



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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PROVISION OF SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT INTENDED

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A BILL WHICH REQUIRES BOTH FACTORY OWNERS AND WORKERS TO PLAY THEIR PARTS IN ENSURING SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK WHO INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 ALSO SEEKS TO IMPOSE CUSTODIAL PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN OFFENCES CONCERNING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, SAID: "I HAVE LONG BEEN CONVINCED THAT WE SHOULD LAY ON EMPLOYERS A GENERAL DUTY TO PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT, AND, ON EMPLOYEES, A DUTY TO CO-OPERATE WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS IN SO DOING.

"AT PRESENT, WE DEPEND SOLELY ON SPECIFIC REGULATIONS GOVERNING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES."

MR BRIDGE CONSIDERED THIS ARRANGEMENT UNSATISFACTORY, BECAUSE IN THESE DAYS OF RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE, SOME REGULATIONS QUICKLY BECAME OUT OF THE DATE, REQUIRING FREQUENT AMENDMENTS TO PROVIDE FOR NEW DANGERS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE POINTED OUT THE REGULATIONS COULD NOT COVER EVERY ASPECT OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH AND TENDED TO BE TOO SPECIFIC.

MR BRIDGE SAID CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL WOULD INTRODUCE INTO THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE A REQUIREMENT FOR EVERY PROPRIETOR TO TAKE MEASURES SO FAR AS WAS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK OF ALL PERSONS EMPLOYED BY HIM.

"EVERY EMPLOYEE WHILE AT WORK WILL BE REQUIRED TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE PROPRIETOR SO FAR AS IS NECESSARY IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH MEASURES, AND TO TAKE REASONABLE CARE FOR HIS OWN SAFETY AND THAT OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY WHAT HE DOES," HE SAID.

ON CUSTODIAL PENALTIES, MR BRIDGE SAID MANY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HAD CRITICISED THE EXISTING PENALTIES AS INADEQUATE AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THE LAW BE STRENGTHENED BY CUSTODIAL PENALTIES.

"WE THEREFORE PROPOSE IN CLAUSES 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 AND THE SCHEDULE THAT CUSTODIAL PENALTIES BE IMPOSED FOR OFFENCES WHICH ARE LIABLE TO CAUSE FATAL OR SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OR RISK TO HEALTH, ARE COMMITTED WILFULLY AND ARE WITHIN THE OFFENDER'S ABILITY TO PREVENT.

"A MAXIMUM OF SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT WOULD APPLY TO THOSE OFFENCES WHICH NOW CARRY A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$30,000, AND A MAXIMUM OF 12 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT TO THOSE OFFENCES WHICH NOW CARRY A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$50,000," HE SAID.

/TO GIVE

TO GIVE AMPLE TIME FOR FACTORY OWNERS AND EMPLOYEES TO GET TO KNOW THESE NEW PROVISIONS AND COMPLY WITH THEM, IT WAS PROPOSED TO BRING THEM INTO EFFECT 12 MONTHS AFTER THEIR APPROVAL BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WOULD MEANWHILE CONDUCT A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN THE NEW PROVISIONS.

TURNING TO OTHER PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE, MR BRIDGE SAID CLAUSE 8 OF THE BILL PROVIDED THAT A PUBLIC OFFICER WAS NOT PERSONALLY LIABLE FOR ANY ACTION OR OMISSION DONE IN GOOD FAITH IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS POWERS OR IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS DUTIES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

"THIS WILL NOT AFFECT ANY LIABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN TORT FOR THAT ACT OR OMISSION," HE SAID.

IN PROCEEDINGS INSTITUTED UNDER THE ORDINANCE IN RESPECT OF A BREACH OF AN OBLIGATION TO DO SOMETHING SO FAR AS WAS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE OR TO TAKE REASONABLE STEPS, ETC., MR BRIDGE SAID THE EXISTING PROVISIONS DID NOT PROVIDE WHO SHOULD BEAR THE ONUS OF PROOF.

"CLAUSE 9 CLARIFIES THE LEGAL POSITION BY PROVIDING THAT THIS ONUS LIES ON THE ACCUSED," HE SAID

AS REGARDS CLAUSES 2 AND 3, HE SAID THEY PROVIDED FOR AMENDMENTS TO REFLECT UP TO DATE CHANGES IN THE TITLE OF PUBLIC OFFICERS WHO DISCHARGED DUTIES UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

MR BRIDGE ADDED THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL HAD THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD.

"I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY THAT WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO IMPROVE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND PREVENT INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MAIN PURPOSE OF MONEY CHANGERS BILL EXPLAINED

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THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE MONEY CHANGERS (DISCLOSURE OF RATES, CHARGES AND COMMISSIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 IS TO SPECIFY CLEARLY THE INFORMATION WHICH MUST BE PROVIDED BY A MONEY CHANGER ON HIS DISPLAY BOARD AND IN THE TRANSACTION NOTE.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, STATED THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL.

/MR JACOBS

MR JACOBS STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE CUSTOMER PRIOR TO ENTERING INTO A TRANSACTION HAD ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION REGARDING THE TERMS THE MONEY CHANGER WAS PREPARED TO OFFER.

HE SAID THE ENACTMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE IN 1985 BROUGHT ABOUT A WELCOME REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST MONEY CHANGERS.

"BUT WE ARE STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT LEVEL OF MALPRACTICE, WHICH LEADS TO A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY FOR HONG KONG.

"IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT UNSCRUPULOUS PRACTICES ARE ERADICATED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE," HE SAID.

EXPLAINING PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, MR JACOBS SAID CLAUSE 5 REQUIRED A MONEY CHANGER TO COMPLETE A TRANSACTION NOTE USING THE NET RATES OF EXCHANGE BEFORE THE EXCHANGE TRANSACTION WAS FINALISED.

"THE NOTE IS TO BE BILINGUAL AND EASILY UNDERSTOOD," HE POINTED OUT.

UNDER CLAUSE 7, THE MONEY CHANGER WAS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN A BOARD DISPLAYING CLEARLY THE NET RATES OF EXCHANGE.

"CLAUSE 8 PROHIBITS A MONEY CHANGER FROM DISPLAYING FALSE OR MISLEADING NOTICES OR MAKING FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENTS," MR JACOBS CONTINUED.

HE ADDED THAT CRIMINAL LIABILITY WAS EXTENDED TO DIRECTORS, MANAGERS AND SECRETARIES OF CORPORATE MONEY CHANGERS IF THEY DID NOT TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO AVOID MALPRACTICE BY EMPLOYEES.

MR JACOBS SAID THESE CONTROLS SHOULD NOT IMPOSE AN ONEROUS BURDEN ON MONEY CHANGERS, AND THEY DEPARTED LITTLE FROM THE EXISTING PRACTICES OF THE MORE REPUTABLE.

HOWEVER, THE NEED FOR CONFORMITY OF PRACTICE AMONG MONEY CHANGERS WOULD REQUIRE MANY TO ADJUST THEIR MODE OF OPERATION IN SOME WAY, HE SAID.

"TO FACILITATE THIS, IT IS INTENDED THAT AT LEAST THREE MONTHS WILL BE ALLOWED AFTER ENACTMENT OF THE BILL BEFORE IT IS BROUGHT INTO EFFECT," HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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ADVICE GIVEN ON ANTI-POLLUTION LAWS

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ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRIALISTS TO ENABLE THEM TO COMPLY WITH THE STANDARDS REQUIRED BY ANTI-INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION LEGISLATION IS PROVIDED IN THE FORM OF EXPLANATORY BOOKLETS AND INFORMAL ADVICE.

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

"THERE ARE FIRST, EXPLANATORY BOOKLETS ON POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION AND HOW TO COMPLY WITH IT AND INFORMAL ADVICE ON WHERE TO GO FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SECONDLY, THE GOVERNMENT GRANTS AN ANNUAL SUBSIDY TO THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL," MR BARNES SAID.

"PART OF THAT GRANT GOES TO THE COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION, WHICH PROVIDES A FULL RANGE OF CONSULTANCY AND EQUIPMENT DESIGN AND FABRICATION SERVICES ON AIR POLLUTION CONTROL, WASTE WATER TREATMENT, NOISE CONTROL AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT."

MR BARNES SAID THE COUNCIL HAD PROVIDED ASSISTANCE ON 193 PROJECTS LAST YEAR.

HE STRESSED THAT POLLUTION CONTROL WAS PART AND PARCEL OF THE TASK AND EXPERTISE OF RUNNING AN INDUSTRIAL CONCERN IN THE SAME WAY THAT FINANCIAL, STAFF AND OTHER CONTROLS WERE.

"IT IS THEREFORE PRIMARILY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDUSTRIALIST TO KEEP HIS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER," HE ADDED.

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PETROL STATION LOCATIONS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED

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THE LOCATIONS OF PETROL FILLING STATIONS ARE VERY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED TAKING MANY FACTORS INTO ACCOUNT, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING A QUESTION FROM THE HON POON CHI-FAI, WHO REFERRED TO AN OCCURRENCE OF A "FIRE AND EXPLOSION" AT A PETROL FILLING STATION CAUSED BY A GOODS VEHICLE IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.

MR BARNES SAID THE INCIDENT IN QUESTION HAD OCCURRED IN WONG CHUK HANG IN JUNE 1987.

"I AM INFORMED THAT THERE WAS A FIRE BUT NO EXPLOSION," HE SAID.

/EXPLAINING THE

EXPLAINING THE CRITERIA ON LOCATING PETROL FILLING STATIONS, MR BARNES SAID THE SITES WERE DETERMINED BY THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS OR THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERING FACTORS SUCH AS NEED, LAND USE COMPATIBILITY, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL AND FIRE SAFETY ASPECTS.

"SINCE THE CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFER FROM AREA TO AREA, THERE ARE NO HARD AND FAST RULES," HE SAID.

"EACH SITE IS VERY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FACTORS MENTIONED."

SIMILAR CONSIDERATIONS ALSO APPLIED TO THE LOCATION OF BUNKERING STATIONS, MR BARNES SAID.

"HERE THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS OR THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SUCH FACTORS AS SITE CHARACTERISTICS, MARINE TRAFFIC FLOW, IMPACT ON WATER QUALITY, AND FIRE SAFETY," HE SAID.

BUNKERING STATIONS WERE LOCATED ON THE SEAFRONT MAINLY ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND IN THE SAI KUNG AREA.

AS REGARDS PETROL FILLING STATIONS, HE SAID THERE WERE 16 LICENSED STATIONS LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOORS OF BUILDINGS AND ONE ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF A BUILDING.

OF THESE, FIVE WERE IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, THREE IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, FIVE IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND FOUR IN CARPARK BUILDINGS.

"PETROL FILLING STATIONS LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOORS OF BUILDINGS MUST COMPLY WITH THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES' GENERAL REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE THEMSELVES IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL SAFETY STANDARDS," MR BARNES SAID.

"THESE INCLUDE BURYING STORAGE TANKS UNDERGROUND, SURROUNDING EACH TANK WITH A LAYER OF SAND AND A LAYER OF FINE CONCRETE, AND SITING THE FILLING/DISPENSING POINTS AT A DISTANCE OF MORE THAN 4.5 METRES FROM THE PERIMETER OF THE STATION AREA."

THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES ALSO STIPULATED ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE ON THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE BUILDING.

"THESE INCLUDE THE COMPLETE SEPARATION OF THE PETROL FILLING STATION FROM THE REST OF THE BUILDING Laterally AND VERTICALLY SO THAT THE FINAL CONSTRUCTION ENSURES A FIRE RESISTANCE PERIOD OF FOUR HOURS.

"ALSO REQUIRED ARE ADDITIONAL FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS SPRINKLER AND DRENCHER SYSTEMS IN BOTH THE FILLING STATION AND ON THE UPPER FLOORS, AND THE SITING OF ESCAPE EXITS FOR THE UPPER FLOORS WELL AWAY FROM THE PETROL FILLING STATION," MR BARNES SAID.

EHC WILL OFFER RELIEF TO TUNNEL CONGESTION

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LONG-TERM RELIEF TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL CONGESTION COULD NOT BE EXPECTED UNTIL THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING OPENED IN SEPTEMBER, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW, MR LEUNG SAID THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR EXAMINED WHETHER VEHICULAR FERRIES MIGHT OFFER SOME RELIEF TO TUNNEL CONGESTION BUT FOUND NO SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL CAPACITY AS ALL AVAILABLE VESSELS WERE FULLY USED.

ADDITIONAL FERRIES COULD NOT BE BUILT IN TIME, AND, EVEN IF ADDITIONAL VESSELS COULD SOMEHOW BE OBTAINED, THEY WOULD BE SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS LATER THIS YEAR WHEN THE NEW TUNNEL OPENED.

MR LEUNG SAID THE HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY AT PRESENT RAN 17 VEHICULAR FERRIES ON THERE ROUTES.

THEY COULD CARRY ABOUT 870 VEHICLES, PROVIDING A TWO-WAY CAPACITY OF OVER 2,000 VEHICLES PER PEAK HOUR.

THE AVERAGE UTILISATION RATE OF AVAILABLE CAPACITY HAD INCREASED STEADILY IN THE LAST THREE YEARS FROM OVER 60 PER CENT IN 1986, TO ABOUT 85 PER CENT LAST YEAR.

MR LEUNG SAID THE ACTUAL RATE VARIED ACCORDING TO THE TIME OF DAY AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL.

IN THE MORNING PEAK HOURS, THE FERRIES WERE USUALLY FULL TRAVELLING TOWARDS HONG KONG, AND LIKewise TOWARES KOWLOON IN THE EVENING PEAK.

AT THESE TIMES, VESSELS TRAVELLING AGAINST THE MAIN DIRECTION OF DEMAND HAD ABOUT 30 PER CENT SPARE CAPACITY.

DURING THE OFF-PEAK HOURS, THERE WAS ONLY ABOUT 15 PER CENT TO 20 PER CENT SPARE CAPACITY IN EITHER DIRECTION AS GOODS VEHICLE UTILISATION WAS AT ITS HIGHEST AT THESE TIMES.

THIS OFF-PEAK SPARE CAPACITY REPRESENTED ABOUT 150 VEHICLES AN HOUR, OR A SMALLER NUMBER OF LARGER VEHICLES.

EVEN IF THIS SPACE COULD BE FILLED, THE RELIEF TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL CONGESTION WOULD BE NEGLIGIBLE, MR LEUNG ADDED.

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WIDER HOSTEL PROGRAMME FOR HOMELESS MAY BE STUDIED

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER INITIATING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE HOSTEL PROGRAMME FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE, INCLUDING STREET SLEEPERS, IF A HOSTEL OPENED IN YAU MA TEI LAST YEAR OPERATES SUCCESSFULLY.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) WHEN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ELSIE TU.

MR CHAU SAID THE MAJOR CONSTRAINT TO SUCH A PROGRAMME WOULD BE IDENTIFYING SUITABLE PREMISES.

"THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMMODATION DIVISION AND THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT ARE THEREFORE EXAMINING, AT MY REQUEST, WHETHER THEY HAVE ANY DISUSED OR VACANT PREMISES WHICH MAY BE SUITABLE FOR CONVERSION INTO HOSTELS," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAD FOR SOME TIME BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE DISUSED BUILDINGS IN THE URBAN AREA WHICH COULD BE CONVERTED INTO HOSTELS TO PROVIDE REHOUSING FOR HOMELESS PERSONS, INCLUDING STREET SLEEPERS.

"SOME SUCCESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND A HOSTEL MANAGED BY THE SALVATION ARMY WAS OPENED IN NOVEMBER 1988 IN THE SIX STREETS REDEVELOPMENT AREA OF YAU MA TEI.

"THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO ASSISTED THE STREET SLEEPERS SHELTER SOCIETY TO LOCATE PREMISES FOR SHELTERS IN MALLORY STREET IN WAN CHAI AND IN SHANGHAI STREET IN YAU MA TEI," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB HAD RECENTLY ALLOCATED \$2.3 MILLION TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE FLATS FOR CONVERSION INTO HOSTELS.

THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION HAD BEEN INVITED TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING PREMISES FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

"AS TO ACCOMMODATION FOR ELDERLY STREET SLEEPERS WHO ARE ABLE TO WORK BUT CANNOT TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL CONSIDER WHETHER THE PEOPLE CONCERNED WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR IMMEDIATE PERMANENT REHOUSING UNDER THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING QUOTA," HE SAID.

"IN ADDITION, PEOPLE AGED OVER 55 ARE GIVEN PRIORITY IN ADMISSION INTO MOST URBAN HOSTELS AND SHELTERS FOR THE HOMELESS.

"THESE HOSTELS AND SHELTERS, WHICH ARE RUN BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SUCH AS THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY, CARITAS, AND HELPING HAND, AND A FEW OF WHICH ARE IN VACANT PREMISES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, CURRENTLY PROVIDE OVER 1,000 PLACES TO HOMELESS PERSONS."

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NO TOTALLY UNRESTRICTED LAND LEASES IN HK
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ALL LAND LEASES IN HONG KONG CONTAIN SOME RESTRICTIONS TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT, AND THERE ARE THUS NO TOTALLY "UNRESTRICTED" LEASES, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PEGGY LAM, MR BARNES SAID THAT MANY OF THE OLDER LEASES IN BOTH THE URBAN AREAS AND THE NEW TERRITORIES, HOWEVER, CONTAINED VERY FEW RESTRICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT AND USE.

"WITH 30,000 LOTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND 23,400 LOTS IN THE URBAN AREA WITH DIFFERENT DEGREES OF RESTRICTION, THE NUMBER OF VERY LOOSELY RESTRICTED LOTS IS STILL VERY LARGE," HE SAID.

"MOST OF THE LESS RESTRICTED OLDER LOTS ARE VERY SMALL. SO IT IS USUALLY NECESSARY TO AMALGAMATE THEM WITH OTHER ADJACENT LOTS TO MAKE REDEVELOPMENT WORTHWHILE.

"THE OLD LOTS MAKING UP THE SITE ARE SURRENDERED TO GOVERNMENT AND IN THEIR PLACE A NEW LOT IS GRANTED WITH UP TO DATE RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS CONFORMING TO THE STATUTORY TOWN PLAN OR WITH PERMISSIONS GIVEN UNDER THE ORDINANCE BY THE TOWN PLANNING BOARD."

MR BARNES SAID THAT IN THEORY THE GOVERNMENT COULD MODIFY A LEASE TO A USE WHICH WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE USE SPECIFIED IN THE STATUTORY PLAN, OR WHICH WAS PERMITTED BY THE BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH NOTES IN THE PLAN.

"BUT IT WOULD NOT DO SO, FIRSTLY BECAUSE SUCH A CHANGE WOULD MAKE NONSENSE OF THE PLANNING PROCEDURE AND SECONDLY BECAUSE HOWEVER THE LEASE WAS PHRASED THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE STATUTORY PLAN OR PERMISSIONS GIVEN BY THE BOARD IN APPROVING THE BUILDING PLANS, AND WOULD NOT APPROVE PLANS WHICH WERE IN CONFLICT," HE SAID.

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MORE PUBLICITY ON HOME SAFETY, CHILD CARE

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EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE, BOTH AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL AND TERRITORY-WIDE THROUGH TELEVISION AND POSTERS, TO STEP UP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND CAMPAIGNS ON HOME SAFETY AND CHILD CARE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MIRIAM LAU, MR CHAU SAID AS FAR AS FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES WERE CONCERNED, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PROVIDED A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMMES CONNECTED WITH CHILD CARE.

THESE PROGRAMMES, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DANGER OF LEAVING YOUNG CHILDREN UNATTENDED AT HOME, WERE TARGETTED PARTICULARLY AT PARENTS AND HOUSEWIVES.

"THESE CONCERTED EFFORTS HAVE, I BELIEVE, HELPED TO ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS IN THIS REGARD," HE SAID.

TO SUPPLEMENT THESE PROGRAMMES, A MAJOR CAMPAIGN FOCUSING IN PART ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHILD IN THE FAMILY AND ON WHAT RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD MEANT, WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN 1989-90, HE ADDED.

"ONE OF THE MESSAGES WE WISH TO PUT ACROSS IS TO REMIND THE PUBLIC OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD NEGLECT," HE STRESSED.

ON THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS IN WHICH YOUNG CHILDREN, LEFT ALONE AT HOME, WERE KILLED AS A RESULT OF FALLING FROM THE BUILDING, MR CHAU SAID THE POLICE WERE NOW GATHERING THE REQUIRED INFORMATION FROM RECORDS KEPT BY INDIVIDUAL POLICE DIVISIONS.

STATISTICS WOULD BE PROVIDED IN WRITING ONCE THIS EXERCISE HAD BEEN COMPLETED, HE SAID.

"THE RESULTS SO FAR SHOW THAT, OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THERE WERE 10 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 10 WHO DIED AS A RESULT OF FALLING OUT OF WINDOWS.

"BUT IT HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN ESTABLISHED HOW MANY OF THESE CHILDREN WERE LEFT UNATTENDED AT THE TIME," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THERE WERE A VARIETY OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WHICH EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES IN TAKING CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN.

"FAMILIES CAN MAKE USE OF CHILD CARE CENTRES IN THE FORM OF NURSERIES AND CRECHES," HE SAID, ADDING THAT THERE WAS A FEE ASSISTANCE SCHEME WHICH PROVIDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES TOWARDS PAYMENT OF NURSERY FEES.

/AT PRESENT,

AT PRESENT, THERE WERE OVER 30,000 PLACES IN CHILD CARE CENTRES, INCLUDING BOTH NURSERIES AND CRECHES, AND THERE WERE PLANS TO PROVIDE 1,600 ADDITIONAL NURSERY PLACES ANNUALLY OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

MR CHAU NOTED THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF DAY NURSERIES WERE ALSO EXPERIMENTING WITH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS LONGER AND MORE FLEXIBLE HOURS.

THESE WERE TO CATER TO CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES WHICH HAD PROBLEMS IN TAKING CARE OF THEM IN THE EVENINGS BECAUSE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF PARENTS' LONG WORKING HOURS.

"IN ADDITION, A HOME HELP SERVICE IS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

"LOCAL VOLUNTARY PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING DEVELOPED TO ENCOURAGE GREATER MUTUAL HELP AMONG NEIGHBOURS TO LOOK AFTER CHILDREN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS," HE SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF LEGISLATIVE CONTROLS AGAINST PARENTS LEAVING CHILDREN ALONE AT HOME, MR CHAU SAID HE WOULD ENDORSE THE VIEWS OF HIS PREDECESSOR, AS EXPRESSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON MAY 28, 1986.

THESE VIEWS WERE THAT EXISTING STATUTORY PROVISIONS WERE GENERALLY ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH CASES OF SERIOUS ABUSE AND WILFUL NEGLECT OF CHILDREN.

MR CHAU POINTED OUT THAT SECTION 27 OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON ORDINANCE MADE IT AN OFFENCE TO WILFULLY ASSAULT, ILL-TREAT, NEGLECT, ABANDON OR EXPOSE ANY CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 16.

FURTHERMORE, THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES ORDINANCE EMPOWERED THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE TO TAKE ACTION IN THE INTERESTS OF A CHILD WHO WAS LIKELY TO BE EXPOSED TO PHYSICAL OR MORAL DANGER.

AS FOR PARENTS LEAVING YOUNG CHILDREN ALONE AT HOME DUE TO TEMPORARY ABSENCE OR NEGLIGENCE BUT THROUGH NO WILFUL NEGLECT OR WITH NO ILL INTENT, MR CHAU EXPRESSED DOUBT ON WHETHER DIRECT STATUTORY CONTROL IN THIS AREA WAS EITHER THE RIGHT ANSWER OR WAS PRACTICAL.

THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES OVER DEFINITION AND ENFORCEMENT AS TO THE LATTER POINT.

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HOME BUYERS SHOULD PROTECT THEIR OWN INTERESTS

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MANY PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN THE SALE OF PROPERTY, AND A LICENSING SYSTEM WOULD BE CUMBROUS AND DIFFICULT TO MANAGE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SO CHAU YIM-PING, MR JACOBS SAID LICENSING ON ITS OWN WOULD PROVIDE NO SOLUTION BECAUSE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM WOULD DEPEND UPON THE DEGREE OF MONITORING.

HE SAID A PRUDENT PURCHASER WOULD NO DOUBT APPROACH A PROPERTY TRANSACTION WITH A PROPER DEGREE OF CAUTION AND MANY WOULD ENGAGE THE ASSISTANCE OF A LAWYER.

"SO IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOUT THE NEED TO DISPLAY CAUTION WHEN PURCHASING PROPERTY, WE TAKE THE VIEW THAT IT IS PREFERABLE THAT PURCHASERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROTECT THEIR OWN INTERESTS," MR JACOBS SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS ALWAYS ANXIOUS TO HEAR OF POSSIBLE ABUSES SO THAT ADDITIONAL PROTECTION COULD BE PROVIDED WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EITHER THROUGH AMENDING THE LAW OR THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

"BUT IN ORDER TO DO THIS, WE, OF COURSE, NEED FACTUAL INFORMATION.

"THE BEST WAY FORWARD IS FOR GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AND WITH THE POLICE, AND THIS WE SHALL DO," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS ALSO NOTED THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN RELATION TO THE SUBJECT OF HOME PURCHASE.

THE COUNCIL HAD PUBLISHED INFORMATIVE ARTICLES IN ITS CHOICE MAGAZINE AND HAD ALSO DISSEMINATED THROUGH THE MEDIA INFORMATION ON THE ESSENTIAL POINTS TO WHICH PURCHASERS OF PROPERTY SHOULD PAY ATTENTION.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989

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MORE THAN ONE MILLION COVERED BY FACTORIES LAW

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ABOUT 1,007,000 PEOPLE WERE COVERED BY THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS WAS ABOUT 36.6 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL WORK FORCE, HE SAID IN REPLYING A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

"BECAUSE THE CATERING TRADE GIVES RISE TO MORE ACCIDENTS THAN ANY OTHER IN THE NON-INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS NOW REVIEWING WHETHER IT SHOULD BE BROUGHT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE," MR BRIDGE SAID.

"IT HOPES TO BE READY TO CONSULT THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD ON THIS ISSUE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE MONTHS."

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REVIEW OF TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR DISABLED

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW THE OVERALL PROVISION OF TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED AND RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON T.H. CHAU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AGREED IN DECEMBER 1988 THAT THE PILOT TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED WAS NOT WORKABLE," MR CHAU SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHAN YING-LUN.

MR CHAU SAID A SURVEY CARRIED OUT AT END OF THE TRIAL PERIOD, WHICH RAN FROM APRIL 1, 1987 TO MARCH 31 LAST YEAR, SHOWED THAT THE SCHEME HAD NOT BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY EITHER THE PARTICIPANTS OR THE TAXI-DRIVERS.

"THIS WAS ATTRIBUTED TO THE RELATIVELY CUMBERSOME APPLICATION PROCEDURES INVOLVED AND THE UNWILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF MANY TAXI DRIVERS TO ACCEPT THE VOUCHERS BECAUSE OF THE INCONVENIENCE INVOLVED IN ENCASHING THEM," HE SAID.

MR CHAU SAID THAT ON THE SUGGESTION OF THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SHORTLY SET UP A WORKING GROUP TO:

/(A) IDENTIFY DEFICIENCIES

- (A) IDENTIFY DEFICIENCIES IN THE PRESENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR DISABLED PERSONS;
- (B) RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING TRANSPORT PROVISIONS FOR DISABLED PERSONS;
- (C) SEE HOW TRANSPORT FOR DISABLED PERSONS COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES, IN PARTICULAR DURING THEIR PLANNING STAGE; AND
- (D) EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE TO ENHANCE THE MOBILITY OF THE DISABLED, HAVING REGARD TO THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF THE TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME.

"IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE WORKING GROUP WILL FINISH ITS WORK LATER THIS YEAR AND SUBMIT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE," MR CHAU SAID.

"IT IS NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT TO SAY WHETHER OR WHEN OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED."

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ARREARS OF REVENUE BEING REDUCED
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THE ARREARS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INTERNAL REVENUE HAD BEEN FURTHER REDUCED TO \$718 MILLION BY DECEMBER 31, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARTIN BARROW.

MR BARROW HAD ASKED WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS DOING TO COLLECT THE OUTSTANDING ARREARS OF REVENUE TOTTALLING \$1,964 MILLION ON MARCH 31 LAST YEAR AND HOW MUCH OF THIS WAS EXPECTED TO BE COLLECTED.

MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT AS NOTED IN THE AUDIT REPORT 1987-88, THE REPORTED ARREARS OF REVENUE OF \$1,964 MILLION AS AT MARCH 31 HAD BEEN REDUCED TO \$1,161 MILLION BY JUNE 30.

THE TWO MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE ARREARS AS AT JUNE 30 COMPRISED \$1,060 MILLION IN INTERNAL REVENUE AND \$45 MILLION UNDER THE FIXED PENALTY SYSTEM RELATING TO TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS AND CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS.

"IN TERMS OF RECOVERY ACTION FOR ARREARS ATTRIBUTABLE TO INTERNAL REVENUE, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO COLLECT OVERDUE TAXES," MR JACOBS SAID.

/"METHODS EMPLOYED

"METHODS EMPLOYED INCLUDE THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ACTIONS THROUGH THE DISTRICT COURTS, THE USE OF POWERS GRANTED UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE TO ISSUE RECOVERY NOTICES TO PERSONS, SUCH AS EMPLOYERS AND BANKERS, WHO OWE MONEY TO, OR HOLD MONEY FOR, DEFAULTERS, AND THE PREVENTION OF DEFAULTERS DEPARTING FROM HONG KONG."

REFERRING TO THE RECOVERY OF ARREARS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE FIXED PENALTY SYSTEM, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE GOVERNMENT SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT THE NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS WAS REDUCED TO A MINIMUM.

HE ADDED THAT EX PARTE ORDERS OF THE COURT WERE SOUGHT FOR NON-PAYMENT AFTER THE DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT.

"WE HAVE ALSO APPLIED TO THE COURT FOR ORDERS IMPOSING AN ADDITIONAL PENALTY TOGETHER WITH COSTS AGAINST DEFENDANTS WHO DO NOT RESPOND TO DULY SERVED SUMMONS," MR JACOBS SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT HAS ON OCCASIONS REFUSED TO ISSUE OR RENEW A VEHICLE OR DRIVING LICENCE UNLESS AND UNTIL ALL DEBTS IN RELATION TO PENALTIES ARE PAID.

"BECAUSE OF THE MANY FACTORS INVOLVED, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A FULLY ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF THE AMOUNT OF REVENUE THAT CAN BE COLLECTED."

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GOVT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PUBLIC VIEWS

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THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PUBLIC VIEWS AS EXPRESSED THROUGH A VARIETY OF CHANNELS AND FORUMS, INCLUDING THE PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THE COLLECTION OF VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES AND IN THE NEWSPAPERS, BE THEY SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS, IS ONE OF THE MAIN TASKS OF THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT," HE SAID.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW, MR TSAO SAID THE DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLATING THOSE VIEWS AND DIRECTING THEM TO THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT OFFICERS.

THE DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY PERUSED SOME 60 CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, AND ABOUT 180 HOURS EACH WEEK OF RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES.

/"IT PRODUCES

"IT PRODUCES SUMMARIES, TRANSLATIONS, CLIPPINGS AND REPORTS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL RELEVANT SECRETARIAT BRANCHES AND DEPARTMENTS FOR INFORMATION AND NECESSARY ACTION," MR TSAO SAID.

"WHERE NECESSARY, FULL TRANSLATIONS ARE PRODUCED OF COMMENTARIES AND/OR ARTICLES IN THE CHINESE PRESS, AND TRANSCRIPTS OF EXTRACTS FROM RADIO AND TELEVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES," HE ADDED.

AT PRESENT THE DEPARTMENT PRODUCED "THE GIST", A DAILY PUBLICATION WHICH SUMMARISED NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE CHINESE PRESS AS WELL AS ELECTRONIC MEDIA; "OPINION", A WEEKLY REVIEW OF CHINESE EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES; "WHAT THE MAGAZINES SAY", A MONTHLY REVIEW OF ARTICLES AND COMMENT IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL MAGAZINES; AND SPECIAL REPORTS ON TOPICAL ISSUES AS AND WHEN REQUIRED, MR TSAO POINTED OUT.

HE SAID A SIMILAR MECHANISM FOR THE DAILY PERUSING AND FEEDBACK OF VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE MEDIA EXISTED IN MORE THAN 20 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SERVED BY THEIR OWN INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UNITS MANNED BY STAFF SECONDED FROM THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

THIS, HE SAID, WOULD ENSURE THAT SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS WERE KEPT ABREAST OF PUBLIC SENTIMENTS ON MATTERS DIRECTLY RELATING TO OR AFFECTING THEIR DEPARTMENT.

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CHOOSING OF LOCATION FOR MURRAY HOUSE RE-ERECTION EXPLAINED

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THE HISTORIC LINK OF MURRAY HOUSE TO THE BRITISH ARMY IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH THE ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD HAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE SELECTION OF A SUITABLE SITE FOR THE RE-ERECTION OF MURRAY HOUSE.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS INFORMED OF THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO.

HE WAS GIVING A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON JAMES MCGREGOR CONCERNING THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING MA HANG VILLAGE AS A LOCATION FOR RE-ERECTING MURRAY HOUSE.

MR LIAO SAID MURRAY HOUSE WAS COMPLETED IN 1846. IT WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT AS AN OFFICERS' MESS AND WAS USED CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE PURPOSE BY THE BRITISH ARMY UP TO 1963, EXCEPT FOR AN INTERRUPTION DURING WORLD WAR II.

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IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DEMOLISHED IN 1982 TO MAKE WAY FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENTS.

MR LIAO NOTED THAT MA HANG WAS SITUATED IN STANLEY WHICH WAS STILL CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE BRITISH ARMY.

HE SAID THE RE-ERECTED MURRAY HOUSE WOULD BECOME A FOCAL POINT IN A VILLAGE SQUARE UNDER THE NEW MA HANG VILLAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SCHEME TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

THE AUTHORITY'S PLANS ALSO INCLUDED THE REHABILITATION OF THE WATERFRONT AREA AT STANLEY AND THE PROVISION OF A NEW PROMENADE THERE TO ENHANCE ITS ATTRACTIVENESS TO TOURISTS, HE ADDED.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAD INDICATED THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO MEET THE COSTS OF RE-ERECTION OF MURRAY HOUSE AND THE SUBSEQUENT MAINTENANCE COSTS.

MR LIAO ALSO SAID THE ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD HAD CONSIDERED THE RELEVANT MERITS OF HARCOURT GARDEN AS A POSSIBLE SITE FOR THE RE-ERECTION OF THE BUILDING.

HOWEVER, THAT PROPOSAL HAD NOT BEEN PURSUED ANY FURTHER BECAUSE THE URBAN COUNCIL, WHICH WOULD MANAGE THE GARDEN, HAD INDICATED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO HAVE THE BUILDING RE-ERECTED THERE.

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ONE BILL PASSED
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THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

DEBATES ON TWO OTHER BILLS WERE ADJOURNED. THE BILLS ARE THE MONEY CHANGERS (DISCLOSURE OF RATES, CHARGES AND COMMISSIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989 AND THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1989.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989

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GOVERNOR TO VISIT LONDON NEXT MONTH

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON, WILL VISIT LONDON FROM FEBRUARY 20-26 FOR ROUTINE DISCUSSIONS WITH FCO MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS.

THE GOVERNOR'S LAST VISIT TO LONDON WAS IN OCTOBER 1988.

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HARBOUR ROAD SITE SOLD FOR \$3.35 BILLION

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A PIECE OF GOVERNMENT LAND AT HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI, WAS SOLD FOR \$3,350 MILLION AT A PUBLIC AUCTION HELD AT THE CITY HALL THEATRE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SITE, INLAND LOT NO. 8643, IS LOCATED AT HARBOUR ROAD OPPOSITE THE HONG KONG CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE.

IT COVERS AN AREA OF ABOUT 7,230 SQUARE METRES, AND IS FOR NON-INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, EXCLUDING GODOWN AND RESIDENTIAL BUT INCLUDING HOTEL AND/OR SERVICE APARTMENT.

BIDDING FOR THE LOT STARTED AT \$2,500 MILLION AND WAS FINALLY BOUGHT BY CHEER CITY PROPERTIES LIMITED.

ACCORDING TO THE BUILDING COVENANT, THE DEVELOPER IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 65,000 SQUARE METRES BEFORE MARCH 31, 1993.

ALSO SOLD AT TODAY'S AUCTION WAS A LOT AT THE TUNG TAU INDUSTRIAL AREA IN YUEN LONG.

THE AREA IS ABOUT 1,736 SQUARE METRES, AND IS FOR INDUSTRIAL AND/OR GODOWN PURPOSES EXCLUDING OFFENSIVE TRADE.

THE DEVELOPER HAS TO COMPLETE A GROSS FLOOR AREA OF NOT LESS THAN 8,333 SQUARE METRES BEFORE MARCH 31, 1993.

BIDDING STARTED AT \$25 MILLION AND WAS SOLD TO MAIN CROWN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED FOR \$33.5 MILLION.

TODAY'S AUCTION, WHICH ATTRACTED FULL-HOUSE ATTENDANCE, WAS CONDUCTED BY MR JIM HUGHES, GOVERNMENT LAND AGENT OF THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989

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\$782 MILLION CONTRACT SIGNED FOR KWUN TONG BY-PASS PHASE 2

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THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT HAS AWARDED A \$782 MILLION CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KWUN TONG BY-PASS PHASE 2, THE LARGEST SINGLE CONTRACT EVER.

THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BETWEEN THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, MR HAROLD BEATON AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF A JOINT VENTURE OF TWO FRENCH CONTRACTORS, DRAGAGES ET TRAVAUX PUBLICS AND BACHY SOLETANCHE, MR MICHEL BETANT AND MR PIERRE DUSSAUZE.

KWUN TONG BY-PASS PHASE 2 WILL CONNECT PHASE 1 AT WAI YIP STREET VIA A DUAL THREE-LANE ELEVATED CARRIAGEWAY ALONGSIDE THE KWUN TONG TYPHOON SHELTER SEAWALL (ADJACENT TO HOI BUN ROAD), TO KAI FUK ROAD AT KOWLOON BAY.

MR BEATON SAID THAT THE PROJECT HAD A NUMBER OF SPECIAL FEATURES.

IN VIEW OF THE LARGE AND FAST TRACKED NATURE OF THE PROJECT, THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME ASSIGNED A PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMPANY TO MANAGE ITS CONSTRUCTION.

ONLY 30 MONTHS WERE ALLOWED FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE MAIN WORKS BECAUSE THE KWUN TONG BY-PASS HAD TO BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR THE OPENING OF TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL LATER IN 1991.

APART FROM THIS, THE EXISTING KWUN TONG PUBLIC CARGO HANDLING AREA WOULD BE RE-LOCATED IN A PHASED PROGRAMME TO A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED PUBLIC CARGO HANDLING AREA AT CHA KWO LING AND THE NEW RECLAMATION ADJACENT TO HOI BUN ROAD.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE AN EARLY START TO THE RELOCATION AN ADVANCE CONTRACT WAS AWARDED LAST AUGUST FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES.

MR BEATON SAID WORKS ALSO INCLUDED THE REPLACEMENT AND REMOVAL OF THE KWUN TONG PASSENGER FERRY PIER AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE KWUN TONG VEHICULAR FERRY PIER.

THE CONSULTING ENGINEERS FOR THE PROJECT ARE FREEMAN FOX/MAUNSELL AND THE PROJECT MANAGERS ARE EHC PROJECT MANAGEMENT CO.

THE OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING SECTION.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989

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\$1 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO REPATRIATE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY APPROVED A \$1 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) TOWARDS ITS INITIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE.

THE CONTRIBUTION IS IN RESPONSE TO AN INTERNATIONAL APPEAL LAUNCHED BY THE UNHCR TO FUND AN INITIAL REPATRIATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR SOME 500 BOAT PEOPLE FROM THE REGION WHO WANT TO RETURN TO VIETNAM.

THE APPEAL AIMS TO RAISE US\$557000 (HK\$4345000). THIS IS REQUIRED TO TRANSPORT RETURNEES BACK TO VIETNAM AND TO HELP THEM RESUME NORMAL LIFE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED IN KIND RATHER THAN IN CASH.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY THAT 296 VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG HAVE SO FAR VOLUNTEERED TO BE REPATRIATED.

"THERE ARE VERY FEW OTHER VOLUNTEERS ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION AND HONG KONG WILL CERTAINLY START AS THE MAJOR BENEFICIARY OF THIS PROGRAMME.

"AND IF MORE VOLUNTEERS SHOULD COME FORWARD, HONG KONG MIGHT WELL PROVE TO BE IN EFFECT THE ONLY BENEFICIARY," HE SAID.

"ALTHOUGH HONG KONG MIGHT BE EXPECTED BY POTENTIAL DONOR COUNTRIES TO COME FORWARD WITH A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME, WE MUST AVOID CREATING THE IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE READY TO MEET THE BULK OF ALL COSTS CONNECTED WITH THE REPATRIATION OF VOLUNTEERS FROM HONG KONG," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

"THIS CONTRIBUTION SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS A COMMITMENT TO AN EQUIVALENT SHARE OF FUTURE PROGRAMMES.

"HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM HONG KONG TO ANY SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMME WHICH THE UNHCR MIGHT ORGANISE, PROVIDED THAT IT IS TO HONG KONG'S CLEAR ADVANTAGE," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT ONE-OFF CONTRIBUTION OF \$1 MILLION REPRESENTED 23 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET OF THE INITIAL PROGRAMME OR 38 PER CENT OF THE COST OF REPATRIATING THE 300 VOLUNTEERS FROM HONG KONG, WHO WOULD BE THE FIRST TO RETURN.

"THIS CONTRIBUTION REPRESENTS 14 PER CENT OF THE NOTIONAL COST OF KEEPING 300 BOAT PEOPLE IN DETENTION CENTRES FOR A YEAR," HE SAID.

"LORD GLENARTHUR HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THE UK GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE US\$125,000 TOWARDS THE INITIAL PROGRAMME, WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS OUR CONTRIBUTION," HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989

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EXPATRIATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS SCHEME TO BE MODIFIED

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A DECISION ON WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE A PERMANENT SCHEME TO EMPLOY EXPATRIATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC-SECTOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL NOT BE MADE UNTIL AFTER THE PRESENT TWO-YEAR EELT PILOT SCHEME HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN AUGUST THIS YEAR.

THE DECISION WILL BE BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN SEPTEMBER.

HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY WHILE THE PILOT SCHEME IS BEING EVALUATED, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT A MODIFIED SCHEME, WHICH WILL ALSO LAST FOR TWO YEARS, SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN SEPTEMBER 1989.

THIS WILL BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF FUNDS BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EXPLAINED THAT WITHOUT THIS MODIFIED SCHEME, MOST TEACHERS IN THE PILOT SCHEME WOULD LEAVE HONG KONG THIS SUMMER.

THIS WOULD LEAD TO A LOSS OF MOMENTUM, AND MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO INTRODUCE A PERMANENT SCHEME, IF ONE SHOULD PROVE TO BE JUSTIFIED.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE MODIFIED SCHEME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- * AIDED SCHOOLS IN THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME MAY JOIN THE MODIFIED SCHEME IF THEY WISH BY EMPLOYING SERVING EXPATRIATE TEACHERS WILLING TO STAY IN HONG KONG FOR TWO MORE YEARS FOR THE MODIFIED SCHEME. (22 SUCH AIDED SCHOOLS WITH 44 POSTS HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO HAVE THE SERVICE OF EXPATRIATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS.
- * THE AIDED SCHOOLS CONCERNED WILL EMPLOY EXPATRIATE TEACHERS DIRECTLY RATHER THAN THROUGH A THIRD PARTY.
- * VACANCIES FOR GRADUATE ENGLISH TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER 1989 (ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 30) ARE TO BE FILLED BY EXPATRIATE TEACHERS THROUGH OPEN COMPETITION WITH EMPLOYMENT ON NORMAL CIVIL SERVICE TERMS. THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH A LONG-ESTABLISHED POLICY PERMITTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF EXPATRIATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS. EXPATRIATE TEACHERS NOW SERVING IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS UNDER THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME MAY APPLY FOR THESE POSTS AS MAY ANY SERVING EXPATRIATE TEACHER IN THE AIDED SECTOR WHO CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN THAT SECTOR OR WHO WOULD PREFER TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR.

/* PARTICIPATING AIDED

- * PARTICIPATING AIDED SCHOOLS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A TEMPORARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUBJECT GRANT TO ENABLE THE EMPLOYMENT TERMS FOR THEIR EXPATRIATE ENGLISH TEACHERS TO BE MADE SIMILAR TO THOSE FOR EXPATRIATE TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.
- * SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE MODIFIED SCHEME WILL BE GIVEN FLEXIBILITY TO USE THEIR EXPATRIATE TEACHERS TO TEACH MORE SENIOR FORMS (SECONDARY 3 AND ABOVE) IF THEY WISH. THIS WILL PROVIDE THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPATRIATE TEACHERS IN IMPROVING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY OF OLDER STUDENTS.

ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE MODIFIED SCHEME IS THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION (ILE) WILL PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO HELP NEWLY RECRUITED EXPATRIATE TEACHERS TO ADJUST QUICKLY TO THE LOCAL TEACHING SITUATION AND TO ENSURE THAT IDEAS AND MATERIALS ORIGINATING FROM THE EXPATRIATE TEACHERS ARE FURTHER DEVELOPED AND MADE WIDELY AVAILABLE.

THE EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THE MODIFIED SCHEME WILL BE A USEFUL COMPLEMENT TO THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME IN DETERMINING HOW BEST TO IMPLEMENT ANY PERMANENT SCHEME, IF THIS SHOULD BE JUSTIFIED.

IN PARTICULAR, THE MODIFIED SCHEME WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO ASSESS THE MANAGEMENT OF EXPATRIATE TEACHERS DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY THEM.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE DECISION TO ADOPT A MODIFIED SCHEME WAS MADE AFTER THE GOVERNMENT HAD CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE FINDINGS OF AN INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME, WHICH IN GENERAL INDICATED THAT NO DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN AT SUCH AN EARLY STAGE.

HE SAID THAT AN ORAL TEST AND A LISTENING TEST HAD REVEALED NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY 1, 2 AND 3 LEVELS BETWEEN STUDENTS IN THE SCHEME AND THOSE IN CONTROL GROUPS TAUGHT BY LOCAL TEACHERS.

HOWEVER, WHILE A WRITTEN TEST HAD SHOWN NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY 1 AND 2 STUDENTS, SECONDARY 3 STUDENTS IN THE PILOT SCHEME HAD SHOWN POSITIVE RESULTS OVER THOSE IN THE CONTROL GROUPS.

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, PANEL CHAIRMEN AND THE EXPATRIATE TEACHERS THEMSELVES REGARDING THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THE EXPATRIATES TO THE GENERAL AIMS OF THE SCHOOLS WERE ALSO INCONCLUSIVE.

WHILE SOME TEACHERS FELT THAT THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS HAD BEEN LIMITED BECAUSE THE METHODS AND EXPECTATION OF THE SCHOOLS WERE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS WITH WHICH THEY WERE FAMILIAR, MOST SCHOOLS REPORTED FAVOURABLY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EXPATRIATE TEACHERS AND FELT THAT THEY HAD CONTRIBUTED POSITIVELY TO THE SCHOOLS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE INTERIM EVALUATION HAD ALSO BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE PILOT SCHEME STEERING GROUP COMPRISING REPRESENTATIVES OF SCHOOL COUNCILS, PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE BRITISH COUNCIL.

STATING THAT COPIES OF THE INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST TO THOSE INTERESTED, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED: "THE BRITISH COUNCIL HAS DONE A VERY THOROUGH INTERIM EVALUATION.

"WITH WIDE EXPERIENCE IN ADMINISTERING SIMILAR SCHEMES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE COUNCIL HAS ALSO ASSISTED THE DEPARTMENT IN ENCOURAGING POSITIVE CHANGE IN TEACHING METHODS IN SEVERAL OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS," HE ADDED.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION NOT TO INVOLVE THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN THE MODIFIED SCHEME WAS IN NO WAY AN ADVERSE REFLECTION ON THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE.

IT WAS MAINLY BECAUSE IN ANY PERMANENT SCHEME EXPATRIATE TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN THE SCHOOLS WOULD BE APPOINTED AND MANAGED BY THE SCHOOLS THEMSELVES, AND THE MODIFIED SCHEME PROVIDED A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS TO BE TESTED.

"WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE BRITISH COUNCIL IS DOING IN THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME AND FOR THE VERY VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION WHICH THE COUNCIL IS MAKING IN THE FIELD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN HONG KONG GENERALLY," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID ALL SCHOOLS AND EXPATRIATE TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PRESENT PILOT SCHEME WOULD BE INFORMED OF THE DETAILS OF THE MODIFIED SCHEME WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

HE SAID THAT THE ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COST OF EMPLOYING A MAXIMUM OF 74 EXPATRIATE TEACHERS FOR THE MODIFIED SCHEME WOULD BE ABOUT \$22 MILLION FOR THE FULL TWO-YEAR PERIOD.

THIS FIGURE INCLUDED ABOUT \$5 MILLION FOR THE SALARIES OF 16 TEACHERS OCCUPYING SUPERNUMARY POSTS SPECIFICALLY CREATED FOR THE ORIGINAL PILOT SCHEME IN THOSE AIDED SCHOOLS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MODIFIED SCHEME.

IF THE SALARIES OF THE OTHER 58 TEACHERS WERE ALSO INCLUDED (AND THESE WOULD HAVE TO BE PAID IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE TEACHERS CONCERNED WERE LOCAL OR EXPATRIATE), THE TOTAL COST OVER THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD WOULD BE ABOUT \$42 MILLION COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATED COST OF ABOUT \$53 MILLION FOR A MAXIMUM OF 84 TEACHERS UNDER THE PRESENT TWO-YEAR PILOT SCHEME.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE EMPLOYMENT OF EXPATRIATE TEACHERS WERE ONE OF MANY LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT MEASURES BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

THE TRAINING OF LOCAL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH HAD BEEN IMPROVED IN RECENT YEARS BY THE RECRUITMENT OF EXPATRIATE LECTURERS FOR THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AND THE ILE, AND BY THE INTENSIVE 23-WEEK COURSES FOR SERVING TEACHERS RUN BY THE ILE.

SINCE 1987 THESE COURSES HAD INCLUDED FOUR WEEKS OF TOTAL IMMERSION LANGUAGE TRAINING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR A TOTAL OF 153 TEACHERS. THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS SENT ANNUALLY WOULD INCREASE FROM 104 THIS YEAR TO 440 IN FINANCIAL YEAR 1993-94.

HE NOTED THAT THE PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS UNION HAD RECENTLY SUGGESTED AN ALTERNATIVE SCHEME UNDER WHICH NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS FROM OVERSEAS WOULD BE INVITED TO HONG KONG TO RUN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES FOR LOCAL TEACHERS.

THIS PROPOSAL WAS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AS A POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT MEASURE.

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GOVERNOR TO VISIT CENTRAL AND WESTERN

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON WILL VISIT CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON TO LOOK AT VARIOUS RE-DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES PLANNED FOR THE DISTRICT.

SIR DAVID WILL FIRST VISIT LAN KWAI FONG IN CENTRAL, AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL URBAN REDEVELOPMENT WITH PRIVATE INITIATIVE.

HE WILL THEN PROCEED TO WING ON STREET-COMMONLY KNOWN AS 'CLOTH ALLEY', WHICH LIES WITHIN THE PROPOSED GILMAN STREET COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AREA.

THE GOVERNOR WILL THEN GO TO LOK SZE TERRACE AND VISIT NEARBY RESIDENTIAL TERRACES IN KENNEDY TOWN.

THE NEXT STOP WILL BE THE WHITTY STREET COMPOUND WHERE AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN.

SIR DAVID WILL HAVE A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE WESTERN RECLAMATION FROM A HIGH-RISE BUILDING IN SHEUNG WAN. THE GOVERNOR WILL THEN MEET MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD AND LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS AT A RECEPTION.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT TO CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT TOMORROW (THURSDAY). REPORTERS ARE REQUESTED TO ASSEMBLE AT THE LAN KWAI FONG SITTING-OUT AREA, NEXT TO THE REFUSE COLLECTION POINT AT 2 PM. TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED TO COVER THE GOVERNOR'S TOUR.

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PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES FOR DECEMBER RELEASED

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HONG KONG'S EXTERNAL TRADE CONTINUED TO SHOW MARKED INCREASES IN DECEMBER 1988, ALTHOUGH THE YEAR-ON-YEAR GROWTH RATES OF THE VARIOUS TRADE AGGREGATES WERE NOT AS HIGH AS IN NOVEMBER.

THIS IS SHOWN BY THE PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN DECEMBER 1988 WAS \$21,175 MILLION, \$2,325 MILLION OR 12.3 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN DECEMBER 1987, WHILE THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 47.6 PER CENT OR \$9,065 MILLION TO \$28,121 MILLION.

THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS (DOMESTIC EXPORTS PLUS RE-EXPORTS), AT \$49,296 MILLION IN DECEMBER 1988, WAS THUS \$11,390 MILLION OR 30.0 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN DECEMBER 1987.

THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY 29.3 PER CENT OR \$11,369 MILLION OVER A YEAR EARLIER, TO \$50,186 MILLION IN DECEMBER 1988.

A VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF \$890 MILLION WAS RECORDED IN DECEMBER 1988, WHICH WAS EQUIVALENT TO 1.8 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS.

THIS COMPARES WITH A DEFICIT OF \$911 MILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 2.3 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, RECORDED IN DECEMBER 1987.

PUTTING THESE TRADE FIGURES IN PERSPECTIVE, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS FOR 1988 AS A WHOLE WAS \$493,069 MILLION, MADE UP OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS OF \$217,666 MILLION AND RE-EXPORTS OF \$275,403 MILLION.

COMPARED WITH 1987, IN VALUE TERMS TOTAL EXPORTS GREW BY \$115,035 MILLION OR 30.4 PER CENT, DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY \$22,412 MILLION OR 11.5 PER CENT, AND RE-EXPORTS BY \$92,623 MILLION OR 50.7 PER CENT.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY \$120,853 MILLION OR 32.0 PER CENT, TO \$498,801 MILLION.

A VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT OF \$5,732 MILLION, EQUIVALENT TO 1.1 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, WAS RECORDED IN 1988.

IN 1987, THE VISIBLE TRADE ACCOUNT WAS VIRTUALLY IN BALANCE, WITH A SMALL SURPLUS OF \$86 MILLION.

COMMENTING ON THESE FIGURES, A GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GROWTH RATE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FLUCTUATED DURING 1988.

/THE YEAR-ON-YEAR

THE YEAR-ON-YEAR GROWTH RATE IN MONEY TERMS OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FELL FROM 14.6 PER CENT IN THE FIRST QUARTER TO 8.8 PER CENT IN THE SECOND QUARTER, BEFORE PICKING UP TO 9.8 PER CENT IN THE THIRD QUARTER AND 13.3 PER CENT IN THE FOURTH QUARTER.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO NOTED THAT RE-EXPORTS REGISTERED SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH THROUGHOUT 1988.

AS A RESULT, 55.9 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS IN 1988 WAS TAKEN UP BY RE-EXPORTS, COMPARED WITH 48.4 PER CENT IN 1987.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE PRESENTS THE PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES FOR DECEMBER 1988.

MERCHANDISE:	DOMESTIC EXPORTS:	\$21,175 MILLION	
	RE-EXPORTS :	\$28,121 MILLION	
	TOTAL EXPORTS :	\$49,296 MILLION	
	IMPORTS :	\$50,186 MILLION	
	TRADE BALANCE :	\$890 MILLION	[IN DEFICIT]

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

LATEST 3 MONTHS	OCT 88 TO	OCT 87 TO	INCREASE	
	DEC 88	DEC 87	HK\$ MN.	%
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	61,293	54,115	7,178	13.3
RE-EXPORTS	82,455	53,704	28,751	53.5
TOTAL EXPORTS	143,748	107,819	35,929	33.3
IMPORTS	144,198	107,797	36,401	33.8
TRADE BALANCE	-450	22	-472	

SAME MONTH LAST YEAR	DECEMBER	DECEMBER	INCREASE	
	1988	1987	HK\$ MN.	%
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	21,175	18,850	2,325	12.3
(% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	(43.0%)	(49.7%)		
RE-EXPORTS	28,121	19,056	9,065	47.6
TOTAL EXPORTS	49,296	37,906	11,390	30.0
IMPORTS	50,186	38,817	11,369	29.3
TRADE BALANCE	-890	-911	21	

LAST MONTH	DECEMBER	NOVEMBER	INCREASE	
	1988	1988	HK\$ MN.	%
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	21,175	20,052	1,123	5.6
(% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	(43.0%)	(42.0%)		
RE-EXPORTS	28,121	27,706	415	1.5
TOTAL EXPORTS	49,296	47,758	1,538	3.2
IMPORTS	50,186	48,226	1,960	4.1
TRADE BALANCE	-890	-468	-422	

LAST 12 MONTHS	JAN-DEC	JAN-DEC	INCREASE	
	1988	1987	HK\$ MN.	%
	HK\$ MN.	HK\$ MN.		
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	217,666	195,254	22,412	11.5
(% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	(44.1%)	(51.6%)		
RE-EXPORTS	275,403	182,780	92,623	50.7
TOTAL EXPORTS	493,069	378,034	115,035	30.4
IMPORTS	498,801	377,948	120,853	32.0
TRADE BALANCE	-5,732	86	-5,818	

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SURVEY ON VACANCIES AT BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION SITES * * * * *

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MANUAL WORKERS ENGAGED AT BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION SITES IN SEPTEMBER 1988 WAS 73,077 AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANCIES WAS 7,600, ACCORDING TO A SURVEY OF VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY, WHICH COVERED SOME 404 PUBLIC SECTOR SITES AND 849 PRIVATE SECTOR SITES WHICH WERE ACTIVE IN SEPTEMBER 1988, WERE RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE VACANCY RATE, WHICH IS THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE SUM TOTAL OF THE NUMBER MANUAL WORKERS ENGAGED AND THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES, WAS 9.4 PER CENT IN SEPTEMBER 1988.

OF THE 7,600 VACANCIES REPORTED FROM THE SITES ENUMERATED, 5,513 WERE FOUND IN PUBLIC SECTOR SITES AND 2,087 IN PRIVATE SECTOR SITES.

THE VACANCY RATES FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND PRIVATE SECTOR SITES WERE RESPECTIVELY 17.6 PER CENT AND 4.2 PER CENT.

A SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS IS GIVEN IN THE TABLE BELOW :-

	PUBLIC SECTOR SITES	PRIVATE SECTOR SITES	TOTAL
	-----	-----	-----
NO. OF ACTIVE SITES	404	849	1,253
NO. OF MANUAL WORKERS	25,804	47,273	73,077
AVERAGE NO. OF WORKERS PER SITE	63.9	55.7	58.3

/NO. OF

NO. OF VACANCIES	5,513	2,087	7,600
AVERAGE NO. OF VACANCIES PER SITE	13.6	2.5	6.1
VACANCY RATE (%)	17.6	4.2	9.4

WHEN COMPARED WITH MARCH 1988, THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN BOTH THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANCIES AND THE VACANCY RATE. IN MARCH 1988, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANCIES WAS 6,003 AND THE VACANCY RATE WAS 7.5 PER CENT. CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN MAKING THE COMPARISON AS THERE COULD BE SEASONAL VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES AND THE VACANCY RATE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN PUBLISHING EMPLOYMENT AND VACANCY STATISTICS COVERING THE MAJOR ECONOMIC SECTORS ON A QUARTERLY BASIS SINCE MARCH 1976.

VACANCY STATISTICS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION SITES WERE, HOWEVER, NOT AVAILABLE. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUCH STATISTICS, THE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTED A SPECIAL SURVEY OF VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES IN MARCH 1988 AND REPEATED THE SURVEY IN SEPTEMBER 1988.

IT IS INTENDED TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY IN EVERY MARCH AND SEPTEMBER IN FUTURE.

THE NEW SURVEY COVERS ALL PRIVATE SECTOR SITES REGISTERED IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE OF THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR SITES UNDER THE CHARGE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT, HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT, TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

IN ADDITION, SITES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION AND THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION ARE ALSO INCLUDED.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR VILLAGE-TYPE HOUSES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND MINOR ALTERATIONS, REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND INTERIOR DECORATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE, HOWEVER, NOT INCLUDED.

DATA WERE COLLECTED BY PERSONAL INTERVIEWS. DURING THE SURVEY PERIOD, FIELD OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT PAID VISITS TO EACH CONSTRUCTION SITE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SOLICIT THE REQUIRED INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM SITE AGENTS OF THE MAIN CONTRACTOR OR SUB-CONTRACTORS.

FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR SITES, DATA WERE SOLICITED FORM THE RESPONSIBLE RESIDENT ENGINEER OR CLERK OF WORKS, WHO OBTAINED THE INFORMATION FROM THE CONTRACTORS.

/THE SPOKESMAN

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN DEFINING AND OBTAINING ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, READERS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE DUE NOTE OF THE DEFINITION OF VACANCY ADOPTED AND THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY WHEN INTERPRETING THE SURVEY RESULTS.

IN THE SURVEY, VACANCIES REFER TO THOSE UNFILLED, IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE JOB OPENINGS FOR WHICH ACTIVE STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO RECRUIT THE WORKERS.

THIS DEFINITION IS CONSISTENT WITH THAT ADOPTED IN OTHER SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

HOWEVER, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL SUBSTITUTION AND RE-SCHEDULING POSSIBILITIES IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES, IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN LABOUR SUPPLY AND WORK REQUIREMENTS.

CONSEQUENTLY, VACANCIES CARRY A MUCH LOOSER SENSE AS FAR AS BUILDING CONTRACTORS ARE CONCERNED.

THIS MEANS THAT VACANCY DATA SUPPLIED BY CONTRACTORS OR SUB-CONTRACTORS ARE LIKELY TO BE SUBJECT TO LARGE VARIATIONS IN REPORTING BEHAVIOUR.

AMONG THE SITES SURVEYED IN SEPTEMBER 1988, SOME WERE FOUND TO HAVE NO VACANCIES AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IN THESE SITES THE CONTRACTORS WERE ABLE TO FILL ALL VACANCIES OR THEY HAD IN FACT DELAYED THE PROJECTS INSTEAD.

DETAILS OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS, TOGETHER WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY, ARE PUBLISHED IN A "REPORT OF VACANCIES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES". COPIES OF THIS REPORT ARE AVAILABLE AT \$7 PER COPY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GPO, GROUND FLOOR, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SURVEY MAY BE MADE TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON TEL. 5-8234758 OR 5-8234753.

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STUDENTS TO BE HONOURED IN CLEAN HONG KONG CAMPAIGN

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A PRIZE PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE 1988-89 KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN WILL BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE CITY HALL TO HONOUR WINNERS OF THE 1988 AUXILIARY LITTER WARDEN SCHEME AND THE "DRAWING THE RAINBOW" SCHOOL PAINTING COMPETITION.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT URBAN COUNCIL/REGIONAL COUNCIL KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN STEERING COMMITTEE, MR WALTER SULKE, AND VICE-CHAIRMAN, DR PANG HOK-TUEN, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE CEREMONY TOGETHER WITH THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR SO FAI-CHO.

AN EXHIBITION, DISPLAYING THE WINNING ENTRIES OF THE PAINTING COMPETITION, WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AFTER THE CEREMONY.

THE AUXILIARY LITTER WARDEN SCHEME AND THE "DRAWING THE RAINBOW" SCHOOL PAINTING COMPETITION WERE TWO MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT CAMPAIGN, AIMED AT SOLICITING STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN KEEPING THE CITY CLEAN.

DURING LAST SUMMER, SOME 640 STUDENTS TOOK PART IN THE AUXILIARY LITTER WARDEN SCHEME TO HELP CLEAN UP URBAN BEACHES AND TO ADVISE BEACH-GOERS TO DISPOSE OF THEIR REFUSE PROPERLY.

SOME 500 STUDENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS WILL ATTEND TOMORROW'S CEREMONY.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT WHICH STARTS AT 2.30 PM IN THE CITY HALL THEATRE, LOW BLOCK. GIS OFFICERS WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST.

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DB TO BE INFORMED OF URBAN COUNCIL CAPITAL PROJECTS

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THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD WILL BE INFORMED OF URBAN COUNCIL CAPITAL PROJECTS COSTING MORE THAN \$3 MILLION WITHIN THE DISTRICT AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

MEMBERS WILL ALSO CONSIDER PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR HAWKERS IN FA YUEN STREET UPON THE OPENING OF THE URBAN COUNCIL FA YUEN STREET MARKET IN MARCH 1989.

/THEY WILL

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THEY WILL ALSO BE CONSULTED ON THE PROCEDURES FOR ELECTING AMONG MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS A REPRESENTATIVE TO SIT ON THE URBAN COUNCIL AND TO FIX A DAY FOR SUCH AN ELECTION IN MARCH.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE WELCOME TO COVER THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD MEETING BEGINNING AT 2.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, 157 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD, KOWLOON.

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COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS ANTI-SMOKING ACTIVITIES

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THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD'S COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO DISCUSS A PROPOSAL BY THE HONG KONG COUNCIL ON SMOKING AND HEALTH TO ORGANISE JOINT ACTIVITIES FOR ANTI-SMOKING PURPOSES.

THE COUNCIL RECENTLY SENT A LETTER TO THE DISTRICT BOARD AND FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS, THE MATTER WAS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION.

MEANWHILE, THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO CONSIDER 14 APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDS TO ORGANISE LUNAR NEW YEAR FUNCTIONS. IF APPROVED, THE TOTAL GRANT WILL AMOUNT TO MORE THAN \$60,000.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT BOARD COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 2.15 PM AT THE SHEK KIP MEI COMMUNITY HALL, BLOCK 42, SHEK KIP MEI ESTATE, NAM CHEONG STREET.

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COUNTRY PARKS SURVEY RESULTS ANNOUNCED

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ALTHOUGH COUNTRY PARKS HAVE BECOME AN ACCEPTED PART OF HONG KONG LIFE, THERE HAVE BEEN FEWER FEMALE VISITORS IN RECENT YEARS, WITH THE PROPORTION OF THOSE OVER THE AGE OF 25 BEING ONLY ONE-FOURTH OF THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS.

THIS WAS ONE OF THE FINDINGS OF A MAJOR COUNTRY PARKS VISITOR SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

ANNOUNCING THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY, THE DEPARTMENT'S SENIOR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (COUNTRYSIDE), MR WONG FOOK-YEE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE SURVEY SHOWED A MALE AND FEMALE RATIO OF 72:28 IN THE VISITOR PATTERN, COMPARED WITH 67:33 RECORDED IN THE PREVIOUS SURVEY CONDUCTED IN 1985.

"THE DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FEMALE VISITORS MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE FACT THAT FEMALES OVER THE AGE OF 25 ARE MOSTLY ENGAGED IN FAMILY AFFAIRS ESPECIALLY IN TAKING CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

"ANOTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE PREVAILING LABOUR SHORTAGE IN THE TERRITORY, MORE FEMALES HAVE TAKEN UP EMPLOYMENT," HE SAID.

THE SURVEY, THE THIRD SINCE 1983, WAS CONDUCTED BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1987 AND JANUARY LAST YEAR IN 17 COUNTRY PARKS AND THE TAI PO KAU NATURE RESERVE.

SOME 6,790 VISITORS WERE SELECTED AT RANDOM TO FIND OUT THE USAGE PATTERN OF PARK VISITORS AND TO IDENTIFY THEIR NEEDS FOR PARK FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

MR WONG SAID AMONG THE PARK VISITORS INTERVIEWED IN THE SURVEY, IT WAS FOUND THAT MORE PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 25 VISITED COUNTRY PARKS WITH THE MOST ACTIVE GROUP BEING IN THE AGE RANGE OF 25 - 29, FOLLOWED BY THE AGE GROUPS OF 30 - 39 AND 20 - 24.

THE AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION REFLECTED IN THE SURVEY WAS 26 PER CENT IN THE 25 - 29 AGE GROUP; 23.4 PER CENT IN THE 30 - 39 AGE GROUP; 21.4 PER CENT IN THE 20 - 24 AGE GROUP; 14.6 PER CENT IN THE 15 - 19 AGE GROUP; 9.8 PER CENT IN THE 40 - 59 AGE GROUP; AND 3.3 PER CENT AGED 60 AND OVER.

THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWED THAT ABOUT 69.7 PER CENT OF THE VISITORS WERE OF SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, 16.9 PER CENT OF POST-SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STANDARD AND 12.1 PER CENT HAVING RECEIVED PRIMARY EDUCATION.

"IN TERM OF OCCUPATION, THE LARGEST PROPORTION OF THE PARK VISITORS OR 30.7 PER CENT, BELONGED TO THE CLERICAL, SALES AND SERVICES CATEGORY," MR WONG SAID.

/THE SECOND

THE SECOND LARGEST GROUP OR 15.6 PER CENT WERE STUDENT WHILE UNSKILLED OR SEMI-SKILLED WORKERS AND TECHNICIANS OCCUPIED 14.7 PER CENT AND 11.4 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

"THE COMBINED PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGERIAL GRADE MADE UP ABOUT 14.7 PER CENT WITH THE REST BELONGING TO HOUSEWIVES, RETIRED AND UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE."

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE VISITORS WENT TO THE COUNTRY PARKS IN GROUPS OF VARYING SIZES WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS, SCHOOL FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES.

"HOWEVER, THE SURVEY REVEALED THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE, OR ABOUT 9.2 PER CENT, VISITED THE COUNTRY PARKS ON THEIR OWN.

"THIS PERCENTAGE REPRESENTS A STEADY INCREASE OVER THE RATINGS OF 3.7 PER CENT AND 6.6 PER CENT RECORDED IN THE 1983 AND 1985 SURVEYS," HE SAID.

THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT THE SAI KUNG COUNTRY PARK REMAINED THE MOST POPULAR AMONG THE 21 COUNTRY PARKS IN HONG KONG, FOLLOWED BY SHING MUN, ABERDEEN, KAM SHAN AND TAI TAM COUNTRY PARKS.

IT ALSO SHOWED THAT BARBECUING WAS THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITY INSIDE COUNTRY PARKS. OTHERS INCLUDED LEISURE WALKING, HIKING, SPORTING AND FITNESS EXERCISE, PICNICKING AND CYCLING.

ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY, NIGHT VISITS TO COUNTRY PARKS HAD BECOME POPULAR.

"OF THE INTERVIEWEES, 28.7 PER CENT HAD VISITED COUNTRY PARKS AFTER 7 PM. MOST OF THE NIGHT VISITORS WENT TO RATHER REMOTE COUNTRY PARKS WHERE PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE," MR WONG SAID.

THE SURVEY ALSO PROVIDED USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT VISITORS' VIEWS, ON PARK FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

"THOUGH MOST OF THE FACILITIES AND SERVICES WERE WELCOMED BY VISITORS, 27.1 PER CENT OF THE INTERVIEWEES STILL CONSIDERED THAT IMPROVEMENT OF TOILET FACILITIES A MATTER OF PRIORITY.

"ABOUT 9.2 PER CENT SUGGESTED THAT WATER SUPPLY SHOULD BE INSTALLED IN RECREATIONAL SITES WHILE 5.5 PER CENT REQUESTED MORE RAIN SHELTERS," MR WONG SAID.

"THE SURVEY HAS PROVIDED THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY WITH SUFFICIENT EMPIRICAL DATA ON THE NATURE, BEHAVIOUR AND EXPECTATIONS OF PARK VISITORS.

"THESE WILL ASSIST PARK PLANNERS AND MANAGERS TO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR CLIENTS AND TO CATER FOR THEIR NEEDS," HE ADDED.

SEWERAGE MASTERPLAN STUDY FOR TSUEN WAN, KWAI CHUNG, AND TSING YI

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) HAS COMMISSIONED A CONSULTANCY STUDY TO ASSESS THE EXTENT OF POLLUTION RESULTING FROM IMPROPER CONNECTIONS OF DOMESTIC SEWAGE AND INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENTS TO STORMWATER DRAINS AND WATERCOURSES WITHIN THE TSUEN WAN, KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI REGION.

THE STUDY WILL IDENTIFY THE SHORTCOMINGS IN THE EXISTING SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOP OUTLINE SCHEMES FOR REMEDIAL WORKS TO ENSURE THAT SEWAGE IS PROPERLY COLLECTED INTO THE FOUL SEWERAGE SYSTEM AND THEN DISPOSED OF IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER.

A SPOKESMAN FOR EPD SAID THE STUDY WILL HELP IN FORMULATING EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENSURE PROPER COLLECTION, TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL OF ALL SEWAGE FROM THE AREA, THUS REDUCING THE CHRONIC WATER POLLUTION OF THE RAMBLER CHANNEL AREA.

A PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NECESSARY ENGINEERING WORKS WILL ALSO BE PRODUCED, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A PRIORITY LIST OF SCHEMES, SO AS TO TACKLE THE WORST POLLUTION AREAS IN THE SHORTEST TIME.

THE AGREEMENT FOR THE CONSULTANCY STUDY WAS SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BETWEEN EPD'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MR MIKE STOKOE AND MR PETER PUN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PYPUN GROUP CONSULTANTS/HOWARD HUMPHREYS AND PARTNERS.

THE STUDY, AT A COST OF \$16 MILLION, WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN TWO PHASES AND IS EXPECTED TO TAKE 24 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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ENTRY SCHEME FOR MACAU RESIDENTS

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THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE FOLLOWING EX-CHINA RESIDENTS OF MACAU WHO HOLD MACAU IDENTITY CARDS ISSUED BETWEEN AUGUST 1, 1981 AND NOVEMBER 30, 1981 MAY APPLY FOR ENTRY TO HONG KONG:

- * HUSBANDS/WIVES (TOGETHER WITH THEIR CHILDREN) TO JOIN THEIR RESIDENT SPOUSE IN HONG KONG; AND
- * AGED PARENTS/DEPENDENT CHILDREN TO JOIN THEIR RESIDENT CHILDREN/PARENTS IN HONG KONG.

APPLICATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED FROM FEBRUARY 2 (THURSDAY) BY THE HONG KONG SPONSORS IN PERSON TO THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, 61 MODY ROAD, TSIM SHA TSUI EAST, KOWLOON.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO WISH TO MAKE ENQUIRIES ABOUT THIS ENTRY SCHEME MAY TELEPHONE THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION OFFICE AT 3-7333126.

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FRESH WATER CUT IN SAI KUNG

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FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN SAI KUNG WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 10 PM ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 27) TO 6 AM THE NEXT DAY, TO FACILITATE WATER WORKS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT PREMISES FROM FUI YIU HA TO PAK TAM CHUNG AND SAI O.

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KWUN TONG URBAN CLEARWAYS

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JANUARY 28), TWO SECTIONS OF YUE MAN SQUARE IN KWUN TONG WILL BE MADE URBAN CLEARWAYS ROUND-THE-CLOCK.

ONE OF THE URBAN CLEARWAYS WILL LIE ON A 29-METRE STRETCH ALONG THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF YUE MAN SQUARE EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HONG NING ROAD.

THE OTHER URBAN CLEARWAY WILL BE DESIGNATED ON THE NORTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF YUE MAN SQUARE BETWEEN A POINT ABOUT 58 METRES EAST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH HONG NING ROAD AND ITS JUNCTION WITH TUNG YAN STREET.

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

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URBAN CLEARWAYS IN JORDAN AND TSIM SHA TSUI EAST

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JANUARY 28), THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF TAK SHING STREET IN JORDAN BETWEEN COX'S ROAD AND TAK HING STREET WILL BE DESIGNATED A 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF TWO ROADS IN TSIM SHA TSUI EAST WILL BECOME URBAN CLEARWAYS ROUND-THE-CLOCK:

- * THE SECTION OF SCIENCE MUSEUM ROAD NORTHBOUND BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH GRANVILLE ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 35 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION; AND
- * THE SOUTHERN KERBSIDE LANE OF GRANVILLE ROAD BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH SCIENCE MUSEUM ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES WEST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.

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

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