



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN THE MOTION DEBATE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON CHILDREN TRAUMA:

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

THE SOCIAL ISSUES RAISED BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS DURING THIS DEBATE HAVE BEEN WIDE-RANGING, INSIGHTFUL AND EDUCATIONAL. A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS WERE BOTH INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT. I WOULDN'T DO JUSTICE TO THESE SUGGESTIONS BY PROVIDING A QUICK OFF-THE-CUFF RESPONSE BECAUSE I THINK EACH SUGGESTION NEEDS CAREFUL ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATION. SO IN MY REPLY I SHALL CONCENTRATE ON BROAD ISSUES AND ATTEMPT TO COVER AREAS INADEQUATELY COVERED IN THIS VERY COMPREHENSIVE DEBATE, AND/OR TO CORRECT SOME ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS AS TO FACT. FAR BE IT FOR ME TO BE SO BOLD OR SO ARROGANT AS TO SUGGEST THAT WE IN THE GOVERNMENT ALONE KNOW THE ANSWER OR HAVE THE CURE.

PARENTS WHO ARE THE CLOSEST AND THE DEAREST TO THEIR CHILDREN IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES DO CARE. BUT I DO AGREE THAT WE SHOULD DO OUR UTMOST TO HELP THEM TO CARE, TO PROVIDE THE PARENTS WITH THE SUPPORTS THAT THEY NEED. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION IS A FOCAL PRIORITY OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE.

A NUMBER OF INFORMATION BOOKLETS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED TO EDUCATE PARENTS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME SAFETY. THEY CARRY THEMES SUCH AS "A SAFE HOME IS A HAPPY HOME", "SAFETY BEGINS AT HOME" AND "SAFETY STARTS AT HOME: HOW TO HAVE A SAFE HOME LIFE". NOW THESE SEEMINGLY SIMPLISTIC MESSAGES ARE IMPORTANT AND SHOULD BE REPEATED AND NOTED. WHILST PARENTS SHOULD NO DOUBT LEARN HOW TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS AT HOME, GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MOUNT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS ON HOME SAFETY. SOME NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALSO WORKING ON INJURY PREVENTION IN CHILDREN.

FOR CASES OF HOME ACCIDENTS THAT COULD HAVE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS SUCH AS EXTENSIVE BURNS, PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE CHILD BY QUALIFIED MEDICAL STAFF. THE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS WILL ALSO BE NOTIFIED AND, DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF INDIVIDUAL CASES, PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST OR A CHILD PSYCHIATRIST WILL BE SOUGHT. COUNSELLING WILL BE PROVIDED SEPARATELY TO THE PARENTS AS TO THE PROPER WAYS OF PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO THE CHILD, COMPLEMENTED BY FOLLOW-UP SESSIONS TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF RECOVERY.

A NUMBER OF FATAL ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN LEFT UNSUPERVISED AT HOME AWAKEN OUR COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE. ONE DEATH IS ALWAYS ONE DEATH TOO MANY! THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PROMOTING ENERGETICALLY THE CONCEPT OF MUTUAL HELP AMONG FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS ARE ENCOURAGED TO GROUP TOGETHER TO HELP ONE ANOTHER.

WITH THE INCREASING NUMBER OF MOTHERS IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT, THERE IS A NEED FOR DAY CARE FACILITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WHO CANNOT BE CARED FOR BY PARENTS DURING THE DAY. NOW CONTRARY TO THE COMMENTS MADE BY SOME MEMBERS, WE DO HAVE CRECHES, WE DO HAVE NURSERIES APART FROM CHILD CARE CENTRES. INDEED THE PROVISION OF DAY CRECHES HAS BEEN INCREASING AND DAY NURSERIES WILL BE EXPANDED. AS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS OCTOBER ADDRESS, SECURE FUNDING WILL BE PROVIDED TO IMPLEMENT THE TARGETS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES.

AND I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT THE IDEA OF WORK-BASED CHILD CARE CENTRES IS PROMOTED AMONGST INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL EMPLOYERS. I MYSELF FOR ONE AM PROMOTING ONE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS. THE AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAMME AND THE OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE SERVICE WILL ALSO BE EXPANDED.

SOME MEMBERS HAVE SUGGESTED THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO PREVENT PARENTS FROM LEAVING THEIR CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME. THIS HAS BEEN DEBATED ON MANY OCCASIONS, AND ON MANY OCCASIONS I HAVE BEEN SORELY TEMPTED TO SUPPORT THIS IDEA. A CONSULTATIVE PAPER ON MEASURES TO PREVENT CHILDREN FROM BEING LEFT UNATTENDED AT HOME WAS INDEED DISCUSSED IN OCTOBER. THE PUBLIC RESPONSE DURING THE TIME WAS THAT LEGISLATION SHOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED TO PROHIBIT PARENTS FROM LEAVING THEIR CHILDREN AT HOME ALONE. THE GENERAL CONSENSUS WAS THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION SHOULD BE PROMOTED TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM CERTAIN AT THIS STAGE OF OUR DEVELOPMENT. MORE CHILD CARE CENTRES AND SERVICES SHOULD BE PROVIDED. I SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION.

APART FROM HOME SAFETY, PARENTS SHOULD ALSO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION IN CHOOSING TOYS FOR CHILDREN AS SUGGESTED BY THE HONOURABLE MR WONG. THE TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS SAFETY ORDINANCE WAS PASSED BY THIS COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR. THE PURPOSE OF THAT ORDINANCE IS TO PROVIDE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR TOYS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS IN ORDER TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM UNSAFE TOYS AND PRODUCTS. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD, PARENTS MUST REMAIN VIGILANT IN CHOOSING TOYS AND PRODUCTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

OUTSIDE THE HOME, CHILDREN ARE ALSO EXPOSED TO POTENTIAL DANGERS. ESCALATORS, ELECTRIC GATES CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUNG CHILDREN. PARENTS SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE ON THEIR SMALL CHILDREN WHEN GOING OUT WITH THEM AND SHOULD NEVER LEAVE THEM TO PLAY AROUND UNSUPERVISED. PARENTS SHOULD ALSO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ROAD SAFETY. A LOT OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVED CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE STREET OR TRAVELLING IN A CAR. IN 1990, 1991 AND 1992, THERE WERE SOME 2493, 2631 AND 2533 CHILDREN AGED 14 AND BELOW INJURED, AND SOME VERY SERIOUSLY, IN ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS. I REGRET THAT THIS VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT WAS NOT COVERED IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE DEBATE.

TURNING NOW TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, SOME CHILDREN ARE HURT NOT BECAUSE OF ACCIDENTS, BUT AS A RESULT OF DELIBERATE ABUSE AND NEGLECT. THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL IN APRIL LAST YEAR. AND I AM STILL WAITING FOR THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL. THE BILL SEEKS TO GIVE BETTER PROTECTION TO CHILDREN BY WIDENING THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A CHILD MAY BE CONSIDERED TO BE IN NEED OF CARE OR PROTECTION. THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT WILL BE INCLUDED AS GROUNDS FOR CONSIDERING A CHILD TO BE IN NEED OF CARE OR PROTECTION UNDER THE ORDINANCE. THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE WILL HAVE MORE FLEXIBLE POWERS OF INTERVENTION AND INVESTIGATION WITHOUT ALWAYS HAVING FIRST TO REMOVE A CHILD FROM HOME. I HOPE SINCERELY THAT THIS BILL CAN BE PASSED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNIT OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE CASEWORK SERVICES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WHOSE SAFETY OR WELFARE IS ENDANGERED BY ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF THEIR PARENTS OR CARERS.

APART FROM SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, SPECIAL PROCEDURES HAVE ALSO BEEN ESTABLISHED IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS TO CATER FOR TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN. ALL SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE ARE BROUGHT IMMEDIATELY TO THE ATTENTION OF THE POLICE, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, AND THE CONSULTANT DOCTOR IN CHARGE FOR APPROPRIATE ACTIONS. CO-OPERATION WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE PARENTS FOR THE CHILD TO BE ADMITTED FOR TREATMENT OR OBSERVATION. FOR SUCH CASES, THE HOSPITAL STAFF CONCERNED WILL EXERCISE THEIR DISCRETION ACCORDING TO THE PREVAILING SOCIAL RATHER THAN MEDICAL INDICATIONS. SHOULD THE PARENTS REFUSE TO GRANT CONSENT FOR THE ADMISSION, ASSISTANCE WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO INVOKE RELEVANT PROVISIONS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILE ORDINANCE. APART FROM MEDICAL TREATMENT, COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE BY MEDICAL STAFF WILL BE PROVIDED TO MINIMIZE THE POTENTIAL DANGER AND DAMAGE TO THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES VARIOUS SUPPORT SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND TO FAMILIES. THERE ARE HOTLINES. HOTLINE SERVICES, MANNED BY PROFESSIONAL WORKERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, RENDERS IMMEDIATE COUNSELLING SERVICE OVER THE PHONE AND ANSWERS ENQUIRIES ON WELFARE SERVICES FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC. IMMEDIATE OUTREACHING SERVICE AND CRISIS INTERVENTION ARE PROVIDED BY SOCIAL WORKERS FROM FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES OR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE UNITS. OTHER HOTLINE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.

CASEWORKERS OF THE 30 FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO COPE WITH PROBLEMS AND PROVIDE COUNSELLING TO PERSONS UNDER STRESS OR WITH SUICIDAL TENDENCIES. COUNSELLING BY THE DEPARTMENT'S CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IS ALSO AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS WITH PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES AND FAMILY PROBLEMS. GROUP DISCUSSIONS, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND TALKS ARE ORGANIZED FOR STUDENTS TO PROMOTE SELF-AWARENESS AND TO HELP THEM COPE WITH STRESS AND PROBLEMS. WE ARE EXPANDING IN ALL THESE AREAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR PLAN.

FURTHERMORE, FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO HANDLE FRUSTRATIONS AND TO COPE WITH CRISIS. PROGRAMMES ARE ALSO DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION AND HELP PARENTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH THE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS. AND I KNOW ALSO THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN A SERIES OF MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS WITH PROBLEMS. PARENTS ARE ALSO TAUGHT TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS. STUDENTS THEMSELVES ARE TAUGHT SKILLS ON COPING WITH STRESS AND PROBLEMS. SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS HAVE ALSO BEEN ORGANIZED AND RESOURCE MATERIALS PREPARED.

THIS IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED TO DO MORE AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY OF LISTENING TO MEMBERS' SUGGESTIONS AT THE DEBATE.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, I AM SURE PARENTS MUST FACE UP TO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTHOOD. I AM SURE THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS DO. WHEN PARENTS NEED HELP, THE COMMUNITY MUST HELP THEM TO DO SO. HOWEVER, IN SAD CASES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT BY IRRESPONSIBLE PARENTS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO INTERVENE. WE DON'T WANT THAT, OR DO WE! MAY BE WE DO.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THIS DEBATE. HONOURABLE MEMBERS HAVE REASONED WELL BUT AS A MODERN PHILOSOPHER PUT IT, "WE DO LOVE AND REASON, LOVE IS THE GREATER". I'D LIKE TO DRAW UPON THE HONOURABLE ELSIE TU'S STATEMENT, BECAUSE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEED FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ECHO THE HONOURABLE SAMUEL WONG'S CALL FOR LOVE, A VERY SIMPLE WORD, BUT HOW IMPORTANT. I'D LIKE TO END WITH A QUOTE WHICH SAYS LOVE IS ALL WE HAVE AND THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER. LET US LOVE OUR CHILDREN IN OUR MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

THANK YOU, MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

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FOLLOWING IS THE SPEECH BY SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, AT THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON AIDS IN HONG KONG:

MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT,

I SHARE MANY OF THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS IN THIS ADJOURNMENT DEBATE.

IN THE SPACE OF JUST OVER 10 YEARS, AIDS HAS DEVELOPED INTO A WORLDWIDE EPIDEMIC, CLAIMING THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ALL CONTINENTS. IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD, WHOLE FAMILIES AND VILLAGES HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED. COUNTRIES ARE LOSING THEIR MOST PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE, MEN AND WOMEN IN THE PRIME OF LIFE, THE MAINSTAYS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, NOT TO MENTION THE SOLE SUPPORTERS OF THE VERY YOUNG AND THE ELDERLY PEOPLE. THE TERM "AIDS ORPHAN" HAS BECOME PART OF OUR VOCABULARY.

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE DISEASE ARE EXTENSIVE AND GO BEYOND THE HEALTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL. IT THREATENS THE VERY FABRIC OF SOCIETY. AS ONE TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENT HAS PUT IT,

"AIDS IS A POLITICAL CRISIS."

I AM GRATEFUL THAT MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL HAVE FOCUSED ON THIS ISSUE.

IN RESPECT OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED EARLIER BY THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG, I HAVE NOTHING TO ADD TO THE ANSWERS ALREADY GIVEN. SO I SHALL FOCUS TONIGHT IN MY CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE MANY BROAD AREAS OF FOCUS. I SHALL RESPOND TO THE CALL FOR OPENNESS. AIDS REMAINS VERY MUCH A MYSTERIOUS DISEASE IN HONG KONG. IT IS SHROUDED BY FEAR AND MISUNDERSTANDING, PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION. WHILST SCIENTISTS HAVE STILL TO DEVELOP A VACCINE OR A CURE FOR THE DISEASE, THE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE IN MEDICAL RESEARCH OVER THE PAST DECADE HAS AT LEAST ENABLED US TO HAVE A PLITER UNDERSTANDING OF THE AIDS SYNDROME.

WE KNOW THAT AIDS IS CAUSED BY INFECTION OF THE BODY BY A RETROVIRUS KNOWN AS HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV). IT HAS A LONG INCUBATION PERIOD DURING WHICH THE VIRUS REMAINS DORMANT INSIDE THE CARRIER'S BODY. AFTER A VARIABLE PERIOD OF TIME, THE VIRUS MAY START GRADUALLY TO DAMAGE THE BODY'S DEFENCE SYSTEM, MAKING THE PERSON SUSCEPTIBLE TO REPEATED SERIOUS INFECTIONS AND CANCERS, FROM WHICH THE PERSON ULTIMATELY DIES. APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE INFECTED INDIVIDUALS WOULD DEVELOP SYMPTOMS DUE TO AIDS OVER A PERIOD OF SOME TEN YEARS WHILE THE REMAINDER MAY STILL BE SYMPTOM-FREE AND REMAIN NORMAL IN THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CAPACITY.

SCIENTISTS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ISOLATED THE VIRUS AND ESTABLISHED THE PATHOGENESIS OF THE DISEASE. ESSENTIALLY, HIV IS TRANSMITTED MAINLY THROUGH BLOOD, SEMAN AND VAGINAL SECRETION. THUS, THE MAIN ROUTES OF INFECTION ARE THROUGH SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, THROUGH TRANSFUSION OF CONTAMINATED BLOOD OR BLOOD PRODUCTS, THROUGH SHARING OF NEEDLES FOR DRUG INJECTION AND PERINATALLY FROM AN INFECTED MOTHER TO HER OFFSPRING.

OTHER BODY FLUIDS SUCH AS SALIVA, SWEAT OR TEARS HAVE NOT BEEN FOUND TO TRANSMIT HIV. HIV IS VERY FRAGILE AND CANNOT SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE HUMAN BODY. HENCE, A PERSON CANNOT GET AIDS FROM NORMAL DAY-TO-DAY CONTACTS WITH HIV-INFECTED PERSONS, SUCH AS FROM SHAKING HANDS OR HUGGING, HAVING MEALS TOGETHER, WORKING IN THE SAME OFFICE OR FACTORY, OR ATTENDING THE SAME SCHOOL.

IN OTHER WORDS, I EMPHASIZE, YOU CANNOT GET AIDS JUST BY BEING CLOSE TO PEOPLE. I AM MENTIONING ALL THESE BECAUSE THESE ARE SCIENTIFIC FACTS, AND YET STILL NOT VERY WELL KNOWN IN HONG KONG.

SO, HOW OFTEN, HOW OFTEN INDEED, HAVE WE HEARD SUGGESTIONS THAT INNOCENT CHILDREN WHO HAVE UNFORTUNATELY BEEN INFECTED BY HIV SHOULD BE KEPT AWAY FROM THEIR SCHOOLS? SUCH PREJUDICE IS REGRETTABLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY DO UNDERLINE THE NEED FOR STEPPING UP PUBLIC EDUCATION ON AIDS, TO REMOVE MISCONCEPTIONS AND TO CHANGE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES. WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A VACCINE OR A CURE FOR AIDS, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION REMAIN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE SPREAD OF THIS EPIDEMIC. IN LINE WITH WHO'S GLOBAL STRATEGY, HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S KEY OBJECTIVES ARE :

- (A) TO PREVENT INFECTION WITH HIV;
- (B) TO REDUCE THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF HIV INFECTION;
AND
- (C) TO MOBILIZE AND UNIFY PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS AGAINST AIDS.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING I THINK, WE IN THE GOVERNMENT HAVE ADOPTED A PROACTIVE APPROACH. EVEN BEFORE THE FIRST AIDS CASE WAS DIAGNOSED IN HONG KONG, AN EXPERT COMMITTEE ON AIDS WAS FORMED IN 1984 TO LOOK INTO THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY OF CONTROL. IN MAY THE FOLLOWING YEAR, A DEDICATED SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP WAS FORMED TO SUPERVISE THE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM ON AIDS AND TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIV INFECTION. IN 1985, A COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR HIV INFECTED PERSONS WAS PUT INTO OPERATION. THE HONG KONG RED CROSS ALSO STARTED SCREENING ALL DONATED BLOOD TO GUARD AGAINST HIV CONTAMINATION. MOREOVER, THE HIV ANTI-BODY TEST BECAME GENERALLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE VIRUS LABORATORY IN QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL. THROUGH THE AIDS COUNSELLING AND HEALTH EDUCATION SERVICES, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH NOW CONDUCTS AN AVERAGE OF SOME 3,000 HIV TESTS ON SAMPLED BLOOD ALONE. IT ALSO PROVIDES MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING FOR CLIENTS, ORGANIZES SUPPORT GROUP FOR PATIENTS, RUNS A SPECIALIST CLINIC FOR HIV POSITIVE PATIENTS AND OPERATES AN AIDS HOT-LINE FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. FURTHERMORE, IT ORGANIZES EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES AIMED AT ENHANCING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE ON THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE DISEASE, PARTICULARLY ON THE WAYS OF PREVENTING INFECTION. IN ADDITION TO APIS AND EXHIBITIONS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STAFF CONDUCTS HEALTH TALKS IN THE CLINICS AND SCHOOLS AND ALSO, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PRODUCED GUIDELINES AND TEACHING KITS FOR SCHOOLS.

FOR THE BETTER COORDINATION OF THE MANY ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY GOVERNMENT AND BY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, TWO YEARS AGO, AN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AIDS WAS SET UP. LATER, THE HONG KONG AIDS FOUNDATION LIMITED WAS ESTABLISHED, RECEIVING MONEY FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE JOCKEY CLUB TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS PART OF OUR OVERALL STRATEGY TO COMBAT AIDS.

IT CAN BE SEEN, THEREFORE, THAT MUCH HAVE BEEN DONE OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. HOWEVER, MUCH MORE, MUCH MUCH MORE NEED TO BE DONE. WE IN HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAVE THEREFORE DEDICATED THIS YEAR TO BE THE YEAR OF CONCENTRATED CAMPAIGN AGAINST AIDS. WE ARE PUTTING IN PLACE PLANS FOR A MAJOR PUBLICITY AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR SUSTAINING THIS EFFORT IN THE COMING YEARS.

/OUR STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGY CALLS FOR A BROAD-BASED MULTISECTORAL RESPONSE BY GOVERNMENT AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS, CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE MEDIA AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS A WHOLE. IN OTHER WORDS, EVERYBODY IN HONG KONG. WE NEED TO CULTIVATE A SYMPATHETIC SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS VITAL TO THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AIDS PREVENTION PROGRAMMES AND HUMANE CARE OF INDIVIDUALS. WE APPRECIATE THE CRITICAL ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING PREVENTION OF AIDS THROUGH SAFER SEXUAL PRACTICE AS WE SEE ALMOST EVERY NIGHT ON TELEVISION, IN PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS AND IN COMBATING STIGMATISATION AND DISCRIMINATION. WE BELIEVE THAT HONG KONG COULD PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE COMBAT AGAINST AIDS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD IF WE GET UP, ACT TOGETHER AND ACT QUICKLY. IN THIS CONTEXT, I HAVE TAKEN VERY CAREFUL NOTE OF MEMBERS' ADVICE AND YOUR VIEWS WHICH ARE VERY HELPFUL AND I WILL TAKE EACH AND EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM INTO ACCOUNT IN FINALIZING OUR PLANS FOR FURTHER ACTION.

I ECHO MEMBERS' CONCERN FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE HAEMOPHILIACS WHO HAVE UNFORTUNATELY BEEN INFECTED BY HIV THROUGH BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCT TRANSFUSION PRIOR TO 1985. I THINK WE ALL KNOW THAT TO THE STATE OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE AT THAT TIME, BLOOD PRODUCTS USED PRIOR TO 1985 WERE NOT TREATED AGAINST CONTAMINATION BY HIV ALTHOUGH THEY WERE STERILIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARD AT THAT TIME.

ALTHOUGH, AS A MATTER OF LAW, GOVERNMENT IS NOT LEGALLY LIABLE TO PAY COMPENSATION, WE IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY INCLUDED, WE HAVE GREAT SYMPATHY FOR THESE HAEMOPHILIACS WHO HAVE TRAGICALLY BECOME INFECTED BY HIV THROUGH BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCT TRANSFUSION PRIOR TO 1985. I HAVE, LAST MONTH, APPOINTED A SPECIAL STUDY GROUP TO EXAMINE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR INFECTION AND TO RECOMMEND ANY SPECIAL CAUSE OF ACTION APPROPRIATE TO HONG KONG FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THESE HIV INFECTED HAEMOPHILIACS. I WOULD REPORT THAT ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL FINDINGS OF THE STUDY GROUP, THE BLOOD PRODUCTS USED SINCE 1986 HAVE BEEN FREE FROM HIV CONTAMINATION.

THIS RED RIBBON THAT SOME OF US IN THIS CHAMBER PROUDLY WEAR MUST ALSO, I AM SURE, TEACH US A CERTAIN DEGREE OF HUMANITY. IN THAT MERE WORDS, ABOVE ALL, WE NEED TO DO MUCH MUCH MORE.

AS A CARING AND COMPASSIONATE GOVERNMENT, WE WILL DO OUR LEVEL BEST TO ASSIST THOSE IN NEED. A PACKAGE OF SPECIAL MEASURES IS BEING DEVELOPED. I LOOK TO MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT WHEN THE PROPOSALS ARE PUT TO THIS COUNCIL. I AM SURE THAT HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL BE FORTHCOMING WITH THEIR SUPPORT IN FINANCE COMMITTEE IN DUE COURSE AS THEY ARE GENEROUS WITH THEIR SYMPATHY AND SUGGESTIONS TODAY. THANK YOU.

BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION BILL INTRODUCED

* * * * *

A BILL THAT SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A STATUTORY BODY WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR ON GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION WILL ALSO ORGANISE AND OVERSEE THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS TO THE THREE TIERS OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTION COMMISSION BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID THE PROPOSED BODY WOULD BE POLITICALLY NEUTRAL, AND ITS IMPARTIALITY WOULD BE ENSURED THROUGH THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND ITS MODUS OPERANDI.

THE COMMISSION WILL COMPRISE THREE MEMBERS, ALL OF WHOM ARE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. ONE MEMBER SHALL BE NOMINATED BY THE FUTURE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"THEY WILL BE PEOPLE OF HIGH SOCIAL STANDING WHO ARE KNOWN TO BE IMPARTIAL AND HAVE NO POLITICAL AFFILIATION," MR SZE SAID.

AS THE MAKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IS AN IMPORTANT AND SENSITIVE TASK, HE SAID THE BILL PROVIDED FOR AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES TO ENSURE THE TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY OF THE PROCESS.

"THE COMMISSION WILL HAVE TO FOLLOW STATUTORY CRITERIA IN MAKING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS," HE SAID.

THE COMMISSION'S PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION BEFORE ITS FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PUT TO THE GOVERNOR.

WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE RECEIPT OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT, THE GOVERNOR WILL CAUSE IT TO BE LAID BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"THIS PROCEDURE WILL ENSURE THAT THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS ARE OPEN TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY," MR SZE SAID.

WHILE DECISIONS ON THE DELINEATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES WILL BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, LEGCO MEMBERS MAY SCRUTINISE THE SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION CONCERNED WHEN IT IS SUBSEQUENTLY PUT BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR ENACTMENT.

AS THE NEXT ROUND OF ELECTIONS WILL START WITH THE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER 1994, MR SZE SAID THE ENABLING LEGISLATION WOULD NEED TO BE ENACTED NOT LATER THAN THE END OF THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN JULY THIS YEAR.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993

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A BILL THAT SEEKS TO MAKE TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO REFERENCE IN THE AUDIT ORDINANCE AND THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING ORDINANCE TO THE GOVERNOR AS PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1993, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID THE AMENDMENT WAS NEEDED BECAUSE THE GOVERNOR WOULD NO LONGER BE THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AMENDMENTS TO THE LETTERS PATENT AND ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS TO EFFECT THAT CHANGE HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE PRIVY COUNCIL AND WOULD COME INTO OPERATION ON FEBRUARY 18 AND 19.

THE BILL DOES NOT SEEK TO CHANGE ANY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES CURRENTLY REFLECTED IN THE AUDIT ORDINANCE (AND THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING ORDINANCE).

AS FAR AS THE TERMS ARE CONCERNED, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OR LOGICAL PROCEDURE OTHERWISE REQUIRE, ALL REFERENCES TO "THE GOVERNOR" ARE TAKEN TO MEAN "THE GOVERNOR QUA GOVERNOR", AND ALL REFERENCES TO "THE GOVERNOR AS PRESIDENT" ARE TAKEN TO MEAN "THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL".

MR SZE SAID SOME CHANGES WERE NECESSARY FOR THE RATIONALISATION OF THE PROCEDURES LEADING TO THE LAYING OF AUDIT REPORTS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS IN THE LEGCO AS SET OUT IN THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE ORDINANCES.

CLAUSE 3 AMENDS SECTION 12 OF THE AUDIT ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE THAT REPORTS PREPARED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN RESPECT OF HIS EXAMINATION AND AUDIT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT WITHIN THE PERIOD SPECIFIED IN THE ORDINANCE OR SUCH LONGER PERIOD AS THE GOVERNOR MAY DETERMINE.

THEREAFTER, IT WILL BE THE PRESIDENT WHO WILL BE EMPOWERED TO VARY THE PERIOD WITHIN WHICH THE REPORT AND RELATED STATEMENTS SHALL BE LAID BEFORE LEGCO AND SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

IT IS ALSO THE PRESIDENT WHO WILL BE EMPOWERED TO VARY THE PERIOD WITHIN WHICH THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE SHALL BE LAID BEFORE LEGCO AND SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

CLAUSE 5 AMENDS SECTION 16(2) OF THE AUDIT ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE THAT THE GOVERNOR, UPON RECEIPT OF A REPORT SUBMITTED TO HIM UNDER SUBSECTION (1) AND IF SO REQUESTED BY THE DIRECTOR, SHOULD AUTHORISE THE DIRECTOR TO TRANSMIT A COPY OF SAME TO THE PRESIDENT TO ENABLE THE LATTER TO PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 12(2) AND (2A).

THIS CHANGE WILL RATIONALISE THE PROCEDURE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE GOVERNOR IS THE PERSON RECEIVING THE REPORT BUT NOT THE ONE TO LAY IT BEFORE THIS COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 12(2) AND (2A) AS AMENDED.

A CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING ORDINANCE IS MADE IN CLAUSE 6.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LEGCO TO ELECT PRESIDENT ON FEBRUARY 19

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION TO ENABLE A FORMAL SITTING TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 19 FOR ELECTING ITS PRESIDENT AND OTHER RELATED BUSINESS.

MOVING THE MOTION TO SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS 11 AND 12, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH MACLEOD, EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS THAT HE WISHED TO HAND OVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING OVER THE COUNCIL TO A PRESIDENT ELECTED FROM AMONGST MEMBERS.

"ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE, AS MEMBERS WISHED, FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE PLACE AT A FORMAL SITTING ON 19 FEBRUARY 1993," MR MACLEOD SAID.

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GOVT OPEN-MINDED ON CHINESE TITLE FOR CHIROPRACTORS

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THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS AN OPEN MIND ON THE CHINESE TITLE OF "CHIROPRACTORS" SO LONG AS IT IS LEGALLY ACCEPTABLE AND DOES NOT CAUSE CONFUSION, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL, MRS WONG SAID SHE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBER THAT THERE WAS NO LEGAL OBJECTION TO THE USE OF THE TERM "JET YEE" BY CHIROPRACTORS.

SHE HAS ALSO BEEN ASSURED BY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AD HOC GROUP DURING DISCUSSIONS ON THE BILL THAT THE TERM "JET YEE" WOULD NOT, AND SHOULD NOT, CONFUSE THE PUBLIC, NOR BE MISINTERPRETED AS ABBREVIATION FOR "JET QUAT SUN KING YSANG".

"I RESPECTFULLY DEFER TO MEMBERS' VIEWS," MRS WONG SAID.

SHE SAID THE BILL AIMED TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHIROPRACTORS COUNCIL TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REGISTRATION, SETTING OF STANDARD, REGULATION OF CONDUCT AND ADMINISTRATION OF DISCIPLINE FOR CHIROPRACTORS.

"THIS IS PART OF OUR CONTINUING EFFORT TO REGISTER PROGRESSIVELY KEY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS TO ENSURE HIGH STANDARDS OF SERVICE, TO ENHANCE THE STATUS OF THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND, ABOVE ALL, TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF OUR PATIENTS," SHE NOTED.

THE BILL PROVIDES FOR APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF FIVE CHIROPRACTORS, FOUR NON-CHIROPRACTORS AND ONE PUBLIC OFFICER TO THE CHIROPRACTORS COUNCIL.

THERE IS THEREFORE ROOM FOR APPOINTING A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER TO FACILITATE INTERFACE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS, SHE ADDED.

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NO SECRET DEALS ON 1994/95 ELECTIONS
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THE GOVERNOR AND MINISTERS HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE NO SECRET DEALS ON THE 1994/95 ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON GILBERT LEUNG KAM-HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SZE SAID THE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION WAS IN ANY CASE CLEAR.

THE ELECTIONS IN 1994/95 WOULD HAVE TO BE HELD ON THE BASIS OF LAWS ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

"IF THERE WERE TO BE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND CHINA RESULTING IN AN UNDERSTANDING, THE BRITISH AND HONG KONG GOVERNMENTS WOULD OF COURSE RECOMMEND IT TO THIS COUNCIL," THE SECRETARY SAID.

THE GOVERNOR HAS CONSISTENTLY MADE CLEAR THAT THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 1994/95 SHOULD BE OPEN, FAIR AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

"THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ENDORSES THIS VIEW," HE SAID.

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SCREENING OF TRAVELLERS FOR HIV CONTRARY TO WHO'S ADVICE
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THE SCREENING OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS FOR HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) IS NOT ONLY CONTRARY TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S (WHO) ADVICE BUT IS ALSO COSTLY AND INEFFECTIVE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MRS WONG SAID THREE DISEASES WERE AT PRESENT SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF WHO'S INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS.

THESE ARE CHOLERA, PLAGUE AND YELLOW FEVER. AIDS IS NOT A DISEASE SUBJECT TO THESE REGULATIONS.

MRS WONG EXPLAINED THAT ACCORDING TO THE GUIDELINES PROMULGATED BY WHO, NO SCREENING PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS COULD PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF HIV INFECTION.

THE GUIDELINES ALSO NOTED THE HIV SCREENING PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS WOULD, AT BEST AND AT GREAT COST, RETARD ONLY BRIEFLY THE DISSEMINATION OF HIV BOTH GLOBALLY AND WITH RESPECT TO ANY PARTICULAR COUNTRY.

"MOREOVER, IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THERE COULD BE A 'WINDOW PERIOD' OF ABOUT THREE MONTHS BETWEEN THE TIME OF INFECTION AND THE TIME WHEN THE INFECTION CAN BE DETECTED," MRS WONG SAID.

"BECAUSE OF THIS 'WINDOW PERIOD', AIDS-FREE CERTIFICATES MAY FURTHER CREATE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY, BOTH FOR THE TRAVELLERS AND FOR THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED."

AS FAR AS HONG KONG WAS CONCERNED, MRS WONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PROVIDE THE PRACTICE OF SCREENING FOR HIV INFECTION SIMPLY FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES.

THE GOVERNMENT PUTS ITS FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND PREVENTION OF THE DISEASE IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHO'S GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF AIDS.

"OUR SCREENING PROGRAMME IS TARGETTED AT THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE AT RISK OF BEING INFECTED," MRS WONG SAID.

"IT IS OFFERED AS A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE INCLUDING PRE- AND POST- SCREENING COUNSELLING AND EDUCATION ON MODIFICATION OF RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOUR.

"THESE TESTS ARE CONDUCTED ON THE BASIS OF CLINICAL JUDGEMENT TO ASSIST IN DIAGNOSIS OF THE PATIENT'S CONDITION."

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OPTIONS TO HANDLE MUNICIPAL WASTE TO BE STUDIED

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A STUDY SHOULD START LATER THIS YEAR TO EXAMINE PRACTICAL OPTIONS TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MUNICIPAL WASTE, OTHER THAN CONSTRUCTION WASTE, GOING TO LANDFILLS, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON FUNG CHI-WOOD IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID A CONSULTANCY STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT CONCLUDED THAT RECYCLING CONSTRUCTION WASTE WAS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE.

A SIX-WEEK TRIAL WAS CONDUCTED AT THE TSEUNG KWAN O LANDFILL IN APRIL AND MAY LAST YEAR TO ASSESS WHAT EQUIPMENT AND PRACTICAL PROCEDURES WOULD BE NECESSARY TO SELECT CONSTRUCTION WASTE SUITABLE FOR DISPOSAL AS RECLAMATION FILL MATERIAL, HE SAID.

/THE TRIAL

THE TRIAL ALSO DEMONSTRATED THAT IT WAS FEASIBLE TO SEPARATE VARIOUS TYPES OF CONSTRUCTION WASTE.

MR EASON SAID IN THE LIGHT OF THE STUDY FINDINGS, THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WAS NOW DISCUSSING WITH THE HONG KONG CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION ARRANGEMENTS TO HELP CONSERVE VALUABLE SPACE AT LANDFILLS.

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AIRPORT WORKS NO GREAT EFFECT ON FISH SUPPLY

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THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME PROJECTS AND OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS ENTAILING RECLAMATION WILL NOT AFFECT SIGNIFICANTLY THE OVERALL SUPPLY OF FRESH MARINE FISH TO HONG KONG.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS BOSHER SAID THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES ESTIMATED THAT SOME 27,500 HECTARES OF INSHORE FISHING GROUNDS WOULD BE AFFECTED BY DREDGING, RECLAMATION AND MUD-DUMPING WORKS.

AS A RESULT, THE LIVELIHOOD OF SOME 4,000 FISHERMEN HABITUALLY OPERATING 1,500 SMALL FISHING BOATS IN THE WATERS BETWEEN LUNG KWU CHAU AND THE NINEPINS WILL BE AFFECTED TO A VARYING DEGREE.

SHE SAID THE ANNUAL PRODUCTION FROM THE AFFECTED AREAS REPRESENTED SOME 1.7 PER CENT, BY WEIGHT, OF THE TOTAL PRODUCTION OF THE HONG KONG FISHING FLEET.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED, HAD HELD MEETINGS WITH THE AFFECTED FISHERMEN TO INFORM THEM OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORKS, OF THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE AND OF THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER ASSISTANCE SUCH AS RE-TRAINING, PUBLIC HOUSING AND SOCIAL SECURITY.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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LAWS ON INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES UNDER REVIEW

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PROCESS IS NOW IN HAND TO CONSIDER WHAT LESSONS MIGHT BE LEARNED FROM THE RECENT INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE INVOLVING CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG MAN-KWONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR CHAN SAID:

"AS PART OF THIS EXERCISE, I AM CONSIDERING, WITH THE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS, WHETHER OUR EXISTING LAWS CONCERNING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ARE ADEQUATE AND WHETHER THEY STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE."

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FURTHER CONTROL ON PROJECTIONS FROM BUILDINGS NOT NEEDED

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THERE IS NO NEED TO INTRODUCE FURTHER LEGISLATIVE CONTROL ON OBJECTS HANGING FROM BUILDINGS AS THERE IS ALREADY SUFFICIENT MEANS AVAILABLE UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON EDWARD HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON EXPLAINED THAT PROJECTIONS FROM BUILDINGS WERE GENERALLY REGARDED AS "BUILDING" OR "BUILDING WORKS" AND WERE SUBJECT TO CONTROL UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE TO THE SAME EXTENT AS OTHER STRUCTURES.

IF THESE PROJECTIONS WERE LIKELY TO AFFECT THE STRUCTURAL SAFETY OF THE BUILDING, THEY COULD NOT BE ERECTED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE BUILDING AUTHORITY AND BE TREATED AS UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE ENABLED ORDERS TO BE SERVED REQUIRING THE REMOVAL OF UNAUTHORISED WORKS AND TO DEAL WITH DANGEROUS OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS BUILDINGS.

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WAYS SOUGHT TO MAKE LEGAL SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, SAID HE HAD RAISED THE ISSUE OF LEGAL FEES AT HIS REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG BAR ASSOCIATION, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JUDICIARY AND OF LAW TEACHERS.

IN HIS WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR MATHEWS SAID HE WAS EXPLORING WAYS IN WHICH LEGAL SERVICES COULD BE MADE MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE.

/"FOR EXAMPLE

"FOR EXAMPLE, I HAVE SUGGESTED THAT LAY MEMBERS SHOULD BE INCLUDED ON THE COSTS COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE.

"OTHER OPTIONS THAT ARE BEING CONSIDERED INCLUDE THE REMOVAL OF CERTAIN DISPUTES FROM THE COURTS TO SPECIALISED TRIBUNALS AND THE TRANSFER OF SOME MATTERS FROM THE HIGH COURT TO THE DISTRICT COURT," HE SAID.

ON MR LEE'S SUGGESTION THAT LAWYERS BE URGED TO PUBLISH A LIST OF THEIR FEES AS GUIDELINES TO THE PUBLIC, MR MATHEWS SAID THIS WAS A USEFUL PROPOSAL AND HE WOULD BE GLAD TO EXPLORE THIS WITH MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

HE SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WAS AWARE THAT PUBLIC CONCERN HAD BEEN EXPRESSED OVER THE LEVEL OF FEES CHARGED BY LAWYERS IN RELATION TO SOME LEGAL SERVICES.

HE NOTED THAT IN HIS SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE LEGAL YEAR LAST MONTH, HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THERE WAS A DANGER THAT LAWYERS MIGHT SOON PRICE THEMSELVES OUT OF THE REACH OF A GROWING NUMBER OF THE CITIZENS.

HE BELIEVED THAT, AT PRESENT, MANY PEOPLE MIGHT BE DETERRED FROM OBTAINING LEGAL SERVICES BY THE HIGH COST INVOLVED.

MR MATHEWS TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID THAT LEGAL AID SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC WERE KEPT UNDER REGULAR REVIEW AND ADJUSTED TO MEET CHANGED NEEDS.

FOR INSTANCE, HE SAID, SINCE JULY 1, 1992, THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY OF AN APPLICANT FOR LEGAL AID WAS ASSESSED ON THE NEW "FINANCIAL CAPACITY" BASIS, THAT WAS, AGGREGATE OF DISPOSABLE ANNUAL INCOME AND DISPOSABLE CAPITAL, AND THE CURRENT CEILING WAS \$120,000.

"THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE LAW, POLICY AND PRACTICE GOVERNING THE PROVISION OF LEGAL AID SERVICES, INCLUDING THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING SERVICES AND THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA IN ENSURING ACCESS TO THESE SERVICES," HE SAID.

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IMPORTANCE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY REAFFIRMED

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THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REAFFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY, NOT JUST WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON DAVID LI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR EASON SAID THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD PREPARED A REPORT ON ENERGY CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, COMPILED ADVISORY NOTES ON GOOD ENERGY HOUSEKEEPING IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND INTRODUCED AN EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY.

"IT PLANS TO EXTEND THESE INITIATIVES FURTHER INTO OTHER MAJOR ENERGY CONSUMING SECTORS SUCH AS THE RESIDENTIAL AND THE TRANSPORT SECTOR," HE SAID.

MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING APPOINTING ENERGY MANAGERS IN EACH GOVERNMENT OFFICE TO CARRY OUT ENERGY AUDITING AND PROMOTE GOOD ENERGY HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES.

ON PAPER RECYCLING, MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED MEASURES WHICH FACILITATED PAPER RECYCLING AND HAD ADOPTED MEASURES TO REDUCE THE USE OF PAPER.

HE SAID THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCH AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAD STARTED USING RECYCLED WRITING PAPER ON A TRIAL BASIS TO ASSESS THE COST IMPLICATIONS AND PRINTING QUALITY.

HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT RECYCLED PAPER OF AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD WAS ABOUT 20 PER CENT TO 25 PER CENT MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THE PAPER IN GENERAL USE WAS AN OBSTACLE TO ITS WIDER USE.

MR EASON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE PRICE OF RECYCLED PAPER, EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTENDING ITS USE AND USE OTHER RENEWABLE SOURCES OF PAPER WHICH WERE COMPETITIVE IN PRICE.

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OVER 350 COMPLETE RETRAINING COURSES
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UP TO JANUARY 29, 358 RETRAINEES HAD COMPLETED COURSES UNDER THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING SCHEME, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN, MR CHAN SAID 138 OF THEM DID NOT REQUIRE THE JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

OF THE REMAINING 220 WHO WERE PROVIDED WITH JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND OTHER TRAINING BODIES, 88 WERE SUCCESSFULLY PLACED, MOSTLY IN JOBS DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THEIR RETRAINING; 75 EVENTUALLY SECURED BY THEMSELVES JOBS WHICH MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THEIR RETRAINING; AND 57 WERE STILL AWAITING PLACEMENT.

THE SALARIES OR WAGES OF THE 88 TRAINEES WHO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY PLACED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND OTHER BODIES RANGE FROM \$3,500 TO \$7,200 PER MONTH.

MR CHAN NOTED THAT SIMILAR INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF THE OTHER RETRAINEES WAS NOT AVAILABLE AS THEY WERE NOT OBLIGED TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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POLL TO SEEK HA STAFF VIEWS

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THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY WILL SHORTLY BE CONDUCTING AN OPINION SURVEY AMONG ALL PROFESSIONAL STAFF, INCLUDING DOCTORS AND NURSES, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING, MRS WONG SAID THE SURVEY WOULD SEEK STAFF VIEWS ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THEIR WORK, INCLUDING THEIR CAREER COMMITMENT AND SUGGESTIONS ON FUTURE REFORMS.

SHE DESCRIBED THE SURVEY AS PART OF AN ON-GOING EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE AUTHORITY'S COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF.

MRS WONG ALSO TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE WASTAGE OF MEDICAL AND NURSING STAFF WORKING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAD IMPROVED SINCE THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN DECEMBER 1991.

SHE SAID THE AVERAGE WASTAGE RATES FOR DOCTORS AND NURSES IN 1992 WERE EIGHT AND 10 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, COMPARED WITH 10 AND 11 FOR EX-GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND 24 AND 14 PER CENT FOR EX-SUBVENTED HOSPITALS IN 1990.

"THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ANTICIPATES THAT THERE WILL BE SUFFICIENT MANPOWER TO COPE WITH THE WASTAGE OF MEDICAL STAFF," MRS WONG SAID.

ON PLANS TO RETAIN SERVING MEDICAL STAFF, THE SECRETARY REVEALED THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGERIAL TRAINING HAD BEEN ENHANCED TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN STAFF.

"DURING THE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1992 TO JANUARY 1993, OVER 900 DOCTORS HAVE RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING THROUGH OVERSEAS PROGRAMMES, CONFERENCES AND LOCAL COURSES," SHE SAID.

"IN ADDITION, 245 DOCTORS HAVE ATTENDED IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT MODULES ORGANISED BY THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY."

THE REMUNERATION PACKAGE DESIGNED FOR HOSPITAL AUTHORITY STAFF AND THE ADOPTION OF A PROMOTION POLICY WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON MERIT RATHER THAN SENIORITY WILL ALSO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS BETTER STAFF RETENTION.

LOCAL GRADUATES WILL CONTINUE TO BE RECRUITED AT THE JUNIOR LEVEL WHILE SERVING OFFICERS ARE BEING PROVIDED WITH FURTHER TRAINING TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR VACANCIES AT A MORE SENIOR LEVEL ARISING FROM THE DEPARTURE OF EXPERIENCED STAFF.

FURTHERMORE, MRS WONG ADDED, OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT WOULD BE CONDUCTED AS AND WHEN NECESSARY IF SUITABLE CANDIDATES WERE NOT AVAILABLE LOCALLY TO FILL ANY SPECIALIST POSTS.

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NO PLAN TO INCREASE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC WARDENS

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THERE IS NO QUESTION OF POLICE LIMITING ENFORCEMENT AGAINST ILLEGAL PARKING TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PEGGY LAM, MR ASPREY SAID THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FIXED PENALTY TICKETS FOR ILLEGAL PARKING HAD INCREASED BY 34% FROM 1,008,499 IN 1991 TO 1,352,184 LAST YEAR.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO IMMEDIATE PLANS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC WARDENS, BUT IT WOULD KEEP THIS UNDER REVIEW.

"BOTH POLICE OFFICERS AND TRAFFIC WARDENS ARE EMPOWERED TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL PARKING," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE PROPORTION OF FIXED PENALTY TICKETS FOR ILLEGAL PARKING ISSUED BY TRAFFIC WARDENS HAD INCREASED STEADILY, FROM 34.9% IN 1990 TO 37.2% IN 1991 AND TO 39.2% LAST YEAR.

ON PUBLICITY WORK TO DISCOURAGE ILLEGAL PARKING, MR ASPREY SAID MOTORISTS WERE ADVISED THROUGH THE 'ROAD USERS CODE' WHERE, AND WHERE NOT, TO PARK.

FUTURE ROAD SAFETY PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS WILL INCLUDE PUBLICITY ABOUT ILLEGAL CAR PARKING.

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LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S REPORT BEING CONSIDERED

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THE ADMINISTRATION WAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERING THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S REPORT RELATING TO DIVORCE AND HOPED TO REACH A DECISION IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON WHETHER OR NOT IT WOULD SEEK TO IMPLEMENT IT, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARTIN LEE, MR MATHEWS SAID THE LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S REPORT WAS PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 12, 1992.

THE PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT ARE:

(1) A COURT SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD THAT A MARRIAGE HAS IRRETRIEVABLY BROKEN DOWN AND TO GRANT A DIVORCE IF -

(A) THE PARTIES HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FOR ONE YEAR (INSTEAD OF THE CURRENT REQUIREMENT OF TWO YEARS) AND THE RESPONDENT CONSENTS TO THE DIVORCE; OR

/(B) THE PARTIES

- (B) THE PARTIES HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FOR TWO YEARS (INSTEAD OF THE CURRENT REQUIREMENT OF FIVE YEARS); OR
 - (C) THE PARTIES HAVE GIVEN A JOINT NOTICE TO THE COURT OF THEIR INTENTION TO DIVORCE AND THEN, AFTER A MINIMUM PERIOD OF ONE YEAR, HAVE FILED A JOINT APPLICATION FOR DIVORCE (A NEW PROVISION);
- (2) THE GENERAL RULE THAT NO PETITION FOR DIVORCE MAY BE PRESENTED WITHIN THREE YEARS FROM THE DATE OF MARRIAGE SHOULD BE AMENDED BY CHANGING THE PERIOD TO ONE YEAR.

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GROWTH IN PRIVATE CAR FLEET
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RAISING THE FIRST REGISTRATION TAX (FRT) AND ANNUAL LICENCE FEE LEVELS HAD PROVED QUITE EFFECTIVE IN THE PAST IN REGULATING THE GROWTH IN NUMBER OF PRIVATE CARS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LAM KUI-CHUN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE OBJECTIVE IN SETTING THE RATE OF FRT IS TO CONTAIN THE GROWTH IN NUMBERS OF PRIVATE CARS TO AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL, HAVING REGARD TO ROAD CONDITIONS AND THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC THAT CAN BE ABSORBED BY PLANNED ROAD PROJECTS," HE SAID.

IT IS ALSO A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF GOVERNMENT REVENUE, ACCOUNTING FOR \$3.4 BILLION OR ABOUT 3% OF TOTAL REVENUE IN 1991/92.

HOWEVER, MR LEUNG SAID VEHICLE OWNERSHIP WAS RISING AGAIN AS A RESULT OF INCREASING AFFLUENCE, AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRENT RATES OF FRT AND ANNUAL LICENCE FEE IN CONTAINING CAR OWNERSHIP WAS BEING GRADUALLY ERODED.

THE NUMBER OF NEW PRIVATE CARS REGISTERED HAD INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM 28,926 IN 1990 TO 31,131 IN 1991 AND FURTHER TO 41,878 IN 1992.

"WE ARE MONITORING THE SITUATION CAREFULLY BEFORE DECIDING WHAT FURTHER MEASURES MIGHT BE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A FREE FLOW OF TRAFFIC ON OUR ROADS," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSIDERING AMENDMENTS TO THE FIRST REGISTRATION TAX ORDINANCE TO REDUCE THE SCOPE FOR TAX AVOIDANCE FOR VEHICLES AND TO ENSURE THAT THE FRT REMAINS EFFECTIVE BOTH IN TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT AND FISCAL TERMS, MR LEUNG SAID.

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EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES FOR FISHERMEN UNDER REVIEW

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THE EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO IN-SHORE FISHERMEN AFFECTED BY DREDGING, DUMPING AND RECLAMATION WORKS ARE BEING REVIEWED TO SEE WHETHER CHANGES SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED.

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 PHILIP WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR EASON SAID THE REVIEW WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WORKS CURRENTLY BEING CARRIED OUT AS WELL AS THOSE UNDER PLANNING.

HE SAID THE RULE UNDER WHICH OPERATORS OF FISHING VESSELS LONGER THAN 15 METRES SHOULD NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES WAS AGREED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE IN 1978 ON THE GROUNDS THAT SUCH VESSELS WERE CAPABLE OF FISHING ELSEWHERE AND WERE NOT LIMITED TO IN-SHORE FISHING.

"NEVERTHELESS, IN THE LIGHT OF REPRESENTATIONS BY FISHERMEN, THIS RULE IS BEING EXAMINED IN THE REVIEW, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS," HE SAID.

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NO EASY SOLUTION TO CONTINUOUS OCCUPATION OF PARKING SPACES

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ALTERNATIVE MEASURES TO STOP SOME SECOND-HAND CAR DEALERS FROM CONTINUING OCCUPYING METERED PARKING SPACES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BUT THERE IS NO EASY SOLUTION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID SECOND-HAND CAR DEALERS NEEDED PLACES TO PARK THEIR VEHICLES AND IT WAS BETTER THAT THEY USED METERED SPACES RATHER THAN PARKED VEHICLES ILLEGALLY.

"IF, FOR EXAMPLE, LEGISLATION WERE ENACTED TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE TO FEED METERS AFTER THE EXPIRY OF THE PRESCRIBED PERIOD, THIS WOULD SIMPLY RESULT IN DEALERS MOVING THEIR VEHICLES BETWEEN METERS OR ELSE PARKING ILLEGALLY," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT UNDER REGULATION 8 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (PARKING) REGULATIONS, IT WAS AN OFFENCE FOR A VEHICLE TO OCCUPY THE SAME PARKING SPACE FOR A CONTINUOUS PERIOD OF MORE THAN 24 HOURS.

TO INSTIGATE A SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION WOULD REQUIRE A WATCH TO BE KEPT ON A PARTICULAR PARKING SPACE FOR A 24-HOUR PERIOD.

"UNDERSTANDABLY, THE POLICE DO NOT REGARD THIS AS A HIGH PRIORITY IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF THEIR MANPOWER, BUT THEY WILL RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON SUCH MATTERS," HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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ELECTRIC SUPPLY WILL NOT BE UPGRADED TO 240 VOLTS
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THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR A FURTHER UPGRADING OF THE HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN HONG KONG TO 240 VOLTS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ELIZABETH BOSHER, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HOWARD YOUNG, MRS BOSHER SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS UPGRADING THE HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICITY SUPPLY FROM 200 TO 220 VOLTS.

THE DECISION WAS MADE IN MAY 1990. A SUPPLY VOLTAGE OF 220 VOLTS WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE THAT VOLTAGE IS WIDELY USED INTERNATIONALLY.

MOST OF THE HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES USED IN HONG KONG ARE ALREADY RATED AT 220 VOLTS.

EXISTING EQUIPMENT AND APPLIANCES RATED AT 200 VOLTS WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE SAFELY AT 220 VOLTS BUT NOT NECESSARILY AT HIGHER VOLTAGES, MRS BOSHER SAID.

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RESIDENCE RESTRICTION FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TO STAY
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS TO LIFT THE CURRENT SEVEN-YEAR RESIDENCE RESTRICTION FOR THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC RENTAL AND HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS.

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

MR EASON SAID THIS WAS BECAUSE THE SUPPLY OF PUBLIC HOUSING FLATS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE VERY TIGHT AGAINST COMPETING DEMANDS FROM THOSE AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT OR CLEARANCES OR ON THE WAITING LIST, NEARLY ALL OF WHOM ALREADY MET THE LOCAL RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT.

"THESE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRIORITY FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE," HE SAID.

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MEASURES TO RELIEVE ROAD CONGESTION
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THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO EASE THE PROBLEM OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.

THESE INCLUDE EXPANDING AND UPGRADING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES TO PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO PRIVATE CAR USAGE; BUILDING NEW ROADS AND IMPROVING EXISTING ROADS; AND BETTER MANAGEMENT OF ROAD SPACE TO MAXIMISE USAGE AND GIVE PRIORITY TO THE MASS CARRIERS.

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IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON SAMUEL WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SPEND \$4.2 BILLION ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THIS COMPARED WITH \$8.6 BILLION SPENT ON SUCH WORK IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

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SELECTION OF LDC JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS EXPLAINED
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THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC) INVITES A WIDE RANGE OF DEVELOPERS TO SUBMIT OFFERS THROUGH A COMPETITIVE TENDERING PROCESS TO ENSURE PROPRIETY IN THE SELECTION OF JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS AND TO SECURE THE BEST POSSIBLE OFFERS.

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 LEONG CHE-HUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE CRITERIA USED BY THE LDC IN SELECTING JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS FOR ITS PROJECTS INCLUDED THE DEVELOPER'S OVERALL FINANCIAL STRENGTH; TRACK RECORD IN SALES AND MARKETING; ITS PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY OF PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED DEVELOPMENTS.

"THE SELECTION OF JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS IS NOT UNDERTAKEN BY PRIVATE NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE LDC AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPERS.

"THE LDC APPOINTS EXTERNAL FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS TO EVALUATE THE TENDERS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LDC'S MANAGING BOARD AS TO WHICH IS THE BEST OFFER," HE SAID.

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NO CHANGE IN COUNTRY PARK LAND USE
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NO CHANGE OF LAND USE HAS BEEN APPROVED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE WHICH DEALS WITH CONTROL OF NEW DEVELOPMENT ON LEASED LAND AND PRIVATE PROPERTY IN AREAS COVERED BY A DRAFT PLAN OF A PROPOSED COUNTRY PARK.

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

"ITS APPLICATION IS THUS LIMITED AS REGARDS BOTH TIME AND LAND AFFECTED," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE LAST TIME A PROPOSED COUNTRY PARK WAS GAZETTED AND CONSEQUENTLY DESIGNATED WAS 1979.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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MOTION ON TRAUMA TO CHILDREN PASSED
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A MOTION ON CHILDREN TRAUMA PROPOSED BY DR THE HON LEONG CHE-
HUNG WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY).

SEVENTEEN MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE MOTION DEBATE. THE SECRETARY
FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, WINDED UP THE DEBATE.

NINE MEMBERS SPOKE IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON AIDS IN HONG
KONG WHICH WAS RAISED BY DR THE HON CONRAD LAM. MRS WONG AGAIN SPOKE
FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

TWO BILLS WERE ALSO PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

THEY ARE CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BILL AND AIR POLLUTION
CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992.

THE MOTION PROPOSED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HAMISH
MACLEOD, TO SUSPEND THE STANDING ORDERS TO ENABLE THE ELECTION OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 19 WAS ALSO PASSED.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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PROPERTY REVIEW 1993

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THE 1993 PROPERTY REVIEW EXERCISE, WHICH EXAMINES PRODUCTION AND ACTIVITY IN THE PROPERTY MARKET DURING 1992 WITH FORECASTS OF SUPPLY FOR 1993 AND 1994, HAS LARGELY BEEN COMPLETED, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE RATING AND VALUATION DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE PRELIMINARY SUPPLY, FORECAST, TAKE-UP AND VACANCY RESULTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE MAJOR PROPERTY CATEGORIES AS FOLLOWS:

PRIVATE DOMESTIC - SMALL/MEDIUM UNITS (LESS THAN 100 SQ.M.)

COMPLETIONS IN 1992 AMOUNTED TO 25,140 UNITS, SOME 21% FEWER THAN IN 1991, AND WELL DOWN ON THE 31,850 FORECAST IN LAST YEAR'S REVIEW.

HOWEVER, OF THE SHORTFALL, THERE WERE ANOTHER 5,000 UNITS WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY COMPLETED AT THE YEAR END.

TAKE-UP WAS marginally DOWN ON THE PRECEDING YEAR SO VACANCY AT THE YEAR END INCREASED SLIGHTLY TO 4.2% OF STOCK.

FORECASTS OF SUPPLY POINT TO AROUND 35,600 UNITS IN 1993, OF WHICH 21,100 SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR. ABOUT 35,400 UNITS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN 1994.

MUCH OF THE TWO YEARS' SUPPLY WILL BE IN YUEN LONG AND TUEN MUN. NORTH AND SHA TIN WILL ALSO SEE SIGNIFICANT COMPLETIONS.

PRIVATE DOMESTIC - LARGE UNITS (100 SQ.M. AND OVER)

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE SUPPLY OF LARGE DOMESTIC UNITS IN 1992 WAS A LOW 1,080 UNITS, WELL DOWN ON THE 1,750 UNITS IN 1991 AND THE LOWEST ANNUAL SUPPLY SINCE 1976.

MID-LEVELS AND SOUTH DISTRICTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN HALF OF THE UNITS IN THIS CATEGORY.

ALTHOUGH TAKE-UP WAS marginally DOWN, THE LIMITED SUPPLY CAUSED VACANCY, AS A PERCENTAGE OF STOCK, TO DROP FROM 5.9% TO 4.5% AT THE END OF 1992.

SUPPLY IN 1993 AND 1994 IS EXPECTED TO RISE AGAIN, TO AROUND 1,700 AND 3,000 UNITS RESPECTIVELY. OF THE TWO YEARS' SUPPLY, ALMOST 3,200 UNITS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

/OFFICES

OFFICES

THE OVERALL SUPPLY OF OFFICE SPACE IN 1992, AT 565,000 SQ.M. WAS 23% MORE THAN SUPPLY IN 1991, BUT WAS NEVERTHELESS WELL SHORT OF THE 749,000 SQ.M. FORECAST IN LAST YEAR'S REVIEW.

ALTHOUGH TAKE-UP IN 1992 WAS WELL UP COMPARED WITH 1991, THE LARGE SUPPLY IN 1992 CAUSED VACANCY TO INCREASE TO 9.5% OF STOCK, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FORECASTS SUGGEST 472,000 SQ.M. OR SO OF SPACE WILL COME ON STREAM IN 1993, WITH AN ENORMOUS 833,000 SQ.M. IN 1994.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT WHILE SHEUNG WAN, WAN CHAI, NORTH POINT AND TSIM SHA TSUI WOULD ALL SEE LARGE AMOUNTS OF NEW FLOOR SPACE IN THE TWO YEARS, ALMOST 500,000 SQ.M. WAS EXPECTED IN NON-TRADITIONAL OFFICE AREAS SUCH AS HUNG HOM AND KWUN TONG.

GRADE A

GRADE A SUPPLY IN 1992 WAS 340,000 SQ.M., 21% MORE THAN IN THE PRECEDING YEAR. TAKE-UP WAS UP 85% RESULTING IN VACANCY AT THE END OF THE YEAR BEING CONTAINED AT 10% OF STOCK.

FORECASTS SHOW THAT ABOUT 204,000 SQ.M. OF GRADE A SPACE IS EXPECTED IN 1993 MAINLY IN WAN CHAI AND NORTH POINT, WITH A SUBSTANTIAL 398,000 SQ.M. EXPECTED THE YEAR AFTER, MUCH OF THIS IN TSIM SHA TSUI, HUNG HOM AND NORTH POINT. FOR CENTRAL, COMPLETIONS ONLY AMOUNT TO ABOUT 7,600 SQ.M. IN THE TWO YEARS.

GRADE B

SUPPLY OF GRADE B SPACE IN 1992 AT 142,000 SQ.M. WAS UP BY 8% ON 1991. HOWEVER, OWING TO THE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN TAKE-UP, VACANCY AT THE YEAR END DROPPED TO 10.1% OF STOCK.

SUPPLY IN 1993 IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY ABOUT 11% TO 157,000 SQ.M., AND THEN TO MORE THAN DOUBLE TO 316,000 SQ.M. IN 1994, MUCH OF IT EXPECTED IN SHEUNG WAN, WAN CHAI AND ABERDEEN.

GRADE C

SUPPLY IN 1992 AMOUNTED TO 83,000 SQ.M., WELL UP FROM 47,000 SQ.M. IN 1991. TAKE-UP IN 1992 WAS ALSO WELL UP ON 1991 BUT, WAS NOT ENOUGH TO SOAK UP THE SUPPLY IN THE YEAR.

VACANCY THUS ROSE TO 7.4% OF STOCK.

FORECASTS FOR 1993 POINT TO COMPLETIONS OF 111,000 SQ.M. AND 119,000 SQ.M. RESPECTIVELY, MUCH OF WHICH WILL BE IN SHEUNG WAN, CENTRAL AND TSIM SHA TSUI.

COMMERCIAL

SUPPLY OF COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE IN 1992 WAS 165,000 SQ.M., ALMOST 20% LESS THAN IN THE PRECEDING YEAR. TAKE-UP WAS ALSO WELL DOWN RESULTING IN A DROP IN VACANCY AT THE YEAR END TO 4.4% OF STOCK.

COMPLETIONS IN 1993 ARE EXPECTED TO BE 372,000 SQ.M., WELL UP ON 1992, AND 1994 SHOULD SEE AROUND 337,000 SQ.M. COME ON STREAM.

FLATTED FACTORIES

SUPPLY OF FLATTED FACTORY SPACE IN 1992 AMOUNTED TO 545,000 SQ.M., MARGINALLY MORE THAN IN 1991. TAKE-UP WAS WELL UP ON THE PRECEDING YEAR, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO ABSORB THE NEW SUPPLY. AS A RESULT, VACANCY INCREASED TO 6.4% OF STOCK.

SUPPLY IN 1993 IS FORECAST TO DROP SIGNIFICANTLY TO AROUND 303,000 SQ.M., ALTHOUGH IT IS EXPECTED TO RISE AGAIN IN 1994, TO 443,000 SQ.M. WHICH IS STILL RELATIVELY LOW COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS 10 YEAR AVERAGE.

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GOVERNOR TO RESUME WORK ON MONDAY

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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES, THE GOVERNOR'S SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO TRUTH IN A RUMOUR THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD BEEN RE-ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL.

HE SAID THE GOVERNOR WAS RECOVERING QUICKLY AND WOULD RESUME WORK ON MONDAY.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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ADDITIONAL LIQUIDITY INJECTED
INTO INTER-BANK MARKET

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THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INJECTED ADDITIONAL LIQUIDITY INTO THE INTER-BANK MARKET.

THE BALANCE OF THE HONGKONGBANK'S ACCOUNT MAINTAINED WITH THE EXCHANGE FUND WAS INCREASED FROM HK\$1,500 MILLION TO HK\$2,150 MILLION.

COMMENTING ON THE OPERATION, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (DESIGNATE) OF THE HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY, MR JOSEPH YAM, SAID THE ADDITIONAL LIQUIDITY WAS INJECTED TO RELIEVE TEMPORARY TIGHTNESS IN THE INTER-BANK MARKET DUE TO THE SHARE FLOATATION CLOSED FOR SUBSCRIPTION AT NOON TODAY.

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GOVT TO CONTROL PUBLICATION OF FILMS AS VIDEOS AND LASER DISCS
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A BILL SEEKING TO AMEND THE FILM CENSORSHIP ORDINANCE WILL BE GAZETTED ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12).

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE BILL IS TO PLUG A LOOPHOLE IN THE EXISTING LEGISLATION IN REGARD TO THE PUBLICATION OF FILMS AS VIDEOS AND LASER DISCS.

CURRENTLY FILMS APPROVED FOR EXHIBITION IN CINEMAS WHEN PUBLISHED AS VIDEO TAPES OR LASER DISCS ARE EXEMPTED FROM THE CONTROL OF EITHER THE FILM CENSORSHIP ORDINANCE OR THE CONTROL OF OBSCENE AND INDECENT ARTICLES ORDINANCE.

AS A RESULT, YOUTHS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ARE NOT PROTECTED FROM ACCESS TO VIDEO TAPES OR LASER DISCS MADE FROM CATEGORY III FILMS ALTHOUGH JUVENILES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SEE SUCH FILMS IN CINEMAS.

THE BILL SEEKS TO REGULATE THE PUBLICATION OF FILMS AND PROHIBITS THE PUBLICATION OF CATEGORY III FILMS TO JUVENILES WHEN RELEASED AS VIDEO TAPES AND LASER DISCS.

ANOTHER PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO INCREASE SOME OF THE PENALTY LEVELS SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED DETERRENT EFFECT.

THE PENALTIES WERE SET IN 1988 WHEN THE ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED AND SOME HAVE BECOME OUTDATED.

IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE INDUSTRY AN ADEQUATE GRACE PERIOD TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AMENDED ORDINANCE, THE BILL WILL BE BROUGHT INTO EFFECT SIX MONTHS AFTER ITS ENACTMENT.

THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 24.

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SES ON ECONOMY

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A STABLE, EFFICIENT AND CORRUPTION-FREE GOVERNMENT, BOUND BY THE RULE OF LAW, IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRE-REQUISITE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF LONG-TERM ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF INWARD INVESTMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"AT THE SAME TIME A RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE THAT THE GROWING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THE COMMUNITY GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH A RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR THOSE WHO HAVE CREATED WEALTH TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN THE PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING WHICH SHAPE AND INFLUENCE ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES," MRS CHAN SAID.

OPENING A SYMPOSIUM ORGANISED BY THE EURASIA INSTITUTE IN PARIS, MRS CHAN SAID ONE OF THE KEY INGREDIENTS TO HONG KONG'S SUCCESS HAD BEEN THE WILLINGNESS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ABOUT WHERE AND WHEN TO INVEST AND HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.

"AMONGST THE DYNAMIC ASIAN ECONOMIES THERE HAVE INEVITABLY BEEN DIFFERENCES OF EMPHASIS IN TERMS OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE IN HONG KONG HAVE CONSISTENTLY PLACED OUR TRUST IN MARKET FORCES AND IN AN UNSWERVING COMMITMENT TO FREE TRADE AND AN OPEN ECONOMY," SHE ADDED.

"THIS HAS PAID HANDSOME DIVIDENDS FOR US," SHE STRESSED.

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN WERE USED TO DOING BUSINESS WITHOUT SUBSIDIES FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

"THEY KNOW THAT THE ULTIMATE RISKS REST WITH THEM, NOT THE TAXPAYERS. THIS LEADS NOT ONLY TO A MORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL RISKS BUT ALSO MAKES IT EASIER AND QUICKER TO ADAPT TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

"OUR LOW TAXATION ENABLES OUR ENTREPRENEURS TO POCKET MOST OF THE PROFITS THAT THEY MAKE," SHE ADDED.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT IF THE CONTINUING GROWTH OF THE ASIAN "MIRACLE ECONOMIES" WAS TO BE SUSTAINED, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PLAY THEIR PART IN RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF AN EVER CHANGING BUSINESS AND TRADING ENVIRONMENT.

"IN PARTICULAR AS INVESTORS AND BUSINESSMEN MOVE ON RELENTLESSLY IN SEARCH OF NEW LOW-COST MANUFACTURING ENVIRONMENTS, THE CHALLENGE FOR THE MORE MATURE ASIAN ECONOMIES WILL BE TO MOVE BEYOND RELIANCE ON THE BASIC, LABOUR-INTENSIVE . MANUFACTURING PROCESSES WHICH SERVED US WELL IN THE PAST, TO THE PRODUCTION OF HIGHER VALUE-ADDED AND MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY SOPHISTICATED GOODS AND SERVICES WHICH CAN SUSTAIN FUTURE GROWTH," SHE SAID.

"WE WILL ALSO NEED TO FIND NEW MARKETS, TO REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON SOME EXISTING MARKETS AND TO CONTINUE TO LOBBY AGAINST THE EVER PRESENT THREAT OF PROTECTIONISM IN THE MARKETS ON WHICH WE HAVE TRADITIONALLY RELIED SUCH AS THE US AND EUROPE," MRS CHAN SAID.

SHE SAID A STRONG COMMITMENT TO INCREASING LIBERALISATION IN WORLD TRADE, BEGINNING WITH THE LONG OVERDUE CONCLUSION TO THE CURRENT URUGUAY ROUND OF GATT TALKS WOULD BE A POTENT TONIC.

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WORKSHOP FOR IMPLEMENTING ILO CONVENTION ON CONSTRUCTION SAFETY
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A WORKSHOP IS BEING HELD IN HONG KONG TO LOOK INTO ACHIEVABLE STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION (ILO) CONVENTION ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THE THREE-DAY WORKSHOP, ORGANISED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE ILO AS PART OF THE ASIAN REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, STARTED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MORE THAN 20 PARTICIPANTS WITH TRIPARTITE BALANCE ATTENDED THE WORKSHOP. THEY INCLUDE THREE ILO OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM GOVERNMENT POLICY BRANCHES, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH COUNCIL, EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

"WE ARE PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKSHOP AS THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE DIVISION ALWAYS WANT TO SEE WORKERS WORKING IN A BETTER AND SAFER WORKING ENVIRONMENT," ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS, THE CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT MR CHAN TAT-KING SAID.

MR CHAN NOTED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CONVENTION WAS AIMED AT MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS OF SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN CONSTRUCTION SITES.

"IT ENLISTS ALL THE MEASURES NECESSARY TO TACKLE HAZARDOUS PROCESSES AND WORKPLACES WHICH INCLUDE SCAFFOLDS, LADDERS, LIFTING APPLIANCES, EARTH-MOVING EQUIPMENTS, WORKING AT HEIGHT, EXCAVATION WORK, EARTHWORKS, UNDERGROUND WORKS, CAISSON WORK, STRUCTURAL FRAMES AND FORMWORK, DEMOLITION, ELECTRICITY, HANDLING OF EXPLOSIVES, AND HEALTH HAZARDS," HE SAID.

"THE CONVENTION ALSO REQUIRES THE ADOPTION OF ALL NECESSARY MEASURES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE PENALTIES AND CORRECTIVE MEASURES, TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT," HE ADDED.

DURING THE WORKSHOP, THERE WILL BE GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PLENARY SESSIONS TO ENABLE PARTICIPANTS TO SET DOWN PRACTICABLE STEPS NECESSARY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN HONG KONG.

/PARTICIPANTS WILL

PARTICIPANTS WILL ALSO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING THE STEPS AND RECOMMEND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

"THROUGH TRIPARTITE CONSULTATION, WE HOPE A COHERENT ACTION PLAN COULD BE DRAWN UP TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION IN HONG KONG," MR CHAN SAID.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 12) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERIES. THEY MAY RESERVE SEATS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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NOTE TO EDITORS :

ADVANCE COPIES OF THE COMMITTEE'S PAPERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE MEDIA FROM 4 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE PRESS ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAPERS WILL BE EMBARGOED FOR USE UNTIL THE MEETING ENDS.

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LAN KWAI FONG INQUIRY

OUTLINE OF WORK DONE ON WEDNESDAY
(FEBRUARY 10) UP TO 4.30 PM

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1. STUDYING MATERIAL ON CROWD CONTROL GENERALLY.
2. STUDYING MATERIAL ON UNDERAGE DRINKING.
3. CORRESPONDENCE.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS
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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	+650
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	NIL
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,150
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 115.00 *-0.2* 10.2.93	

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.43 PCT	12 MONTHS	2402	5.50	101.82	3.70
1 MONTH	3.09 PCT	15 MONTHS	2405	5.50	101.90	3.98
3 MONTHS	3.08 PCT	18 MONTHS	2408	4.375	100.25	4.25
6 MONTHS	3.19 PCT	21 MONTHS	2411	4.625	100.25	4.52
12 MONTHS	3.69 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 16,308 MN

CLOSED 10 FEBRUARY 1993

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