT SAY, HOWEVER, TO WHAT EXTENT SUCH A THEORY REPRESENTS THE TRUTH SINCE THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT CARRIED OUT A STUDY ON THIS QUESTION."

COMPLAINTS ARE INVESTIGATED BY THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE OFFICE (CAPO) UNDER THE POLICE. CAPO'S REPORTS ARE MONITORED AND REVIEWED BY THE PCC.

A COMPLAINT IS NOT FINALISED UNTIL THE PCC'S QUERIES AND SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED TO THE PCC'S SATISFACTION AND THE REPORT HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY THE COMMITTEE.

PRESENTING THE REPORT TO LEGCO, MRS PEGGY LAM SAID 3,333 CAPO'S REPORTS WERE ENDORSED BY THE COMMITTEE LAST YEAR.

"THESE REPORTS DEAL WITH 4,580 ALLEGATIONS, OF WHICH ABOUT TWO-THIRDS WERE WITHDRAWN OR NOT PURSUABLE. ONLY 2.3% OF THE ALLEGATIONS WERE SUBSTANTIATED."

REFUTING SUGGESTION THAT THE LOW RATE OF SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATION REFLECTED ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENT COMPLAINTS SYSTEM, SHE SAID: "SUCH AN INFERENCE IS INVALID BECAUSE IT ASSUMES THAT MOST COMPLAINTS ARE JUSTIFIED.

"WHILE WE SHOULD NOT EASILY DISMISS A COMPLAINT AS MISGUIDED, IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD NOT DISBELIEVE A COMPLAINEE SIMPLY BECAUSE HIS ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE COMPLAINANT.

"THIS IS THE REASON FOR THE 27.1% OF ALLEGATIONS WHICH WERE CLASSIFIED AS 'UNSUBSTANTIATED'. NEARLY ALL THESE CASES INVOLVE THE COMPLAINANTS' WORDS AGAINST THE POLICE OFFICERS', WITH NO INDEPENDENT WITNESS FOR EITHER SIDE," MRS LAM ADDED.

TO SHOW THAT A COMPLAINANT'S WORDS ARE NOT EASILY DISMISSED AS MISGUIDED, SHE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY 1.8% OF THE ALLEGATIONS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE LAST YEAR WERE CLASSIFIED AS "FALSE".

"EACH AND EVERY SUCH CASE WAS REFERRED TO THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT FOR ADVICE ON WHETHER THE COMPLAINANTS SHOULD BE PROSECUTED FOR WASTING POLICE TIME."

ILLUSTRATING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE, MRS LAM SAID: "WITH REGARD TO THE 3,333 CAPO'S REPORTS ENDORSED BY THE COMMITTEE IN 1991, THE FINAL CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN THESE REPORTS INCORPORATED 123 SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE, MAINLY ON FURTHER INVESTIGATION REQUIRED AND CLASSIFICATION OF RESULT.

"IN ADDITION, 269 COMMENTS AND QUERIES WERE RAISED AND CAPO'S SUBSEQUENT EXPLANATIONS WERE ACCEPTED," SHE SAID.

ACCORDING TO THE PCC'S REPORT FOR 1991, NEW PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED FROM JANUARY 1 THIS YEAR TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN MINOR COMPLAINTS AND ALSO THE SUB-JUDICE COMPLAINTS.

UNDER THE NEW PROCEDURES, IF THE COMPLAINANTS SO AGREE, CERTAIN MINOR COMPLAINTS MAY BE RESOLVED INFORMALLY THROUGH THE PERSONAL INTERVENTION OF A CONCILIATING OFFICER OF THE RANK OF SUPERINTENDENT OR ABOVE, WHO WILL INTERVIEW THE COMPLAINANTS AND EITHER JOINTLY OR SEPARATELY, THE COMPLAINNEES.

SUB-JUDICE COMPLAINTS ARE COMPLAINTS LIKELY TO BE RAISED AGAIN BY CRIME SUSPECTS DURING THE COURT CASE AGAINST THEM.

THE COMMITTEE HAS ACCEPTED A SUGGESTION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND CAPO THAT AFTER A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION, SUCH COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT FOR ADVICE ON WHETHER A FULL INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BEFORE THE COURT CASE.

THE PCC IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. CHAIRED BY DR DANIEL TSE, ITS MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES TWO VICE-CHAIRMEN WHO ARE BOTH LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, EIGHT JUSTICES OF PEACE AND TWO EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS, NAMELY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE) AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS.

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FOUR PIECES OF LAND TO LET
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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR SHORT-TERM TENANCIES ON FOUR PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES.

LOCATED AT CHUN WAH ROAD, NGAU TAU KOK, TWO OF THE SITES HAVE AN AREA OF ABOUT 5,150 SQUARE METRES AND ABOUT 4,650 SQUARE METRES RESPECTIVELY.

ONE OF THEM IS DESIGNATED FOR THE PARKING OF MOTOR VEHICLES LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES WITH THEIR TRAILERS OR CHASSIS ATTACHED) OR AS A FEE-PAYING PUBLIC PARKING AREA.

THE OTHER LOT IS INTENDED FOR OPEN STORAGE OF GOODS (EXCLUDING CONTAINERS, CONTAINER VEHICLES WITH THEIR TRAILERS OR CHASSIS ATTACHED AND VEHICLES LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE).

BOTH TENANCIES ARE FOR NINE MONTHS AND QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE OTHER TWO SITES ARE IN KWAI CHUNG. ONE IS AT AREA 10E, HING SHING ROAD AND THE OTHER IS AT AREA 26E.

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WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 3,570 SQUARE METRES, THE SITE AT AREA 10E IS EARMARKED FOR A FEE-PAYING CAR PARK FOR PRIVATE CARS, GOODS VEHICLES AND CONTAINER TRACTORS WITHOUT TRAILERS, ALL OF WHICH MUST BE LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

THE SITE AT AREA 26E OCCUPIES AN AREA OF ABOUT 4,100 SQUARE METRES AND IS INTENDED FOR A FEE-PAYING CAR PARK FOR CONTAINER TRACTORS AND TRAILERS LICENSED UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

THE TENANCIES ARE FOR THREE YEARS AND ONE YEAR RESPECTIVELY AND QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON JUNE 12.

FORMS OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICES AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM, AND TENDER PLANS INSPECTED AT THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14/F, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG; THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON OR THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON EAST, 10/F, YAU MA TEI CARPARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON; AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KWAI TSING, 10/F AND 11/F, TSUEN WAN STATION MULTI-STOREY CARPARK BUILDING, 174-208 CASTLE PEAK ROAD, TSUEN WAN.

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CONTRACT FOR FANLING SCHOOL AWARDED

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THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AWARDED A \$28.4 MILLION CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN LUEN WO HUI, FANLING.

OCCUPYING AN AREA OF ABOUT 5,860 SQUARE METRES, THE SCHOOL WILL HAVE A MAIN TEACHING BLOCK, A BLOCK OF SPECIAL ROOMS, AN ASSEMBLY HALL, SEPARATE ANCILLARY BUILDINGS AND STAFF QUARTERS.

THE MAIN TEACHING BLOCK WILL COMPRISE 26 CLASSROOMS WITH A LIBRARY, A COMPUTER ROOM AND STAFF ROOMS ON THE UPPER FLOORS AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICES AND CHANGING ROOMS ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

THE BLOCK OF SPECIAL ROOMS, WITH A COVERED PLAY AREA ON THE GROUND FLOOR, WILL PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS.

WORK FOR THE PROJECT IS TO START SOON AND WILL TAKE ABOUT 15 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT OFFICE ON MOVE

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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT OFFICE IN TONKIN STREET WILL MOVE TO A NEW OFFICE ON 6/F AND 9/F OF WEST COAST INTERNATIONAL BUILDING, 290 UN CHAU STREET, TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE COUNTER WILL BE LOCATED ON 6/F.

THE DISTRICT OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER, 720 4251, WILL REMAIN UNCHANGE.

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FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS ON AIRPORT FINANCING PLAN

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THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON THE NEW AIRPORT AND RELATED PROJECTS WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) FOR FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS ON THE AIRPORT FINANCING PLAN.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT CONFERENCE HALL, FIRST FLOOR, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, MAIN WING (NEW ANNEXE), STARTING AT 2.30 PM.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS ARE REQUESTED TO RESERVE A SEAT BY TELEPHONING MS LEUNG WING-CHONG ON TEL 802 3302 DURING OFFICE HOURS.

AS SEATING IN THE CONFERENCE HALL IS LIMITED, BOOKINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED BASIS.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING.

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FRESH WATER CUT IN SAI KUNG

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO SOME PREMISES IN SAI KUNG WILL BE TURNED OFF FROM 9.30 AM TO 3 PM ON FRIDAY (MAY 29) TO FACILITATE CONNECTION WORK ON WATER MAINS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT MAU PO VILLAGE, TAI HANG HAU VILLAGE AND ALL PREMISES ON LUNG HA WAN ROAD.

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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	26.5.92	1,688
EFFECT OF FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED ON	27.5.92	-933 *
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS MORNING		+233
EFFECT OF OPERATIONS THIS AFTERNOON		NEUTRAL
* O/N ASSISTANCE TO BE REVERSED	-700 MN	
OTHER FORWARDS TO BE SETTLED	-233 MN	

TRADE WEIGHTED INDEX 111.8 *+0.1* 27.5.92

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS

TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.85 PCT	18 MONTHS	2311	6.25	102.32	4.66
1 MONTH	2.71 PCT	21 MONTHS	2402	5.50	100.96	4.97
3 MONTHS	2.76 PCT	24 MONTHS	2405	5.50	100.68	5.20
6 MONTHS	3.22 PCT					
12 MONTHS	3.93 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 18,714MN (RECORD HIGH)

CLOSED 27 MAY 1992

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