



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1985

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MOTION ON TRANSFER OF POWERS APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE DEALING WITH THE NECESSARY TRANSFER OF STATUTORY POWERS, FOLLOWING CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

MOVING THE MOTION EARLIER, SIR PHILIP REMINDED MEMBERS THAT A PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WOULD BE ESTABLISHED ON APRIL 1 TO COVER THOSE AREAS NOT UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL.

A NEW DEPARTMENT, TO BE CALLED THE REGIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, WOULD BE CREATED TO SERVE THE NEW COUNCIL. IT WOULD BE MADE UP OF THE PRESENT NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, TOGETHER WITH THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE PRESENT RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WHICH PROVIDED SERVICES AT THE REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREAS.

AT THE SAME TIME, SIR PHILIP SAID, THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WOULD REORGANISED SO AS TO OFFER THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE TO THE URBAN COUNCIL.

+ON THE SAME DATE, THAT IS TO SAY, APRIL 1, 1985, TWO NEW BRANCHES WILL BE CREATED AND A NUMBER OF RESPONSIBILITIES TRANSFERRED BETWEEN OTHER POLICY BRANCHES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,+ HE SAID.

A NEW BRANCH IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT ENTITLED THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH TO BE HEADED BY A SECRETARY FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES, WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE NEW REGIONAL COUNCIL AND ADVISING ON THE FORMULATION OF POLICIES BY THE TWO COUNCILS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY IN THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

THE NEW MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH WOULD ASSUME POLICY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE MATTERS (REFUSE COLLECTION, CEMETERIES, ABATTOIRS, MARKETS AND THE LIKE) FROM THE HEALTH AND WELFARE BRANCH, AND FROM THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS, COUNTRY PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION, LIQUOR LICENSING, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES AT TERRITORIAL LEVEL, U.S.D. LICENSING OTHER THAN HEALTH MATTERS, AND URBAN COUNCIL RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT.

THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH WOULD ALSO ASSUME FROM THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH AND THE RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS RELATING TO THE MUSIC OFFICE AND THE PRINCIPAL SPORTING AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS.

/SIR PHILIP

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SIR PHILIP SAID THE OPPORTUNITY HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE COLLATION OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION, LIAISON WITH TRADITIONAL CHINESE ORGANISATIONS AND RELATED MATTERS, MANAGEMENT OF TRUST FUNDS AND PROPERTIES, AND MANAGEMENT OF CHINESE TEMPLES AND CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERIES FROM THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS TO THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

THE RESIDUE OF THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH, WHICH INCLUDED POLICY MAINLY RELATING TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS, CHINESE LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS REGISTRATION OF NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS, GAMBLING AND PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT WOULD BE COMBINED WITH THE PRESENT FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH TO FORM A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION BRANCH HEADED BY A SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION.

THE PRESENT HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH, THE PRESENT COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH AND THE PRESENT RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT WOULD THEN CEASE TO EXIST AS WOULD SUCH POSTS AS THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND DIRECTOR, COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH.

HE SAID THAT IN ORDER TO EFFECT THESE CHANGES, CERTAIN STATUTORY POWERS HAD TO BE TRANSFERRED TO, AND FROM, THE VARIOUS OFFICERS CONCERNED AND THESE WERE SET OUT IN THE MOTION AND THE ATTACHED SCHEDULES.

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MOTIONS TO INCREASE FEES, DUTY, TAX DEFERRED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED THE DEFERMENT UNTIL TOMORROW OF MOTIONS BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, FOR INCREASES IN BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEES, BETTING DUTY AND AIR PASSENGER DEPARTURE TAX TO COME INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 1.

EXPLAINING HIS REQUEST FOR DEFERMENT, SIR JOHN SAID, +IN THE BUDGET SPEECH I SAID THAT MY PROPOSALS FOR INCREASED BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEES, BETTING DUTY AND AIR PASSENGER DEPARTURE TAX WERE DESIGNED TO COME INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 1, AND THAT THE CHANGES WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY WAY OF RESOLUTIONS UNDER THE RELEVANT ORDINANCES.

+THIS WOULD NECESSITATE THE PASSING OF THE RESOLUTION DURING THE COURSE OF THE RESUMED DEBATE,+ HE SAID.

/HOWEVER, IT

HOWEVER, IT WOULD NOT BE PROPER TO MOVE THE RESOLUTIONS UNTIL UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD SPOKEN ON THE SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

ON THE OTHER HAND, SIR JOHN SAID, STANDING ORDERS 11 AND 12 AND THE PRACTICE OF THIS COUNCIL REQUIRED MOTIONS TO BE LISTED AND TO BE TAKEN BEFORE BILLS.

+THEREFORE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 68, WITH YOUR CONSENT, I MOVE THAT STANDING ORDER 11 (1) BE SUSPENDED SO THAT THE MOTIONS STANDING IN MY NAME IN THE ORDER PAPER MAY BE DEALT WITH TOMORROW, AFTER THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAVE FINISHED SPEAKING ON THE SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL,+ HE SAID.

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BIG SPENDING ON EDUCATION WELCOMED
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THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMENDED TODAY BY DR THE HON FRANCIS TIEN FOR ALLOCATING +MASSES OF PUBLIC MONEY+ FOR EDUCATION.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR TIEN SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT 17 PER CENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE WAS BEING SPENT ON EDUCATION.

HE NOTED THAT TEN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, FIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS WELL AS NUMEROUS OTHER ELEMENTS WERE PROPOSED IN EDUCATION.

+IN ALL THIS FIGURE IS 7.81 BILLION - A SUM MORE THAN OUR ENTIRE BUDGET A FEW YEARS AGO,+ HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT IN CONSIDERING HOW THE MONEY COULD BEST BE SPENT, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER THE PROPER NEEDS OF THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SECTOR OF EDUCATION, UPON WHICH HONG KONG'S FUTURE PROSPERITY DEPENDED.

+I THEREFORE URGE THAT THE GRANTS TO THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL SHOULD BE KEPT AT AN ADEQUATE LEVEL,+ HE SAID.

DR TIEN ECHOED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S VIEW THAT TWO QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ASKED FOR EACH VOTE : +WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES? WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING FROM?+

+IF WE FAIL AT EVERY POINT TO ASK THESE QUESTIONS WE MERELY GET BIGGER GOVERNMENT. BIG GOVERNMENT COMES ABOUT WHEN THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES EXPANDS,+ DR TIEN SAID.

HONG KONG SHOULD HEED THE WARNING OF BUDGETS OUT OF CONTROL IN A NUMBER OF STATES IN WESTERN EUROPE, HE OBSERVED.

+WHAT IS NEEDED IS ADEQUATE, BUT NOT EXCESSIVE, GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONEY,+ HE SAID.

NOTING THE PRESENT BUDGET HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN A CLIMATE OF HOPE AND AN ALMOST 10 PER CENT EXPANSION, HE SAID: +WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT WE MUST PAY FOR OUR HOPES. NOTHING IS FOR NOTHING - WE ARE TALKING ABOUT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS.+

+WE ARE NOW A MORE CARING SOCIETY THAN WE WERE, BUT WE MUST RETAIN OUR SENSE OF COMPETITIVE REALISM,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER, COMMENTING ON THE REVENUE PROPOSALS, DR TIEN SAID THAT ON ANALYSIS THEY INTENDED +TO TURN US OR SO IT WOULD APPEAR, INTO A COMMUNITY OF SAINTS.+

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FULL STATEMENT OF FINANCES CALLED FOR
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THE HON LYDIA DUNN SPEAKING IN THE BUDGET DEBATE CRITICISED THE +MISLEADING+ INFORMATION IN THE BUDGET AND ITS RELATED PAPERS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S TRUE FINANCIAL PICTURE. SHE CITED AS EXAMPLES GOVERNMENT'S EQUITY HOLDINGS IN THE MTR, LIABILITIES REPRESENTED BY LETTERS B, EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE AND OTHER CONTINGENT LIABILITIES WHICH WERE NOT CLEARLY PRESENTED IN THE BUDGET DOCUMENTS.

SHE SAID MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL NEEDED, AND THE PUBLIC WAS ENTITLED TO, A FULL STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL POSITION WHICH SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE SOME INFORMATION ON THE DIVERSIFIED ASSET PORTFOLIO OF THE EXCHANGE FUND AND SOME INDICATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VALUE OF THE ASSETS IN THE FUND EXCEED LIABILITIES.

THE FORM AND CONTENT OF ALL THE TABLES, APPENDICES, AND STATEMENTS OF FUNDS THAT SUPPORT THE BUDGET SHOULD BE EXAMINED WITH THE AIM OF MAKING THEM AS COMPLETE AND ACCURATE AND PRESENTING THEM AS SIMPLY AND CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE, SHE SAID.

+I ACCEPT THAT MUCH OF THE INFORMATION IS FOR THE RECORD, BUT LITTLE EFFORT IS MADE TO OFFER IT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PRESENT A CLEAR PICTURE, OF THE GOVERNMENT'S TRUE FINANCIAL POSITION LET ALONE WITH PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE AND INFORMATION ABOUT ALL ITS ACTUAL AS WELL AS ITS CONTINGENT LIABILITIES,+ MISS DUNN SAID.

WHILE WELCOMING THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S INTENTION TO PRESENT A BALANCED BUDGET IN A YEAR'S TIME, MISS DUNN SAID SHE WONDERED WHETHER HE FULLY COMPREHENDED THE TASK FACING HIM.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID THAT DESPITE THE TAX INCREASES IN THE 1983 AND 1984 BUDGETS, RECURRENT EXPENDITURE HAD SINCE 1981-82 BEEN GROWING MUCH FASTER THAN RECURRENT REVENUE, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE SURPLUS ON RECURRENT ACCOUNT HAD SHRUNK FROM \$7.7 BILLION IN 1981-82 TO \$4 BILLION IN 1984-85.

+BUT FOR THE NEW REVENUE PROPOSALS FOR THE COMING YEAR, IT WOULD SHRINK FURTHER,+ SHE SAID.

STRESSING THE NEED FOR A SURPLUS ON RECURRENT ACCOUNT, MISS DUNN THEN ASKED THE QUESTION AS TO HOW A SUFFICIENT RECURRENT SURPLUS COULD BE OBTAINED.

+I BELIEVE WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GO ON INCREASING TAXES EVERY YEAR TO DO IT BUT I FEAR THAT THIS IS WHAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MIGHT HAVE IN MIND+, SHE SAID.

SHE SAID SHE DID NOT NECESSARILY OPPOSE THE TAX MEASURES PROPOSED IN THIS BUDGET BUT BELIEVED THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF A LOW TAX ENVIRONMENT WAS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

+AS I SAID LAST YEAR, WE SHOULD GET BACK TO CUTTING OUR COAT ACCORDING TO OUR CLOTH.

+IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUDGET SHOULD BE REVENUE-BASED AS IT USED TO BE, NOT EXPENDITURE-BASED, AND THE RESERVES SHOULD RETURN TO THEIR CLASSIC ROLE, THAT IS, TO MEET UNFORESEEN DEFICITS,+ SHE SAID.

MISS DUNN SAID THAT NO PROJECT WAS SACROSANCT JUST BECAUSE IT ONCE GOT INTO THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME NOR WAS IT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT IT SHOULD GO AHEAD THIS YEAR RATHER THAN NEXT YEAR OR EVEN LATER.

+IF AN EXPENDITURE-BASED BUDGET WILL BALANCE IN 1986-87, FINE.

+IF NOT, NEW REVENUE MEASURES ARE NOT INEVITABLE. THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE,+ MISS DUNN STRESSED.

SHE SAID THE REASON WHY ALL THIS WAS SO SPECULATIVE WAS THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD FAILED AGAIN TO PROVIDE FIGURES FOR THE FORECAST PERIOD.

SUMMING UP, MISS DUNN SAID THAT THE BUDGET STATEMENT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS WERE NEITHER SELF-EXPLANATORY NOR SELF-CONTAINED AND THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD GIVEN NO PROJECTIONS EVEN FOR 1986-87.

SHE ADDED THAT SHE HOPED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WOULD ACCEPT THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TAKE A DEFINITIVE VIEW OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL 1985 AS SUCH IN THE ABSENCE OF ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:

- * WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S TRUE FINANCIAL POSITION?
- * WHAT IS THE TRUE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR?
- * WHAT ARE THE LIKELY FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE MTRC AND OTHER STATUTORY CORPORATIONS?
- * WHAT ARE THE PROJECTIONS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE FORECAST PERIOD?
- * WHAT WILL BE OR ARE LIKELY TO BE THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF ANNEX III OF THE JOINT DECLARATION ON OUR AVAILABLE CAPITAL REVENUE?
- * CAN WE MAINTAIN OUR RECURRENT SERVICES INTACT AND AVOID STOP-GO IN OUR CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME WITHOUT RECOURSE TO HIGHER TAXATION?
- * IF NOT, THEN WHAT?

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PRIVATISATION OF MEDICAL SERVICES URGED
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATISING ITS HOSPITALS AND CLINICS.

DR THE HON HARRY FANG MADE THIS PLEA DURING THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY,

HE SAID THAT THE PRESENT UNFAVOURABLE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND CLINICS AS WELL AS THE DISCONTENT OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH STAFF WERE NOT NECESSARILY DIRECTED AT THE ADMINISTRATION WHICH HAD DONE A MOST ADMIRABLE JOB IN MAINTAINING HONG KONG AT A VERY HIGH STANDARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

+THEY COULD BE THE RESULT OF THE RAPID INCREASE OF OUR POPULATION, THE INCREASING AFFLUENCE AND ASPIRATIONS OF OUR PEOPLE, AND THE FACT THAT OUR PRESENT SYSTEM OF HOSPITALS AND CLINICS NEEDS CHANGING,+ HE SAID.

DR FANG SAID THAT IT WOULD BE QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO IMPROVE MEDICAL CARE FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL AS IT WOULD HAVE TO COMPETE WITH OTHER SERVICES FOR THE LIMITED FUNDS.

HE BELIEVED THAT BY CHANGING THE PRESENT SYSTEM AND ALLOWING GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND CLINICS TO BE MANAGED INDEPENDENTLY, EACH WITH ITS AUTONOMOUS BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND A BLOCK GRANT, A GREAT DEAL OF IMPROVEMENT COULD BE ACHIEVED.

/+BECAUSE EACH

+BECAUSE EACH HOSPITAL WILL THEN BE MADE DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS OPERATION AND COMPETITION WILL INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVE STAFF ATTITUDE AND PERFORMANCE.

+MONEY WILL BE SAVED, FOR EXAMPLE, BY PUTTING STAFF, ESPECIALLY DOCTORS, ON CONTRACT TERMS ON FULL TIME OR PART TIME (SESSIONAL) BASIS. THEY NEED NO LONGER BE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE,+ DR FANG SAID.

HE FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE HOSPITALS WOULD BECOME NON-PROFIT-MAKING INSTITUTIONS, ADDITIONAL FUNDS COULD BE GENERATED FROM MODEST INCREASES IN FEES FOR VARIOUS SERVICES WHILE KEEPING THEM WITHIN THE MEANS OF THE AVERAGE WAGE EARNER.

LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS AND DISTRICT BOARD OR URBAN/REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS COULD BE INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SUCH INSTITUTIONS, THUS IMPROVING FURTHER THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC, HE SAID.

REFERRING TO CLINICS, DR FANG SUGGESTED THAT THE SPECIALTY CLINICS WHICH WERE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENTS OF VARIOUS HOSPITALS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE SO ATTACHED WHILE THE GENERAL OUTPATIENT CLINICS COULD BE RUN BY THE COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ON A RENTAL BASIS OR AT AN AGREED RENT.

+THE COLLEGE COULD BE DELEGATED WITH THE DUTY OF PROVIDING INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAMPLING PURPOSES OR GOVERNMENT COULD RETAIN SOME OF THE STRATEGICALLY PLACED CLINICS FOR THOSE FUNCTIONS,+ HE SAID.

DR FANG STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT TRYING TO STRIP THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AND HIS DEPARTMENT OF THEIR ESSENTIAL DUTIES.

+QUITE THE CONTRARY, BY RELIEVING THE DEPARTMENT OF DIRECT PRIMARY (OUTPATIENT) AND SECONDARY (HOSPITAL) MEDICAL CARE, GREATER EMPHASIS AND EFFORT CAN BE SPENT THAN AT PRESENT ON PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, POLICY AND PLANNING, SUBVENTING AND MONITORING THE MEDICAL SERVICES AS A WHOLE,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WAS BEING PRACTISED OVERSEAS AND IT HAD BY AND LARGE BEEN THE BASIS OF OTHER SERVICES SUCH AS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN HONG KONG.

HE CONCEDED THAT THERE WOULD BE LOTS OF DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS NEW CONCEPT BUT A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE COULD BE DRAWN FROM THE PRIVATISATION OF THE KCR.

+IF THE PRINCIPLE CAN BE ACCEPTED WE CAN WORK IN STEPS GRADUALLY TOWARDS THE GOAL. PERHAPS WE COULD MAKE A START WITH THE NEW TUEN MUN OR SHAU KEI WAN HOSPITALS,+ HE SAID.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION MADE BY DR FANG WAS THAT PATIENTS SHOULD BE CHARGED A MODERATE SUM FOR ITEMS SUCH AS X-RAY, LABORATORY TESTS, PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENTS AND SURGICAL PROCEDURES CONDUCTED IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.

+OF COURSE, THOSE PATIENTS WHO CANNOT AFFORD MAY HAVE THE FEES WAIVED OR REDUCED.

+THIS WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FUTURE EXPANSION OF OUR MEDICAL SERVICE AND ALLOWING NECESSARY INCREASES IN THE MEDICAL BUDGET,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON PROPOSED TAXATION ON DUTIABLE COMMODITIES, DR FANG SAID HE WISHED TO SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THAT BESIDES MILK, PURE FRUIT JUICE AND DISTILLED WATER, OTHER HEALTH DRINKS SUCH AS SOYA BEAN MILK WERE EXEMPTED FROM TAX.

HE SAID HE SUPPORTED THE REPRESENTATION BY THE HONG KONG SOYA BEAN PRODUCTS CO LTD TO UMEICO THAT ITS PURE SOYA BEAN MILK PRODUCT SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED UNDER FOOD AND MILK AND NOT UNDER NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.

+EVEN WHEN TABLE WATERS WERE SUBJECTED TO DUTY PRIOR TO 1973, SOYA BEAN MILK WAS NOT TAXED.

+IN RE-INTRODUCING THE TAX ON NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES THIS YEAR I THINK SOYA BEAN MILK SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY EXEMPTION AS IT CLEARLY IS A HEALTH ITEM RATHER THAN A 'PLEASING INDULGENCE',+ DR FANG SAID.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A DISTINCT DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN THE PRICES OF SOFT DRINKS AND THAT OF BEER SO THAT GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SEEN TO BE ENCOURAGING THE YOUNG INTO OPTING FOR THE STRONGER DRINK CONTAINING ALCOHOL.

ON COSMETICS, HE HOPED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY COULD DRAW A CLEAR LINE BETWEEN LUXURY ITEMS AND ITEMS WHICH WERE FOR HYGIENE AND THERAPEUTIC PURPOSES SUCH AS SOAP, SKIN LOTION OR CREAM, ADDING THAT THE LATTER SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM TAX.

ON THE CIVIL SERVICE, DR FANG RECOGNISED THE NEED TO RESTRAIN THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BUT HE SAID IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THOSE IN THE SERVICE WERE PROPERLY AND ADEQUATELY REMUNERATED AND THEIR PENSION SCHEMES REASSURED IF WE WERE TO HAVE CONTINUED STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN HONG KONG FOR THE NEXT 62 YEARS AND BEYOND.

+I WISH TO SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT ISSUE AN ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCUMULATED PENSION TO ALL ELIGIBLE OFFICERS SIMILAR TO THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS ON THE WIDOWS AND CHILDREN PENSION SCHEME,+ HE SAID.

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RESERVATIONS FELT ABOUT CAR LICENCE FEE RISE

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DR HON HO KAM-FAI SAID THAT THOUGH HE SUPPORTED THE BUDGET PROPOSALS AS A WHOLE, HE HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED 10 PER CENT INCREASE IN ANNUAL VEHICLE LICENCE FEES AND DRIVING LICENCE FEES.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, DR HO SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF HEFTY INCREASES IN ANNUAL LICENCE FEES AND FIRST REGISTRATION TAX IN MAY 1982, THE NUMBER OF LICENSED PRIVATE CARS HAD DROPPED FROM 217 945 IN MAY 1982 TO 180 084 IN FEBRUARY 1985.

CONSEQUENTLY, HE SAID, ROAD CONGESTION HAD +BEEN RELIEVED TO SOME EXTENT+.

+THERE IS NOW NO JUSTIFICATION TO USE FISCAL MEASURES TO BRING CAR OWNERSHIP FURTHER DOWN,+ HE SAID.

DR HO ALSO SAID THAT AS THE ANNUAL LICENCE FEES AND FIRST REGISTRATION TAX COULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED IF THE PRESENT ELECTRONIC ROAD PRICING PILOT SCHEME PROVED SUCCESSFUL, HE FELT THERE WAS NO URGENT NEED NOW TO INCREASE THOSE FEES.

FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, PRIVATE CAR OWNERS AS A GROUP HAD ALREADY CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE TO THE PUBLIC COFFERS, AND THEY +DESERVED A BREAK, AT LEAST PENDING A DECISION ON THE ELECTRONIC ROAD PRICING SYSTEM.+

+MOREOVER, THE OPENING OF THE MTR ISLAND LINE THIS SUMMER MIGHT FURTHER ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO LEAVE THEIR CARS AT HOME IN FAVOUR OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT,+ DR HO SAID.

DR HO ALSO ASKED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO CONSIDER SOME OF THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO UMEICO AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF A 25 PER CENT AD VALOREM DUTY ON COSMETICS AND PERFUMES.

+THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DUTY ON COSMETICS IS TOO ABRUPT, CAUSING POSSIBLE FINANCIAL LOSSES AND DISRUPTION TO THE COSMETICS BUSINESS.

+HENCE IT IS PROPOSED THAT SHIPMENTS OF COSMETICS PRODUCTS FOR WHICH ORDERS HAVE BEEN PLACED BEFORE FEBRUARY 27 SHOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE DUTY,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE FOB VALUES OF THE IMPORTED COMMODITIES SHOULD BE TAKEN AS THE BASE FOR CALCULATING THE TAX PAYABLE, RATHER THAN CIF PRICES.

/DR HO

DR HO ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT SHOULD RE-CONSIDER HOW MUCH COSMETICS AND PERFUME A VISITOR OR LOCAL RESIDENT SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BRING INTO HONG KONG DUTY FREE FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY, POINTING OUT THAT THE CURRENTLY PERMITTED AMOUNT WAS +SOMEWHAT GENEROUS AND MIGHT AFFECT GOVERNMENT REVENUE.+

HE FURTHER URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO REVISE THE CLASSIFICATION OF COSMETICS SO THAT TRADERS IN THE INDUSTRY WOULD KNOW CLEARLY WHICH COSMETIC AND TOILET ITEMS WERE DUTIABLE.

COMMENTING ON THE PROPOSED ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE, DR HO RAISED THREE MATTERS +OF PUBLIC CONCERN.+

ONE OF THESE CONCERNS, HE SAID, WAS RELATED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCIDENTS ARISING FROM THE USE OF CHEMICALS IN INDUSTRY.

HE CALLED FOR SUFFICIENT PROVISION TO BE MADE SO THAT MORE FACTORY INSPECTORS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF NEW CHEMICALS AND THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY MIGHT BE AVAILABLE.

DR HO ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE RECENT RETIREMENT OF SEVERAL EXPERIENCED FACTORY INSPECTORS AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECT THIS COULD HAVE ON THE STANDARD OF ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

+THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR MIGHT WELL BE ADVISED TO LOOK INTO WAYS TO RETAIN MUCH NEEDED EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE OF FACTORY INSPECTORS AT THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVEL,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS +THE PLIGHT+ OF SINGLE ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN BOARDING HOUSES IN SUB-STANDARD PRIVATE TENEMENT BLOCKS, OR THE +CAGED MEN AS DESCRIBED BY THE MEDIA,+ DR HO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION TO MOVE THEM TO PROPER HOUSING.

THE JOINT EFFORTS OF SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS WERE REQUIRED TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, HE SAID.

+I HOPE THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN CO-ORDINATING THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAMME TO REHOUSE THESE ELDERLY PEOPLE,+ DR HO SAID.

WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION, DR HO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE COURSE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION.

+BOTH THE PANEL OF VISITORS AND THE EDUCATION COMMISSION SUGGESTED THAT SUCH A COURSE SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO UPGRADE THE STANDARD OF PRIMARY EDUCATION.

+THE COURSE WILL ALSO HELP TO TRAIN SENIOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS FOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ROLES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID.

DR HO POINTED OUT THAT THE COST FOR THE PROGRAMME IS QUITE MODEST. +IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION, THREE INSTRUCTORS AND ONE SUPPORT STAFF ARE REQUIRED AT THE COST OF \$1.7 MILLION. AS THE COURSE GROWS TO MATURITY IN ITS THIRD YEAR, AN ESTABLISHMENT OF SIX INSTRUCTORS AND A SMALL SUPPORT STAFF IS NEEDED AT A COST OF \$3.5 MILLION.+

THE PROPOSED COURSE, HE SAID, MIGHT UPSET THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN GRADUATE TEACHERS AND NON-GRADUATE TEACHERS.

+HOWEVER, FROM THE EDUCATIONAL POINT OF VIEW, THE MERITS OF THE COURSE FAR OUTWEIGH ANY ADMINISTRATIVE INCONVENIENCE,+ HE SAID.

+HONG KONG HAS NO MAJOR NATURAL RESOURCES EXCEPT FOR ITS PEOPLE AND A MAGNIFICENT HARBOUR.

+WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR HUMAN RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR POSITION AS A MAJOR INDUSTRIAL, FINANCIAL AND TRADING CENTRE,+ HE SAID.

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UPDATE BUDGET GUIDELINES - STEPHEN CHEONG

IT WAS SUGGESTED TODAY BY THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG THAT THE TIME MIGHT HAVE COME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW AND, IF NECESSARY, UPDATE THE BUDGETARY GUIDELINES STATED IN THE BUDGET SPEECH.

SPEAKING AT THE BUDGET DEBATE, MR CHEONG SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THESE GUIDELINES RATIONALISED DE NOVO AND PROJECTED FORWARD AS MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVES WHICH COULD BE PURSUED WITH A DEGREE OF CONTINUITY BY WHOEVER MIGHT BE STEERING THE COURSE OF OUR BUDGETARY POLICIES.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COULD THEN BE CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ONLY BE WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING A BALANCED BUDGET IN 1986-87 BUT WOULD ALSO STAY ON THE COURSE IN THE YEARS TO COME, WITHOUT HAVING TO INCREASE TAXES YEAR AFTER YEAR, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, HE SAID.

HE HAD EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SUCCEED IN HOLDING DOWN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

+HOWEVER, I AM LESS CONFIDENT ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT BEING ABLE TO ACHIEVE SUFFICIENT REVENUE WITHOUT SUBSTANTIALLY WIDENING OUR TAX BASE,+ HE SAID.

IN ORDER TO INCREASE PUBLIC REVENUES SUBSTANTIALLY, MR CHEONG SAID, HE BELIEVED THE TIME HAD COME TO FACE UP TO THE HARSH REALITY THAT THE TAX BASE HAD TO BE WIDENED BY INTRODUCING A NEW TAX OR NEW TAXES.

HE SUGGESTED A TAX THAT COULD LEAD TO A BALANCED BUDGET THIS YEAR COULD BE A FLAT HALF A PER CENT LEVY ON THE VALUE OF ALL IMPORTS, EXCLUDING FOODSTUFFS.

+SUCH A TAX WOULD BE ONLY MILDLY INFLATIONARY. IT WOULD BE EASY AND INEXPENSIVE TO COLLECT AND ADMINISTER, FOR WE ALREADY HAVE THE MECHANISM OF TRADE DECLARATIONS. IT SHOULD BEAR EQUITABLY ON ALL SECTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

+AND, GIVEN THE SIZE OF HONG KONG'S IMPORTS, THIS IS THE SORT OF TAX THAT IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE INCREASING YIELDS,+ MR CHEONG SAID.

HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFUL THAT THE YIELD FROM THIS TAX WAS NOT UNWITTINGLY PASSED ON TO THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, AND WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A TAX ON OUR OFT-PRONOUNCED STATUS IN THE GATT AS A FREE PORT.

HE SAID IF THERE WERE COMPELLING REASONS AGAINST HAVING AN IMPORT TAX, WE SHOULD AT LEAST BE CONTEMPLATING THE INTRODUCTION OF A TAX, SAY, ONE PER CENT ON SALES AT WHOLESALE LEVEL.

HE POINTED OUT THAT MANY COMMUNITIES, NOTABLY THE UNITED STATES AND PRACTICALLY ALL EEC COUNTRIES, HAD BEEN TAXING SALES OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER FOR YEARS.

THERE WAS NO GOOD REASON WHY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT SEEK TO LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER ADMINISTRATIONS, HE SAID.

TURNING TO ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR 1985, MR CHEONG SAID HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OVER HIS FORECAST GROWTH RATE OF 11 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS OF HONG KONG'S DOMESTIC EXPORTS.

+WITH ADVERSE EXCHANGE RATES, AND WITH PROTECTIONISM BEGINNING TO RENDER OUR BILATERAL TEXTILE AGREEMENTS SOMEWHAT INSECURE, MY EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GROWTH RATE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS WOULD BE MUCH LOWER THAN 10 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG THEN EXAMINED THE REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT'S OVERSEAS OFFICES AND THE SCOPE FOR IMPROVING THE OUTPUT OF VARIOUS MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

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COMMENTING ON THE OVERSEAS OFFICES, MR CHEONG SAID WHILE HE CONSIDERED THE LEVEL OF OUR REPRESENTATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN MULTILATERAL ISSUES BOTH LAUDABLE AND ADEQUATE, HE DID NOT THINK THAT ENOUGH WAS BEING DONE WITHIN THE UNITED STATES AND THE EEC.

+WE NEED MORE MANPOWER OF SUFFICIENTLY HIGH CALIBRE TO INFLUENCE NATIONAL OPINION, WHICH HAS A MARKED EFFECT ON COMMUNITY POLICY, IN OUR FAVOUR,+ HE SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT THERE WAS A CASE FOR DOING MUCH MORE THAN WE HAD DONE IN THE WAY OF PROMOTING HONG KONG'S CASE, WHATEVER THE ISSUE MIGHT BE, PARTICULARLY AS WE DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH POLITICAL CLOUT TO RETALIATE, OR EVEN THREATEN TO RETALIATE.

HE SUGGESTED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPERVISING THE OVERSEAS OFFICES SHOULD CLEARLY AND FIRMLY BE VESTED IN THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

AS REGARDS THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, MR CHEONG SUGGESTED THAT A REVIEW SHOULD BE MADE FOR EACH MAJOR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY TO ASSESS THE SIZE OF THEIR PROBLEMS, TO ASCERTAIN THEIR IMPORT GROWTH PROSPECTS AND TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT LEGITIMATELY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS IMPROVING THE VOLUME AND QUALITY OF THEIR PRODUCT.

HE SAID THIS EXERCISE SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE EXISTING MACHINERY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH VARIOUS INDUSTRIES.

+I BELIEVE THIS EXERCISE WOULD BE WELL WORTH OUR WHILE : THERE IS NEVER ANY HARM IN TAKING STOCK, IN THE SENSE OF RE-EXAMINING THE MEASURES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS INTRODUCED,+ HE SAID.

IN MAKING THE SUGGESTION, MR CHEONG EMPHASISED THAT HE WAS NOT SEEKING TO UPSET OR REPLACE THE GOVERNMENT'S TRADITIONAL ROLE OF POSITIVE NON-INTERVENTION.

THE QUESTION HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ANSWERED WAS GIVEN A POSITIVELY NON-INTERVENTIONIST STANCE, WHETHER THE MEASURES AND SERVICES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD DIRECTLY PROVIDED HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE AND WHETHER THE ESSENTIAL BUSINESS SERVICES FOR WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WAS INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE WERE AS EFFECTIVE AS THEY SHOULD BE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGING ECONOMIC AND TRADING ENVIRONMENT OF THE 1980S.

FINALLY, MR CHEONG SAID HE SUPPORTED THE SETTING UP OF A COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF THE BORDER INDUSTRIAL ZONE AS ADVOCATED BY THE HON SIR S.Y. CHUNG AND THE HON ALLEN LEE.

HE FELT THAT THIS CONCEPT COULD BE OF VITAL LONG-TERM IMPORTANCE TO HONG KONG AND SHOULD NOT BE DISMISSED AS JUST A MEANS THROUGH WHICH INDUSTRIALISTS WOULD SIMPLY MAKE MORE PROFITS WITHOUT DUE CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THE WELFARE OF THE WORKFORCE.

/+GIVEN HONG

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+GIVEN HONG KONG'S FULL EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AND HOPEFULLY, WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN AT THIS SATISFACTORY STATE OF AFFAIRS, ANY FURTHER LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT OF OUR MANUFACTURING BASE WILL NEED TO LOOK SERIOUSLY INTO FINE TUNING OF OUR PRODUCTION METHODS,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEONG CITED THE KNITTING OF PANELS FOR THE SWEATER INDUSTRY AS A CASE IN POINT.

HE SAID NOW THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD CHOSEN TO CHANGE THE RULES UNILATERALLY WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, OUR WORKFORCE WOULD DEFINITELY BE FACED WITH ADJUSTMENTS PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

+SURELY, UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE WOULD BE A CASE FOR SERIOUS THOUGHTS ON HOW BEST HONG KONG CAN DO IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SOME STABILITY TO THE SITUATION.

+WE ASK NO MORE THAN THE SETTING UP OF A COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE CONCEPT SERIOUSLY,+ HE SAID.

+I SINCERELY HOPE THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE OPEN MINDED ENOUGH TO REFRAIN FROM TORPEDOING THE CONCEPT WITH JUST A STEREOTYPE RESPONSE,+ MR CHEONG CONCLUDED.

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CLOSER LOOK AT SUBSIDY POLICIES PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS TODAY URGED TO LOOK FOR WAYS AND MEANS TO REDUCE EXPENDITURE WITHOUT AFFECTING THE LONG TERM GOAL OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

SPEAKING AT THE FIRST DAY OF THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HON F.K. HU SAID WE MUST CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO WERE LEAST ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES BUT HE SAW NO REASON TO CARRY ON POLICIES WHICH ALLOWED FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD SUBSIDY INCLUDING SUBSIDISING THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD TO PAY FOR THE FULL COST.

+THIS IS AN AREA WHERE THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO AS CONSIDERABLE SAVING CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE PRINCIPLE OF CARING FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT CARE FOR THEMSELVES,+ HE SAID.

CITING THE CASE OF PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS, MR HU SAID IT WAS EVIDENT SOME OF THEM HAD PROSPERED OVER THE YEARS SINCE THEY MOVED INTO PUBLIC HOUSING.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN A GROWING TREND OF OPINION THAT THESE TENANTS SHOULD MOVE OUT OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO ALLOCATE HOUSING TO THOSE WHO REALLY NEEDED SUBSIDY.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAD RECENTLY SET UP A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO FIRSTLY THE QUESTION OF IDENTIFYING THOSE TENANTS WHO DID NOT NEED HOUSING SUBSIDY AND SECONDLY WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING REDUCTION OF SUBSIDY, MR HU SAID.

MR HU FORSAW THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD INEVITABLY INCREASE RENT FOR CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS.

+HIGHER RENT WILL MEAN LESS SUBSIDY FROM OTHER TAX-PAYERS AND INDEED WILL BE AN INCENTIVE FOR THESE TENANTS TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY TO BUY H.O.S. FLATS WHICH ARE LESS SUBSIDISED.

+SUCH ARRANGEMENT WILL ENABLE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO CONTRIBUTE MORE TOWARDS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR RENTAL HOUSING AND TO BE MORE INDEPENDENT IN CARRYING OUT ITS AMBITIOUS AND LONG TERM PLANS,+ HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT CONSIDERATION COULD BE GIVEN TO RENTING OUT H.O.S. FLATS WHICH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY BOUGHT BACK OR COULD NOT DISPOSE OF AT UNSUBSIDISED RENT TO TENANTS WHO COULD MEET SET CONDITIONS, BUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS PREFERRED TO STAY IN RENTED FLATS.

MR HU BELIEVED THE SAME ARGUMENT FOR REDUCING HOUSING SUBSIDY COULD ALSO BE APPLIED TO THE STUDENT TRAVEL SCHEME WHICH WOULD COST \$248 MILLION IN 1985-86.

HE CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS ABOUT TIME FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO RE-EXAMINE THE CONTINUED JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SCHEME SO AS TO DECIDE WHETHER THE SCHEME SHOULD BE TERMINATED OR ALLOWED TO CONTINUE BUT WITH REVISED ARRANGEMENTS.

MR HU ALSO SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF REGULAR UPDATING OF ALL GOVERNMENT FEES AND CHARGES AS SERVICES SHOULD BE PAID BY THOSE WHO USED THEM.

BESIDES CONSIDERING VALUE FOR MONEY FOR THESE SERVICES, CONTROLLING OFFICERS SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH SERVICES COULD BE PROVIDED MORE COMPETITIVELY THROUGH CONTRACTING OUT, AS IT WOULD NOT BE FAIR FOR THOSE WHO PAID FOR SERVICES TO PAY EXORBITANT FEES OR CHARGES BECAUSE OF GOVERNMENT'S OWN PROVISION OF THESE FACILITIES AT A HIGHER COST WHILE AN ALTERNATIVE CHEAPER ARRANGEMENT WAS AVAILABLE, HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR HU DID NOT BELIEVE MONEY SAVING SHOULD BE APPLIED RIGIDLY.

/IN SOME

IN SOME AREAS OF SOCIAL SERVICES WHICH REQUIRED PERSONAL ATTENTION, HE SAID, FLEXIBILITY WAS NEEDED TO ENFORCE THE POLICY OF STABILISING THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN ORDER THAT EFFECTIVE WORK COULD BE MAINTAINED TO COPE WITH INCREASED ACTIVITIES.

HE SUGGESTED THAT FOR SOCIAL WORK PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SUBVENTED VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, INCREASES SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN MANPOWER WHERE THEY WERE JUSTIFIED AND WHERE IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION OF FACILITIES HAD ALREADY BEEN PLANNED FOR.

+THERE ARE BOUND TO BE SITUATIONS WHERE PRODUCTIVITY CANNOT BE FURTHER STRETCHED AND THE CURRENT TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT CEILING NEEDS TO BE EXCEEDED,+ HE SAID.

IN SUCH CASES, HE HOPED THE CONTROLLING OFFICERS CONCERNED WOULD BE ALLOWED TO EXERCISE FLEXIBILITY AND DISCRETION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY.

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AVOID DEVIATION FROM LONGSTANDING PRINCIPLES
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WE MUST AVOID ADOPTING ANY MEASURES CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLES THAT WE HAVE FOLLOWED ALL ALONG AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE IN BAD NEED OF INCREASING OUR REVENUE, THE HON WONG PO-YAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR WONG SAID IF WE HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BILLS WHICH HAD BEEN PASSED, WE MUST REMAIN +CALM AND STEADY+ AND TRIED OUR BEST TO AVOID ADOPTING ANY MEASURES WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO LONG-TERM LOSSES THAT HAD SO FAR NOT YET SHOWN FOR THE TIME BEING.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, IF, IN THE MATTER OF BASIC PRINCIPLES OR ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES, WE NEED TO DEVIATE FROM OUR LONGSTANDING PRINCIPLES IN THE INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN LEGISLATION, WE SHOULD CONSIDER AND ANALYSE IT MORE CAREFULLY AND SERIOUSLY AND IN GREAT DETAIL AND HASTY DECISIONS ARE TO BE AVOIDED,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG BELIEVED THAT IN RAISING REVENUE, WE SHOULD STICK TO THE LONGSTANDING +SOURCE RULE+ IN THE IMPOSITION OF TAX AND ONLY LEVY TAXES ON PROFITS GENERATED WITHIN THE TERRITORY.

HE WAS GLAD TO SEE THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO CERTAIN VIEWS CONCERNING THE ENACTMENT OF THE 1984 AMENDMENT ORDINANCE RELATING TO INTEREST.

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+THE STATUS OF HONG KONG IS UNIQUE. WE HAVE TO ESTABLISH CLOSE LINKS AND ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL TRADE. BESIDES, THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR THE SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG.

+THE INFLOW AND OUTFLOW OF CAPITAL AND ITS MANAGEMENT, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE, SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM, ARE INTERWOVEN WITH THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF HONG KONG. AND HONG KONG THUS DERIVES BENEFITS IN VARIOUS SPHERES,+ HE SAID.

IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, MR WONG SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED VARIOUS MEANS TO INCREASE SOURCES OF REVENUE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED BUDGET.

WHILE NOTING THAT THE PROPOSAL IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET TO RE-INTRODUCE THE DUTY ON NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES HAD AROUSED MUCH PUBLIC OUTCRY, MR WONG SAID IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND VERY LIMITED NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE WHICH WERE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

+I HOPE THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WOULD IN FUTURE SPEND HIS EFFORTS ON CUTTING EXPENDITURE INSTEAD OF FURTHER TAPPING NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE,+ HE SAID.

NOTING THE PROPORTION OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE TO GDP HAD DROPPED 16.4 PER CENT LAST YEAR AND IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT THIS WOULD FURTHER FALL TO 16 PER CENT IN 1985-86, MR WONG CONSIDERED THIS TO BE A GOOD STEP FORWARD IN THE BETTER UTILISATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE GROWTH RATE, IN REAL TERMS, OF GNP WAS 9.6 PER CENT LAST YEAR, WHICH WAS VERY REMARKABLE INDEED,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID IF THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE WAS NOT HELD AT BAY, THE PERCENTAGE MIGHT RISE AGAIN.

+I CONSIDERED THAT WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS ON TWO ASPECTS, NAMELY, TO APPLY APPROPRIATE RESTRAINT ON EXPENDITURE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO SPARE NO EFFORTS IN INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A BETTER GROWTH IN GDP,+ HE SAID.

ON THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR WONG SAID THAT WHILE THERE SHOULD BE NO INCREASE IN ITS SIZE, THERE WERE INDEED MANY AREAS WHERE ADDITIONAL STAFF WERE NEEDED TO DO THE JOB.

+PRIORITY WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IF THIS GOAL IS TO BE ACHIEVED,+ HE SAID.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT AMONG THE GOVERNMENT'S MANY AND DIVERSE DUTIES, WASTE CERTAINLY EXISTED WHILE CERTAIN UNNECESSARY WORK MIGHT ALREADY BE THERE FOR QUITE A LONG TIME, BUT THEY HAD NOT DISAPPEARED WITH CHANGES IN BOTH ENVIRONMENT AND WORK.

HE QUESTIONED HOW THEN WERE WE GOING TO PINPOINT THESE PROBLEMS AND TRY TO SOLVE THEM.

+IN MY OPINION, APART FROM FREQUENT, THOROUGH AND SERIOUS REVIEWS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, AND BECAUSE GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE PUBLIC, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD WIDELY HEED OR EVEN MAKE AN EFFORT TO FIND OUT THE VIEWS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE AND TO ACCEPT THEIR CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS WITH AN OPEN MIND.

+THUS, WE CAN EXPECT TO HAVE FRUITFUL RESULTS,+ HE SAID.

MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT ANY WORK ASSOCIATED WITH HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY THE CONDUCT OF THE IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE, WAS NOT UNDULY HINDERED BY INSUFFICIENT MANPOWER, HE SUGGESTED.

ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG, MR WONG SAID THE POSITIVE INVESTMENT ATTITUDE SHOWN BY LOCAL AND OVERSEAS INVESTORS HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT HONG KONG'S FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS WOULD MOVE AHEAD ALONG THE SAME TRACK AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

+ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT THE TREND WILL DEFINITELY BE AN UPWARD ONE.

+OUR BUDGET HAS IMPROVED BETTER THAN EXPECTED. IF WE ARE CAUTIOUS ENOUGH, IT WILL NOT BE TOO HARD TO RETURN TO THE PEAK PERIOD WE USED TO HAVE, AND EVEN MORE THAN THAT, IN THREE TO FIVE YEARS' TIME,+ HE SAID.

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FISCAL POLICY SERVES HK WELL - PETER WONG
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IT IS REASSURING THAT GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO A POLICY WHICH HAS SERVED HONG KONG WELL OVER THE YEARS, THE HON PETER C. WONG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR WONG SAID HE FULLY ENDORSED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY THAT EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY SHOULD BE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

HE NOTED THE DEFICITS HAD DWINDLED FROM \$3.5 BILLION IN 1982-83 TO THE PLANNED DEFICIT OF \$1 BILLION FOR 1985-86 AS A RESULT OF THE SKILFUL HANDLING OF PUBLIC FINANCES AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE HONG KONG ECONOMY.

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BARRING UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE SHOULD BE WITNESSING A BALANCED BUDGET IN 1986-87, HE SAID. SOME HAVE EVEN PREDICTED THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE IN THE RED IN THE COMING FISCAL YEAR. JUDGING FROM OUR EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE DURING 1984, THIS MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE CORRECT.

ON THE ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE OF \$38.4 BILLION FOR 1985-86, HE SAID THIS REPRESENTED ONLY A MODERATE INCREASE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

+THIS IS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF RIGID DISCIPLINE AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG WELCOMED THE ADMINISTRATION'S AIM NOT TO PERMIT ANY INCREASE IN THE TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN 1985.

THIS WAS TO BE ACHIEVED BY CUTTING OUT WASTE, BY INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY AND BY ELIMINATING UNNECESSARY WORK, BUT NO CUT BACK ON THE VARIOUS SERVICES BEING PROVIDED, HE SAID.

+INDEED, SOME SERVICES, SUCH AS EDUCATION, MEDICAL AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE, WILL ENJOY A MODERATE INCREASE.

+IT APPEARS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE THAT SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICE IS BY NO MEANS INFERIOR TO BUREAUCRATIC INFLEXIBILITY,+ MR WONG SAID.

ON EDUCATION, MR WONG SAID ITS IMPORTANCE WAS UNDERLINED BY THE FACT THAT \$7.81 BILLION HAD BEEN EARMARKED FOR IT AS AGAINST \$4 BILLION FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND \$2.53 BILLION FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES.

+THE AMOUNT FOR EDUCATION REPRESENTS 17 PER CENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE AND A 10.7 PER CENT RISE OVER 1984-85,+ HE SAID.

HE REFUTED CRITICISM THAT NOT ENOUGH WAS BEING PROVIDED IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION BY GIVING SOME FACTS AND FIGURES.

+GOVERNMENT'S STATED POLICY IS TO PROVIDE PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHIN A REASONABLE WALKING DISTANCE FOR ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN; TO PROVIDE A SUBSIDISED PLACE FOR ALL PRIMARY 6 LEAVERS; TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES IN SCHOOLS AND PLACES AT TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES TO MEET THE FULL DEMAND FOR FORM III LEAVERS WHO ARE SUITABLE FOR THE COURSES PROVIDED; AND TO PHASE OUT THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT (JSEA) BY 1991.

+TO HELP MEET THESE OBJECTIVES, 10 PRIMARY SCHOOLS, PROVIDING 19 200 PLACES MAINLY IN THE NEW TOWNS, AND FIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROVIDING INITIALLY 1 280 FORM I AND 640 FORM IV PLACES WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1985-86.

/+AS REGARDS

+AS REGARDS VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, AN IMPRESSIVE PROGRAMME IS IN TRAIN. EXPANSION WILL CONTINUE SO THAT HOPEFULLY THE APPARENTLY INSATIABLE DEMAND WILL BE MET IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG POINTED OUT THAT THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, IN THE NEXT PHASE OF ITS WORK, WOULD HAVE TO REVIEW AMONG OTHER THINGS THE MODES OF FINANCING EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE FINANCING OF SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS CONTAINED IN ITS NO. 1 REPORT TO DETERMINE ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS BY WHICH THESE AND ANY FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS MIGHT BE FINANCED.

WHILE CONCEDING THAT EDUCATION WAS EXPENSIVE, MR WONG SAID IF WE WERE TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF OUR GROWTH AND TO MEET THE CHALLENGES THAT LAY AHEAD, +IS THERE ANY DOUBT THAT OUR BEST BET IS TO PUT OUR MONEY ON EDUCATING THE YOUNGER AND PERHAPS EVEN THE OLDER MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY?+

REFERRING TO REVENUE PROPOSALS, MR WONG SAID HE ACCEPTED THE FIVE REASONS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY GAVE FOR HIS PROPOSALS FOR RAISING THE \$1.2 BILLION NECESSARY TO MEET THE ESTIMATED REVENUE SHORTFALL BY SELECTIVE INCREASES IN INDIRECT TAXATION.

HE CONSIDERED THE FOUR CONCESSIONS ON PERSONAL TAXATION IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES AS GENEROUS AND SAID THESE SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN ATTEMPT BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO REDUCE FURTHER ANY INEQUITY THAT MIGHT BE INHERENT IN OUR EXISTING SYSTEM.

+IF THE FORECAST FOR 1985 IS NEAR ITS MARK, PERHAPS IN THE NEXT BUDGET, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MIGHT FIND IT POSSIBLE TO RE-CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF SEPARATE ASSESSMENT FOR MARRIED WOMEN.

+EVEN A PHASED PROGRAMME WILL SURELY BE HAILED AS A VICTORY FOR THE FAIR SEX AND FOR COMMON SENSE,+ HE SUGGESTED.

ON THE PROPOSAL TO RE-INTRODUCE DUTY ON COSMETICS AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, HE SAID THIS WAS NOT COSMETIC.

+NATURALLY, CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE NOT AMUSED, BUT IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT REVENUE HAS TO BE RAISED,+ HE SAID.

IT WOULD BE WRONG TO ASSUME THAT THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE WERE NECESSARILY ALWAYS FREE, MR WONG SAID.

ON THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S INTENTION TO INTRODUCE ANTI-AVOIDANCE LEGISLATION, HE SAID IF OUR TAX WAS TO BE KEPT AT A LOW RATE, IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT LEGISLATION SHOULD BE REINFORCED SO THAT THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO COLLECT TAXES WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE ESCAPE PAYMENT THROUGH LOOPHOLES IN THE LAW.

TURNING TO THE GROWING TREND OF PROTECTIONISM, MR WONG SAID AS HONG KONG WAS VULNERABLE TO EXTERNAL FACTORS, THE RECENT UNILATERAL ACTION BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OVER THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN RULES IN RESPECT OF KNITWEAR MUST BE VIEWED WITH THE UTMOST CONCERN.

+IN THE MEANTIME, NO EFFORTS SHOULD BE SPARED IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO AN INTRACTABLE PROBLEM, WHICH LEAVES US WITH FEW OPTIONS.

+THE APPEAL BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF HONG KONG KNITWEAR ASSOCIATIONS DESERVES SUPPORT AND MERITS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG ALSO SAID THAT A BILL WHICH SOUGHT TO IMPOSE QUOTA RESTRICTIONS ON ALL TEXTILE ITEMS, INCLUDING THOSE NOT COVERED BY THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT (MFA), WAS NOW BEFORE THE US CONGRESS.

+AND THERE IS SUGGESTION TO REPLACE THE EXISTING QUOTA SYSTEM BY AN IMPORT LICENCE SYSTEM.

+IF THAT HAPPENS, EFFECTIVE CONTROL WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE EXPORTING COUNTRY,+ MR WONG SAID.

HE STRESSED THAT PROTECTIONISM IN ANY FORM MUST BE DEPLORED.

+FOR OUR PART, WE MUST REMAIN VIGILANT AND FLEXIBLE AND BE PREPARED TO ADAPT OURSELVES TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES AT SHORT NOTICE,+ HE SAID.

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WONG LAM OPPOSES DUTY ON NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
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THE HON WONG LAM TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON THE IMPOSITION OF DUTY ON NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUDGET DEBATE.

+WHILE STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE PRINCIPLE OF TAXING INDULGENCE, I AM AFRAID I DO NOT CONCUR THAT NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WERE THE BEST TARGETS FOR RAISING REVENUE.

+MANY NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS SUCH AS AERATED WATERS HAVE ALREADY BECOME PART OF OUR DAILY LIFE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR THE MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS.

/+I DO

+I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HAVING A SOFT DRINK ON A HOT SUMMER DAY IS A LUXURY,+ HE SAID.

ON THE CONTRARY, MR WONG SAID, MANY OTHER COMMODITIES BETTER MET THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S PRINCIPLES FOR THE IMPOSITION OF DUTY.

EXAMPLES INCLUDED AIR-CONDITIONERS, HIGH-QUALITY CLOTHES, EXPENSIVE FAMOUS BRAND WATCHES, GOLD ORNAMENTS, HI-FI SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT.

+COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING, THESE ARE THE MERCHANDISE OR NON-ESSENTIALS FOR THE HIGHER INCOME GROUP AND ARE BETTER TARGETS THAN BEVERAGES SUCH AS SOFT DRINKS FOR THE IMPOSITION OF THE DUTY WITH EQUALLY CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL YIELD,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, MR WONG COMMENTED ON THE INCREASE IN SIZE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE HOUSING POLICY.

HE SAID THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY REASONABLE AND NECESSARY FOR THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS IN CONTROLLING PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE AND ESPECIALLY THE INCREASE IN SIZE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

+HOWEVER, IN RESTRAINING THE GROWTH OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO THE REQUEST OF DISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENTS, ESPECIALLY THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE,+ MR WONG NOTED.

HE SAID THAT PART OF THE JUSTIFICATIONS OF STAFF INCREASE IN THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE WAS MERELY THE INCREASE IN WORKLOAD WHICH WAS MORE OR LESS SIMILAR TO THE JUSTIFICATIONS PUT UP BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

IN RECENT YEARS, HE SAID, AUTOMATION HAD BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE POLICE FORCE WITH ADVANCED EQUIPMENT TO HANDLE THE WORK, BUT THE DEMAND ON STAFF RESOURCES HAD NOT DROPPED BUT RATHER HAD INCREASED.

+THIS IS WORTH A CAREFUL STUDY AND REVIEW,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID HE DID NOT MEAN AT ALL TO PINPOINT THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE AND HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER.

HOWEVER, AT A TIME WHEN FRUGALITY WAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUED, ANY PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT ENJOYED BY A PARTICULAR DEPARTMENT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND A BLOW TO STAFF MORALE GENERALLY.

TURNING TO THE HOUSING POLICY, MR WONG SAID HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL VIGOROUSLY BUILDING PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FLATS.

HE FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY SHOULD BE AIMED AT ENABLING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING OR TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE HOS FLATS.

+BUT ONCE THIS IS DONE, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT CONTINUE TO TAKE EXCESSIVE CARE OF THESE PEOPLE BUT SHOULD INSTEAD CONCENTRATE ITS ATTENTION ON OTHERS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN OFFERED PUBLIC HOUSING ACCOMMODATION OR THOSE WHO HAVE NO CHANCE OF BUYING HOS FLATS,+ MR WONG SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE CONTINUED EXCLUSION OF THE LAND VALUE (OR PART OF IT) IN THE SELLING PRICES OF HOS FLATS IN THE FACE OF DECREASED LAND VALUES AND CONSIDERABLE INCREASES IN THE REAL INCOME OF THE CITIZENS WAS OPEN TO QUESTION.

+EVEN IF THE LAND VALUE IS INCLUDED, I BELIEVE THAT THE PRICE FOR THE HOS FLATS ARE STILL FAR BELOW THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS LONG AS THE PROFIT ELEMENT IS EXCLUDED, AND THEY WILL REMAIN ATTRACTIVE TO THE MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS,+ MR WONG SAID.

THOUGH THE PRICING POLICY OF EXCLUDING LAND VALUE HAD BENEFITED THOSE WHO PURCHASED THE HOS FLATS, MR WONG SAID IT REDUCED GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND THUS HAMPERED ITS FINANCIAL ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT MORE HOS FLATS.

+THIS IN TURN REDUCES THE OPPORTUNITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET BOUGHT HOS FLATS TO PURCHASE ONE IN THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

HE THEREFORE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVISE THE PRESENT POLICY SO AS TO INCLUDE AT LEAST PART OF THE LAND VALUE IN THE SELLING PRICES AND USE THE INCREASED PROCEEDS TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORE HOS FLATS FOR THE MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS.

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REVIEW OF PUBLIC UTILITIES MONITORING POLICIES

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GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONDUCT AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE POLICIES TOWARDS THE MONITORING OF ALL PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC UTILITIES AND FORMULATE A UNIFORM AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR NEW SCHEMES OF CONTROL, THE HON ANDREW SO SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOREOVER, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, EITHER A SPECIAL COMMITTEE SHOULD BE SET UP OR UMELCO MEMBERS SHOULD BE APPOINTED TO ASSIST IN THE REVIEW AND MONITORING OF PUBLIC UTILITIES, MR SO SAID AT THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

/THIS WOULD

THIS WOULD HELP TO REMOVE EXISTING ANOMALIES AND TO RELIEVE CONSUMERS OF THEIR WORRIES, HE SAID.

ON THE EXISTING POLICIES TOWARDS PUBLIC UTILITIES, MR SO NOTED THAT THERE WERE SEVEN COMPANIES WHICH HAD ENTERED INTO SCHEME OF CONTROL AGREEMENTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT WHILE OTHERS WERE UNDER THE CONTROL OF LAW OR FRANCHISE CLAUSES.

+HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THAT THERE ARE NO CRITERIA GOVERNING THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON WHICH COMPANIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT UNDER A SCHEME OF CONTROL OR BE GRANTED A FRANCHISE,+ HE SAID.

HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE THAT NEITHER THE CABLE AND WIRELESS (HONG KONG) LIMITED NOR THE HONG KONG AND CHINA GAS COMPANY LIMITED WAS UNDER A SCHEME OF CONTROL THOUGH THEY WERE PRIMARILY OPERATING ON A MONOPOLY AND SEMI-MONOPOLY BASIS.

+AS THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY LIMITED HAS BEEN REQUIRED TO OPERATE ON A FRANCHISED BASIS, WHY HAS IT NOT BEEN SO WITH THE CABLE AND WIRELESS (HONG KONG) LIMITED?+ HE ASKED.

+THESE ANOMALIES AND THE DEALINGS BETWEEN UTILITY COMPANIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED AND SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES ARE ALL VERY PUZZLING,+ HE SAID.

MR SO SAID THAT GOVERNMENT HAD A SET OF GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE CHARGES OF THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES, THE PRINCIPAL ONE BEING THAT CHARGES MUST BE ABLE TO COVER OPERATING COSTS.

+HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO STANDARD RULES FOR DETERMINING WHICH AUTHORITY SHOULD DETERMINE OR APPROVE CHARGES,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT SOME COMPANIES HAD TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OR A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT ON MATTERS CONCERNING THEIR CHARGES WHILE ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS OF SOME COMPANIES WERE EMPOWERED TO REVISE CHARGES FOR THEIR SERVICES.

+SUCH BEING THE SITUATION, THERE IS NO WONDER THAT SOME INTERESTED BODIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS FIND THEMSELVES ALWAYS 'CLAMOURING AT THE WRONG DOORS OR PETITIONING THE WRONG DEPARTMENTS,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR THE MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF +PERMITTED RETURN+, MR SO SAID THERE WERE SEVEN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PERMITTED RETURN FOR THE EXISTING SEVEN SCHEMES OF CONTROL.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT UNIT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MONITORING OF PUBLIC UTILITIES HAD A WORKFORCE OF ONLY FIVE.

+GIVEN THE DIFFERENCES IN THE SCHEMES OF CONTROL AND IN THE MONITORING PROCEDURES, STRICT ENFORCEMENT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE EVEN IF THEY WERE SUPERMEN,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1985

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S.L. CHEN PROPOSES TAX ON ADVERTISING
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TAX ON ADVERTISING EXPENDITURE WAS PROPOSED BY THE HON S.L. CHEN IN THE LEGCO BUDGET DEBATE TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ELABORATING ON HIS SUGGESTION, HE SAID THAT ADVERTISEMENT DID NOT INCREASE THE REAL VALUE OF THE PRODUCTS IT REPRESENTED.

IT ONLY CREATED IMPRESSIONS, HE SAID.

SOCIETY WOULD NOT SUFFER, NOR THE GENERAL STANDARD OF LIVING BE LOWERED, IF ADVERTISEMENT EXPENDITURE WAS REDUCED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED TAX, HE SAID.

+ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON THE TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENDITURE ON ADVERTISING IN HONG KONG, I THINK THE REVENUE POTENTIAL OF THE PROPOSAL IS HUGE,+ MR CHEN SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT HAD RECORDED A TOTAL TURNOVER OF \$2 600 MILLION FOR THE PUBLIC RELATIONS, MARKET RESEARCH, AND ADVERTISING TRADE AS A WHOLE IN 1982.

+EVEN ASSUMING THAT HALF OF THE EXPENDITURE IS FOR ADVERTISING PURPOSES, AND WITH AN ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF AROUND 25 PER CENT WHICH A UNIVERSITY RESEARCHER HAS DISCOVERED RECENTLY, THE TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE ON ADVERTISING IS \$2 000 MILLION IN 1984,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT SINCE ADVERTISING EXPENDITURE WOULD GENERALLY GROW WITH CONSUMPTION, TAX REVENUE WOULD GROW WITH FURTHER INCREASES IN OUR GDP.

HE ADDED THAT IF ADVERTISEMENT WAS REDUCED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED TAX, THE SELLING COST OF THE COMMODITIES, FOR EXAMPLE SOFT DRINKS, COULD BE LOWERED TOWARDS HELPING TO OFF-SET THE PROPOSED TAX ON SOFT DRINKS.

MR CHEN FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO TAXING THE USE OF AIR SPACE OVER ROADS BY ADVERTISING SIGNS PROTRUDING FROM BUILDINGS.

SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ONLY RESULT IN REVENUE ACCRUING TO THE PUBLIC PURSE, BUT ALSO MIGHT RESULT IN A TIDIER AND POTENTIALLY SAFER ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CITY, HE SAID.

MR CHEN'S NEXT PROPOSAL WAS FOR GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE A MORE EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF TAXING SELF-EMPLOYED PROFESSIONALS.

+WE ALL KNOW THAT TAX AVOIDANCE OF UNSALARIED PROFESSIONALS IS PRACTISED WIDELY AND AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM AGAINST AVOIDANCE WOULD NOT ONLY BE FAIR BUT ALSO HELP SUBSTANTIALLY TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S EFFORT IN ATTAINING A BALANCED BUDGET AT AN EARLY DATE,+ HE SAID.

/HE THEREFORE

HE THEREFORE EXPRESSED HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR ANTI-AVOIDANCE LEGISLATION.

FINALLY, MR CHEN SAID HE FULLY ENDORSED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S AIM TO STABILISE THE TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COUPLED WITH HIS TOUGH VALUE FOR MONEY CRITERION.

+THIS IS ACHIEVED BY CUTTING OUT WASTE AND BY INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY,+ HE SAID.

HE REITERATED A POINT MADE BY HIM EARLIER THIS YEAR WITH REGARD TO THE NEED OF A TRAINING SCHEME WHEREBY ALL OFFICERS RISING TO THE DIRECTORATE RANK IN THE CIVIL SERVICE WERE REQUIRED TO BE TRAINED IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

+THIS IS ESPECIALLY RELEVANT GIVEN THE NO GROWTH POLICY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, MR CHEN SAID HE WAS GRATIFIED TO NOTE THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD TURNED TO INDIRECT TAXATION IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET PROPOSALS.

HOWEVER, HE FELT THE PROPOSALS HAD NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH TOWARDS +FALLING MORE HEAVILY ON THE BETTER OFF+.

+WHAT I AM REALLY SAYING IS THAT THE WELL-OFF HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE PUBLIC COFFERS, GIVEN THE LOW TAX BASE IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

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MORE SUPPORT SOUGHT FOR INDUSTRIAL GROWTH
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THE HONG KONG ECONOMY WAS BASICALLY SOUND BUT NEEDED REFINEMENT TO FURTHER DEVELOP INDUSTRY, THE HON ALLEN LEE SAID AT THE BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE SAID THERE WERE MANY AREAS IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COULD ENHANCE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HE FOCUSED HIS DISCUSSION ON THREE TOPICS WHICH HE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT -- PRODUCT INNOVATION AND DESIGN, AUTOMATION AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT PROMOTION.

ON PRODUCT INNOVATION AND DESIGN, MR LEE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO GO AHEAD AND ESTABLISH A PRODUCT INNOVATION AND DESIGN UNIT (PIDU) AS DESIGN AND QUALITY WERE IMPORTANT TO THE EXPORT ORIENTATED ECONOMY.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT DURING THE LATTER PART OF 1979, A PROPOSAL WAS PUT FORWARD TO GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A PIDU.

+THIS PROPOSAL WENT THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT'S BUREAUCRATIC MACHINERY AND TO THIS DATE, I UNDERSTAND IT IS STILL IN THE DISCUSSION STAGE, WITH NO DEFINITE COMMITMENT.

+WE CONTINUE TO HEAR OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITIVE NON-INTERVENTION POLICY, YET GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN OUR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

+TO ESTABLISH A PIDU IS CERTAINLY IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT POLICY OF PROVIDING INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT.

+WE MUST MOVE AHEAD AS WE HAVE ALREADY LOST VALUABLE YEARS PONDERING OVER THE PROPOSAL,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID HONG KONG HAD PROGRESSED FROM THE LARGELY LABOUR INTENSIVE STAGE OF PRODUCTION, AND, HAVING MADE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN BOTH THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FRONTS, SHOULD NOW BE +TAKING A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION.+

HE NOTED THAT A PROPOSAL HAD BEEN PUT FORWARD BY THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE TO ESTABLISH AN INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION UNIT WITHIN THE CENTRE TO CATER FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY, TO ASSIST INDUSTRY REGARDLESS WHETHER IT WAS LARGE OR SMALL, TO MOVE TOWARDS AUTOMATING THE MANUFACTURING PROCESSES, TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMPETITIVE EDGE AND TO PROVIDE CONSISTENT QUALITY AND DELIVERY OF OUR PRODUCTS.

+I HOPE TO HEAR A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THIS PROPOSAL AND THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR FIVE YEARS AND END UP IN THE DISCUSSION STAGE,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO PROMOTION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, MR LEE REFERRED THE POINTS RAISED ON THIS TOPIC BY THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS DURING A FINANCE COMMITTEE SESSION EARLY THIS MONTH.

+FIRSTLY, WE ARE CONCERNED WITH GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVITIES IN THE PROMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

+SECONDLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO ENQUIRE IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER AVENUES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE POSSIBLY OVERLOOKED,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE EMPHASISED THAT IT WAS NOT THE \$19 MILLION THAT HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT BUT IT WAS THE RESULT, THE BOTTOM LINE THAT COUNTED.

+HAS THE GOVERNMENT LOOKED FOR OTHER AVENUES THAT MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE PROMOTION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT,+ HE ASKED.

SINCE THE GOVERNMENT HAD FOUR OVERSEAS OFFICES, WITH A FIFTH ONE TO BE ESTABLISHED SHORTLY, MR LEE ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT COULD UTILISE, FOR INSTANCE, THE SERVICES OF THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WHICH HAD A MUCH WIDER COVERAGE AROUND THE WORLD. THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, COULD THEN +PLAY THE ROLE OF A CENTRAL CO-ORDINATING FUNCTION IN ENHANCING FOREIGN INVESTMENT.+

+I AM IN NO WAY SAYING THAT CIVIL SERVANTS ARE INCAPABLE, I AM MERELY ASKING IF WE CAN DO BETTER. HOW CAN WE ATTRACT MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT INTO HONG KONG?+ HE SAID.

ON THE CONCEPT OF ESTABLISHING A BORDER INDUSTRIAL ZONE, MR LEE URGED GOVERNMENT +NOT TO CLOSE THE DOOR IN A NEGATIVE FASHION.+

+THERE ARE PROS AND CONS OF A BORDER INDUSTRIAL ZONE, PERHAPS A STUDY TEAM COULD BE SET UP TO INVESTIGATE THE IMPLICATIONS,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID HE CARED ABOUT EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES, TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING AS WELL, BUT FELT ALSO THAT PRIORITIES HAD TO BE SET CORRECTLY.

+THE PRIORITY MUST BE WITHIN THE SPHERE OF FURTHER STRENGTHENING OUR COMPETITIVENESS IN THE EXPORT OF GOODS SO THAT OUR PEOPLE MAY CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING THAT THEY DESERVE.

+THEREFORE, WE MUST STRIVE VIGOROUSLY TOWARDS OUR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM WHICH HAS CARRIED US THIS FAR, FOR A BRIGHTER AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

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+DON'T NEGLECT NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES,+ -- ALEX WU
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THE LEVELS OF PROVISION MADE AVAILABLE IN 1985/86 FOR THE NON-ESSENTIAL SERVICES SHOULD NOT IMPLY CONTINUED UNDERFUNDING IN THE FUTURE, THE HON ALEX WU SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGCO BUDGET DEBATE, MR WU SAID HE CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS NO MEAN FEAT FOR THE BUDGET TO SUCCEED LARGELY IN MAINTAINING THE DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE ON THE ONE HAND AND THE STARK REALITIES OF THE FISCAL POSITION ON THE OTHER.

HOWEVER HE FELT THAT CERTAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN RATHER HARSHLY TREATED.

/WHILE CONCEDED

WHILE CONCEDED THAT IN TIMES OF FINANCIAL STRINGENCY, IT WAS DIFFICULT, EVEN IMPOSSIBLE, TO SATISFY THE MANY COMPETING CLAIMS FOR FUNDING, HOWEVER WORTHY THEY MIGHT ALL BE, HE SAID : +IN THE PROCESS OF ASSESSING PRIORITIES, ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE NOT CLASSIFIED AS ESSENTIAL SERVICES - THOSE WHICH DO NOT OBVIOUSLY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS BUILDING THE ECONOMY - ARE INEVITABLY AND INVARIABLY BUDGETARY CASUALTIES.+

HOWEVER, MR WU SAID, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF ALL KINDS WERE AS VITAL AS WERE ECONOMIC SERVICES TO THE WELL-BEING OF OUR SOCIETY, AND TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE FULFILMENT OF GENERATIONS TO COME.

+WE HAVE PLANTED THE SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE. WE MUST AVOID DAMAGING THE GROWTH OF VIGOROUS YOUNG PLANTS FOR REASONS OF SHORT-TERM EXPEDIENCY,+ HE SAID.

+I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES AFFECTED BY THESE MEASURES APPRECIATE GOVERNMENT'S DILEMMA. BUT GOVERNMENT IN TURN MUST RECOGNISE THAT IT HAS DEALT A HARSH BLOW WHICH WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT IN SOME CASES TO MAINTAIN THE ENVISAGED GROWTH,+ MR WU SAID.

HE THEREFORE STRONGLY URGED THAT THE LEVELS OF PROVISION MADE AVAILABLE IN 1985/86 IN THESE AREAS WOULD NOT BE USED AS THE BASIS OF FUNDING IN THE FUTURE.

+LET US NOT BE SHORT SIGHTED, AND LET US BEAR IN MIND THAT THE QUALITY OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES IS AT STAKE,+ MR WU SAID.

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GIS SEES NEED FOR COMPUTERS

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THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES WAS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO USE COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND MODERN COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY TO ENABLE IT TO PERFORM MORE EFFICIENTLY AS A LINK BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT, THE PUBLIC AND THE MEDIA, THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES, MISS CHEUNG MAN-YEE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE +PBC AND INFOTECH 85 EXHIBITION+, MISS CHEUNG SAID THE DEPARTMENT WAS ENGAGED IN AN INTERNAL STUDY OF HOW IT COULD BEST LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR COMPUTER AND COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT IN THE FUTURE.

+THIS, I THINK, IS MOST IMPORTANT, FOR IT IS ALL TOO EASY TO RUSH INTO THE MARKETPLACE AND GO FOR THE SYSTEM WHICH SEEMS SUPERFICIALLY THE MOST ATTRACTIVE.

+WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW IS ANALYSING HOW WE OPERATE, THE DEMANDS THAT ARE MADE UPON US AND HOW WE CAN USE MODERN EQUIPMENT TO MEET THOSE DEMANDS,+ MISS CHEUNG SAID.

DESCRIBING HOW SHE SAW THE FUTURE OPERATION OF COMPUTERISED GIS, MISS CHEUNG SAID: +A REPORTER TELEPHONES A QUESTION TO OUR NEWS ENQUIRY DESK WHERE THE OFFICER ENTERS IT INTO THE GIS COMPUTER SYSTEM. THE REPORTER WISHES TO KNOW SOMETHING WHICH IS ON THE RECORD.

+THE OFFICER CALLS UP THE ANSWER FROM THE GIS DATABASE CONTAINING PRESS RELEASES, STATEMENTS, MEDIA CLIPPINGS, STATISTICAL AND OTHER INFORMATION AND GIVES IT TO THE REPORTER.

+PAINSTAKING RESEARCH FROM MISCELLANEOUS FILES AND RECORDS IS ELIMINATED AND A LOT OF TIME IS SAVED. PERHAPS THE REPORTERS CAN EVEN ENTER THE DATABASE DIRECT AND GET THE ANSWER IN HIS OWN OFFICE.

+OR AN OFFICER IN A DEPARTMENT MAY PREPARE A PRESS RELEASE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN. HE PUSHES A BUTTON AND THIS APPEARS IMMEDIATELY ON THE SCREEN OF AN EDITOR AT GIS WHO EDITS IT AND SCHEDULES IT FOR RELEASE.+

THE SYSTEM THEN ISSUES THE RELEASE DIRECT TO THE TERMINALS OF THE MEDIA. DELAY IS ELIMINATED, THERE IS NO PAPER INVOLVED AND LITTLE MARGIN FOR ERROR.

THE IMPACT OF COMPUTERISATION, SHE SAID, HAD ENABLE THE MOST COMPLEX TASKS TO BE COMPLETED IN SECONDS, AND IN THE YEARS TO COME THE PACE OF CHANGE WOULD BE EVEN FASTER.

BUT ALL THESE COMPUTERS AND THEIR RELATED EQUIPMENT WERE, IN FACT, MERELY MACHINES.

+FAST AND EFFICIENT MACHINES, I ADMIT - BUT THEIR PRIME TASK IN REALITY IS TO FREE HUMAN TALENT AND INGENUITY FROM ROUTINE DRUDGERY AND TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER TO IMPROVE OUR COMMON FUTURE,+ SHE SAID.

+WE IN HONG KONG ARE THUS VERY WELL PLACED TO FACE THE FUTURE - FOR IT IS IN HUMAN RESOURCES THAT OUR TERRITORY IS RICHEST. OUR POEPL E ARE NOT AFRAID OF HARD WORK, THEY ARE ADAPTABLE AND QUICK TO REACT,+ MISS CHEUNG SAID.

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PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES FOR FEBRUARY 1985

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THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN FEBRUARY 1985 GREW BY 38 PER CENT OR \$2 558 MILLION OVER FEBRUARY 1984, TO REACH \$9 380 MILLION, ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONAL TRADE FIGURES PUBLISHED TODAY BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

THE VALUE OF RE-EXPORTS ALSO GREW RAPIDLY, BY 46 PER CENT OR \$2 344 MILLION TO \$7 437 MILLION. THUS, TAKING DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS TOGETHER, THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS, AT \$16 817 MILLION, WAS 41 PER CENT OR \$4 902 MILLION HIGHER THAN A YEAR EARLIER.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY TWO PER CENT OR \$218 MILLION TO REACH \$14 966 MILLION.

AS THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS WAS GREATER THAN THAT OF IMPORTS, THE VISIBLE TRADE ACCOUNT RECORDED A SURPLUS OF \$1 851 MILLION IN FEBRUARY 1985.

COMPARING THE 12 MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1985 WITH THE 12 MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1984, OVERALL TRADE GREW BY 29 PER CENT. THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS GREW BY 35 PER CENT, WHILE THE VALUE OF IMPORTS GREW BY 23 PER CENT. IN CONSEQUENCE, A VISIBLE TRADE SURPLUS OF \$2 892 MILLION WAS RECORDED IN THE 12 MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1985, EQUIVALENT TO ONE PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS DURING THIS PERIOD.

THIS WAS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP (THAT IS, THE PROPORTION OF THE VALUE OF IMPORTS NOT COVERED BY THAT OF TOTAL EXPORTS) OF EIGHT PER CENT RECORDED IN THE 12 MONTHS ENDING FEBRUARY 1984.

/COMMENTING ON

COMMENTING ON THESE COMPARATIVE FIGURES, A GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT BECAUSE TRADE FIGURES FOR THE BEGINNING MONTHS OF A YEAR WERE USUALLY INFLUENCED BY THE TIMING OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR, IT WAS MORE USEFUL TO CONSIDER JANUARY AND FEBRUARY FIGURES TOGETHER. ON THIS BASIS, THE VALUES OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND OF RE-EXPORTS IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THIS YEAR WERE 17 PER CENT AND 48 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY HIGHER THAN IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS INCREASED BY 29 PER CENT. AS THE VALUE OF IMPORTS INCREASED AT A SLOWER RATE OF 11 PER CENT, THE VISIBLE TRADE ACCOUNT RECORDED A SURPLUS OF \$2 856 MILLION IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF 1985.

THE FOLLOWING TABLE PRESENTS THE PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES FOR FEBRUARY 1985-

TRADE FIGURES FOR FEBRUARY, 1985

THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT HAS RELEASED THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONAL MERCHANDISE TRADE FIGURES FOR FEBRUARY:-

MERCHANDISE:	DOMESTIC EXPORTS	:	\$ 9 380 MILLION
	RE-EXPORTS	:	\$ 7 437 MILLION
	TOTAL EXPORTS	:	\$16 817 MILLION
	IMPORTS	:	\$14 966 MILLION
	TRADE BALANCE	:	\$ 1 851 MILLION (IN SURPLUS)

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

<u>LATEST 3 MONTHS</u>	DECEMBER 1984 TO FEBRUARY 1985	DECEMBER 1983 TO FEBRUARY 1984	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	32 419	28 535	+ 3 884	+13.6
RE-EXPORTS	25 415	17 284	+ 8 131	+47.0
TOTAL EXPORTS	57 834	45 819	+12 015	+26.2
IMPORTS	55 014	49 570	+ 5 444	+11.0
TRADE BALANCE	+ 2 820	- 3 751	+ 6 571	

/SAME MONTH

SAME MONTH LAST YEAR	FEBRUARY 1985	FEBRUARY 1984	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	9 380 (55.8%)	6 822 (57.3%)	+2 558	+37.5
RE-EXPORTS	7 437	5 093	+2 344	+46.0
TOTAL EXPORTS	16 817	11 915	+4 902	+41.1
IMPORTS	14 966	14 748	+ 218	+ 1.5
TRADE BALANCE	+ 1 851	- 2 833	+4 684	
LAST MONTH	FEBRUARY 1985	JANUARY 1985	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	9 380 (55.8%)	11 166 (55.5%)	-1 786	-16.0
RE-EXPORTS	7 437	8 958	-1 521	-17.0
TOTAL EXPORTS	16 817	20 124	-3 307	-16.4
IMPORTS	14 966	19 119	-4 153	-21.7
TRADE BALANCE	+ 1 851	+ 1 005	+ 849	
CALENDAR YEAR TO-DATE	JAN - FEB 1985	JAN - FEB 1984	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS (% OF TOTAL EXPORTS)	20 546 (55.6%)	17 613 (61.4%)	+2 933	+16.7
RE-EXPORTS	16 395	11 068	+5 327	+48.1
TOTAL EXPORTS	36 941	28 681	+8 260	+28.8
IMPORTS	34 085	30 647	+3 438	+11.2
TRADE BALANCE	+ 2 856	- 1 966	+4 822	

LAST 12 MONTHS	MARCH 1984 TO FEBRUARY 1985	MARCH 1983 TO FEBRUARY 1984	INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	\$ MN.	%
DOMESTIC EXPORTS	140 869	110 010	+30 859	+28.1
RE-EXPORTS	88 831	60 209	+28 622	+47.5
TOTAL EXPORTS	229 700	170 219	+59 481	+34.9
IMPORTS	226 808	184 386	+42 422	+23.0
TRADE BALANCE	+ 2 892	- 14 167	+17 059	

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PRESS FACILITY FOR HK BILL DEBATE

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A FACILITY HAS BEEN ARRANGED TO ENABLE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES TO LISTEN TO THE DEBATE ON THE THIRD READING OF THE HONG KONG BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS TOMORROW (THURSDAY) NIGHT FROM 11 PM ONWARDS.

RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG WILL PROVIDE A DIRECT +FEED+ TO THE GIS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM ON THE FIFTH FLOOR OF BEAONSFIELD HOUSE, FROM WHERE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE ABLE TO LISTEN TO THE DEBATE. THE +FEED+ WILL COVER THE DEBATE FROM BEGINNING TO END.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA SHOULD NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH THEY CAN RECORD THE DEBATE FROM THE GIS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, THE RECORDING CANNOT BE BROADCAST BECAUSE OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF RTHK.

IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT RECORDINGS AT THE GIS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM CAN ONLY BE DONE BY HAND-HELD RECORDERS AND THERE WILL BE NO PLUG-IN FACILITIES.

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NT AMBULANCE CALLS RISE SHARPLY

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THE NUMBER OF AMBULANCE CALLS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES INCREASED BY 140 PER CENT SINCE 1978, THE CHIEF AMBULANCE OFFICER OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, MR H. KENYON SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING OF THE \$4-MILLION FANLING AMBULANCE DEPOT, HE SAID:

+THIS REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT HAS CREATED A GREATER DEMAND UPON GOVERNMENT FOR ADDITIONAL MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN WHICH THE AMBULANCE SERVICE PLAYS A VITAL ROLE.

+THE NEW AMBULANCE DEPOT OFFICIALLY OPENED TODAY IS JUST ONE SMALL PART OF GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES.+

THE NEW DEPOT IS SITUATED ON THE CROSS-ROADS TO FANLING, SHEUNG SHUI, SHA TAU KOK AND TAI PO.

+THE FORESIGHT DISPLAYED BY GOVERNMENT IN PROVIDING NEW AMBULANCE DEPOTS AT LEI MUK SHUE IN TSUEN WAN, TUEN MUN, TSING YI, SHA TIN AND NOW FANLING HAS PROVIDED MUCH-NEEDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE AMBULANCE AND CREWS WHICH ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THIS ADDITIONAL DEMAND,+ MR KENYON SAID.

THE NEW DEPOT HAS AN AREA OF 1 260 SQUARE METRES AND IS MANNED BY 100 AMBULANCEMEN HEADED BY AN AMBULANCE OFFICER. THE TWO-STOREY HIGH DEPOT CONSISTS OF AN EXERCISE ROOM, STAND-BY QUARTERS, CANTEEN, AND KITCHEN.

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BOE MEMBERS VISIT TEACHING CENTRES

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EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION THIS MORNING VISITED THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE TEACHING CENTRES OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN NORTH POINT TO LOOK OVER IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING COURSES AND FACILITIES THERE.

THE CENTRES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PROMOTION OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN SCHOOLS.

MEMBERS WHO WENT ON TODAY'S VISIT WERE MRS RITA FAN, MR CHARLES CHEUNG, PROFESSOR B.L. COOKE, MISS DEBRA CHOW, DR DANIEL LAM, MRS PEGGY LAM, MR ALBERT LI AND MR TAM MAN-KWAN.

THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY MRS RUBY LAU, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND MISS WINNIE TANG, PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1985

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EASTERN ARTS COUNCIL HOLDING INAUGURATION
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THE EASTERN DISTRICT ARTS COUNCIL WILL HOLD AN INAUGURATION CEREMONY FOR ITS FIRST TERM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON FRIDAY (MARCH 29) EVENING AT THE SHOUSON THEATRE OF THE HONG KONG ARTS CENTRE IN WAN CHAI.

FORMED TO PROMOTE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT OFFICE, THE ARTS COUNCIL HAS A MEMBERSHIP OF ABOUT 130, COMPRISING INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS.

THE EASTERN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR LUI HAU-TUEN, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT 7.30 PM IN THE CLUB MEMBERS' ROOM ON THE 15TH FLOOR OF THE CENTRE.

BEFORE THE CEREMONY, THERE WILL BE A COCKTAIL RECEPTION STARTING AT 6 PM. THE LAM KEK HAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA WILL PLAY POPULAR WESTERN AND CHINESE MUSICAL PIECES DURING THE EVENING.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE COCKTAIL RECEPTION AND THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ARTS COUNCIL.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR RUGBY TOURNAMENT
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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN HAPPY VALLEY ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY (MARCH 30 AND 31) FOR THE RUGBY TOURNAMENT AT THE HONG KONG STADIUM.

ON SATURDAY (MARCH 30), THE FOLLOWING MEASURES WILL COME INTO EFFECT FROM 9 AM AND WILL REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL THE CROWDS HAVE DISPERSED AT AROUND 7 PM. THE SAME MEASURES WILL BE EFFECTED AGAIN THE NEXT DAY (MARCH 31) FROM 8 AM TO AROUND 6 PM.

- * CAROLINE HILL ROAD BETWEEN LINK ROAD AND STADIUM PATH WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY SOUTHBOUND;
- * CAROLINE HILL ROAD BETWEEN EASTERN HOSPITAL ROAD AND PENNINGTON STREET WILL BE RESTRICTED TO VEHICLES REQUIRING LOCAL ACCESS;

/* CAROLINE HILL

- * CAROLINE HILL ROAD BETWEEN COTTON PATH AND PENNINGTON STREET WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY NORTHBOUND;
- * EASTERN HOSPITAL ROAD BETWEEN STADIUM PATH AND TUNG LO WAN ROAD WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY NORTHBOUND; BUT VEHICLES MAY STILL PROCEED TO ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL CAR PARK FROM TUNG LO WAN ROAD;
- * VEHICLES ON EASTERN HOSPITAL ROAD NORTHBOUND WILL BE PERMITTED TO TURN RIGHT INTO EASTBOUND TUNG LO WAN ROAD AT ITS JUNCTION WITH KA NING PATH; AND
- * LINK ROAD BETWEEN CAROLINE HILL ROAD AND HAPPY VIEW TERRACE WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY UPHILL. VEHICLES LEAVING HAPPY VIEW TERRACE, LEIGHTON HILL AND THE UPPER SECTION OF BROADWOOD ROAD SHOULD PROCEED TO WONG NAI CHUNG ROAD VIA BROADWOOD ROAD.

ON BOTH OCCASIONS, HOWEVER, COACHES AND BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE NORTHBOUND SECTION OF EASTERN HOSPITAL ROAD FOR STACKING PURPOSE ONCE THE LAST MATCH OF THE DAY HAS BEGUN.

CMB BUSES ON ROUTE 17 AND GREEN MINIBUSES ON ROUTES 5 AND 14 WILL BE DIVERTED AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS.

MATHESON STREET, RUSSELL STREET AND SHARP STREET EAST WILL BE PROHIBITED TO LEARNER DRIVERS BETWEEN 8 AM AND 8 PM ON THESE TWO DAYS. ALSO, LEARNER DRIVERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TURN LEFT FROM PERCIVAL STREET SOUTHBOUND INTO LEIGHTON ROAD EASTBOUND, OR TO ENTER TUNG LO WAN ROAD FROM CAUSEWAY ROAD.

ALL ON-STREET PARKING SPACES ON SUN WUI ROAD, STADIUM PATH AND THE UNNAMED SERVICE ROAD AROUND THE STADIUM WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 8 AM TO 8 PM.

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BOARD TURNS DOWN APPLICATION FOR LIQUOR LICENCE

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THE URBAN COUNCIL'S LIQUOR LICENSING BOARD TODAY TURNED DOWN THE APPLICATION FOR THE ISSUE OF A LIQUOR LICENCE BY THE CITY GARDEN LOUNGE IN NORTH POINT.

THE DECISION WAS REACHED AFTER THE BOARD, AT ITS MONTHLY MEETING TODAY, HAD TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES CONCERNED.

A COUNCIL SPOKESMAN SAID THAT IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE BOARD NOT TO GRANT A LIQUOR LICENCE TO ANY PREMISES WHICH SHARED A COMMON ENTRANCE WITH THE RESIDENTIAL PARTS OF THE BUILDING.

/+ALTHOUGH THE

+ALTHOUGH THE ENTRANCE TO THE PREMISES IN QUESTION IS SEPARATE FROM THAT OF THE RESIDENTIAL BLOCK, BOTH OPEN ON TO A RELATIVELY SMALL CUL-DE-SAC WHICH HAS BEEN FURTHER NARROWED BY THE HOARDING OF A NEARBY CONSTRUCTION SITE,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

+AFTER LENGTHY DELIBERATION, THE BOARD FELT THAT IN THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTS LIVING ON THE UPPER FLOORS, THE APPLICATION SHOULD NOT BE GRANTED.+

TODAY'S MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY MR PETER C.K. CHAN AND ATTENDED BY MR KWAN LIM-HO, DR KIM CHAM, MISS CECILIA YEUNG, MR TONG KAM-BIU AND MRS MARGARET LI.

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SHORT TERM TENANCIES CALLED FOR FOUR SITES
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TENDERS ARE BEING INVITED BY THE LANDS DEPARTMENT FOR THE SHORT TERM TENANCIES OF FOUR SITES.

THE FIRST SITE MEASURES 700 SQUARE METRES AT SANDY BAY ROAD, POK FU LAM, AND IS FOR OPEN STORAGE PURPOSE.

MEASURING 6 000 SQUARE METRES, THE SECOND SITE IS AT WONG CHUK YUEN, PAT HEUNG, YUEN LONG. IT IS FOR USE AS AN AGRICULTURAL FOOD PRODUCTION CENTRE AND PLANT NURSERY, EXCLUDING THE REARING AND SALE OF LIVESTOCK OR FISH.

THE TENANCY FOR BOTH SITES IS FOR TWO YEARS AND IS RENEWABLE QUARTERLY AFTERWARDS.

THE LAST TWO SITES ARE IN KWAI CHUNG. ONE, WHICH IS FOR THE NURSERY AND SALE OF POTTED PLANTS, IS SITUATED NEAR KWAI FUK ROAD. IT HAS AN AREA OF 4 100 SQUARE METRES. THE TENANCY IS FOR 18 MONTHS AND IS RENEWABLE QUARTERLY THEREAFTER.

THE OTHER SITE MEASURES 1 380 SQUARE METRES AND IS AT CASTLE PEAK ROAD. IT IS FOR OPEN STORAGE BUT EXCLUDING THE STORAGE OF CONTAINER AND/OR MOTOR VEHICLES PURPOSES. THE TENANCY IS FOR ONE YEAR AND IS RENEWABLE ON MONTHLY BASIS ON EXPIRY.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS FOR THE FOUR SITES IS NOON ON APRIL 12.

TENDER FORMS, NOTICES AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND PLANS ARE AVAILABLE AT:

- * LANDS DEPARTMENT, SURVEY DIVISION, MURRAY BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG;
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, KOWLOON, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 10TH FLOOR, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON; AND
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, HONG KONG SOUTH, 12TH FLOOR, HARBOUR CENTRE, 25 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI, HONG KONG FOR THE POK FU LAM SITE;
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, YUEN LONG, YUEN LONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND TAI KIU MARKET, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG, NEW TERRITORIES FOR THE YUEN LONG SITE; AND
- * DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, TSUEN WAN, 10TH FLOOR, TSUEN WAN STATION MULTI-STOREY CARPARK BUILDING, 174-208 CASTLE PEAK ROAD, TSUEN WAN, NEW TERRITORIES FOR THE KWAI CHUNG SITES.

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TWO SLIP ROADS BEING CLOSED FOR WORKS
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THE SLIP ROAD LINKING THE WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF LAI CHI KOK ROAD AND LAI CHI KOK BRIDGE WILL BE CLOSED FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE MORNINGS FROM SATURDAY (MARCH 30), BETWEEN 1 AM AND 5.30 AM, FOR RESURFACING WORK.

MOTORISTS ON LAI CHI KOK ROAD WESTBOUND HEADING FOR KWAI CHUNG AREA WILL BE DIVERTED VIA MEI LAI ROAD, LAI KING HILL ROAD, PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL INTERCHANGE AND KWAI CHUNG ROAD WESTBOUND.

AND, THE SOUTHBOUND SLIP ROAD CONNECTING TAI PO ROAD WITH YUEN WO ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 1 AM TO 5 AM ON SATURDAY (MARCH 30), ALSO FOR ROAD WORKS.

MOTORISTS FROM TAI PO ROAD HEADING FOR YUEN WO ROAD ARE ADVISED TO USE EITHER TAI PO ROAD AND SHA TIN RURAL COMMITTEE ROAD OR SHA TIN ROAD, SHA TIN WAI ROAD AND SAND MARTIN BRIDGE.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1985

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHING MING FESTIVAL
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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ON HONG KONG ISLAND FOR THE CHING MING FESTIVAL.

THE MEASURES, WHICH WILL BE IN FORCE BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM DAILY ON MARCH 31 (SUNDAY), APRIL 5 (CHING MING), APRIL 6 (SATURDAY), APRIL 7 (SUNDAY) AND APRIL 8 (MONDAY) UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, ARE :

CHAI WAN

- * CAPE COLLINSON ROAD EAST OF LIN SHING ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT THOSE REQUIRING LOCAL ACCESS.
- * THE SLIP ROAD LEADING FROM CAPE COLLINSON ROAD TO THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE AND CREMATORIUM WILL BE RESTRICTED TO HEARSEs AND VEHICLES CARRYING PASSENGERS TO SERVICES AT THE CREMATORIUM.
- * THE SLIP ROAD LEADING TO CHAI WAN CHINESE PERMANENT CEMETERY WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC.
- * CAPE COLLINSON ROAD BETWEEN LIN SHING ROAD AND SHEK O ROAD WILL BECOME ONE-WAY WESTBOUND.
- * LIN SHING ROAD BETWEEN WAN TSUI ROAD AND CAPE COLLINSON ROAD WILL BECOME ONE-WAY SOUTHBOUND.
- * WAN TSUI ROAD WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY CLOCKWISE FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY ON MARCH 31, APRIL 5 AND APRIL 7.
- * WAH HA STREET BETWEEN LIN SHING ROAD AND CHAI WAN ROAD WILL BECOME ONE-WAY NORTHBOUND.
- * NO PARKING WILL BE PERMITTED ALONG CAPE COLLINSON ROAD, LIN SHING ROAD, WAH HA STREET AND THE SECTION OF SHEK O ROAD BETWEEN CAPE COLLINSON TRAINING CENTRE AND TAI TAM ROAD.

POK FU LAM

- * FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM ON APRIL 5, CONSORT RISE BETWEEN VICTORIA ROAD AND BISNEY ROAD WILL BE REROUTED ONE-WAY SOUTHBOUND.

ABERDEEN

ABERDEEN

- * FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM ON APRIL 5, PEEL RISE FROM ABERDEEN RESERVOIR ROAD TO THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF ABERDEEN CHINESE CEMETERY, ALONG WITH THE SLIP ROAD LEADING FROM SHEK PAI WAN ROAD TO THE SAME CEMETERY, WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

- * ON APRIL 5, CMB WILL OPERATE A COUPLE OF SPECIAL SERVICES. ROUTE 57 BETWEEN CENTRAL BUS STATION AND CHINESE CHRISTIAN CEMETERY WILL RUN FROM 7 AM UNTIL 5.52 PM AT SEVEN-MINUTE INTERVALS, WHILE ROUTE 89 BETWEEN SHAU KEI WAN AND CHAI WAN CEMETERY WILL OPERATE EVERY FIVE MINUTES FROM 7 AM TO 6 PM.
- * FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM ON APRIL 5, THE BUS STOPS ON WAN TSUI ROAD NEAR WAN TSUI ESTATE WILL BE RESTRICTED TO ROUTE 89.
- * FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY ON MARCH 31, APRIL 5 AND APRIL 7, A TEMPORARY BUS STOP WILL BE PROVIDED ON CHAI WAN ROAD EAST OF HONG MAN STREET FOR EASTBOUND BUSES.
- * BUSES ON CMB ROUTES 80, 81, 81M, 82, 83, 83A, 84, 780, CROSS HARBOUR ROUTE 106 AND GREEN MINIBUSES ON ROUTES 16 AND 18 WILL BE DIVERTED AS A RESULT OF THE ROAD CLOSURE AND REROUTING MEASURES IN CHAI WAN.

CONGESTION IS EXPECTED ON APPROACH ROADS TO CEMETERIES AND MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED TO AVOID THESE AREAS IF POSSIBLE.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1985

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SHAU KEI WAN TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS
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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN SHAU KEI WAN TO FACILITATE WORK ON THE ISLAND EASTERN CORRIDOR.

FROM 1.15 AM TO 5.30 AM ON SATURDAY (MARCH 30) AND 1.15 AM TO 6.30 AM ON SUNDAY (MARCH 31), TRAFFIC ON SHAU KEI WAN ROAD EASTBOUND AND SHAU KEI WAN MAIN STREET EAST WESTBOUND NEAR CHAI WAN ROAD WILL BE REQUIRED TO STOP AT INTERVALS. EACH STOP WILL LAST FOR FIVE MINUTES AFTER WHICH TRAFFIC WILL BE ALLOWED TO PROCEED.

AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE MEASURES, TRAM SERVICES IN SHAU KEI WAN WILL START LATER THAN USUAL ON SUNDAY (MARCH 31) MORNING. THE DETAILS ARE:

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>FIRST DEPARTURE</u>
SHAU KEI WAN TO WESTERN MARKET	7.09 AM
SHAU KEI WAN TO HAPPY VALLEY	7.11 AM
WESTERN MARKET TO SHAU KEI WAN	6.25 AM
HAPPY VALLEY TO SHAU KEI WAN	6.38 AM

BEFORE THE ABOVE TIMES, TRAM SERVICES TO SHAU KEI WAN WILL BE CUT OFF AT SAI WAN HO.

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SALT WATER CUTS
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SALT WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN KWUN TONG WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 9 AM TO 5 PM ON SATURDAY (MARCH 30) FOR WATER MAINS WORK.

THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY KUNG LOK ROAD, HONG LEE ROAD AND HONG NING ROAD FROM KUNG LOK ROAD TO HIP WO STREET, INCLUDING LOK WAH ESTATE PHASE I, II AND III.

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MEET THE MEDIA
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THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, DR K.F. NIP, AND THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT HIGHWAY ENGINEER, MR H.C. BEATON, WILL MEET THE MEDIA TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 4 PM IN THE GIS PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, FIFTH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, CENTRAL.

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