



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1994

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RATES INCREASE WELL WITHIN INFLATION FIGURE: FS

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WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING ABOUT RATES INCREASE IS IN EFFECT MERELY KEEPING UP WITH INFLATION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

"THE AVERAGE INCREASE IN RATES HAPPENS TO WORK OUT TO BE PRETTY WELL EXACTLY THE SAME FIGURE AS THE INCREASE IN CPI(A) OVER THE THREE YEARS IN QUESTION, THAT IS TO SAY, ABOUT 33 PER CENT," HE SAID.

HE WAS SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA AFTER A LUNCHEON SPEECH TO THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

"OF COURSE, WE ARE NOT PROPOSING TO ISSUE BILLS TO THAT EXTENT BECAUSE WE ARE PROPOSING A CAP WHICH WILL BRING THE INCREASES DOWN TO 20 PER CENT IN THE FIRST YEAR, SO WE ARE LOOKING AT RATES REVALUATION WHICH IN TERMS OF THE BILL WHICH WILL COME INTO PEOPLE'S HANDS WILL BE QUITE A LOT LESS THAN THE INCREASE IN THE CPI(A) OVER THE PERIOD," HE SAID.

"WE ARE NOT CHANGING THE PERCENTAGE. THE TOTAL PERCENTAGE REMAINS AT 5.5 PER CENT," HE ADDED.

HE NOTED THAT THIS PERCENTAGE WAS HISTORICALLY VERY LOW, ADDING THAT \$1.1 BILLION OF THE REVENUE THAT THE PUBLIC WOULD BE GETTING FROM THE RATES INCREASE NEXT YEAR WOULD GO TO THE TWO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WHILE THE BALANCE WOULD GO INTO GENERAL REVENUE.

"OVER THE PERIOD OF THE FORECAST, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT \$9 OR 10 BILLION. SO IT'S NOT A SMALL SUM AND IT FITS INTO THE BUDGET PACKAGE RATHER NICELY.

"I THINK IT'S A PITY IF ANYONE TRIES TO PICK OUT FROM WHAT IS BASICALLY A SERIES OF MEASURES WHICH SHOULD BE VERY WELCOME ONE MEASURE WHICH IS MILDLY DISAGREEABLE," HE SAID.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE CRITICISM OF THE RATES INCREASE PROPOSAL FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES, SIR HAMISH STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHED A LOT OF IMPORTANCE TO KEEPING REVENUE IN LINE WITH INFLATION.

"ONE OF THE REASONS PRECISELY THAT WE HAVE A GOOD REVENUE POSITION, A GOOD FISCAL POSITION, IS WE HAD DONE THAT IN THE PAST.

"IF WE CAN'T GRIT OUR TEETH A LITTLE BIT AND KEEP FEES AND CHARGES AND RATES AND THE LIKE UP WITH INFLATION, THEN THE CORE OF OUR REVENUE WILL GRADUALLY BE NIBBLED AWAY AT. SO I VIEW IT IS QUITE IMPORTANT TO IMPLEMENT THE INCREASE," HE SAID.

RESPONDING TO A SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT A RATES INCREASE IN VIEW OF THE AMOUNT OF SURPLUS THE GOVERNMENT HAD, SIR HAMISH EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE REVENUE POSITION INTO ACCOUNT AND THAT WAS THE REASON WHY HE HAD NOT ATTEMPTED TO INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE CHARGE ON RATES.

/"WE ARE

"WE ARE MERELY DOING A REVALUATION. WE DO ONE EVERY THREE YEARS. IT'S BEEN KNOWN ABOUT AT LEAST SINCE THE LAST BUDGET. THERE HAS BEEN NO FUSS ABOUT IT UNTIL AFTER THE BUDGET SPEECH.

"I GUESS IT'S THE ONLY SLIGHTLY UNPOPULAR MEASURE IN THE BUDGET. I THINK IT WILL BE A GREAT PITY IF THE POLITICAL PARTIES DO DECIDE TO OPPOSE IT BUT I AM COMMITTED TO GETTING IT THROUGH," HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH TO THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT 1993 WAS THE 27TH SUCCESSIVE YEAR IN WHICH HONG KONG'S ECONOMY GREW IN REAL TERMS SINCE THE START OF THE GDP FIGURE IN 1966.

HE ALSO SAID THE BENEFITS OF HONG KONG'S SUCCESS WERE BEING SPREAD THROUGH THE COMMUNITY, NOTING THAT NEARLY HALF OF THE TOTAL PUBLIC SPENDING IN HONG KONG WAS DEVOTED TO HOUSING AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES.

TO ENSURE THE CONTINUATION OF THIS SUCCESS, HE SAID, IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL EXPENDITURE, TO MAINTAIN LOW, SIMPLE AND PREDICTABLE TAXES AND ALSO TO ENSURE ADEQUATE REVENUE AND RESERVES.

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BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO GAIN FROM POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, TODAY (THURSDAY) ASSURED THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAT THEY HAD NOTHING TO FEAR AND MUCH TO GAIN FROM THE PROCESS OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG.

SINCE THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS WERE INTRODUCED IN 1991, HONG KONG'S POSITION AS THE PREMIER BUSINESS LOCATION IN THE REGION HAS CONTINUED TO IMPROVE, SHE SAID.

"CHINA'S ECONOMIC MODERNISATION HAS CREATED EXCEPTIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONG KONG.

"BUT OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS ALSO BENEFITED CONSIDERABLY FROM THE REASSURANCES PROVIDED BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND ITS SENIOR OFFICIALS," MRS CHAN TOLD THE HONG KONG EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON.

THEY HAVE REGULARLY STRESSED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE BASIC LAW AS WELL AS THEIR DETERMINATION TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG, SHE NOTED.

ON THIS BASIS, HONG KONG WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE AND OPEN MARKETS AND MINIMAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ESSENTIAL TO ITS CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

REGARDING THE SECOND STAGE OF LEGISLATION FOR NEXT YEAR'S LEGCO ELECTIONS, MRS CHAN SAID: "IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS."

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID THE PROPOSALS WOULD NOT MEAN A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN DEMOCRACY AND THEY WERE MODEST, AS LAID DOWN IN THE BASIC LAW, IN A MANNER THAT THE COMMUNITY WILL RECOGNISE AS FAIR AND OPEN.

"OUR PROPOSALS WILL IN NO WAY WEAKEN OUR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING HONG KONG'S ATTRACTIONS AS THE OUTSTANDING BUSINESS LOCATION IN THIS REGION," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID SHE WAS CONFIDENT THAT AT THE END OF THESE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, HONG KONG WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE A VIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE EXECUTIVE-LED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

HONG KONG WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE A LEGISLATURE WHOSE HIGHEST PRIORITY WILL BE TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE TRANSITION AND OF THE JOINT DECLARATION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES, SHE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE NEW AIRPORT PROJECT, MRS CHAN SAID THIS MONTH HAD SEEN SOME USEFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS ON THE LATEST FINANCIAL PROPOSALS.

"WE ARE ALL ANXIOUS IN HONG KONG THAT WHATEVER QUESTIONS STILL REMAIN, CAN BE DEALT WITH QUICKLY.

"GIVE US THE CHANCE TO MANAGE THIS PROJECT IN OUR USUAL HONG KONG WAY, AND WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO COMPLETE THE WORK, WELL WITHIN FORECAST IN TERMS OF BOTH TIME AND MONEY," SHE SAID.

ON DISCUSSIONS WITH CHINA IN OTHER AREAS SUCH AS CRIME, IMMIGRATION MATTERS AND DEFENCE LANDS, MRS CHAN SAID: "I VALUE THESE AND ALL OUR OTHER REGULAR CONTACTS."

"WE WILL SEEK TO CO-OPERATE WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT ON THE MANY TRANSITIONAL ISSUES WHICH AFFECT THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PEOPLE."

REGARDING THE UNCONDITIONAL RENEWAL OF CHINA'S MOST FAVOURED NATION (MFN) TRADE STATUS, MRS CHAN SAID EFFORTS WOULD CONTINUE TO LOBBY THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION.

SHE WILL VISIT WASHINGTON IN APRIL TO EXPLAIN WHY HONG KONG BELIEVES THAT ECONOMIC ISSUES SHOULD NOT BE LINKED TO POLITICAL DISPUTES.

POINTING OUT THAT MFN IS THE WRONG TOOL TO ACHIEVE IMPROVEMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS, MRS CHAN SAID THE ISSUE WAS BEST ADDRESSED BY CONTINUING TO TRADE WITH CHINA.

IN THIS WAY IT WILL HELP NOT ONLY TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN CHINA, BUT KEEP OPEN AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF INFLUENCE ON CHINA, SHE SAID.

"IT IS IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST THAT CHINA REMAINS IN EVERY WAY A PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY THROUGH OPEN TRADE AND CONTINUING CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER NATIONS," SHE SAID.

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CS SPEAKS TO REPORTERS

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT TODAY:

MRS CHAN: GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I'VE JUST SPENT A VERY INTERESTING AFTERNOON HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HIS STAFF ABOUT ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE DEPARTMENT AND ALSO SEEING FOR MYSELF SOME OF THE LATEST HOUSING UNITS. I THINK WE'VE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN OUR HOUSING PROGRAMME. IT IS ONE OF THE GREAT SUCCESS STORIES OF HONG KONG AND A GREAT DEAL OF THE CREDIT MUST GO TO THE DIRECTOR AND HIS STAFF WHO WORK EXTREMELY HARD. THEY DON'T ALWAYS GET THE CREDITS THAT THEY DESERVE. BUT WHEN YOU REMEMBER THAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY NOW HOUSES NEARLY HALF OF THE HONG KONG'S POPULATION, THEY ARE BUILDING FLATS AT A RATE OF ABOUT A HUNDRED A DAY, I THINK YOU WILL THEN APPRECIATE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE TASK. I'M SURE THAT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MISS ROSANNA WONG AS CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE GREAT IMPROVEMENT BOTH IN QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF OUR HOUSING STOCK, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY PLEDGED AND WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN VERY CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO ENSURE THAT WE SATISFIED THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE.

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GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO SUPPLYING MORE LAND

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THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO EASE THE LAND SUPPLY SITUATION, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR TONY EASON, SAID.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY (THURSDAY), MR EASON SAID SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF LAND FOR BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES WOULD BE COMING ON STREAM IN THE MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM.

"ABOUT 60 HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USES FROM THE NEW RECLAMATION AREAS IN WEST KOWLOON, CENTRAL AND WAN CHAI.

"WE WILL ALSO HAVE APPROACHING 30 MORE HECTARES OF NEW LAND ON TSING YI AND AT TUNG CHUNG FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF THE AIRPORT RAILWAY.

"IN PARTICULAR, WE PATIENTLY AWAIT THE GO AHEAD TO START BRINGING THE 62 HECTARES OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL LAND ALONG THE AIRPORT RAILWAY ON STREAM."

"IN DUE COURSE, FOLLOWING THE RELOCATION OF THE EXISTING AIRPORT, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH EAST KOWLOON WILL PROVIDE ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF LAND - SOME 172 HECTARES FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT," HE SAID.

/ON COMMERCIAL

ON COMMERCIAL LAND, MR EASON SAID MORE LAND FOR COMMERCIAL USES WAS EXPECTED TO COME OUT OF REDEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF REZONING TO COMMERCIAL USES IN LARGE AREAS IN KOWLOON SOUTH AND ALONG NATHAN ROAD.

HE NOTED THE ACHIEVEMENT IN INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF NEW LAND HAD BEEN ENORMOUS - ALMOST 9,000 HECTARES OF LAND HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE IN THIS WAY IN THE NEW TOWNS OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS AND THIS PROCESS WAS CONTINUING.

"RECLAMATION HAS ALSO BEEN AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF NEW LAND AND THAT PROCESS ALSO IS CONTINUING, AS THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION GROWS BEFORE OUR EYES, NOT TO MENTION OTHER SMALLER AREAS AROUND THE HARBOUR AND OF COURSE THE NEW AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

"BUT, THE SUPPLY OF NEW LAND IS ALWAYS FINITE AT ANY PARTICULAR TIME BECAUSE RECLAIMING FROM THE SEA AND BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE TAKE TIME AND REQUIRE VERY LARGE CAPITAL INVESTMENT.

"THE SECOND METHOD OF INCREASING LAND SUPPLY IS TO UNLOCK EXISTING LAND IN THE OLDER, UNDERDEVELOPED PARTS OF THE CITY THROUGH REDEVELOPMENT."

HE SAID STATISTICS SHOWED REDEVELOPMENT HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS A FLAT PRODUCER, REPRESENTING SOME 53 PER CENT OF NEW FLATS IN 1991, 63 PER CENT IN 1992 AND 73 PER CENT IN 1993.

IT IS EXPECTED FLATS FROM REDEVELOPMENT WILL REPRESENT AN AVERAGE OF SOME 60 PER CENT - 70 PER CENT OF RESIDENTIAL FLAT SUPPLY IN THE COMING FIVE YEARS.

HE ALSO SAID ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IN 1994/95 TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSING OF NEW LAND GRANTS, LAND EXCHANGES AND LEASE MODIFICATIONS.

BY SPEEDING UP THIS PROCESS, IT IS EXPECTED THE FLAT PRODUCTION RATE WILL INCREASE BY 2,000 UNITS A YEAR.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ADOPTED MEASURES TO STREAMLINE THE PROCESSING OF DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DEVELOPERS AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES REPRESENTED IN THE LAND AND BUILDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

NEW PRACTICE NOTES TO GUIDE THE PREPARATION AND PROCESSING OF MASTER LAYOUT PLANS AND DESIGN, DISPOSITION AND HEIGHT CLASS SUBMISSIONS UNDER LEASE CONDITIONS AND TIME LIMITS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED.

IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO PROVIDE MORE PRIVATE SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPLEMENT LAND SUPPLY.

ONE APPROACH MIGHT BE TO ALLOW A DEVELOPER TO APPLY TO GOVERNMENT FOR PROPERTY TO BE RESUMED WHERE HE ALREADY OWNS A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE PROPERTY NEEDED TO PERMIT WORTHWHILE REDEVELOPMENT BUT THE ACQUISITION OF A FEW UNITS IS FRUSTRATING HIS EFFORTS.

MR EASON EMPHASISED THAT THE RELOCATION OF EXISTING RESIDENTS ON FAIR AND EQUITABLE TERMS WOULD BE ESSENTIAL AND DEVELOPERS WOULD HAVE TO PLAY A PART IN THIS.

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO BE IDENTIFYING WAYS OF INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SUPPLYING MORE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO BE PROPERLY SERVICED.

THIS SHOULD HELP ELIMINATE SIGNIFICANT SOURCES OF DELAY IN STARTING CONSTRUCTION WORK ON NEW SITES BY USING PRIVATE SECTOR CAPITAL TO OPEN UP NEW LAND.

TURNING TO PUBLIC HOUSING PRODUCTION, HE SAID: "THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAVE MADE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO PREVENT PLANNED PUBLIC FLAT PRODUCTION FROM SLIPPING BEYOND THE LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY PERIOD UP TO 2001 AND TO ALLEVIATE A BUNCHING PROBLEM TOWARDS THE END OF THE PERIOD.

"THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO COME UP WITH A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE CONSTRUCTION LEAD TIME TO BRING FORWARD THE COMPLETION OF PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS BY 11 MONTHS," HE ADDED.

ON A PROPOSAL OF INTRODUCING A CAPITAL GAINS TAX FOR PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS, MR EASON SAID THE SUGGESTION DID NOT FIT INTO THE FUNDAMENTAL POLICY OF MAINTAINING A SIMPLE AND EASY-TO-ADMINISTER TAXATION REGIME BASED ON LOW TAX RATES.

"THE LONG-TERM NEGATIVE EFFECT SUCH A TAX MIGHT HAVE ON OUR ECONOMY, AND ON THE WAY INVESTORS PERCEIVE HONG KONG, OUTWEIGHS ANY SHORT-TERM EFFECTS IT WOULD HAVE ON COOLING PROPERTY SPECULATION. BUT OUR BOOK ON IT IS NOT COMPLETELY CLOSED," HE NOTED.

HE DENIED THERE WAS A HIGH LAND PRICES POLICY BECAUSE IT WAS THE MARKET RATHER THE GOVERNMENT THAT FIXED PRICES. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS TO PROVIDE A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF LAND TO MEET DEMAND TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

"THERE IS NEITHER ANY EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT DEVELOPERS ARE HOARDING LAND AND FLATS BECAUSE THEY USUALLY SELL FLATS AHEAD OF PRODUCTION, AND ON NEW SITES, THEY ARE BOUND BY BUILDING COVENANTS WHICH REQUIRE PRODUCTION USUALLY WITHIN THREE YEARS," HE ADDED.

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LABOUR LAW CLARIFIED

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IN RESPONSE TO MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENQUIRIES ON EMPLOYEES' WELFARE AND BENEFITS AS PRESENTED IN A RECENT TELEVISION PROGRAMME, A LABOUR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE APPLIED, WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS, TO ALL EMPLOYEES INCLUDING THOSE EARNING MONTHLY WAGES OF MORE THAN \$15,000.

AS REGARD THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID AN EMPLOYEE WAS ENTITLED TO SUCH PAYMENT IF HE HAD SERVED HIS EMPLOYER FOR NO LESS THAN FIVE YEARS AND WAS BEING DISMISSED FOR REASONS OTHER THAN SUMMARY DISMISSAL OR REDUNDANCY; DIED IN SERVICE OR RESIGNED ON GROUNDS OF ILL HEALTH.

/AN EMPLOYEE

AN EMPLOYEE WHO IS AGED 65 OR ABOVE IS ALSO ENTITLED TO LONG SERVICE PAYMENT IF HE HAD WORKED FOR THE EMPLOYER FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS AND WANTED TO RETIRE ON GROUNDS OF OLD AGE.

"FOR THE PURPOSE OF CALCULATING LONG SERVICE PAYMENT UNDER THE ORDINANCE, THE RECKONABLE SERVICE OF AN EMPLOYEE EARNING MONTHLY WAGES OF \$4,000 IS UP TO 1977," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"THE MAXIMUM LONG SERVICE PAYMENT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF WAGES EARNED DURING THE 12 MONTHS PRECEDING HIS TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT, OR \$180,000 WHICHEVER IS THE LESS.

"UNDER THE ORDINANCE, LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SHALL BE SET-OFF BY PAYMENT UNDER A RETIREMENT SCHEME OR PROVIDENT FUND SCHEME IN RESPECT OF CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THE EMPLOYER," HE ADDED.

ON THE QUESTION OF ANNUAL LEAVE, AN EMPLOYEE IS ENTITLED TO ANNUAL LEAVE WITH PAY AFTER SERVING EVERY PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS UNDER A CONTINUOUS CONTRACT WITH THE EMPLOYER.

"THE LEAVE SHOULD BE GRANTED WITHIN THE FOLLOWING PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES ON THE NOTICE PERIOD REQUIRED FOR TERMINATION OF A CONTINUOUS CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, IF NO PROVISION FOR LENGTH OF NOTICE HAD BEEN MADE, THE NOTICE PERIOD WAS NOT LESS THAN ONE MONTH, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THE EMPLOYEE WAS DAILY OR MONTHLY RATED.

"IF THERE IS AN EXPRESSED AGREEMENT AS TO THE LENGTH OF NOTICE, THE NOTICE PERIOD REQUIRED IS THE AGREED PERIOD BUT IN ANY CASE NOT LESS THAN SEVEN DAYS," HE ADDED.

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NO DECISION ON ISSUANCE OF TAXI LICENCES
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IN RESPONSE TO PRESS ENQUIRIES, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID IT WAS PURE SPECULATION TO SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ISSUE 200 URBAN AND 100 NEW TERRITORIES TAXI LICENCES IN 1994/95. THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASISED THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE ON THE NUMBER AND TIMING OF NEW TAXI LICENCES TO BE ISSUED.

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LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SURVEY AGREEMENT SIGNED

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) APPOINTED THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC TO CONDUCT A \$1.5 MILLION SURVEY OF PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.

THE SURVEY IS PART OF AN ONGOING STUDY ON LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BY A WORKING GROUP SET UP UNDER THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

THE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN THE EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BRANCH AND SECRETARY TO THE WORKING GROUP, MR C D GODWIN, AND ON BEHALF OF THE POLYTECHNIC BY THE ASSOCIATE DEAN IN THE FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION, PROFESSOR CHEUNG YAT-SHING.

"FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE WORKING GROUP'S REPORT TO THE COMMISSION IN THE SUMMER," MR GODWIN SAID.

"THE COMMISSION EXPECTS TO PUBLISH PROPOSALS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN THE AUTUMN,"

THE AIMS OF THE SURVEY ARE TO IDENTIFY THE VIEWS OF EDUCATORS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS ABOUT CURRENT LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN CANTONESE, WRITTEN CHINESE, PUTONGHUA AND ENGLISH; AND TO IDENTIFY FACTORS WHICH HELP AND FACTORS WHICH HINDER THE ACQUISITION BY STUDENTS OF DESIRED LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DURING THEIR FORMAL EDUCATION.

EXPLAINING HOW THE SURVEY WOULD BE CONDUCTED, PROFESSOR CHEUNG SAID: "THE SURVEY WILL COVER 8,000 STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, PRINCIPALS AND EMPLOYERS, WITH SAMPLES DRAWN FROM 60 PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 60 SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND SEVEN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS."

THE POLYTECHNIC TEAM IS LED BY SENIOR LECTURER MR YU FONG-YING AND LECTURER DR DANIEL SO, BOTH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHINESE, TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION; AND PRINCIPAL LECTURER MR P K LUI IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES.

THE TEAM INCLUDES SEVERAL EXPERTS ON LANGUAGE AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY FROM THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC AND THE CITY POLYTECHNIC.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP, MS ANGELA CHEUNG, HAS WRITTEN TO ALL THE SCHOOLS SELECTED TO TAKE PART IN THE SURVEY, EXPLAINING ITS PURPOSE AND SEEKING THEIR COOPERATION.

"WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH SURVEY EVER CONDUCTED IN HONG KONG," MS CHEUNG SAID.

"THE WORKING GROUP HOPES THAT ALL THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WE HAVE APPROACHED WILL RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SURVEY, AND WORK WITH US TO ENSURE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE RESPONSE RATE.

"PILOT WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN IN A SMALL NUMBER OF SELECTED SCHOOLS," SAID THE TEAM LEADER, MR YU.

"THE MAIN FIELD WORK WILL TAKE PLACE IN ALL SELECTED SCHOOLS TOWARDS THE END OF MARCH," HE ADDED.

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VOLUME AND PRICE MOVEMENTS OF EXTERNAL TRADE
IN DECEMBER AND 1993

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THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FOR THE WHOLE YEAR OF 1993 RECORDED A DECREASE OF 5.1% OVER 1992. OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE VOLUME OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY BY 20%, ACCORDING TO STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY (THURSDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

TAKING DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS TOGETHER, THE VOLUME OF TOTAL EXPORTS INCREASED BY 14%. IMPORTS INCREASED BY 13% IN VOLUME.

THE GROWTH IN THE VOLUME OF TRADE IS DERIVED FROM THE GROWTH IN TRADE VALUES WITH THE EFFECT OF PRICE CHANGES BEING DISCOUNTED.

AS REGARDS PRICE CHANGES OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE PRICES OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASED SLIGHTLY BY 0.3%. THE PRICES OF RE-EXPORTS AND IMPORTS BOTH DECREASED BY 0.6%.

PRICE CHANGES ARE REFLECTED BY CHANGES IN UNIT VALUE INDICES, WHICH ARE COMPILED BASED ON AVERAGE UNIT VALUES OR, FOR CERTAIN COMMODITIES, BASED ON SPECIFIC PRICE DATA.

THE TERMS OF TRADE INDEX, DEFINED AS THE RATIO OF TOTAL EXPORT PRICE INDEX TO IMPORT PRICE INDEX, INCREASED SLIGHTLY BY 0.2% IN 1993 AS COMPARED WITH 1992.

TAKING DECEMBER 1993 ALONE AND COMPARING WITH DECEMBER 1992, THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS DECREASED BY 5.8% WHILE THAT OF RE-EXPORTS INCREASED BY 16%. THE VOLUME OF TOTAL EXPORTS INCREASED BY 10%. THE VOLUME OF IMPORTS GREW BY 6.6%.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE PRICES OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASED BY 0.9% WHILE THOSE OF RE-EXPORTS DECREASED BY 0.9%. THE PRICES OF IMPORTS REMAINED VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED.

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY PRINCIPAL COMMODITY GROUP ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 1.

COMPARING DECEMBER 1993 WITH DECEMBER 1992, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF METAL MANUFACTURES WHICH RECORDED AN INCREASE OF 2.7%, THE VOLUME OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS FOR OTHER COMMODITY GROUPS DECREASED, PARTICULARLY RADIOS OF ALL KINDS (-73%); TEXTILE MADE-UPS AND RELATED ARTICLES (-40%); FOOTWEAR (-38%); AND METAL ORES AND SCRAP (-34%).

AS REGARDS DOMESTIC EXPORT PRICES, THE PRICES OF FOOTWEAR; AND ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS INCREASED BY 5.5% AND 3.4% RESPECTIVELY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, DECREASES IN DOMESTIC EXPORT PRICES WERE RECORDED FOR TEXTILE YARN AND THREAD (-10%); TEXTILE FABRICS (-6.3%); AND RADIOS OF ALL KINDS (-6.2%).

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF IMPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 2.

/THE IMPORT

THE IMPORT VOLUME OF FOODSTUFFS INCREASED BY 2.5% IN DECEMBER 1993 AS COMPARED WITH DECEMBER 1992.

CONSIDERABLE INCREASES WERE RECORDED FOR THE IMPORT VOLUME OF SOYA BEAN OIL, PEANUT OIL, VEGETABLE OIL AND LARD; AND RICE. ON THE OTHER HAND, DECREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE IMPORT VOLUME OF WHEAT AND FLOUR; TEA AND COFFEE; AND VEGETABLES.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE IMPORT VOLUME OF CONSUMER GOODS INCREASED BY 6.2%.

COMMODITY ITEMS WITH SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN IMPORT VOLUME INCLUDED HOUSEHOLD TYPE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES; RADIOS, TELEVISION SETS, GRAMOPHONES, RECORDS, TAPE RECORDERS AND AMPLIFIERS; CLOTHING; AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE DECREASE IN IMPORT VOLUME WAS NOTED FOR PASSENGER MOTOR CARS.

THE IMPORT VOLUME OF RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES INCREASED BY 7.2% IN DECEMBER 1993 AS COMPARED WITH DECEMBER 1992.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN IMPORT VOLUME WERE NOTED FOR MAN-MADE FIBRES; AND THERMIONIC CATHODE VALVES AND TUBES, DIODES, TRANSISTORS AND ELECTRICAL MICROCIRCUITS.

HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE DECREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE IMPORT VOLUME OF WOOL AND OTHER ANIMAL HAIR; YARN OF WOOL AND MIXTURES; AND RAW COTTON.

IMPORTS OF FUELS DECREASED BY 20% IN VOLUME IN DECEMBER 1993 AS COMPARED WITH DECEMBER 1992.

AS REGARDS CAPITAL GOODS, THE IMPORT VOLUME INCREASED BY 10%. NOTABLE INCREASES WERE RECORDED FOR THE IMPORT VOLUME OF ELECTRICAL MACHINERY; SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL, OPTICAL, MEASURING AND CONTROLLING INSTRUMENTS AND APPARATUS; AND OFFICE MACHINES.

THE IMPORT VOLUME OF CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY; TEXTILE MACHINERY; AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT DECLINED.

COMPARING DECEMBER 1993 WITH DECEMBER 1992, THE IMPORT PRICES OF CAPITAL GOODS; AND CONSUMER GOODS INCREASED BY 2.0% AND 0.4% RESPECTIVELY. THE IMPORT PRICES OF FUELS; FOODSTUFFS; AND RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES DECREASED BY 9.3%, 1.5%, AND 1.2% RESPECTIVELY.

THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE, UNIT VALUE AND VOLUME OF RE-EXPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY ARE SHOWN IN TABLE 3.

COMPARING DECEMBER 1993 WITH DECEMBER 1992, THE VOLUME OF RE-EXPORTS OF MOST END-USE CATEGORIES GREW: CAPITAL GOODS (+20%); FUELS (+19%); CONSUMER GOODS (+16%); AND RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES (+15%). HOWEVER, THE VOLUME OF RE-EXPORTS OF FOODSTUFFS DECREASED BY 13%.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF COMPARISON, THE RE-EXPORT PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS; CONSUMER GOODS; AND CAPITAL GOODS INCREASED BY 1.1%, 0.5% AND 0.3% RESPECTIVELY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE RE-EXPORT PRICES OF FUELS; AND RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES DECREASED BY 13% AND 4.4% RESPECTIVELY.

DETAILS OF THE ABOVE STATISTICS ARE PUBLISHED IN THE DECEMBER 1993 ISSUE OF THE "HONG KONG TRADE INDEX NUMBERS".

THE REPORT WILL BE ON SALE AROUND MARCH 14 AT \$8.5 A COPY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE ON THE GROUND FLOOR, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL; OR AT THE PUBLICATIONS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON THE 19TH FLOOR, WANCHAI TOWER, 12 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE REPORT MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT FRENCH MISSION BUILDING, 1 BATTERY PATH, HONG KONG (TEL: 842 8802) AND ENQUIRIES ON TRADE INDICES TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT (TEL: 582 4918).

TABLE 1 : CHANGES IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS BY PRINCIPAL COMMODITY GROUP

COMMODITY GROUP	COMPARING DEC 1993 WITH DEC 1992			COMPARING JAN-DEC 1993 WITH JAN-DEC 1992		
	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME
	%	%	%	%	%	%
CLOTHING	-2.5	-0.1	-2.4	-6.9	1.1	-7.9
TEXTILE FABRICS	-12.5	-6.3	-6.6	-4.6	-4.7	0.1
TEXTILE YARN AND THREAD	-25.8	-10.4	-17.2	-14.4	-7.0	-8.0
TEXTILE MADE-UPS AND RELATED ARTICLES	-42.2	-3.4	-40.3	-28.2	-1.4	-27.2
RADIOS OF ALL KINDS	-74.2	-6.2	-72.5	-49.8	-6.5	-46.3

/ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS

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ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS	0.2	3.4	-3.1	3.0	0.3	2.8
FOOTWEAR	-34.4	5.5	-38.0	-45.1	6.6	-48.6
METAL MANUFACTURES	2.4	-0.3	2.7	1.6	-1.9	3.4
METAL ORES AND SCRAP	-33.5	0.7	-34.0	-5.8	-1.2	-4.8
WATCHES AND CLOCKS	-24.1	0.5	-24.5	-15.0	0.5	-15.4
TRAVEL GOODS, HANDBAGS AND SIMILAR ARTICLES	-18.0	-1.8	-16.3	-21.3	-2.4	-19.5
DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES	-2.8	1.2	-3.7	-21.5	-2.0	-19.8
ALL COMMODITIES	-5.0	0.9	-5.8	-4.8	0.3	-5.1

TABLE 2 : CHANGES IN IMPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY

END-USE CATEGORY	COMPARING DEC 1993 WITH DEC 1992			COMPARING JAN-DEC 1993 WITH JAN-DEC 1992		
	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME
	%	%	%	%	%	%
FOODSTUFFS	1.1	-1.5	2.5	-0.7	-0.9	0.3
CONSUMER GOODS	6.6	0.4	6.2	15.3	-0.3	15.5

/RAW MATERIALS

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RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES	5.9	-1.2	7.2	7.6	-2.5	10.4
FUELS	-27.3	-9.3	-19.8	3.4	-2.5	6.1
CAPITAL GOODS	12.5	2.0	10.3	18.8	3.0	15.3
ALL COMMODITIES	6.5	-0.1	6.6	12.2	-0.6	12.8

TABLE 3 : CHANGES IN RE-EXPORTS BY END-USE CATEGORY

END-USE CATEGORY	COMPARING DEC 1993 WITH DEC 1992			COMPARING JAN-DEC 1993 WITH JAN-DEC 1992		
	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME	VALUE	UNIT VALUE	VOLUME
	%	%	%	%	%	%
FOODSTUFFS	-11.8	1.1	-12.7	-3.7	-0.4	-3.4
CONSUMER GOODS	17.1	0.5	16.4	18.7	0.2	18.5
RAW MATERIALS AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES	9.6	-4.4	14.6	14.7	-3.5	18.9
FUELS	3.2	-13.4	19.1	43.6	-8.1	56.1
CAPITAL GOODS	20.4	0.3	20.0	30.4	1.8	28.1
ALL COMMODITIES	14.8	-0.9	15.7	19.1	-0.6	19.9

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WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR SENIOR CITIZEN CARD SCHEME

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THE SENIOR CITIZEN CARD SCHEME WHICH AIMS TO LAUNCH A MOVEMENT IN SOCIETY TO SHOW MORE RESPECT AND CONCERN FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE IN HONG KONG WAS KICKED OFF BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, TODAY (THURSDAY).

ADDRESSING A GATHERING OF ELDERLY PERSONS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL COMPANIES JOINING THE SCHEME AT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SHATIN SOCIAL CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, MRS WONG SAID THE SENIOR CITIZEN CARD WOULD FACILITATE PERSONS AGED 65 AND ABOVE TO HAVE ACCESS TO CONCESSIONARY FARES, PRIORITY TREATMENT AND DISCOUNTS OFFERED BY PARTICIPATING COMPANIES.

"WE HAVE NOW OVER 1,200 OUTLETS IN THE TERRITORY OFFERING CONCESSIONS AND PRIORITY SERVICE TO ELDERLY PERSONS," SHE SAID.

"THEY INCLUDE BANKS, FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES, ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESSES, HOTELS, REHABILITATION PRODUCT COMPANIES, RESTAURANTS, DEPARTMENT STORES, SHOPS, TRAVEL AGENTS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES, CLINICS AND SO ON.

"SOME OF THE EXAMPLES OF THESE CONCESSIONS ARE PREFERENTIAL INTEREST RATES FOR FIXED DEPOSITS, DISCOUNTS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES, FREE ADMISSION TO ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES, HALF-PRICE FOR A BUFFET LUNCH, DISCOUNTS FOR WHEELCHAIRS, HEARING AIDS, GLASSES, SPORTS WEAR, TOURS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

"ALL THESE DEMONSTRATE THE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AND CONCERTED EFFORTS IN RESPECTING THE ELDERS IN OUR SOCIETY," SHE ADDED.

SHE CALLED FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT BECAUSE "WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT, THE SENIOR CITIZEN CARD IS ONLY A CARD - WHICH MEANS LITTLE".

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT (SWD) WILL ISSUE THE CARDS FREE OF CHARGE FROM APRIL 1.

ALL AN ELDERLY PERSON HAS TO DO IS TO FILL IN AN APPLICATION FORM AND SEND IT IN TOGETHER WITH A PHOTOGRAPH AND A PHOTOCOPY OF THEIR HONG KONG IDENTITY CARD THROUGH A PRE-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.

APPLICATIONS CAN ALSO BE MADE IN BATCHES BY THE SERVICE UNITS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND BY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS.

APPLICATION FORMS AND PRE-ADDRESSED ENVELOPES ARE OBTAINABLE FROM SWD'S FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES, SOCIAL SECURITY FIELD UNITS AND GROUP WORK UNITS; ESTATE OFFICES OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT; SOCIAL, DAY CARE AND MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY; AND PUBLIC ENQUIRY OFFICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION.

MRS WONG SAID TO PUBLICISE THE SCHEME, TWO "PROMOTION DAYS" WOULD BE HELD ON MARCH 12 AND 19 WHEN VOLUNTEERS FROM SERVICE UNITS OF SWD AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WOULD ASSIST ELDERLY PERSONS IN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORMS AT OVER 170 DESIGNATED CENTRES.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES ON THE SCHEME MAY BE MADE ON TEL 961 7580 - 961 7585.

DURING TODAY'S LAUNCHING CEREMONY, MRS WONG AWARDED CERTIFICATES TO MORE THAN 30 REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTICIPATING COMPANIES.

THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR IAN STRACHAN, ALSO PRESENTED THE FIRST SENIOR CITIZEN CARD TO AN ELDERLY WOMAN.

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CS VISITS HOUSING HEADQUARTERS AND ESTATES

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, MRS ANSON CHAN, WAS BRIEFED ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC HOUSING ALLOCATION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING ESTATES IN KOWLOON CENTRAL DURING HER VISIT TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY).

ACCOMPANYING HER ON THE VISIT WERE CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, MS ROSANNA WONG, AND DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, MR FUNG TUNG.

MRS CHAN FIRST TOURED ROUND THE APPLICATIONS SECTION IN THE AUTHORITY'S HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, INCLUDING THE INTERVIEW ROOMS AND THE PRIORITY SERVICE CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY.

SHE WAS TOLD THAT THE SECTION HAD TO REGISTER ON AVERAGE 1,240 NEW RENTAL HOUSING APPLICATIONS MONTHLY, TO VET APPLICANTS' ELIGIBILITY AND TO ALLOCATE FLATS WITH A VIEW TO OPTIMISING THE USE OF HOUSING RESOURCES.

IN THE PRIORITY SERVICES CENTRE, SHE WAS TOLD THAT ABOUT 25 ELDERLY APPLICANTS WERE ENTERTAINED EACH DAY AND THAT GUIDED TOURS TO SHELTERED HOUSING WERE ORGANISED ONCE A MONTH.

MRS CHAN THEN MET SENIOR DIRECTORATE STAFF FOR A CHAT, DURING WHICH SHE PRESENTED A 30-YEAR LONG AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE CERTIFICATE AND A COMMEMORATIVE GOLD PIN TO MR FUNG.

SHE THEN DEPARTED THE HOUSING HEADQUARTERS FOR TSZ MAN ESTATE TO SEE THE LATEST HARMONY BLOCKS COMPLETED AFTER REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ESTATE.

INSIDE A SAMPLE FLAT IN THE ESTATE, SHE WAS TOLD THAT THE MODULAR CONCEPT ADOPTED IN THE HARMONY DESIGN WOULD ALLOW FOR GREATER STANDARDISATION AND QUALITY CONTROL. SHE ALSO NOTED THAT THERE WAS A SLIGHT INCREASE IN THE OVERALL FLAT SIZE AND UPGRADED FINISHES IN COMMON AREAS AND CORRIDORS.

THE PARTY THEN PROCEEDED TO THE ROOFTOP OF A NEARBY BLOCK WHERE MRS CHAN WAS BRIEFED ON THE PROGRESS OF REDEVELOPMENT IN TSZ WAN SHAN AREA WHILE HAVING A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE DISTRICT.

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SHE LEARNT THAT ESTATES IN TSZ WAN SHAN HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE DEPARTMENT'S COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME BEING IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES UP TO 2000/2001. APART FROM TSZ MAN ESTATE, BLOCKS IN TSZ OI, TSZ ON AND TSZ CHING ESTATES HAD ALREADY BEEN SCHEDULED FOR REDEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

DURING HER VISIT TO A FAMILY LIVING IN A TWO-BEDROOM HARMONY FLAT IN WANG TAU HOM ESTATE PHASE 7, MRS CHAN NOTED THAT THE ORIGINAL 26 MARK I/II BLOCKS HAD ALL BEEN DEMOLISHED FOR REDEVELOPMENT. AT PRESENT, 18 MODERN BLOCKS, INCLUDING FOUR HARMONY BLOCKS, WERE BUILT TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR 25,000 PERSONS.

MRS CHAN FINALLY VISITED THE LARGEST SHOPPING CENTRE EVER BUILT BY THE DEPARTMENT - THE LOK FU SHOPPING CENTRE WHICH NOT ONLY SERVED TENANTS FROM LOK FU ESTATE BUT ALSO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT IN BROADCAST DRIVE, BEACON HILL ROAD AND EVEN KOWLOON CITY.

MANY MARKET LEADERS, INCLUDING A JAPANESE DEPARTMENT STORE AND CINEMA OPERATORS, HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED TO RUN THEIR BUSINESS IN THIS 37,000 SQUARE-METRE SHOPPING CENTRE.

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APPLICATIONS TO SPONSOR FIREWORKS DISPLAY INVITED

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THE RECREATION AND CULTURE BRANCH TODAY (THURSDAY) INVITED ORGANISATIONS WISHING TO SPONSOR THE 1995 LUNAR NEW YEAR FIREWORKS DISPLAY TO SUBMIT EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE APRIL 30, 1994.

SINCE 1982, FIREWORKS DISPLAYS HAVE BEEN HELD OVER VICTORIA HARBOUR IN THE EVENING OF THE SECOND DAY OF THE LUNAR NEW YEAR TO CELEBRATE THE SPRING FESTIVAL.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE RECREATION AND CULTURE BRANCH SAID APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SENT AT LEAST NINE MONTHS BEFORE THE DATE PROPOSED FOR THE DISPLAY.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, 41ST FLOOR, REVENUE TOWER, 5 GLOUCESTER ROAD, WAN CHAI.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES CAN BE MADE ON TEL 594 5659 DURING OFFICE HOURS.

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THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1994

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CANADA AND HONG KONG SHARE ENVIRONMENT EXPERIENCE

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EXPERTS AND PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FROM BOTH CANADA AND HONG KONG TODAY (THURSDAY) TOOK PART IN A SEMINAR ON CANADIAN EIA EXPERIENCE.

THE SEMINAR WAS PRECEDED BY A THREE-DAY WORKSHOP WHERE BOTH SIDES EXCHANGED VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES ON SOME IMPORTANT EIA ISSUES.

"BOTH THE SEMINAR AND THE WORKSHOP ARE EVENTS ORGANISED UNDER THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION SIGNED BETWEEN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT AND ITS CANADIAN COUNTERPARTS IN 1992," THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, MR RAYMOND CHAN, SAID.

"THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE OF HAVING TO MOVE FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE CABINET DIRECTIVE TO A STATUTORY EIA ACT IS EXTREMELY RELEVANT TO OUR CURRENT POSITION OF PROPOSING AN EIA ORDINANCE IN HONG KONG.

"THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN THE WORKSHOP AND THE SEMINAR IS VERY USEFUL TO US," HE SAID.

TODAY'S SEMINAR FOCUSED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT, PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT PLANNING AS WELL AS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

AMONG THE SPEAKERS WERE EXPERTS FROM CANADA'S FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW OFFICE, THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PRIVATE CONSULTANCY FIRMS.

"CANADA HAS OVER 20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING EIA AND WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO SHARE WITH HONG KONG THE MANY LESSONS LEARNED," THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW OFFICE OF CANADA, MR PATRICE LEBLANC, SAID.

"THE SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP ALSO PROVIDE US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN FROM THE HONG KONG EXPERIENCE IN EIA, VALUABLE INPUTS AND INSIGHTS FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT," HE SAID.

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CLOTHING INDUSTRY HAS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL

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HONG KONG IS FAST BECOMING THE HUB OF A MANUFACTURING AREA EXTENDING WELL INTO SOUTHERN CHINA, SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T H CHAU, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY FAIR, MR CHAU SAID THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY IN THIS AREA HAD ENORMOUS POTENTIAL, NOT JUST TO SERVE WORLD MARKETS, BUT ALSO TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AN INCREASINGLY AFFLUENT CHINESE POPULATION.

HE NOTED THAT DESPITE THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY CONTINUED TO MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO HONG KONG'S EXPORT EARNINGS.

IT ACCOUNTED FOR OVER 30 PER CENT OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS LAST YEAR, AND A THIRD OF HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT.

ON THE LOCAL MANUFACTURING SCENE, MR CHAU SAID: "FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS ALREADY, HONG KONG MANUFACTURERS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY OBLIGED TO COMPETE IN OUR MAJOR MARKETS ON FAST RESPONSE AND QUALITY RATHER THAN ON PRICE.

SOME MANUFACTURERS HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN TO MOVE UP THE HIGH VALUE-ADDED LADDER, AND HAVE INVESTED IN THE LATEST EQUIPMENT AND PROCESSES, HE ADDED.

"THOSE WHO CHOOSE THIS PATH WILL FIND THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL AND THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY READY TO HELP WITH TECHNICAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE," HE SAID.

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TEACHERS URGED TO VOTE ON APRIL 20

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THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) APPEALED TO ELIGIBLE TEACHER VOTERS AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO VOTE IN THE ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN EDUCATION ON APRIL 20.

A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WAS TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

ALL FULL-TIME TEACHERS REGISTERED WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ARE URGED TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT IN ELECTING THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COUNCIL, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE COUNCIL ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN EDUCATION IS A NON-STATUTORY BODY TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON MEASURES TO PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE DRAFTING OF OPERATIONAL CRITERIA DEFINING THE CONDUCT EXPECTED OF AN EDUCATOR, AND TO ADVISE THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN CASES OF DISPUTE OR ON ALLEGED PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT.

DETAILS ABOUT VOTING PROCEDURES AND LISTS OF NOMINEES ARE BEING SENT TO SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BODIES. CIRCULARS AND POSTERS WILL BE PUT UP IN STAFF ROOMS IN SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE THE ELECTION, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SCHOOLS WILL CONDUCT THEIR OWN VOTING SESSION ON ELECTION DAY.

"FOR VOTING IN TEACHER-NOMINATED CATEGORIES IN SECONDARY, PRIMARY, SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS, ALL FULL-TIME REGISTERED AND FULL-TIME PERMITTED TEACHERS INCLUDING PRINCIPALS AND HEADTEACHERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

"HOWEVER, IF TEACHERS TEACH IN MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, HE OR SHE SHOULD OPT TO EXERCISE HIS OR HER VOTING RIGHT IN ONLY ONE OF THE SCHOOLS. SHOULD A TEACHER VOTE IN MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, THE BALLOT PAPER WILL BE CONSIDERED NULL AND VOID.

"VOTING IS TO BE CONDUCTED BY SECRET BALLOT IN WHICH VOTERS SHOULD NOT PUT DOWN THEIR NAMES OR ANY OTHER MARKS OF IDENTIFICATION ON THE BALLOT PAPER. THEY SHOULD NOT LET OTHER VOTERS SEE WHOM THEY VOTE FOR," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT ANY AMENDMENTS BY THE ELECTOR ON THE BALLOT PAPER SHOULD BE INITIALED BY THE RETURNING OFFICER. OTHERWISE THE VOTE WOULD BE CONSIDERED VOID.

"IF, FOR SOME REASONS, TEACHER VOTERS CANNOT CAST THEIR VOTES DURING THE VOTING SESSION, THEY MAY DO SO BEFORE THE SESSION BUT THIS MUST BE DONE ON THE VOTING DAY.

"IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT ANY SCHOOL DOES NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VOTING EXERCISE, THE SCHOOL HEAD SHOULD PREPARE A STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT SIGNED BY ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN THE SCHOOL," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

AS TO VOTING IN ORGANISATION-NOMINATED CATEGORIES, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT VOTING WOULD BE CARRIED OUT ON A ONE-ORGANISATION-ONE-VOTE BASIS.

"EACH ORGANISATION CAN ONLY VOTE FOR CANDIDATES IN ITS OWN CATEGORY AND CANNOT CAST MORE THAN ONE VOTE FOR ANY CANDIDATE. SHOULD AN ORGANISATION CAST MORE THAN ONE VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE, ONLY ONE VOTE WILL BE COUNTED," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE UNSEALING OF ENVELOPES AND COUNTING OF VOTES FOR ORGANISATION-NOMINATED CATEGORIES WILL BE OFFICIATED BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (SCHOOLS), MR S M TSUI, AND WITNESSED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ORGANISATIONS.

THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WILL BE ANNOUNCED THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA AS SOON AS THEY ARE AVAILABLE, PROBABLY IN LATE APRIL, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

MEANWHILE, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED TWO MORE NOMINATIONS WHICH WERE MAILED OR REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS.

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THIS BRINGS TO 69 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF 25 SEATS.

THE NOMINATIONS COMPRISE 42 FROM TEACHER-NOMINATED CATEGORIES AND 27 FROM ORGANISATION-NOMINATED CATEGORIES.

THE TWO NOMINATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED ARE MR CHUNG MAN-KIN FROM THE LEARNER-TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION AND MR WONG WAI-YU FROM THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF HEADS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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TAI PO SEWAGE WORKS CONTRACT SIGNED

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THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT IN THE TAI PO SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT IS BEING UPGRADED FOR IMPROVING THE EFFLUENT QUALITY AND OPERATION CONDITIONS OF THE TREATMENT WORKS.

A \$95.9 MILLION CONTRACT FOR THE UPGRADING WORKS WAS SIGNED TODAY (THURSDAY) AT A CEREMONY BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DRAINAGE SERVICES (ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL), MR LEUNG CHAM-TIM, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTOR, A JOINT VENTURE OF CHEVALIER (ENVIROTECH) LIMITED AND BIWATER INTERNATIONAL LIMITED.

THE CONTRACT, WHICH INVOLVES THE DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE SEWAGE TREATMENT PROCESS AND ASSOCIATED ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, WILL ENHANCE THE NUTRIENT REMOVAL CAPACITY OF THE TREATMENT PLANT.

THE WORKS HAD BEGUN ON FEBRUARY 17 FOR COMPLETION IN AUGUST 1996.

THE CONTRACT IS PART OF THE STAGES I AND II IMPROVEMENT WORKS FOR THE TAI PO SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT.

A \$37.6 MILLION CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS CONTRACT UNDER THIS IMPROVEMENT SCHEME WAS SIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT LAST WEEK.

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THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1994

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,389
REVERSAL OF LAF	+1,611
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	3,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	-1,261
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,739
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 125.6 *-0.1* 10.3.94

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.47	18 MONTHS	2508	4.625	99.84	4.80
1 MONTH	3.58	21 MONTHS	2511	4.15	98.74	4.99
3 MONTHS	3.72	24 MONTHS	2602	4.40	98.73	5.16
6 MONTHS	3.93	32 MONTHS	3610	4.20	97.01	5.51
12 MONTHS	4.39	35 MONTHS	3701	4.60	97.51	5.62

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 13,492 MN

CLOSED 10 MARCH 1994

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