



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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MAJORITY OF RENT INCREASES RELATIVELY MILD
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THE MAJORITY OF RENT INCREASES FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF HOUSING AUTHORITY ESTATES IN MONEY TERMS ARE RELATIVELY MILD, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LIAO WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HUI YIN-FAT.

REFERRING TO ANOTHER PART OF MR HUI'S QUESTION, MR LIAO SAID IN EACH OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS ABOUT 60,000 OR 12 PER CENT OF HOUSEHOLDS IN RENTAL ESTATES PAID RENTS EXCEEDING 15 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME. THESE OCCURRED MAINLY IN THE NEWER ESTATES.

"VERY FEW TENANTS HAD EXPRESSED DIFFICULTY IN PAYING THE NEW RENTS, THE LEVEL OF WHICH REPRESENTED ABOUT ONE THIRD OF MARKET RENTS," HE SAID.

MR LIAO ALSO NOTED THAT HOUSING DEPARTMENT STATISTICS SHOWED THAT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFERS MADE TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CLEARANCES, TENANTS AFFECTED BY REDEVELOPMENT AND WAITING LIST APPLICANTS, IN LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF THE CASES HAD CHEAPER ACCOMMODATION BEEN REQUESTED.

WHERE DIFFICULTY WAS EXPRESSED, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT OFFERED THESE PEOPLE FLATS AT LOWER RENTS IN OTHER ESTATES, HE SAID.

IN THE CASE OF GENUINE DIFFICULTIES, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT REFERRED THE PEOPLE CONCERNED TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, 14,500 FLATS WERE ALLOCATED TO SUCCESSFUL WAITING LIST APPLICANTS, MR LIAO SAID.

WHILE ABOUT 1.5 PER CENT OR 220 FAMILIES DECLINED THE OFFER OF NEW FLATS CHARGED AT RENTS WHICH EXCEEDED 15 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME, ALL OF THEM WERE OFFERED, AND ACCEPTED, CHEAPER SELF-CONTAINED ACCOMMODATION IN OTHER ESTATES.

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AG: PROPOSAL FORMALISES CONTROLS OVER FOREIGN LAWYERS

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THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL ON FOREIGN LAW FIRMS IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT ONLY FIRMS OF SUBSTANTIAL REPUTATION AND INTEGRITY ARE LICENSED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JEREMY MATHEWS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IT WAS ALSO THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM THAT ANY HONG KONG QUALIFIED SOLICITOR WHO PRACTISED HONG KONG LAW AS A PARTNER OR EMPLOYEE OF A FOREIGN LAW FIRM WAS HIMSELF, OR WAS CLOSELY SUPERVISED BY, A HONG KONG SOLICITOR OF SUBSTANTIAL EXPERIENCE AND STANDING.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SO CHAU YIM-PING, MR MATHEWS SAID HE BELIEVED IT WAS THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROPOSAL THAT MOST CONCERNED THE LAW SOCIETY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION WOULD NEED TO BE WORKED OUT TOGETHER WITH THE LAW SOCIETY.

"THIS EXERCISE WILL TAKE TIME, BUT I AM CONFIDENT THAT, WHEN THE EXERCISE IS COMPLETED, THE WORRIES EXPRESSED BY THE LAW SOCIETY WILL HAVE BEEN REMOVED," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED INCLUDED:

- * THE CRITERIA TO BE SATISFIED BEFORE A FOREIGN LAW FIRM IS GIVEN A LICENSE TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG;
- * WHAT EVIDENCE A FOREIGN LAW FIRM SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE IN SUPPORT OF ITS APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE;
- * CONDITIONS TO BE IMPOSED UPON THE GRANTING OF A LICENCE;
- * WHAT RECORDS SHOULD BE KEPT BY FOREIGN LAW FIRMS OF ADVICE GIVEN OR WORK DONE BY THEIR HONG KONG SOLICITORS ON HONG KONG LAW;
- * TO WHOM THESE RECORDS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE;
- * POWERS TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS;
- * COMPULSORY INSURANCE, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE RATIOS OF LOCAL PARTNERS TO FOREIGN PARTNERS AND OF LOCAL PARTNERS TO LOCAL SOLICITORS EMPLOYED.

MR MATHEWS SAID THAT FAR FROM RELAXING RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRACTICE OF LAW BY FOREIGN LAWYERS THE PROPOSAL WOULD IN FACT "FORMALISE AND TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER THEM".

HE SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME A STATUTORY SYSTEM OF ADMISSION WITH CLEARLY DEFINED CRITERIA WAS BEING PROPOSED.

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MOREOVER, THE LAW SOCIETY WOULD HAVE SIMILAR POWERS OF DISCIPLINE OVER FOREIGN LAWYERS AS IT NOW HAD OVER LOCAL SOLICITORS.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN MADE UNDER DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE OR THE THREAT OF TRADE SANCTIONS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID:

"THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED TO BE PRESSURISED OR THREATENED INTO DOING SOMETHING WHICH WE FIRMLY BELIEVE TO BE IN HONG KONG'S BEST INTERESTS.

"WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING HAS NOT BEEN THE RESULT OF DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE. IT IS TRUE THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF TRADE ACTION BEING SOUGHT WAS MENTIONED BY CERTAIN AMERICAN LAW FIRMS IN THEIR PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR.

"THAT THIS WAS DONE IS REGRETTABLE, BUT IT PLAYED NO PART IN THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION.

"OUR PROPOSAL DOES NOT ONLY RELATE TO AMERICAN LAW FIRMS; IT WILL AFFECT LAW FIRMS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL."

MR MATHEWS SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL FACTORS LEADING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO PERMIT FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO TAKE IN HONG KONG SOLICITORS AS EMPLOYEES OR PARTNERS TO PRACTISE HONG KONG LAW.

FIRST, THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT ENABLING FOREIGN LAW FIRMS TO PROVIDE FROM WITHIN THE FIRM AN INTEGRATED LEGAL SERVICE TO THEIR CLIENTS WOULD HELP STRENGTHEN HONG KONG'S POSITION AS A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE.

SECOND, SOME OF THE LARGER FIRMS OF HONG KONG SOLICITORS ALREADY PROVIDED THIS INTEGRATED SERVICE, ADVISING NOT ONLY ON THE LAW OF HONG KONG BUT ALSO ON THE LAWS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, AMERICA, CHINA AND OTHERS.

THERE WERE NO VALID GROUNDS ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PREVENT FOREIGN LAW FIRMS FROM COMPETING ON THE SAME BASIS.

THIRD, INTERNATIONALLY THERE WAS GROWING INTEREST IN THE INTEGRATION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN LAWYERS TO PROVIDE MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL ADVICE WITHIN A SINGLE FIRM.

FINALLY, THE PROPOSAL WOULD ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONG KONG SOLICITORS.

ON THE QUESTION OF CONSULTATION, MR MATHEWS SAID THE LAW SOCIETY WAS CONSULTED BEFORE A DECISION WAS REACHED.

THE PETITION FROM THE AMERICAN LAWYERS WAS REFERRED TO THE LAW SOCIETY FOR COMMENT AND THE SOCIETY RESPONDED WITH A FULL AND DETAILED SUBMISSION.

BOTH THE PETITION AND THE LAW SOCIETY'S SUBMISSION WERE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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NO HEALTH HAZARDS IN ROAD TUNNELS

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THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE HEALTH HAZARDS IN ANY OF THE ROAD TUNNELS, BECAUSE THERE ARE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PROTECTION.

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

MR HO HAD ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS A HEALTH HAZARD INVOLVED AS A RESULT OF PASSENGERS INHALING HARMFUL MOTOR CAR EXHAUSTS WHEN THE TUNNELS WERE CONGESTED.

"THE AIR QUALITY INSIDE THE TUNNELS IS MAINTAINED WITHIN ACCEPTABLE LEVELS AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING PEAK TRAFFIC CONDITIONS," MR BARNES SAID.

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STRICT CONTROL ON ASBESTOS REMOVAL

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REMOVAL OF ASBESTOS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS IS ENTRUSTED ONLY TO COMPANIES THAT HAVE THE EQUIPMENT AND THE EXPERTISE FOR DEALING WITH SUCH WORK SAFELY.

THEIR WORK IS SUPERVISED BY EITHER THE STAFF OF THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OR THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

MR BARNES SAID OPERATIONS TO REMOVE ASBESTOS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, INCLUDING HOUSING AUTHORITY BUILDINGS, WERE GOVERNED BY PARTICULAR SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT CLEARLY SPELT OUT AT THE TIME SUCH A WORKS CONTRACT WAS AWARDED.

IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ASBESTOS REMOVAL COMPANIES WERE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (ASBESTOS) SPECIAL REGULATIONS AND CODES OF PRACTICE ISSUED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

"WHERE NECESSARY, SPECIAL PRECAUTIONARY NOTICES ARE ALSO ISSUED TO THE COMPANIES UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE," HE SAID.

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"UNDER THESE REGULATIONS ALL DEMOLITION OPERATIONS IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR WORKS INVOLVING ASBESTOS MUST BE REPORTED TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

"ALL KNOWN WORKS ARE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SURVEILLANCE BY THE STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT'S FACTORY INSPECTORATE DIVISION AND THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS ARE OBSERVED.

"MEETINGS ARE USUALLY HELD WITH THE COMPANIES PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT ON THE METHODS TO BE USED AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN."

MR BARNES SAID THAT WHILE THE WORK WAS IN PROGRESS, FREQUENT SITE VISITS WERE MADE TO MONITOR THE LEVEL OF ASBESTOS IN THE AIR.

"THE DEPARTMENT GIVES A HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS WORK," HE ADDED.

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CONTAINER HANDLING: REVIEW OF REGULATIONS INTENDED
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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR WILL BE ASKED TO REVIEW THE REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE HANDLING OF CONTAINERS TO SEE WHETHER THEY CAN BE IMPROVED IN ANY WAY, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING STATUTORY HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HO SAI-CHU.

MR BRIDGE SAID THE HANDLING OF CONTAINERS WAS SUBJECT TO THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE AND TWO SETS OF REGULATIONS MADE UNDER IT.

"THESE ARE THE CARGO HANDLING REGULATIONS AND LIFTING APPLIANCES AND LIFTING GEAR REGULATIONS, WHICH PROVIDE FOR SUCH MATTERS AS MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT, SAFE METHODS OF OPERATION, SAFE WORKING LOADS, THE PROVISION OF FIRST AID FACILITIES AND OTHER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS," HE SAID.

MR BRIDGE NOTED THAT THESE REGULATIONS DID NOT AT PRESENT INCLUDE HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS FOR THE STACKING OF CONTAINERS.

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IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL ENFORCEMENT BY THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE, MR BRIDGE SAID SAFETY WAS ALSO MONITORED BY THE CENTRAL CONTAINER HANDLING SAFETY COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM MAJOR CONTAINER DEPOTS, CONTAINER REPAIR FIRMS, THE MARINE DEPARTMENT AND THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

"THE COMMITTEE ORGANISES ANNUAL SAFETY PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMMES FINANCED BY THE INDUSTRY AND HAS COMPILED A BOOKLET ENTITLED 'SAFE PRACTICES FOR CONTAINER HANDLING' WHICH SETS OUT GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE HANDLING, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF CONTAINERS," HE SAID.

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REVIEW OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR KINDERGARTENS

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THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS ON THE OPERATION OF KINDERGARTENS ARE NOW UNDER REVIEW, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON RON BRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PAUL CHENG, MR BRIDGE SAID ALL KINDERGARTENS, WHETHER PROFIT-MAKING OR NOT, WERE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE AND THE EDUCATION REGULATIONS.

"THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S 1984 MANUAL OF KINDERGARTEN PRACTICE SERVES TWO PURPOSES: TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE MAIN STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AND TO ADVISE OPERATORS ON GOOD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE.

"NO CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE LEGISLATION SINCE 1984, SO THE MANUAL STILL ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE CRITERIA WHICH MUST BE MET BEFORE A KINDERGARTEN CAN BE REGISTERED," MR BRIDGE SAID.

THE CRITERIA IN THE MANUAL RELATING TO GOOD PRACTICE HAD BEEN DRAWN UP BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH THE ADVICE OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH, FIRE SERVICES AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S INSPECTORS VISITED EACH KINDERGARTEN TWICE A YEAR TO ENSURE THAT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS WERE BEING MET, AND TO ADVISE ON GOOD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, HE ADDED.

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STRIKING RIGHT BALANCE ON NEW SFC

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IN FORMING THE NEW SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION, THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION IS TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE POWERS TO CURB MARKET ABUSES AND THE NEED TO PRESERVE CIVIL LIBERTIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIER JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON RONALD ARCULLI, MR JACOBS SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION ALSO TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF MARKETS AND THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THEY DID NOT GET OUT OF CONTROL.

"AND LASTLY, IN RELATION TO THE FUNDING OF THE NEW COMMISSION, IT IS OUR INTENTION TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE MARKET USERS ON THE ONE HAND AND THE PUBLIC PURSE ON THE OTHER," HE SAID.

MR JACOBS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING LEGISLATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECURITIES AND FUTURES COMMISSION AND HAD BEEN CONSULTING VARIOUS MARKET ORGANISATIONS, PROFESSIONAL BODIES AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES ON THE MAJOR LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS.

HE ADDED THAT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND BUDGETARY AND MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEW COMMISSION WERE ALSO BEING CONSIDERED IN SOME DETAIL.

"WE SHALL ENSURE THAT ALL VIEWS, INCLUDING VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EXCHANGES AND OTHER RELEVANT PARTIES, ARE PROPERLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE DRAFT LEGISLATION," MR JACOBS SAID.

"WE AIM TO SUBMIT A BILL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR ADVICE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THEREAFTER, THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL," HE ADDED.

FULL DETAILS OF THE FUNDING PACKAGE WOULD BE GIVEN, AND WHERE NECESSARY THE APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WOULD BE SOUGHT, HE SAID.

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INAPPROPRIATE TO COMMENT AT THIS STAGE

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WHILST SEVERAL ELECTION PETITIONS ARE BEFORE THE COURTS, IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON THE ISSUES INVOLVED, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR DAVID WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG.

MR CHEUNG HAD ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER REVIEWING RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE IN THE LIGHT OF A RECENT HIGH COURT RULING IN RELATION TO THE HOLDING OF TEMPORARY PUBLIC OFFICE BY A DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER.

"THE RULING REFERRED TO BY MR CHEUNG IS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE HOLDER OF A JUDICIAL OFFICE IS THE HOLDER OF A PUBLIC OFFICE, AND IS THEREFORE DISQUALIFIED UNDER THE LAW FROM STANDING FOR A ELECTION OR BEING ELECTED AS A MEMBER OF A DISTRICT BOARD," SIR DAVID SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS RULING WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE AND OF THE CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD NOT SEEK POLITICAL OFFICE THROUGH ELECTION.

"THIS POLICY IS AIMED AT AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND ENSURING THE SEPARATION OF ROLES OF THE LEGISLATURE, THE JUDICIARY AND THE EXECUTIVE," HE ADDED.

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VISA APPLICATIONS PROCESSED IN 2 TO 3 WEEKS

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THE AVERAGE TIME TAKEN BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT TO PROCESS THE VISA APPLICATIONS OF TAIWAN VISITORS IS ABOUT TWO TO THREE WEEKS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"IT IS NOT LONGER THAN THAT FOR VISITORS FROM OTHER AREAS," MR BARNES ADDED IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG.

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MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

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THE GOVERNMENT HAD INTRODUCED A NUMBER OF MEASURES IN 1986 TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ROSANNA TAM, MR LEUNG SAID THAT SINCE JANUARY 1986, ALL SCHOOL PRIVATE BUSES HAD BEEN COMPULSORILY INSPECTED ANNUALLY BEFORE RELICENSING.

DRIVERS WERE ALSO REQUIRED TO HAVE A PRIVATE CAR DRIVING LICENCE FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS BEFORE THEY COULD BE LICENSED TO DRIVE SCHOOL LIGHT BUSES.

UNDER THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TRAFFIC CONTROL) REGULATIONS, DRIVERS HAD TO ENSURE THAT PASSENGERS ENTERED AND LEFT THE VEHICLE IN SAFETY AND THAT THE VEHICLE DID NOT CARRY EXCESS PASSENGERS.

HE SAID THAT SINCE 1986 TWO ADDITIONAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED FOLLOWING A REVIEW.

FIRST, THESE VEHICLES WERE REQUIRED TO HAVE A YELLOW-STRIPE MARKING ON ALL SIDES AND INCLUDE THE WORDS "SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUS" IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE.

ON THE REAR, THE SIGN "CHILDREN" MUST BE PLACED IN THE CENTRE OF THE YELLOW-STRIPE.

THE PURPOSE WAS TO IDENTIFY SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES MORE CLEARLY AND THUS WARN OTHER ROAD USERS OF THE LIKELY PRESENCE OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE VICINITY OF THESE VEHICLES.

SECOND, ALL VEHICLES, INCLUDING SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES, WERE REQUIRED TO BE FITTED WITH BLINKING HAZARD LIGHTS TO WARN OTHER ROAD USERS.

MR LEUNG SAID THAT APART FROM THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REGULARLY ISSUED CIRCULARS TO ALL SCHOOLS ON THE PROPER SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN CARRIED IN SCHOOL TRANSPORT.

ON THE NUMBER OF OFFENCES INVOLVING EXCESS PASSENGERS BEING CARRIED BY SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES, MR LEUNG SAID POLICE RECORDS DID NOT SHOW A SEPARATE BREAKDOWN FOR SUCH BUSES.

THE NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS BY SUMMONS AGAINST DRIVERS OF THE BROADER CATEGORY OF PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES WAS VERY SMALL - FOUR IN 1985 AND NONE SINCE 1986.

IN TERMS OF FIXED PENALTIES, POLICE RECORDS ONLY SHOWED SUCH OFFENCES FOR ALL VEHICLES.

THE NUMBER OF SUCH OFFENCES COMMITTED BY DRIVERS OF SCHOOL PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES WAS NOT READILY AVAILABLE BUT WAS BELIEVED TO BE RELATIVELY SMALL, MR LEUNG ADDED.

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DISTRICT BOARD MEETING COSTS PUT AT \$27,000
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THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF COSTS INVOLVED IN HOLDING A DISTRICT BOARD MEETING AMOUNT TO AN ESTIMATED \$27,000, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE COSTS FOR A DISTRICT BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING AMOUNT TO AN ESTIMATED \$13,000.

THESE FIGURES WERE GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

MR LIAO SAID THAT ON AVERAGE A MEETING OF A DISTRICT BOARD TOOK ABOUT FOUR AND A HALF HOURS AND A DISTRICT BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING TOOK ABOUT THREE HOURS.

THE ESTIMATED COSTS WERE CALCULATED ON THIS BASIS AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE AVERAGE STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR THESE MEETINGS, HE EXPLAINED.

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299 APPLICATIONS TO BUILD SMALL HOUSES IN NT
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A TOTAL OF 299 APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES TO BUILD "SMALL HOUSES" IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAD BEEN RECEIVED BETWEEN OCTOBER 1 LAST YEAR AND SEPTEMBER 30 THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON GRAHAM BARNES, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

OF THESE APPLICATIONS, 81 HAD BEEN APPROVED SO FAR, MR BARNES SAID IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON TAI CHIN-WAH.

MR TAI HAD ASKED HOW MANY APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES TO BUILD SMALL HOUSES HAD BEEN RECEIVED SINCE PASSAGE OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (APPLICATION TO THE NEW TERRITORIES) BILL 1986.

MR BARNES SAID THE LOCALITIES APPLIED FOR WERE TUEN MUN, YUEN LONG AND SAI KUNG.

"AS IT TAKES AT LEAST SIX TO NINE MONTHS TO PROCESS AN APPLICATION, MANY OF THOSE SUBMITTED IN THE LATTER PART OF THIS 12-MONTH PERIOD ARE STILL BEING PROCESSED," HE SAID.

"DURING THE SAME PERIOD, A TOTAL OF 236 APPROVALS WERE ISSUED WHICH INCLUDES APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 1987," HE ADDED.

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BILLS ON WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS INTRODUCED
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THREE BILLS SEEKING TO IMPLEMENT PROPOSALS IN THE 1988 WHITE PAPER, "THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT: THE WAY FORWARD", WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILLS ARE THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, THE REGIONAL COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 AND THE DISTRICT BOARD (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1988.

IN MOVING THAT EACH BILL BE GIVEN A SECOND READING, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, EXPLAINED THE THREE MAIN AREAS IN WHICH THE BILLS WOULD BRING CHANGES.

"FIRST, FROM APRIL 1, 1989, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE URBAN COUNCIL WILL BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF THE 10 DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE URBAN COUNCIL AREA," HE SAID.

"SECONDLY, URBAN COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL CEASE TO BE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS."

THIRDLY, SIR DAVID SAID THE TENURE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS TO BE ELECTED IN MARCH 1989 WOULD BE ADJUSTED FROM THE NORMAL THREE YEARS TO TWO YEARS AND TWO WEEKS TO PREPARE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SEQUENCE OF ELECTIONS.

"THE INTENTION IS THAT, AFTER 1991, ELECTIONS TO THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN THAT ORDER WITHIN A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS," HE SAID.

"THIS SEQUENCE WILL FACILITATE ELECTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SUCCESSIVE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT, THAT IS THE ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DISTRICT BOARDS TO THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND FROM THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL."

THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL ALSO PROVIDED FOR A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS, SIR DAVID SAID.

IT AMENDED THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES ORDINANCE SO THAT THE ORDINANCE WOULD BE APPLIED TO THE ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS TO THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS.

THE BILL ALSO AMENDED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ELECTORAL PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARDS ON THE URBAN COUNCIL IN THE URBAN COUNCIL SPECIAL CONSTITUENCY FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

"I SHALL BE SEEKING A FURTHER AMENDMENT AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO COVER TWO TECHNICAL POINTS WHICH WERE INADVERTENTLY OMITTED FROM THE BILL," SIR DAVID CONTINUED.

/ONE POINT

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ONE POINT WAS THAT THE TERMS OF THE CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS ELECTED IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS NEEDED TO BE EXTENDED BY TWO WEEKS IN LINE WITH THE TENURE OF MEMBERS.

THE OTHER WAS THAT THE QUORUM FOR A MEETING OF THE URBAN COUNCIL OR OF ITS STANDING COMMITTEE NEEDED TO BE INCREASED IN PROPORTION TO THE EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP.

SPEAKING ON THE AMENDMENT BILL CONCERNING DISTRICT BOARDS, SIR DAVID SAID HE WOULD SEEK ANOTHER AMENDMENT AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WOULD NOT COME INTO EFFECT UNTIL APRIL 1989.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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NEW PENSION SCHEME FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS PROPOSED

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A BILL PROVIDING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW PENSION SCHEME FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND MAKING A NUMBER OF CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING ORDINANCES CONTAINING REFERENCES TO PENSION MATTERS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, TOLD THE COUNCIL THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEVISED A PACKAGE OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO ENCOURAGE MORE LOCAL LAWYERS TO SEEK JUDICIAL OFFICE AND TO RETAIN STAFF OF HIGH QUALITY.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS INCLUDED A NEW PENSION SCHEME, AS WELL AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE PAY SCALE FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS, SIR DAVID SAID IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PENSION BENEFITS (JUDICIAL OFFICERS) BILL 1988.

THE BILL WAS LARGELY MODELLED ON THE PENSION BENEFITS ORDINANCE WHICH GOVERNED THE NEW CIVIL SERVICE PENSION SCHEME.

"THE JUDICIARY HAS BEEN PREDOMINANTLY EXPATRIATE BUT THE LACK OF LOCAL RECRUITS CERTAINLY DOES NOT REFLECT ANY SHORTAGE OF TALENT AMONGST PRACTISING MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION," HE SAID.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE TWO MAIN ELEMENTS IN THE NEW PENSION SCHEME WHICH CONCERNED ESSENTIALLY THE RETIREMENT AGE AND PENSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE RETIREMENT AGE AS SPECIFIED IN THE LETTERS PATENT REMAINED AT 65 FOR SUPREME COURT JUDGES.

/IN THE

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IN THE CASE OF DISTRICT COURT JUDGES, IT HAD BEEN RAISED FROM 60 TO 65 FOR THOSE APPOINTED ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 1987, BUT REMAINED AT 60 FOR THOSE APPOINTED BEFORE THAT DATE.

"THE PRESENT BILL PROVIDES THAT THE RETIREMENT AGE WILL BE RAISED TO 65 FOR THE REGISTRAR AND DEPUTY REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT, AND 60 FOR ASSISTANT REGISTRARS, MEMBER, LANDS TRIBUNAL, JUDICIAL OFFICERS PRESIDING OVER SPECIALISED TRIBUNALS AND MAGISTRATES," HE SAID.

ON THE PENSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS WHICH MIRRORED THE NEW PENSION SCHEME FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID TWO SPECIAL FEATURES WOULD BE INTRODUCED.

FIRST, PENSION SERVICE WOULD INCREASE AT THE RATE OF ONE MONTH FOR EACH MONTH OF SERVICE AFTER THE AGE OF 50; AND SECONDLY, A MINIMUM PENSION EQUIVALENT TO ONE QUARTER OF SALARY WOULD BE GRANTED TO OFFICERS RETIRED ON MEDICAL GROUNDS.

"THE SPECIAL PROVISION UNDER CLAUSE 25 WILL DOUBLE THE STANDARD PENSION EARNINGS RATE OVER THE AGE OF 50. HOWEVER, SERVICE BELOW 50 WILL CONTINUE TO EARN PENSION AT THE STANDARD RATE.

"THE OTHER SPECIAL FEATURE IN CLAUSE 16 GUARANTEES THAT OFFICERS RETIRED WITH SHORT SERVICE ON GROUNDS OF ILL HEALTH WILL RECEIVE A MINIMUM PENSION EQUIVALENT TO ONE-QUARTER OF SALARY.

"THIS BROADLY FOLLOWS UNITED KINGDOM PRACTICE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH OFFICERS WILL RECEIVE A REASONABLE SUM IN PENSION BENEFITS," SIR DAVID SAID.

SIR DAVID EXPLAINED THAT THESE PROPOSALS RECOGNISED THAT JUDICIAL OFFICERS WERE NORMALLY APPOINTED LATER IN LIFE AND THAT, UNDER EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS, THEY WERE UNABLE EITHER TO PURSUE A LONG CAREER OR EARN A SATISFACTORY PENSION.

"BECAUSE IT IS DESIRABLE THAT ONLY LAWYERS WITH ADEQUATE EXPERIENCE ARE APPOINTED TO JUDICIAL OFFICE, THOSE WHO JOIN THE JUDICIARY ARE 10 TO 15 YEARS OLDER THAN THEIR PUBLIC SERVICE COUNTERPARTS.

"THIS IS PERCEIVED AS ONE OF THE FACTORS DETERRING SUITABLE LOCAL CANDIDATES FROM COMING FORWARD," SIR DAVID SAID.

"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE MORE SENIOR PRACTITIONERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SEEK JUDICIAL OFFICE AND THAT THEY ARE NOT DETERRED BY THEIR INABILITY TO EARN A WORTHWHILE PENSION.

"THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS ARE THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THIS."

SIR DAVID ADDED THAT THE BILL PROVIDED THAT JUDICIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME WOULD BE ENGAGED ON THESE NEW TERMS.

/SERVING OFFICERS -----

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SERVING OFFICERS MIGHT APPLY TO TRANSFER TO THE NEW SCHEME OR REMAIN ON THE EXISTING SCHEME AS THEY PREFERRED.

"THE BILL IS LARGELY MODELLED ON THE PENSION BENEFITS ORDINANCE WHICH GOVERNS THE NEW CIVIL SERVICE PENSION SCHEME.

"BUT IN ORDER TO REFLECT THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, SEPARATE LEGISLATION IS PROPOSED AND CLAUSES 1 TO 38 OF THE BILL GIVE EFFECT TO THE NEW SCHEME," SIR DAVID SAID.

THE REMAINING CLAUSES 39 TO 57 OF THE BILL ALSO MADE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO A NUMBER OF ORDINANCES TO EXTEND THE APPLICATION OF THESE ORDINANCES TO JUDICIAL OFFICERS WHO CAME UNDER THE NEW PENSION SCHEME.

THESE WERE TO ENSURE THAT DOUBLE BENEFITS WERE NOT PAYABLE UNDER THE EXISTING AND NEW PENSION SCHEMES IN RESPECT OF THE SAME PERIOD OF SERVICE, SIR DAVID SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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IMPROVED PROCEDURES ON PENSION APPEALS PROPOSED

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A BILL PROPOSING IMPROVED PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF APPEALS BY PUBLIC OFFICERS RELATING TO DECISIONS TO SUSPEND, REDUCE, CANCEL OR NOT TO GRANT PENSION BENEFITS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PENSION BENEFITS (REFUSAL TO GRANT, SUSPENSION, REDUCTION AND CANCELLATION) BILL 1988, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THE PROPOSALS AROSE FROM A REQUEST FROM STAFF.

THEY WERE ALSO IN KEEPING WITH THE PRINCIPLE THAT PUBLIC OFFICERS WERE ENTITLED TO THEIR PENSIONS AS A MATTER OF RIGHT, HE SAID.

SIR DAVID SAID THAT UNDER THE PROPOSED NEW ARRANGEMENTS, THE OFFICER CONCERNED WOULD BE NOTIFIED OF THE INTENTION TO REFUSE TO GRANT, CANCEL, SUSPEND OR REDUCE HIS PENSION BENEFITS, AND GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT REPRESENTATIONS.

"THESE REPRESENTATIONS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE.

"ANY OFFICER AGGRIEVED BY SUCH A DECISION MAY PETITION THE GOVERNOR," HE SAID.

/SIR DAVID

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SIR DAVID SAID THAT ON RECEIVING THE PETITION, THE GOVERNOR MIGHT REQUIRE AN APPEAL PANEL TO CONSIDER THE PETITION.

"HE WILL THEN TAKE A FINAL DECISION ON THE PETITION HAVING REGARD TO THE APPEAL PANEL'S REPORT," HE SAID.

THE APPEAL PANEL WOULD CONSIST OF THREE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, ONE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE JUDICIARY OR THE LEGAL PROFESSION, ANOTHER A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WHO WAS NOT A PUBLIC OFFICER, AND THE THIRD A LAYMAN.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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CHANGES IN APPROVED ESTIMATES

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A SUMMARY OF ALL CHANGES MADE TO THE APPROVED ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 1988-89 FINANCIAL YEAR WAS TABLED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR JACOBS SAID SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION OF \$292.2 MILLION WAS APPROVED.

IT WAS FULLY OFFSET EITHER BY SAVINGS UNDER THE SAME HEAD OF EXPENDITURE OR BY THE DELETION OF FUNDS UNDER THE ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS SUBHEADS.

THIS INCLUDED \$176.7 MILLION FOR THE RECEPTION, MANAGEMENT, SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE OF THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN THE VARIOUS CENTRES, AND \$56 MILLION FOR A CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHINESE WATER AUTHORITY.

APPROVED NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENTS WERE INCREASED BY \$801.4 MILLION DURING THE PERIOD, AND NEW NON-RECURRENT COMMITMENTS OF \$63.7 MILLION WERE ALSO APPROVED.

IN THE SAME PERIOD, A NET INCREASE OF 2,692 POSTS WAS APPROVED.

MR JACOBS SAID ITEMS IN THE SUMMARY HAD BEEN APPROVED EITHER BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OR UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY.

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FIVE BILLS INTRODUCED

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

THE FIVE BILLS ARE THE DISTRICT BOARDS (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1988, REGIONAL COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988, PENSION BENEFITS (JUDICIAL OFFICERS) BILL 1988 AND THE PENSION BENEFITS (REFUSAL TO GRANT, SUSPENSION, REDUCTION AND CANCELLATION) BILL 1988.

DEBATES ON THE BILLS WERE ADJOURNED.

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SECOND PAC SESSION TOMORROW

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THE SECOND SESSION OF THIS YEAR'S OPEN HEARINGS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE WILL START AT 9.30 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

APPEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE TO ANSWER POINTS RAISED IN THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S ANNUAL REPORT WILL BE:

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDINGS AND LANDS, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY.

THE TIMETABLE FOR TOMORROW'S HEARING IS AS FOLLOWS:

9.30 AM	DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE AND DIRECTOR OF BUILDING AND LANDS, PARAGRAPHS 12.1 - 12.22
10.30 AM	DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, PARAGRAPHS 13.1 - 13.5
11.15 AM	SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, PARAGRAPHS 4.1 - 4.3

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES COVERING THE OPENING HEARING ARE REQUESTED TO BRING WITH THEM A COPY OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT WHICH WAS ISSUED ON NOVEMBER 16.

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FS TO OPEN SEAMEN'S TRAINING CENTRE

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR PIERS JACOBS, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE \$30 MILLION SEAMEN'S TRAINING CENTRE TOMORROW (NOVEMBER 24).

THE CENTRE, MANAGED BY THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL, PROVIDES BOTH PRE-SEA TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WISHING TO PURSUE A SEAFARING CAREER AND MODULAR TRAINING FOR SERVING SEAMEN TO ENABLE THEM TO MEET MANDATORY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

IT AIMS TO TRAIN 450 NEW ENTRANTS AND 600 IN-SERVICE SEAFARERS EACH YEAR.

THE CENTRE, SITUATED AT TAI LAM CHUNG, OCCUPIES AN AREA OF 1.6 HECTARES.

IT HAS FULL FACILITIES FOR TRAINING IN SEAMANSHIP, ENGINEERING, WATCHKEEPING, FIRE-FIGHTING, PERSONAL SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES AND CARGO HANDLING.

ALSO OFFICIATING AT THE CEREMONY WILL BE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL, MR CHAN KAM-CHUEN AND THE COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MR HORACE KNIGHT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SEAMEN'S TRAINING CENTRE AT CASTLE PEAK ROAD, TAI LAM CHUNG, WHICH WILL BEGIN AT 10.30 AM ON THURSDAY (NOVEMBER 24).

TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES COVERING THE EVENT. ONE OF THE COACHES WILL LEAVE HARBOUR CENTRE, 25 HARBOUR ROAD, WANCHAI AT 9 AM, ANOTHER WILL PICK UP PASSENGERS AT KOWLOON TONG KCR STATION AT 9.15 AM.

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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 APRIL 1, 1981 AND JULY 31, 1981 MAY APPLY FOR ENTRY TO HONG KONG:

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

APPLICATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED AS FROM DECEMBER 1, 1988 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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DB TO DISCUSS LICENSING GUIDELINES FOR GAMES CENTRES

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THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD WILL GIVE ITS VIEWS ON THE LICENSING GUIDELINES FOR AMUSEMENT GAMES CENTRES AT A MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

BOARD MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO CONSIDER AND ENDORSE RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED BY A WORKING GROUP ON LANDLORD AND TENANT DISPUTES.

THE GROUP WAS FORMED AT A PREVIOUS DISTRICT BOARD MEETING WHEN MEMBERS DISCUSSED PROTECTION FOR TENANTS FROM HARASSMENT BY LANDLORDS WHO TRY TO EVICT THEM SO THAT THE PROPERTY COULD BE RE-LET OR SOLD AT A HIGHER PROFIT.

THE GROUP HAD STUDIED THE PROBLEM IN DETAIL AND RECOMMENDED THAT APPROPRIATE ACTION BE TAKEN.

AT TOMORROW'S MEETING, A MOTION WILL BE MADE REQUESTING THAT THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT REFLECT TO THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE MONG KOK DISTRICT BOARD AND LOCAL RESIDENTS OVER THE KOWLOON BUS COMPANY'S APPLICATION FOR FARE INCREASES.

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SAI KUNG TO LAUNCH FIRST DISTRICT ARTS FESTIVAL

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SAI KUNG DISTRICT RESIDENTS INCLUDING NEW ARRIVALS AT JUNK BAY NEW TOWN WILL BE TREATED TO 16 DAYS OF FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT WHEN THE FIRST SAI KUNG DISTRICT ARTS FESTIVAL IS LAUNCHED ON DECEMBER 2 (FRIDAY).

A VARIETY OF ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EVENTS WILL BE HELD AT THE SAI KUNG TOWN HALL, TANG SHIU KIN SPORTS GROUND, TSUI LAM COMMUNITY HALL AND A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN JUNK BAY.

A SPOKESMAN OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT ARTS FESTIVAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ABOUT \$317,000, OF WHICH \$100,000 WERE SPONSORED BY THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AND \$50,000 BY THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD, WILL BE SPENT ON STAGING PROGRAMMES FOR PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT AGES AND INTERESTS.

THE FESTIVAL WILL BE LAUNCHED WITH AN OPENING CEREMONY AT THE SAI KUNG JOCKEY CLUB TOWN HALL ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 2.

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR MICHAEL SUEN; LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR LAU WONG-FAT AND MR LAM WAI-KEUNG; SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR CHRISTOPHER MUNN; AND SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR WILLIAM WAN WILL OFFICIATE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FESTIVAL WILL BE TWO CANTONESE OPERAS PERFORMED BY THE SHENZHEN CITY CANTONESE OPERA TROUPE AND A PLAY "THE STORY OF DRAGONBALL" PERFORMED BY THE CHUNG YING THEATRE COMPANY.

THE CLOSING CEREMONY ON DECEMBER 18 WILL FEATURE A LARGE-SCALE DANCE PERFORMANCE AT THE SAI KUNG JOCKEY CLUB TOWN HALL. DANCE ENTHUSIASTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT WILL TAKE PART IN THE SHOW.

OTHER PROGRAMMES IN THE FESTIVAL INCLUDE ARTS CARNIVALS, VARIETY SHOWS, MOVIE SHOW, CHINESE MUSIC CONCERTS, TALKS ON SAI KUNG RURAL FOLK SONGS, AND PAINTINGS AND PHOTO EXHIBITIONS.

ADMISSIONS TO THE PROGRAMMES, EXCEPT THE CANTONESE OPERA, WILL BE FREE. TICKETS FOR THE PROGRAMMES AND PAMPHLETS CONTAINING DETAILS OF THE FESTIVAL WILL BE OBTAINABLE AT THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICE, REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (SAI KUNG OFFICE,) RURAL COMMITTEE OFFICES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE OFFICES.

THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT ARTS FESTIVAL IS ARRANGED BY AN ORGANISING COMMITTEE WITH 17 MEMBERS INCLUDING DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS, LEADING PERSONALITIES, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM RURAL COMMITTEES, MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

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AP LEI CHAU AREA COMMITTEE TO HOLD SEMINAR

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THE AP LEI CHAU AREA COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A SEMINAR TOMORROW (THURSDAY) EVENING FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS' BODIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON DISTRICT AFFAIRS.

THE SEMINAR, JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE AREA COMMITTEE, WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 7.30 PM TO 10 PM AT THE LEI TUNG COMMUNITY HALL IN LEI TUNG ESTATE.

SOUTHERN ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER, MR DAVID LEUNG, WILL GIVE A SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR AND THE AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, MR WONG TZE-KWONG, WILL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE SEMINAR WILL FEATURE A VIDEO PROGRAMME ENTITLED "HAPPY AND SWEET HOME IN SOUTHERN DISTRICT" PRODUCED BY THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD TO INTRODUCE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTRICT AND VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE BOARD'S WORK.

THERE WILL ALSO BE GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING MATTERS. THE ISSUES RAISED WILL BE NOTED AND FOLLOWED UP BY THE AREA COMMITTEE.

ABOUT 60 REPRESENTATIVES FROM MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, OWNERS' CORPORATIONS AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE SEMINAR ALONG WITH OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

"ALL RESIDENTS OF THE AP LEI CHAU AREA ARE ALSO WELCOME TO ATTEND THE SEMINAR AND TAKE PART IN THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS," A DISTRICT OFFICE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE SEMINAR IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF SEMINARS ORGANISED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE DISTRICT'S SEVEN AREA COMMITTEES WITH AN AIM TO STRENGTHEN TIES AMONG LOCAL ORGANISATIONS," THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE SEMINAR WHICH WILL START AT 7.30 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE LEI TUNG COMMUNITY HALL IN LEI TUNG ESTATE, AP LEI CHAU.

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WINNERS CHOSEN IN CLEAN AND GREEN PHOTO COMPETITION

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THE 1988 CLEAN AND GREEN PHOTO COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT CONCLUDED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AFTER A PROLONGED JUDGING SESSION TO SELECT THE WINNING ENTRIES FOR THE THREE THEME GROUPS.

THE WINNERS WERE CHOSEN FROM 462 ENTRIES DIVIDED INTO GROUPS ON PORTRAITS, ON WILDLIFE AND VEGETATION AND ON SCENERY.

THE WINNER OF THE PORTRAIT GROUP WAS MR TSE KAM-YUE WHILE MR LEE SHUE-CHEONG AND MR SHUM KA-PO WON THE FIRST AND SECOND RUNNER-UP TITLES.

IN THE WILDLIFE AND VEGETATION CATEGORY, MR WONG YUK-CHEUNG EMERGED AS THE WINNER WHILE THE FIRST AND SECOND RUNNER-UP TITLES WENT TO MR NG CHUN-LEUNG AND MR SO CHI-WAI.

THE ENTRY BY MR LEE CHI-KWONG WAS VOTED THE WINNING PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SCENERY GROUP, FOLLOWED BY MR TAN YUK-KOR AND MR LAU WAI-KAN AS THE FIRST AND SECOND RUNNERS-UP.

OF THE WINNERS OF THE THREE THEME GROUPS, MR LEE CHI-KWONG WAS NAMED OVERALL CHAMPION, AND WON THE GRAND PRIZE - A SET OF PERSONAL COMPUTER, VALUED AT \$12,700.

ATTRACTIVE PRIZES VALUED AT \$2,000, \$1,000 AND \$500 RESPECTIVELY WILL BE AWARDED TO THE FIRST THREE WINNING ENTRIES IN EACH GROUP. IN ADDITION, CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE NEXT FIVE HIGHEST-SCORE ENTRIES IN EACH OF THE THREE THEME GROUPS.

THE ADJUDICATION WAS CONDUCTED IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT BY A PANEL OF JUDGES COMPRISING WELL-KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHERS, MR MANLY CHIN, MR CHAN CHIK AND MR PHILIP LAU AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SPONSORS - FOTOMAX (FAR EAST) LIMITED, KODAK (FAR EAST) LIMITED AND EPSON ELECTRONICS TRADING LIMITED.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CONSERVATION AND COUNTRY PARKS) OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, MR K.C. IU, WHO SUPERVISED THE ADJUDICATION, SAID THAT THE JUDGES HAD FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO SELECT THE WINNERS AS ALL THE ENTRIES WERE OF A HIGH QUALITY.

"WE WERE IMPRESSED BY THE HIGH STANDARD OF PHOTOGRAPHIC SKILL OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE IMAGINATIVE FLAIR EXPRESSED IN THEIR ENTRIES. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO SEE THAT THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE ALL SUCCEEDED IN PORTRAYING THE MAIN THEME OF CLEANER AND GREENER COUNTRYSIDE," MR IU SAID.

THE PHOTO COMPETITION IS JOINTLY ORGANISED WITH THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES AS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES FOR THIS YEAR'S CLEAN AND GREEN SCHEME.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WESTERN DISTRICT, AND KWUN TONG
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (NOVEMBER 25), ALL VEHICLES OVER TEN METRES LONG WILL BE BANNED FROM KA ON STREET IN WESTERN DISTRICT FOR ABOUT FOUR WEEKS FOR DRAINAGE WORKS.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THE EASTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF KA ON STREET WILL BE MADE A DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY ROUND-THE-CLOCK.

ALSO FROM 10 AM ON THE SAME DAY (FRIDAY), THE WESTERN KERBSIDE LANE OF WANG CHIU ROAD IN KWUN TONG BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH KAI YIP ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 75 METRES SOUTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION WILL ALSO BECOME A 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

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 HAVEN STREET
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 26), TWO SECTIONS OF HAVEN STREET IN CAUSEWAY BAY WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS:

- * THE SECTION BETWEEN ITS JUNCTION WITH LEIGHTON ROAD AND A POINT ABOUT 10 METRES TO THE EAST WILL BE MADE A PEAK HOUR (I.E. 7 - 10 AM AND 4 - 7 PM) DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.
- * THE DEAD-END SECTION BETWEEN HOUSE NOS. 44 AND 50 WILL BECOME A 24-HOUR DAILY URBAN CLEARWAY.

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

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF EDINBURGH PLACE NORTH
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED THAT EDINBURGH PLACE NORTH BETWEEN QUEEN'S PIER AND H.M.S. TAMAR WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 26) AND SUNDAY.

THE CLOSURE WILL LAST FROM 3 PM ON SATURDAY TO 10 PM THE NEXT DAY FOR THE HOLDING OF THE CSL AUTUMN FAIR.

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