



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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BILL ENABLES LEGCO MEMBERS TO SERVE PROPERLY
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THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (POWERS AND PRIVILEGES) BILL 1985 IS TO ENABLE MEMBERS TO DISCHARGE THEIR FUNCTIONS PROPERLY, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR, AND TO UPHOLD THE DIGNITY OF THE LEGISLATURE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, SIR PHILIP SAID THE BILL FOLLOWS TO A LARGE EXTENT THE STANDARD PATTERN OF SUCH LEGISLATION AS DEVELOPED FOR OTHER LEGISLATURES 'IN A POSITION SIMILAR TO HONG KONG.

AN AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, CHAIRED BY THE HON MARIA TAM, HAD EXAMINED THE INITIAL DRAFT OF THE BILL AND HAD SUGGESTED A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS.

ALL THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE BILL, WHICH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD THEN ADVISED SHOULD BE INTRODUCED, HE SAID.

AS PROVIDED IN PART I, THE BILL WOULD COME INTO FORCE ON A DATE TO BE SET BY THE GOVERNOR AND THIS WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE FIRST SITTING OF THE 1985-86 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION, HE SAID.

PART II OF THE BILL DEALS WITH THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE MEMBERS.

IN THIS PART, CLAUSE THREE, HE SAID, EXPRESSLY PROVIDES FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND DEBATE IN THE COUNCIL OR ANY COMMITTEE AND FOR THE CORRESPONDING IMMUNITY OF THE PROCEEDINGS FROM BEING QUESTIONED IN ANY COURT OR PLACE OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL.

CLAUSE FOUR CONFERS IMMUNITY ON MEMBERS FROM CIVIL OR CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN RESPECT OF MATTERS SAID, OR DOCUMENTS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL OR ANY COMMITTEE.

PART III, SIR PHILIP SAID, MAKES PROVISION GOVERNING WITNESSES BEFORE THE COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES.

FINALLY, HE SAID, PART IV DEALS WITH OFFENCES AND PENALTIES.

SIR PHILIP SAID THAT +A NEW STYLE HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS TO BE ASSEMBLED WITH EFFECT FROM THE 1985-86 SESSION, WITH A BLEND OF MEMBERSHIP APPROPRIATE TO HONG KONG'S CIRCUMSTANCES+, AND HE COMMENDED THE BILL TO MEMBERS AS +AN ESSENTIAL MEASURE TO SECURE AND TO STRENGTHEN THE STANDARDS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THAT NEW STYLE COUNCIL.+

/EARLIER, SIR

EARLIER, SIR PHILIP SAID THAT THOUGH THE LEGISLATURE OF A CROWN COLONY, BY ITS MERE ESTABLISHMENT, DID NOT ACQUIRE ALL THE POWERS, PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ENJOYED BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN WESTMINSTER, THE EXISTING BODY OF LAW IN HONG KONG, THE JURY ORDINANCE AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES +IN FACT CONFER ALL THESE POWERS AND PRIVILEGES ON MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL.+

+IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW, HOWEVER, IT IS DESIRABLE TO ENACT LEGISLATION GENERALLY TO CODIFY SUCH POWERS AND PRIVILEGES,+ HE SAID.

THERE WERE SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS SUPPORTING THIS VIEW, HE SAID, INCLUDING:

FIRST, AFTER 1997, ANY INHERENT POWERS AND PRIVILEGES DERIVED FROM THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS A COLONIAL LEGISLATURE WOULD CEASE TO HAVE EFFECT IN HONG KONG;

SECOND, TO SMOOTH THE TRANSITION, THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION TO CODIFY THESE POINTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED EARLIER, RATHER THAN LATER;

THIRD, AS HONG KONG MOVES TOWARDS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF CONSENSUS POLITICS MAY COME UNDER SOME PRESSURE. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE DESIRABLE SPECIFICALLY TO PROVIDE FOR THE RIGHTS OF MEMBERS AND FOR THE POWERS AND PRIVILEGES THROUGH WHICH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MANAGES ITS BUSINESS TO BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD;

FOURTH, IF THE GOVERNOR IS TO CEASE TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AT SOME FUTURE DATE, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR THE NEW PRESIDING OFFICER TO HAVE CLEAR LEGAL SANCTION TO HAND FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE COUNCIL'S BUSINESS; AND

FIFTH, DECISIONS RECENTLY TAKEN TO HOLD MEETINGS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE IN PUBLIC MAKE IT TIMELY FOR THE POSITION AS REGARDS THE CALLING OF WITNESSES AND THE HEARING OF EVIDENCE TO BE CODIFIED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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HIGHER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT RATE SOUGHT

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A MUCH HIGHER RATE OF RESETTLEMENT WAS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

WINDING UP THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN HONG KONG, MR JEAFFRESON STRESSED THAT THIS POSSIBILITY REMAINED HONG KONG'S PREFERRED ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM.

+THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE KEEP THE ENTRY DOOR OPEN FOR ARRIVALS MUST DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES ARE PREPARED TO KEEP OUR EXIT DOOR OPEN FOR RESETTLEMENT,+ HE SAID.

+WHAT I CAN SAY IS THAT, ON THE ADVICE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, WE ARE PURSUING ALL THE REALISTIC POSSIBILITIES HARD WITH THE COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED.+

MR JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG WAS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO BE A PLACE OF FIRST ASYLUM FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FOR AS LONG AS THE INTERNATIONAL PRESUMPTION WAS THAT THEY WERE REFUGEES AND RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WERE PREPARED TO TAKE THEM.

HONG KONG ITSELF, HE SAID, COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO TAKE ON AGAIN THE ROLE OF RESETTLEMENT AS WELL AS BEING A PLACE FOR FIRST ASYLUM.

ON LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROBLEM, MR JEAFFRESON SAID HONG KONG WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER ITS POLICIES IF RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WERE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT.

+IT IS NO SECRET THAT THOSE NOW ARRIVING HERE, AND WHOM WE, AS A PLACE OF FIRST ASYLUM, ACCEPT, ARE FINDING IT VERY MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO MEET THE CRITERIA FOR RESETTLEMENT THE RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES ARE NOW CHOOSING TO APPLY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO SAY WHETHER HONG KONG WOULD ACCEPT +THE REJECTS+ INTO ITS COMMUNITY.

+OUR HOPE IS THAT RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES WILL HONOUR THEIR INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND TAKE ALL REFUGEES ARRIVING HERE FROM VIETNAM.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL BUT IT HAD ALSO, INEVITABLY, COME IN FOR SOME CRITICISM.

/+AS IT

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+AS IT HAPPENS, IN THE PAST FEW DAYS THE COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION AND NATURALISATION SERVICE AND SOME OF HIS STAFF, AND THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES AND SOME OF HIS STAFF HAVE VISITED SOME OF OUR CLOSED CENTRES,+ HE SAID.

+WHILE, LIKE US, THEY MAY DEPLORE THE NEED FOR THESE CENTRES, THEY HAD NO CRITICISMS OF THE WAY IN WHICH THEY WERE BEING RUN,+ HE SAID.

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FOUR WAYS FOR UK TO HELP ON VRS
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THERE ARE FOUR WAYS THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD ACT ON HONG KONG'S BEHALF IN THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE ISSUE, APART FROM ADOPTING A MUCH LARGER INTAKE, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

LEADING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG, DR HO SAID:

- * FIRST, HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT SHOULD REMIND THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) OF ITS PLEDGES AND PROMISES THAT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ARE ONLY TAKING TEMPORARY ASYLUM IN HONG KONG AND IT SHOULD ENSURE THAT ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE FOR THEIR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT ELSEWHERE AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE
- * SECOND, HONG KONG'S PREDICAMENT IN RESPECT OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE UNHCR, AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNHCR IN GENEVA SHOULD BE ASKED TO CALL AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RESETTLEMENT
- * THIRD, THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT SHOULD TRY ITS BEST TO PERSUADE THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND BRITISH COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES TO COMPASSIONATELY ACCEPT MORE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT AND
- * FOURTH, THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE URGED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO EXERCISE CHECKS ON FURTHER OUTFLOW AND TO ACCEPT REPATRIATION OF ITS NATIONALS AND THOSE REFUGEES WILLING TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND.

/DR HO

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DR HO SAID THE RECENT REPORT BY THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM SHOULD RELAX THE FAMILY REUNION CRITERIA FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

+I WHOLE-HEARTEDLY ENDORSE THIS RECOMMENDATION,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, THIS MEASURE ALONE WAS NOT ENOUGH.

+IF THE UNITED KINGDOM REALLY WANTS TO SOLVE THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN HONG KONG, IT SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ACCEPTING A REASONABLY LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG ON TOP OF THE FAMILY REUNION CATEGORY.

+THIS LEAD BY THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL BE CATALYTIC IN EFFECT.

+THE MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES FOR OUR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD FURTHER REDUCE THEIR RESPECTIVE RESETTLEMENT OFFERS IF THE UNITED KINGDOM IS NOT SEEN TO BE PLAYING ITS FULL PART.

+ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE UNITED KINGDOM INCREASES ITS INTAKE, THEY WOULD FOLLOW SUIT.+

DR HO SAID BRITAIN HAD ALWAYS CLAIMED THAT IT HAD A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS HONG KONG, AND HAD TIME AND AGAIN ASSURED HONG KONG THAT IT WOULD DISCHARGE THIS RESPONSIBILITY CONSCIENTIOUSLY.

+HONG KONG IS AT PRESENT UNDER TREMENDOUS STRAIN IN TACKLING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM: IS IT NOT THE MOST APPROPRIATE TIME NOW FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM TO DEMONSTRATE TO US ITS CONCERN AND SINCERITY BY REMOVING A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF OUR REFUGEE BURDEN?+ HE ASKED.

DR HO ALSO SAID UNDER THE PRESENT CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM, THE ABOLITION OF THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY WAS DEFINITELY NOT IN THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG.

+IT IS TANTAMOUNT TO OPENING THE FLOODGATES AND INVITING AN ENDLESS INFLUX OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES TO HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

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HONG KONG'S HELPING EFFORTS 'WELL KNOWN TO ALL'

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ALTHOUGH HONG KONG COULD DO VERY LITTLE TO ASSIST VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, THE EFFORTS ALREADY MADE WERE WELL KNOWN TO ALL, UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON WONG LAM, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, MR WONG SAID ANY PERSON WITH AN IMPARTIAL MIND, WHEN COMMENTING ON THE WAY IN WHICH HONG KONG HAD HANDLED THE ISSUE, SHOULD TAKE A VIEWPOINT OF SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING.

+APART FROM SYMPATHISING WITH HONG KONG'S LIMITATION IN THIS REGARD, HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE KEY TO A SOLUTION LIES IN PREVENTING THE RECURRENCE OF A REFUGEE INFLUX, AND IN ASSISTING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT PRESENT STAYING IN HONG KONG TO RESETTLE IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

+WHAT WE NEED IS INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE RENDERED THROUGH PRACTICAL ACTION,+ MR WONG SAID.

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CALL FOR BRITAIN TO TAKE 5 000 VRS

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A LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE WOULD BE SATISFIED IF THE UNITED KINGDOM ACCEPTED 5 000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

THE HON ALLEN LEE WAS SPEAKING DURING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG.

HE QUOTED BRITISH LABOUR PARLIAMENTARIAN, MR CLIVE SOLEY, AS CALLING ON THE UNITED KINGDOM TO ACCEPT 10 000 OF THE REFUGEES SO THAT OTHER COUNTRIES LIKE CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA WOULD TAKE THE REST AND CAMPS IN HONG KONG COULD BE CLOSED.

WHILE WELCOMING MR SOLEY'S STATEMENT, MR LEE SAID HE HOPED BRITISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT REALISED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAD TAKEN A MUCH GREATER NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG THAN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IT WAS ABOUT TIME THE UNITED KINGDOM DID ITS PART ABOUT +THIS SAD SITUATION+.

/+I WILL

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+I WILL BE JUMPING WITH JOY IF THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL ACCEPT 10 000 REFUGEES,+ MR LEE SAID.

+IN FACT, I WILL BE SATISFIED IF THE UNITED KINGDOM ACCEPTS HALF THAT NUMBER.+

HOWEVER, FOR THE RECORD, LAST YEAR THE UNITED KINGDOM ACCEPTED A PATHETIC 88 REFUGÉES FROM HONG KONG, OF WHOM ONLY 61 WERE NOT SHIP RESCUE CASES.

+I HOPE THE UNITED KINGDOM MEANT WHAT IT SAID THAT BRITAIN HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG AND I WOULD URGE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO SHOW THAT SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY BY ACCEPTING THESE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE QUANTITY THAT MR SOLEY MENTIONED.+

MR LEE SAID HE COULD, WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, SAY THAT THE TREATMENT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WERE GETTING IN HONG KONG WAS BETTER THAN THAT OF A LOT OF PEOPLE LIVING IN HONG KONG WHO WERE GENUINE HONG KONG RESIDENTS.

WE HAD ALREADY SPENT HALF A BILLION DOLLARS ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND WE WERE CONTINUING TO SPEND MONEY ON A DAILY BASIS OUT OF THE PUBLIC PURSE.

+IN MY VIEW, WE HAVE DONE MORE THAN OUR SHARE BASED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS OR ON ANY OTHER GROUND,+ MR LEE SAID.

+VERY FEW PEOPLE REALISE THAT WE HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED 14 500 REFUGEES INTO OUR COMMUNITY.

+WE CAN STAND UP TO THE WORLD AND TO ANY CRITICISM WITH REGARD TO OUR TREATMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.+

HE ASKED WHAT WAS HONG KONG GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS THE REFUGEES AND WHAT WOULD BE THE LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS? DID WE HAVE TO ACCEPT THE REJECTS INTO OUR COMMUNITY? WHAT WAS THE SOLUTION?

ON THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY MR LEE SAID IT WAS A DETERRENT TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEES TO COME TO HONG KONG AND HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO REMOVE THE POLICY.

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CLOSED CAMPS ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE

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WITH THE WISDOM OF HINDSIGHT WE CAN SAY THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE CLOSED CAMPS FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES - ALTHOUGH BY NO MEANS A PLEASANT ONE, BUT DEFINITELY A NECESSARY ONE - HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

THIS WAS THE VIEW OF THE HON SELINA CHOW, WHO SPOKE IN TODAY'S (WEDNESDAY'S) ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN HONG KONG.

SHE SAID TWO MONTHS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY IN 1982, WHICH WAS THE TIME ESTIMATED FOR THE NEWS TO GET BACK TO VIETNAM, THE NUMBER OF MONTHLY ARRIVALS DROPPED QUITE DRAMATICALLY.

FOR THE LAST FOUR MONTHS OF 1982, TOTAL ARRIVALS NUMBERED ONLY HALF THOSE OF THE SAME PERIOD THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

IN 1983, TOTAL ARRIVALS WERE LESS THAN HALF OF 1982, AND IN 1984 THE TOTAL WAS 60 PER CENT OF THAT OF 1983.

+THE CLOSED CAMPS ARE PART AND PARCEL OF MEASURES NECESSARY TO CURB THE AGGRAVATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM,+ MRS CHOW SAID.

+UNLESS AND UNTIL THE WORLD CAN HELP US SEE THE END OF THE TUNNEL HONG KONG CANNOT AFFORD TO ACT OTHERWISE.+

SHE SAID IN THE FACE OF THE ONLY REALISTIC OPTIONS OPEN TO HONG KONG: TO REPATRIATE THEM, TO TURN THEM AWAY, AND OFFER ASYLUM IN THE CLOSED CAMPS, THE LAST WAS CERTAINLY THE LEAST INHUMANE.

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TAKE MORE REFUGEES AS MATTER OF POLICY, UK TOLD

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STATEMENTS IN A REPORT ISSUED LAST MONTH BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG WERE DESCRIBED AS +NOBLE+ BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG, SHE SAID IT WAS VERY NOBLE FOR THE COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND THAT BRITAIN SHOULD RELAX ITS FAMILY REUNION CRITERIA SO AS TO ATTRACT OFFERS OF ADDITIONAL RESETTLEMENT PLACES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES; THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE HELD TO REDUCE DRASTICALLY THE SIZE OF HONG KONG'S VIETNAMESE REFUGEE POPULATION; AND THAT AS PART OF A BURDEN-SHARING AGREEMENT BRITAIN SHOULD ACCEPT A SMALL SHARE OF THOSE WHO WERE HARD TO RESETTLE.

/+BRITAIN SHOULD

+BRITAIN SHOULD TAKE IN MORE REFUGEES AS A MATTER OF POLICY AND SPELL OUT THEIR NOBLE PROPOSALS INTO CONCRETE FIGURES,+ DR IP SAID.

+IT IS TIME TO PUT THE MATTER TO THE TEST,+ SHE ADDED, QUOTING FROM THE REPORT.

+I BELIEVE THAT SUCH A LEAD BY BRITAIN WOULD INDEED BE FOLLOWED BY THE MAJOR RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES,+ SHE SAID.

THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD VIEW SUCH A LEAD POSITIVELY.

IT WAS REASSURING, DR IP CONTINUED, THAT THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOGNISED THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG, THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WERE RELUCTANT TO DO MORE TO HELP HONG KONG IN THE ABSENCE OF A FURTHER UNITED KINGDOM RESETTLEMENT EFFORT OR PROGRAMME, THAT HONG KONG, BEING DENSELY POPULATED AND COPING WITH ITS OWN HALF A MILLION-ODD SQUATTERS WITHOUT A PERMANENT SHELTER, HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT SOME 14 500 REFUGEES SINCE 1975, AND LASTLY THAT INTEGRATION IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM OF WHICH HONG KONG WAS ONE WAS NOT A REALISTIC OPTION EXCEPT ON A SMALL SCALE.

+HAVING RECOGNISED ALL THESE, DOES THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REALLY CONSIDER IT EQUITABLE AND POSSIBLE FOR HONG KONG TO ACCEPT ANY MORE REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT OR TO DO AWAY WITH CLOSED CAMPS?+ DR IP ASKED.

SHE SUBMITTED THAT HONG KONG WAS ONE OF THE SIX SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES WHICH HAD TO COPE AND WAS STILL COPING WITH THE AFTERMATH OF A LARGE INFLUX OF REFUGEES.

LIKE THE OTHER FIVE COUNTRIES IN MANAGING THIS PROBLEM, HONG KONG NEEDED TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE CLOSED CAMPS - ALTHOUGH WITH RELUCTANCE - UNTIL AND WHEN ALL SUCH REFUGEES WERE PROPERLY RESETTLED ELSEWHERE, HONG KONG DID NOT HAVE A BETTER ALTERNATIVE.

+RATHER THAN CRITICISE US FOR DOING THE BEST WE CAN WITH A PROBLEM THEY DO NOT HAVE TO FACE, OTHER COUNTRIES SHOULD BE MORE POSITIVE IN THEIR ASSISTANCE,+ SAID DR IP.

SHE REITERATED THAT HONG KONG HAD PLAYED A DUAL ROLE IN THE GLOBAL MANAGEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND SHOULDERED MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE BURDEN.

+IT IS NOW TIME FOR OTHER COUNTRIES TO DO A BIT MORE,+ SHE SAID.

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LOGICAL FOR UK TO HELP SOLVE PROBLEM
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IT IS LOGICAL THAT BRITAIN SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO HELP HONG KONG SETTLE ITS VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM, THE HON MRS RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING DURING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THE REFUGEES, MRS FAN SAID IN 1984 A LARGE COUNTRY LIKE BRITAIN ONLY ACCEPTED 88 REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG, OF WHOM OVER 20 WERE SHIP-RESCUED CASES.

+BRITAIN'S INTAKE OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG IN THE LAST THREE YEARS AMOUNTS TO ONLY 2.5 PER CENT OF THE RESETTLED REFUGEES,+ SHE SAID.

+WITH THIS LEVEL OF HELP FROM BRITAIN, WHAT CHANCES HAVE WE GOT TO CONVINCE OTHER COUNTRIES TO TAKE IN MORE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG?+

MRS FAN SAID THE STRINGENT POLICY PRACTISED BY THE HOME OFFICE IN BRITAIN EVEN BARRED FAMILY REUNION OF REFUGEES WITH CLOSE RELATIVES RESIDING IN BRITAIN.

SHE THEREFORE WELCOMED THE RECOMMENDATION IN THE RECENT REPORT OF THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE THAT BRITAIN SHOULD RELAX ITS FAMILY REUNION CRITERIA.

INDEED, BRITAIN SHOULD AT LEAST FOLLOW THE EXAMPLES OF THE TWO COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, AUSTRALIA AND CANADA, WHICH ACCEPTED 20 PER CENT AND 27 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY OF THE REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG IN 1984.

SHORT OF A RENEWED COMMITMENT BY BRITAIN WE COULD NOT EXPECT OTHER COUNTRIES TO TAKE UP A MORE SUBSTANTIAL BURDEN THAN THEY HAD ALREADY DONE.

IT WAS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT BRITAIN SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD.

IF BRITAIN COULD NOT TAKE UP THIS RESPONSIBILITY THERE WOULD BE MORE FRUSTRATED, BITTER AND HARD-CORE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG AND THE PEOPLE HERE WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE PROBLEM INDEFINITELY.

+WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO HELP OTHERS IN NEED,+ MRS FAN SAID.

+HOWEVER, THERE IS A LIMIT TO PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING.

+WHEN THE THRESHOLD IS PASSED, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL REQUEST MORE DRAMATIC MEASURES.+

/THERE APPEARED

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THERE APPEARED TO BE GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM BETWEEN HONG KONG AND BRITAIN.

+I THEREFORE URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT EVERY PIECE OF INFORMATION IS PROVIDED TO PERSUADE BRITAIN TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE,+ SHE SAID.

ON THE CLOSED CAMPS MRS FAN SAID IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL TO ABOLISH THE POLICY BEFORE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WAS FOUND.

SHE APPRECIATED THAT LIFE IN CLOSED CAMPS WAS COMPARATIVELY DULL, AS REFUGEES COULD NOT SEEK OUTSIDE WORK OR LEAVE THE CAMPS AT WILL, BUT THEY DID ENJOY FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND WERE FREE FROM POLITICAL HARASSMENT.

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MEMBER ABSTAINS FROM VOTING ON OATHS BILL
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN, ABSTAINED FROM VOTING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN TOLD THE COUNCIL: +IF THE WORDING OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OATH AMOUNTS TO PLEDGING LOYALTY TO HONG KONG ONLY, THEN IT IS WRONG IN PRINCIPLE AS HONG KONG IS NOT AN INDEPENDENT STATE.

+THE DATE 1ST JULY, 1997, IS A CLEAR-CUT POLITICAL DIVIDING LINE WHICH AFFECTS OUR ALLEGIANCE, ECONOMY, SOCIETY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT IS NOT BLURRED TOO SOON,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAN SAID MONTHS BEFORE THE BILL AND THE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE WERE PUBLISHED, IT WAS ALREADY LEARNED FROM A TELEVISION INTERVIEW THAT AN ASPIRANT TO A SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD STATED THAT IF THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE RULE WAS NOT CHANGED HE WOULD RESIGN, EVEN IF ELECTED.

+THIS MAY BE MISCONSTRUED AS DICTATING TO THE GOVERNMENT THE TERMS OF ENTRY TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

+THESE MISCONCEPTIONS SHOULD BE EMPHATICALLY DENIED, OTHERWISE IT WOULD NOT ONLY UNDERMINE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION BEFORE 1997 TO THE DETRIMENT OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG BUT WOULD ALSO CREATE A SPECIAL PRIVILEGED CLASS AMONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

/+THE INTENTION

+THE INTENTION OF BENDING OVER BACKWARDS TO ACCOMMODATE MORE MAY BE GOOD, BUT IF WE OVERDO IT WE MAY FALL OVERBOARD.+

THE JOINT DECLARATION STATED THAT 'CHINA HAS DECIDED TO RESUME THE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG WITH EFFECT FROM 1ST JULY 1997'.

+BEFORE THIS DATE, THE BRITISH FLAG STILL FLIES HERE AND BRITISH LAW AND ADMINISTRATION WILL MAINTAIN STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN HONG KONG,+ MR CHAN SAID.

+TOO EARLY A CHANGE IN LOYALTY WOULD CHANGE HONG KONG INTO A 'CHAMELEON LAND'.+

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OATHS BILL MOVE TO MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT
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THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES GOVERNMENT'S SINCERITY AND COMMITMENT TOWARDS MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT.

THIS WAS SAID BY THE HON MRS PAULINE NG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL.

SHE SAID IN SEPTEMBER THE FIRST ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE HELD AND IT WAS UNDESIRABLE TO RETAIN THE OATH IN ITS PRESENT FORM WHICH SWORE ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN ALONE.

+IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN HONG KONG AND IN THE RUN UP TO 1997, BY WHICH TIME HONG KONG WOULD TURN INTO A HIGHLY AUTONOMOUS REGION WITHIN CHINA, THE IMAGE OF HONG KONG AS A COLONY SHOULD GRADUALLY FADE,+ MRS NG SAID.

+THE RETENTION OF SUCH A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT MIGHT DETER SOME CANDIDATES FROM SEEKING ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RESULTING IN ALLEGATIONS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS FAR FROM GENUINE IN ITS COMMITMENT TOWARDS POLITICAL REFORM.+

SHE SAID THE BILL DEFINITELY HELPED TO DISPEL ANY LINGERING DOUBTS AND IF PASSED WOULD GO A LONG WAY TO REMOVING A MAJOR OBSTACLE AND TO ENSURING THAT AS WIDE A FIELD OF CANDIDATES AS POSSIBLE WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO STAND IN THE COMING LEGCO ELECTIONS.

/INSTEAD OF

INSTEAD OF PLEDGING LOYALTY TO THE CROWN, THE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OATH TOOK THE FORM OF A PUBLIC AFFIRMATION OF DUTY TO SHOW THAT THE MEMBER ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HE OR SHE HAD INCURRED BY APPOINTMENT OR ELECTION AND THAT HE OR SHE WOULD CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND TRULY SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AS A MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATURE.

+THIS PROVISION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY INSTIL A GREATER SENSE OF DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE,+ SAID MRS NG.

SHE SAID CONCERNS WERE RAISED THAT WITH THE PASSING OF THIS BILL A SCENARIO WOULD OCCUR WHEREBY MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL WOULD BE SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS PURELY BY THE OATH WHICH THEY CHOSE TO TAKE UPON THEIR ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT TO THE LEGISLATURE.

+I AM OF THE VIEW THAT THIS SHOULD NOT CAUSE ANY UNDUE ALARM,+ SHE SAID.

+I FIRMLY BELIEVE, AND I AM SURE MY COLLEAGUES WOULD AGREE, THAT MEMBERS SITTING WITHIN THIS CHAMBER HAVE THE SOLE AIM TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AND WOULD DO NOTHING BUT TO FOSTER THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC.

+THERE IS A SAYING, 'OATHS ARE BUT WORDS, AND WORDS ARE BUT WIND.'

+ALTHOUGH I COULD NOT ENTIRELY AGREE TO THIS I AM CONFIDENT THAT NO MATTER WHICH OATH MEMBERS TAKE THE THOUGHTS BEHIND IT GO MUCH FURTHER BEYOND THE WORDS THEMSELVES,+ SHE SAID.

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NEW OATH A HELP TO LEGCO
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THE OBJECT OF THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 WAS THAT OATH TAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WOULD NOT IMPEDE, AND INDEED SHOULD FACILITATE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING OF THE BILL, MR TSAO SAID IT SOUGHT TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE OATH WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN BY ANY MEMBER OF LEGCO WHO DID NOT WISH TO TAKE THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

/HE ASSURED

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HE ASSURED MR K.C. CHAN THAT, AS ALWAYS, THE AMENDMENTS SOUGHT HAD BEEN MOST CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BEFORE THEY WERE PUT TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+THEY ARE CERTAINLY NOT IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER A RESPONSE TO THE ONE ELUSIVE PERSON ASPIRING TO A SEAT ON THIS COUNCIL TO WHICH MR CHAN MADE REFERENCE,+ HE SAID.

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SEVERAL ROBBERS HIT IN GUN BATTLE, LEGCO TOLD
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SEVERAL ROBBERS WERE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN HIT IN THE EXCHANGE OF FIRE WITH POLICE DURING THE ROBBERY OF THE TIME WATCH COMPANY AT 54 NATHAN ROAD, KOWLOON ON MAY 1, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT CASUALTIES THE ROBBERS SUFFERED. BUT WE ARE PRETTY SURE SEVERAL OF THEM WERE HIT,+ HE SAID.

RESPONDING TO A REQUEST BY THE HON PETER C. WONG FOR A STATEMENT ABOUT THE ROBBERY, MR JEAFFRESON SAID IT WAS +PROFESSIONALLY PLANNED AND RUTHLESSLY EXECUTED+.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT NO EFFORT WAS BEING SPARED +TO BRING THESE VICIOUS CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE POLICE HAD OBTAINED INFORMATION THAT AN ARMED ROBBERY OF THE COMPANY WAS BEING PLANNED. BUT WHILE THIS INFORMATION WAS CORRECT IN ESSENCE, IT WAS INACCURATE AND VERY SCANTY IN VITAL RESPECTS, INCLUDING WHEN IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN.

THIS FACT, HE SAID, HAD A DIRECT BEARING ON THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED.

ON THE BASIS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION, THE POLICE DETERMINED THEIR STRATEGY AND PLANNED THEIR TACTICS WITH GREAT CARE, AND SET UP AMBUSHES IN SEVEN LOCATIONS AROUND THE TARGET PREMISES.

SHORTLY AFTER 10.15 PM ON MAY 1, MR JEAFFRESON SAID, A GANG OF SIX PERSONS STORMED INTO THE SHOP AND SECURED BOTH THE PREMISES AND THE STREET IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY.

/THEY WERE

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THEY WERE ARMED WITH GENUINE FIREARMS AND PISTOL-LIKE OBJECTS AND WORE MASKS AND BULLET-PROOF VESTS. ABOUT SEVEN SECONDS LATER, THEY WERE LEAVING WITH WATCHES VALUED AT \$1.7 MILLION.

WHEN THE POLICE MOVED IN TO BLOCK THEIR ESCAPE, AN EXCHANGE OF FIRE ENSUED IN NATHAN ROAD AND IN MODY ROAD, WHERE THE ROBBERS HAD PARKED THEIR GETAWAY VAN.

SEVEN POLICE OFFICERS WERE INJURED IN THE EXCHANGE OF GUNFIRE, WHILE TWO PASSERS-BY RECEIVED MINOR INJURIES FROM FLYING GLASS AND A WOMAN STAFF MEMBERS OF THE SHOP WAS SLIGHTLY INJURED BY THE ROBBERS IN THE ATTEMPT TO TAKE HER HOSTAGE.

IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE POLICE, THE WHOLE EPISODE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN OVER IN ABOUT 15 SECONDS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

SO, +CONSIDERING THAT THE POLICE HAD ONLY A PRETTY VAGUE IDEA OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN, THEY REACTED VERY QUICKLY,+ HE SAID.

THE GANG WAS PREPARED TO RESORT TO EXTREME VIOLENCE AND SHOWED A CHILLING DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE.

+THE POLICE OFFICERS ON THE GROUND DISPLAYED EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO APPREHEND THEM,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE POLICE RECOVERED THE VEHICLES USED BY THE ROBBERS FOR THEIR ESCAPE AND FOUND SOME ARMS AND AMMUNITION IN THEM. THE POLICE ALSO FOUND ARMS, AMMUNITION AND ONE BULLET-PROOF VEST, ALL BELIEVED TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE CASE, NEAR MONGKOK RAILWAY STATION.

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MEET THE PUBLIC SCHEME A SUCCESS -- SDA
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MORE THAN HALF OF THE 2 623 CASES HANDLED UNDER THE DISTRICT BOARDS' MEET-THE-PUBLIC SCHEME DURING THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR WERE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MRS PAULINE NG ON THE VALUE OF THE SCHEME, MR LIAO SAID: +IN OTHER CASES WHICH COULD NOT BE RESOLVED FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, FULL EXPLANATION WAS ALWAYS GIVEN TO THOSE CONCERNED.

/+BY AND

+BY AND LARGE, THE SCHEME HAS PROVED TO BE A SUCCESS AND CREDIT MUST GO TO ALL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT.+

MR LIAO SAID THAT DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS THEMSELVES KEPT THE SCHEME UNDER REGULAR REVIEW AND BE UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME DISTRICT BOARDS WERE CONSIDERING WAYS TO FURTHER EXPAND IT.

HE ALSO ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT ALL DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE THEIR FULLEST SUPPORT TO THE SCHEME.

MR LIAO POINTED OUT THAT ALL DISTRICT BOARDS HAD MEET-THE-PUBLIC SESSIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS.

+IT HAS PROVED TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH DISTRICT RESIDENTS CAN CONTACT THEIR DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS TO MAKE ENQUIRIES, TO SEEK PERSONAL ASSISTANCE OR TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS ON A WHOLE RANGE OF SUBJECTS SUCH AS HOUSING, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT,+ HE SAID.

MEETING SESSIONS ARE HELD IN DISTRICT OFFICES AND SUB-OFFICES ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK; AND THEY ARE USUALLY ARRANGED AFTER OFFICE HOURS TO SUIT THE CONVENIENCE OF RESIDENTS.

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POLICY ON REFUSE SITES OUTLINED

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IT IS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO RESERVE AND ALLOCATE SITES FOR USE AS REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS (RCPS) IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPROVED PLANNING STANDARDS, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR NICKY CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION BY DR THE HON KIM CHAM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT POLICY ON THE ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR THE PROVISION OF OFF-STREET REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS TO REPLACE ON-STREET REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS.

MR CHAN SAID THAT AS A GENERAL RULE, OFF-STREET RCPS WERE PREFERRED TO ON-STREET ONES AS THE LATTER MIGHT CAUSE OBSTRUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

+SITES FOR OFF-STREET RCPS WILL BE ALLOCATED ON APPLICATION BY THE CLIENT DEPARTMENTS IF THEY ARE RESERVED IN THE TOWN PLAN AND CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY,+ HE SAID.

+IF NO RESERVATION HAS BEEN MADE OR IF THE RESERVED SITES ARE NOT AVAILABLE, THE CLIENT DEPARTMENTS MAY IDENTIFY OTHER SUITABLE SITES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LANDS DEPARTMENT AND DISTRICT TOWN PLANNERS.

+NO PREMIUM OR RENT WILL BE CHARGED FOR THE ALLOCATION OF RCP SITES,+ HE ADDED.

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HELP FOR DEAF, BLIND OUTLINED
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A TOTAL OF 7 151 DEAF AND PARTIALLY HEARING, AND 12 364 BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PERSONS REGISTERED IN THE CENTRAL REGISTRY OF THE DISABLED WERE RECEIVING GOVERNMENT FUNDED OR SUBVENTED SERVICES, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON ALEX WU, HE SAID UNDER HONG KONG'S 1984 REHABILITATION PROGRAMME PLAN BLIND AND DEAF PEOPLE RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- * IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR DISABILITY;
- * MEDICAL TREATMENT AT CLINICS OR HOSPITALS;
- * SPECIAL EDUCATION, DEPENDING ON AGE AND THE EXTENT OF DISABILITY;
- * SOCIAL REHABILITATION - COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING, RECREATIONAL SERVICES; AND FOR THE BLIND, ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY TRAINING, COMMUNICATION, INCLUDING BRAILLE SERVICES, DAILY LIVING SKILLS, AND RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES;
- * VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION;
- * ASSISTANCE IN JOB PLACEMENT; AND
- * DISABILITY ALLOWANCE.

OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND RECEIVED \$14.1 MILLION SUBVENTION FROM GOVERNMENT IN 1982-83, \$15.7 MILLION IN 1983-84, AND \$17.2 MILLION IN 1984-85.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SERVING THE DEAF RECEIVED \$16.3 MILLION IN 1982-83, \$18.5 MILLION IN 1983-84, AND \$21.4 MILLION IN 1984-85, MR HENDERSON SAID.

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'SCHOOL AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNICIANS NOT NECESSARY'

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A SUGGESTION THAT AN AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNICIAN GRADE BE ESTABLISHED FOR SERVICE IN SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF THE WIDE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT FOR TEACHING PURPOSES WAS NOT CONSIDERED JUSTIFIED, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN, WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ESTABLISHING SUCH A GRADE SPECIFICALLY TRAINED TO HANDLE THE EQUIPMENT, AND ALLOCATING A PURPOSE-BUILT ROOM AT THE SCHOOL PLANNING STAGE FOR THE STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE OF SUCH EQUIPMENT.

MR LEUNG SAID HE DID NOT THINK THERE WAS A STRONG CASE FOR THE CREATION OF SUCH A GRADE AS STUDENT TEACHERS IN THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION WERE TAUGHT EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY TO EQUIP THEM WITH THE ABILITY TO HANDLE STANDARD HARDWARE AND TO PRODUCE APPROPRIATE SOFTWARE.

+THE PROCUREMENT, ISSUE AND COLLECTION, ORGANISATION AND MAINTENANCE OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING MINOR REPAIRS, IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EXISTING SCHOOL STAFF, INCLUDING TEACHERS.

+FOR SERVING TEACHERS, THE VISUAL EDUCATION SECTION OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE PROVIDES A WIDE RANGE OF ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS THROUGH VISITS, PUBLICATIONS, SEMINARS, SHORT COURSES AND WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED BY THE MEDIA PRODUCTION SERVICES UNIT,+ HE SAID.

MORE COMPLEX AND VALUABLE AUDIO-VISUAL ITEMS, SUCH AS MICRO-COMPUTERS, TELEVISION RECEIVERS, VIDEO-CASSETTE RECORDERS AND THE WIRE-FREE LOOP SYSTEMS USED FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING, ARE ALL MAINTAINED BY CONTRACTED AGENTS.

THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF DESIGNATING TEACHERS AS AUDIO-VISUAL CO-ORDINATORS, SUPPORTED WHERE NECESSARY BY CLERICAL STAFF AND LABORATORY TECHNICIANS, IS EDUCATIONALLY APPROPRIATE, EFFECTIVE AND SATISFACTORY.

+THE PROVISION OF AN AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNICIAN IS THEREFORE NOT AT PRESENT NECESSARY,+ MR LEUNG SAID.

AS TO THE PROVISION OF A PURPOSE-BUILT ROOM FOR THE STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT, HE SAID THAT THIS WAS BEING CONSIDERED IN THE REVISED STANDARD DESIGNS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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ESTATE SHOP TENANTS GET COMPENSATION
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COMPENSATION FOR SHOP TENANTS AFFECTED BY THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF MARK I AND MARK II ESTATES WAS MADE IN THREE WAYS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DAVID FORD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAULINE NG, HE SAID: FIRSTLY, CASH COMPENSATION WAS PAID TO TENANTS BASED ON THE SIZE OF THEIR SHOP AND ITS BUSINESS POTENTIAL. A TENANT OF A TYPICAL SHOP OF 22 SQUARE METRES WAS PAID HK\$83 000 AS COMPENSATION, SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN THE TOTAL RENT PAID BY TENANTS DURING THE WHOLE PERIOD OF THEIR TENANCY.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, A TENANT OF A SHOP WHO STARTED A TENANCY ON JANUARY 1, 1956 AND WHO GAVE IT UP ON APRIL 30, 1985, WOULD ONLY HAVE PAID SOME \$56 000 IN RENT DURING THE WHOLE OF THAT 29-YEAR PERIOD.

SECONDLY, AND IN ADDITION TO THE COMPENSATION, SHOP TENANTS AFFECTED BY RE-DEVELOPMENT WERE OFFERED RE-PROVISIONING IN NEW OR OLD ESTATES THROUGH A SYSTEM OF RESTRICTED TENDER.

THIRDLY, IF A SHOP TENANT CHOSE TO BID FOR A SHOP THROUGH THE OPEN TENDER SYSTEM IN ANOTHER AREA AND WAS SUCCESSFUL, HE WOULD BE GRANTED A RENT DEPOSIT CONCESSION EQUIVALENT TO TWO MONTHS' RENT OR \$8 000, WHICHEVER WAS THE LESS.

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STEPS TAKEN TO MINIMISE MONKEY NUISANCE
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MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TO MINIMISE POSSIBLE NUISANCE CAUSED BY MONKEYS AROUND SHEK LEI PUI RESERVOIR, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MR G.A. HIGGINSON, SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON WONG LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HIGGINSON SAID MONKEYS AROUND SHEK LEI PUI RESERVOIR WERE NORMALLY HARMLESS AND THE MANY VISITORS TO THE AREA ENJOYED WATCHING THEM.

+HOWEVER, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF PICNICKERS FEEDING THEM, A NUMBER HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO SUCH TREATMENT AND THUS APPROACH PASSERS-BY FOR FOOD,+ HE SAID.

MR HIGGINSON SAID THAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TO MINIMISE NUISANCE CAUSED BY THESE MONKEYS. NOTICES HAVE BEEN DISPLAYED AT PROMINENT LOCATIONS ADVISING PICNICKERS AND RESIDENTS NOT TO FEED OR TEASE THE MONKEYS, AND PARK WARDENS REGULARLY DISCOURAGE VISITORS FROM FEEDING THEM AND SIMILAR ADVICE IS GIVEN IN THE MASS MEDIA FROM TIME TO TIME.

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NEED FOR WORKING INDEPENDENCE STRESSED

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DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (DMCS) SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOB WITH A REASONABLE DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON KEITH LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LIAO SAID THAT FOR THE MOMENT DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMEN WOULD NOT ATTEND DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS, WHICH ARE CHAIRED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICER.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DMC WAS A DISTRICT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES WHOSE MAIN DUTY WAS TO ORGANISE CO-ORDINATED ACTION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS.

IT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING PROMPT AND POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THE ADVICE OF THE DISTRICT BOARD.

MR LIAO SAID THE DISTRICT OFFICER MADE REGULAR REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE TO MEETINGS OF THE FULL BOARD.

+AS AND WHEN NECESSARY, THE DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES ALSO GIVE THEIR VIEWS AND EXPLAIN THEIR DEPARTMENTAL DECISIONS FULLY AT BOARD MEETINGS,+ HE SAID.

+THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL ENSURE THAT THE DMC REMAINS RESPONSIVE TO THE DISTRICT BOARD.

+NEVERTHELESS, WHERE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT BOARD CONSIDERS IT NECESSARY, AND SO REQUESTS, THE DISTRICT OFFICER WILL ARRANGE SPECIAL MEETINGS BETWEEN HIM AND THE DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNED TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL ANY DISTRICT ISSUE WHICH IS OF CONCERN TO THE BOARD.

+FURTHERMORE, EVERY DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN IS PROVIDED WITH AN OFFICE IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THERE IS THEREFORE NO LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTACT AND CO-ORDINATION.+

MR LIAO ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING ALL THE NEWLY-ELECTED DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMEN FOR THE FIRST TIME NEXT WEEK, AND HE WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THEM.

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SCHEME PLANNED FOR REPAIR PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO LAUNCH A PILOT SCHEME IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR TO TAKE OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAJOR REPAIR WORKS IN SELECTED AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THAT THIS WAS AIMED AT IMPROVING EXISTING PROCEDURES CONCERNING REPAIRS AND THAT IF THE SCHEME PROVED PRACTICABLE, CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO EXTENDING IT TO OTHER AIDED SCHOOL.

MR LEUNG WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN ON WHAT MEASURES GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE TO SIMPLIFY AND SPEED UP THE APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR MAJOR REPAIR WORKS IN SUBVENTED SCHOOLS OR BODIES.

REFERRING TO PRESENT PROCEDURES, MR LEUNG SAID THAT THEY WERE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM WHICH COMBINED THE EXPEDITIOUS CARRYING OUT OF REPAIRS WITH ADEQUATE MONITORING TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

+THE SYSTEM IS UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW AND ONLY RECENTLY IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE TO ENABLE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS TO BE MORE QUICKLY RESOLVED AND INTERIM PAYMENTS MORE QUICKLY MADE.

+TO SEE IF ANY FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE, A MEETING WILL SHORTLY BE HELD BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS' COUNCILS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED,+ HE SAID.

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SIX PER CENT PENSION RISE APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED TWO MOTIONS TO INCREASE BY SIX PER CENT PENSIONS IN PAYMENT ON APRIL 1, THIS YEAR, INCLUDING PREVIOUS INCREASES ALREADY APPROVED.

THE INCREASE IS ESTIMATED TO COST \$37.1 MILLION FOR A FULL YEAR.

MOVING THE MOTIONS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL PURCHASING POWER OF CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS, INCLUDING PENSIONS PAYABLE UNDER THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION SCHEME AND UNDER THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS SCHEME.

THIS WAS ACHIEVED BY PERIODIC ADJUSTMENTS TO REFLECT CHANGES IN THE COST OF LIVING.

DURING THE LATEST REVIEW PERIOD FROM APRIL 1, 1984 TO MARCH 31, 1985, HE SAID, THE MOVING ANNUAL AVERAGE OF THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) ROSE BY 9.1 POINTS, OR 6.19 PER CENT.

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RISES IN FEES, CHARGES APPROVED
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SIX MOTIONS DEALING WITH RISES IN FEES AND CHARGES WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING OF THE MAGISTRATES (FEES)(AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1985, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS SAID THE INCREASED FEES REFLECTED INFLATION SINCE THE OLD FEES WERE SET IN 1976, AND BROUGHT THEM INTO LINE WITH THE FEES CHARGED FOR SIMILAR SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT COURT AND THE HIGH COURT.

THE REGULATIONS HAD BEEN MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE, BUT REQUIRED THE APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL TO BECOME LAW.

THE MATRIMONIAL CAUSES (FEES)(AMENDMENT) RULES 1985, MR THOMAS SAID, INTRODUCED A +BLOCK FEE+ SYSTEM, TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

INSTEAD OF A FEE CHARGED FOR EACH DOCUMENT FILED AT COURT, A LARGER FEE WOULD BE CHARGED FOR ALL DOCUMENTS FILED AT VARIOUS STAGES OF AN ACTION.

THIS SYSTEM HAD ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED UNDER THE SUPREME COURT (FEES) RULES AND DISTRICT COURT (FEES) RULES, AND SO FAR AS THEY WERE COMPARABLE THE FEES WERE THE SAME AS THOSE FEES, HE SAID.

THE FEES HAD BEEN LAST REVIEWED IN 1976.

SPEAKING OF THE COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) (AMENDMENT) RULES 1985, AND THE COMPANIES (FEES AND PERCENTAGES) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 1985, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON G.A. HIGGINSON, SAID THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROPOSAL WAS THE INCREASE FROM \$1 000 TO \$10 000 OF THE DEPOSIT PAYABLE BY A PETITIONER UPON PRESENTATION OF A PETITION FOR WINDING-UP UNDER SECTION 22A (1) OF THE COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) RULES, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A MINIMUM FEE OF \$10 000 CHARGEABLE UNDER THE COMPANIES (FEES AND PERCENTAGES) ORDER WHERE THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER ACTED AS LIQUIDATOR OF A COMPANY.

+AT PRESENT, THE COST TO A PROSPECTIVE PETITIONER IS MINIMAL AND PETITIONS ARE FREQUENTLY PRESENTED WHEN THERE IS NO REAL HOPE OF MEANINGFUL DIVIDEND,+ HE SAID.

THE REGISTRAR GENERAL HAD ESTIMATED THAT 44 PER CENT OF THE CASES PROCESSED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER INVOLVED TOTAL REALISABLE ASSETS OF LESS THAN \$10 000, HE SAID.

/EACH LIQUIDATION

EACH LIQUIDATION OF THIS SORT COST THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER ALONE AN ESTIMATED \$16 000 OR MORE, AND ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE COST IS RECOVERED IN FEES AND CHARGES.

+THE RESULT OF INTRODUCING A MINIMUM DEPOSIT AND FEE OF \$10 000 WILL BE TO DISCOURAGE CREDITORS FROM PETITIONING FROM WINDING UP WHERE THE ASSETS ARE NOT LIKELY TO YIELD A WORTHWHILE DIVIDEND. THIS WILL LEAD TO A CONSIDERABLE SAVING IN TIME, EFFORT AND MONEY,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR PETITIONERS RECEIVING LEGAL AID, THE MINIMUM DEPOSIT FEE OF \$10 000 WOULD BE PAID BY THE LEGAL AID DIRECTOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRACTICE.

OTHER AMENDMENTS INCREASED THE CHARGES PAYABLE UNDER THE FEES AND PERCENTAGES ORDER, AND REPLACED THE PERCENTAGE SCALE WITH A FLAT RATE OF 10 PER CENT CHARGEABLE ON THE TOTAL ASSETS REALISED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER.

THERE WAS POWER UNDER SECTION NINE OF THE ORDER FOR THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER TO APPLY TO THE COURT TO REDUCE THE FEE IF IT WOULD PRODUCE AN AMOUNT WHICH, PARTICULARLY IN THE RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD CASES WHERE THE ASSETS ARE CONSIDERABLE, WOULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE EFFORT INVOLVED, HE SAID.

AS FOR THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) RULES 1985 AND THE BANKRUPTCY (FEES AND PERCENTAGES) ORDER 1985, MR HIGGINSON SAID, THEY MADE SIMILAR PROVISIONS UNDER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE TO THOSE HE DESCRIBED FOR THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE.

THE OPPORTUNITY HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO RE-ORGANISE AND REDRAFT THE BANKRUPTCY (FEES AND PERCENTAGES) ORDER IN ITS ENTIRETY, HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THE MEETINGS OF CREDITORS (AMENDMENT) RULES 1985 EXTENDED, FROM ONE MONTH TO THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE RECEIVING ORDER, THE PERIOD OF TIME ALLOWED FOR THE HOLDING OF THE FIRST MEETING OF CREDITORS.

+THE PURPOSE OF THIS IS TO INCREASE THE INFORMATION ABOUT ASSETS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE, AND SO INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CREDITORS APPOINTING OUTSIDE TRUSTEES,+ MR HIGGINSON SAID.

MOVING THE REGISTERED TRUSTEES INCORPORATION ORDINANCE (AMENDMENT OF SECOND SCHEDULE) ORDER 1985, MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON APRIL 30 THIS YEAR, MR HIGGINSON SAID IT INCREASED SOME OF THE FEES PAYABLE TO THE REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCORPORATION OF REGISTERED TRUSTEES. THE FEES HAD BEEN LAST REVISED IN 1977.

THE NEW FEES WOULD NOT BE A BURDEN ON THE CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS FOR WHICH THE ORDINANCE PROVIDED, AS, WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS, THEY CONCERNED THE PROVISION OF DOCUMENTS TO THIRD PARTIES ENQUIRING ABOUT THEM.

THE TWO EXCEPTIONS, HE SAID, WERE THE FEE PAYABLE FOR ANY ALTERATION OR AMENDMENT TO A CERTIFICATE BY THE GOVERNOR, AND THE FEE PAYABLE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME OR SEAL, BOTH OF WHICH WERE RAISED FROM \$20 TO \$100.

THE REGISTRATION OF PATENTS (FEES) (AMENDMENT) RULES 1985, MR HIGGINSON SAID, INCREASED THE FEES PAYABLE FOR VARIOUS PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF PATENTS ORDINANCE.

THE FEES HAD LAST BEEN REVISED IN 1981. THE INCREASES WERE DESIGNED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE COST OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED.

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MOTION FOR LAND PREMIUM PAYMENT APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION WHICH WOULD ENABLE PREMIUM INCOME FROM LAND TRANSACTIONS TO BE SPECIFIED FOR DIRECT PAYMENT INTO THE CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION UNDER THE PUBLIC FINANCE (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1985, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID THIS WAS NECESSARY TO GIVE EFFECT TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING PARAGRAPH 6 OF ANNEX III TO THE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PUBLIC FINANCE (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1985 CONTAINED PROVISIONS FOR THE COUNCIL TO SPECIFY BY RESOLUTION THAT CERTAIN MONEYS BE CREDITED DIRECTLY TO A FUND WITHOUT THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATION.

THE RESOLUTION ALSO PROPOSED THAT THE FUND BE RESTRUCTURED, WITH EFFECT FROM THE DATE THE JOINT DECLARATION ENTERED INTO FORCE, BY THE SETTING UP UNDER IT OF THREE SEPARATE ACCOUNTS, SIR JOHN SAID.

+ALL PREMIUM INCOME FROM LAND TRANSACTIONS WILL IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT GO TEMPORARILY INTO A SUSPENSE ACCOUNT,+ HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE AMOUNT OF THE DEDUCTION OF THE AVERAGE COST OF LAND PRODUCTION, TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S SHARE OF PREMIUM INCOME, WOULD GO INTO A WORKS ACCOUNT FROM WHICH PAYMENTS FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC PROJECTS WOULD BE MADE.

+THE FUTURE SAR GOVERNMENT'S SHARE WILL BE PAID INTO THE BANK ACCOUNT OR ACCOUNTS DESIGNATED BY THE CHINESE SIDE,+ HE ADDED.

/THERE WOULD

THERE WOULD ALSO BE A RESERVE ACCOUNT THROUGH WHICH ADDITIONAL FUNDS, APPROPRIATED FROM GENERAL REVENUE, WOULD, WHEN NECESSARY, BE TRANSFERRED TO THE WORKS ACCOUNT.

INTEREST EARNED ON THE FUNDS HELD IN THE SUSPENSE ACCOUNT WILL BE DIVIDED ANNUALLY, AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH FINANCIAL YEAR, IN THE SAME PROPORTIONS AS THE GROSS PREMIUM INCOME HAS BEEN DIVIDED.

ALL THREE ACCOUNTS WOULD BE DIVISIONS OF THE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND WHICH IS REFERRED TO IN ANNEX III TO THE JOINT DECLARATION. THE SUSPENSE AND RESERVE ACCOUNTS WERE REQUIRED FOR TECHNICAL ACCOUNTING REASONS, HE ADDED.

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LEVY THRESHOLD RAISED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED TWO MOTIONS RAISING LEVY THRESHOLD UNDER THE PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE AND THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING (CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY) ORDINANCE.

THE LIMIT FOR ANY CONSTRUCTION WORK NOT LIABLE TO THE LEVY WILL BE RAISED FROM THE CURRENT \$250 000 TO \$1 MILLION.

MOVING THE TWO MOTIONS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, SAID THE INTENTION WAS TO REDUCE THE CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT SPENT IN COLLECTING RELATIVELY SMALL SUMS OF MONEY.

THE CHANGES WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JUNE 1, 1985.

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AMENDMENTS TO BILL WILL BE EASIER
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THE DANGEROUS GOODS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 SEEKS TO TRANSFER THE POWER TO MAKE ADMINISTRATIVE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD AMENDMENTS TO VARIOUS SCHEDULES TO THE DANGEROUS GOODS REGULATIONS FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL TO THE PUBLIC OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THEM.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IT SOUGHT TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER OF MINES AND THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES TO AMEND, BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE, THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE DANGEROUS GOODS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS.

/THE BILL

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSED TO EMPOWER THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE TO AMEND, BY NOTICE IN THE GAZETTE, THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD SCHEDULES TO THE DANGEROUS GOODS (SHIPPING) REGULATIONS, HE SAID.

+THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE DANGEROUS GOODS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS PRESCRIBES THE SPECIFICATIONS FOR LABELS TO BE ATTACHED TO THE PACKING OR CONTAINERS OF DANGEROUS GOODS.

+PROVISIONS IN THIS SCHEDULE RELATING TO EXPLOSIVES IN CATEGORY 1 ARE ADMINISTERED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF MINES AND PROVISIONS IN RESPECT OF LABELS RELATING TO DANGEROUS GOODS IN CATEGORIES 2 TO 10 ARE ADMINISTERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES.

+THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE DANGEROUS GOODS (SHIPPING) REGULATIONS IS A LIST OF APPROVED PETROLEUM WHARVES. THE SECOND SCHEDULE PRESCRIBES THE FORMAT OF DANGEROUS GOODS MANIFESTS. THE THIRD SCHEDULE IS A LIST OF APPROVED CONTAINER TERMINALS.

+PROVISIONS RELATING TO THESE THREE SCHEDULES ARE ADMINISTERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL AIMS TO FURTHER RELAX RENT CONTROL
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THE PROPOSALS OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 WERE MADE FOLLOWING THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF ANNUAL REVIEWS OF THE RENT CONTROL SYSTEM, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DAVID FORD, SAID TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, HE SAID THE PROPOSALS WERE DESIGNED TO FURTHER RELAX RENT CONTROL WITH THE OBJECT OF AN EVENTUAL RETURN TO FREE MARKET CONDITIONS, BUT THEY TOOK ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION IN 1984 AND THE PROSPECTS FOR 1985.

POINTING OUT THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, MR FORD SAID PUBLIC REACTION TO IT SINCE ITS PUBLICATION ON APRIL 26 HAD BEEN MUTED, AND THERE SEEMED TO BE BROAD ACCEPTANCE +OF THESE RATHER MILD PROPOSALS+.

+THEY AIM TO TAKE ANOTHER STEP ALONG THE ROAD OF PHASING OUT RENT CONTROL, BUT THE STEP IS A MODERATE ONE SINCE WE ARE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO AVOID HARDSHIP.

+IT IS NEVER EASY TO PLEASE BOTH LANDLORDS AND TENANTS, BUT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE BILL CONSTITUTE A REASONABLE COMPROMISE,+ HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL PROVIDED WITH PENALTY CLAUSE

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THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 REPRESENTED ANOTHER STEP IN PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION, THE HON PETER TSAO SAID TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR TSAO TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT IT SOUGHT TO PROVIDE A PENALTY FOR ANY PERSON TO MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT OF FACT ABOUT A CANDIDATE, OR FOR THE CANDIDATE HIMSELF TO DO SO.

HE SAID THAT BREACH OF THE PROVISIONS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A FINE OF \$500 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR THREE MONTHS UPON SUMMARY CONVICTION, OR A FINE OF \$2 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS ON CONVICTION UPON INDICTMENT.

+AN EFFECT OF THE BILL WILL BE ALSO TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR AN ORDER TO BE SOUGHT FROM THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL PRESCRIBING THE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF EXPENSES WHICH MAY BE INCURRED BY A CANDIDATE STANDING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS,+ HE ADDED.

THE PROPOSED CEILING IS \$20 000 FOR FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WHICH COMPRISE AN ELECTORATE SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER THAN THAT OF THE AVERAGE DISTRICT BOARD CONSTITUENCY, BUT WITH A MUCH WIDER GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSAL OF ITS ELECTORS.

AS THE ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE IN ANY OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE CONSTITUENCIES WOULD NOT EXCEED 59 AND THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD MINIMAL, MR TSAO SAID, +THE EXPENSES WHICH CANDIDATES IN THESE CONSTITUENCIES WILL NEED TO INCUR ON ELECTIONEERING WILL ACCORDINGLY BE RELATIVELY SMALL AND IT IS FELT FOR THIS REASON THAT THE CEILING ON THEIR EXPENSES SHOULD BE CAST AT THE LOWER LEVEL OF \$10 000.+

+ON A PER CAPITA BASIS, THESE PROPOSED CEILINGS WOULD ALLOW AN AVERAGE EXPENDITURE OF \$2.86 PER ELECTOR IN THE CASE OF THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, AS COMPARED TO AN AVERAGE OF \$2.28 PER ELECTOR IN THE DISTRICT BOARD CONSTITUENCIES,+ MR TSAO SAID.

+IN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE CONSTITUENCIES, HOWEVER, THE PROPOSED CEILING OF \$10 000 WOULD PRODUCE THE VERY MUCH HIGHER PER CAPITA FIGURE OF \$277 PER ELECTOR, AND FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN AS TO WHETHER THIS CEILING SHOULD NOT BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED,+ HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL SEEKS TO RAISE \$7.7 MILLION A YEAR

THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, SEEKING TO RAISE ADDITIONAL REVENUE OF ABOUT \$7.7 MILLION PER ANNUM AND TO SIMPLIFY AND IMPROVE WINDING-UP PROCEDURES, WAS READ A SECOND TIME TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON G.A. HIGGINSON, SAID THE SIMPLIFICATION WOULD ENABLE THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER TO CONCENTRATE ON CASES IN WHICH THERE WAS +SOME REAL POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING A DIVIDEND FOR THE CREDITORS+.

HE RECALLED THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO RAISE THE FEES AND CHARGES PAYABLE TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

+A FULL REVIEW OF THESE FEES AND CHARGES HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED,+ HE SAID.

EXPLAINING ANOTHER AIM OF THE AMENDMENTS, MR HIGGINSON SAID A LARGE BURDEN OF THE WORK UNDER THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE FELL ON THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER, WHOSE OFFICE HAD EXPERIENCED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN WORKLOAD DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

+AN INCREASING NUMBER OF INSOLVENCIES DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AN INCREASE IN BAD BUSINESS, BUT IS AN INDICATOR OF MORE BUSINESS.

+MEASURES TO INCREASE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE ARE THEREFORE TIMELY,+ HE SAID.

IN FORMULATING THE PRESENT PROPOSALS, MR HIGGINSON POINTED OUT, THE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO SEEK TO REDUCE THE WORKLOAD OF THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE, THEREBY INCREASING ITS PRODUCTIVITY, AND AT THE SAME TIME TO INCREASE REVENUE.

ONE OF THE MAJOR AMENDMENTS WAS TO ALLOW THE REMUNERATION OF AN OUTSIDE LIQUIDATOR TO BE DECIDED EITHER BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LIQUIDATOR AND THE COMMITTEE OF INSPECTION OR BY THE COURT, AND TO ALLOW THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER TO APPLY TO THE COURT FOR A REVIEW OF THE REMUNERATION OF THE LIQUIDATOR, HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS AMENDMENT TO SECTION 196 OF THE ORDINANCE WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF OUTSIDE LIQUIDATORS.

THE SECOND PROPOSAL IS TO RAISE FROM \$10 000 TO \$200 000 THE LIMIT ON THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY OF A COMPANY IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER MAY WIND UP THE COMPANY BY WAY OF SUMMARY PROCEDURE UNDER SECTION 227F.

/+THE EFFECT

+THE EFFECT OF INCREASING THIS LIMIT WILL BE TO ENABLE THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER TO USE THE SUMMARY PROCEDURE IN A GREATER NUMBER OF CASES AND SO REDUCE THE WORKLOAD OF HIS OFFICE,+ HE SAID.

MR HIGGINSON EXPLAINED THAT THE LIMIT OF \$10 000 HAD NOT BEEN CHANGED SINCE THE SUMMARY PROCEDURE WAS INTRODUCED IN 1976.

HE ADDED THAT THE WHITE PAPER ON THE REFORM OF THE INSOLVENCY LAW RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM RECOMMENDED THAT A SIMILAR LIMIT IN THE BRITISH ACT BE INCREASED TO 15 000 STERLING.

+A FIGURE OF \$200 000 IS THEREFORE APPROPRIATE FOR HONG KONG.

+THE OPPORTUNITY HAS ALSO BEEN TAKEN TO SIMPLIFY THE SUMMARY PROCEDURE,+ HE SAID.

THE THIRD AMENDMENT PROPOSED WAS TO CREATE A MINIMUM LIMIT OF \$100 000 TO THE AMOUNT OF CREDITOR'S FUNDS WHICH MAY BE INVESTED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF INSPECTION, BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CREDITORS.

THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO LIMIT THE INTEREST PAYABLE ON SUCH FUNDS TO A MAXIMUM OF 3.5 PER CENT PER ANNUM OR SUCH OTHER RATE AS MAY BE FIXED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HIGGINSON CONTINUED.

+THE INTEREST IN EXCESS OF 3.5 PER CENT ON SUMS OF OVER \$100 000 AND THE INTEREST ON SUMS OF LESS THAN \$100 000 INVESTED BY THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE GENERAL REVENUE.

+IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS MEASURE WILL GO SOME WAY TOWARDS MEETING THE COST OF THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER'S OFFICE,+ HE SAID.

MR HIGGINSON ADDED THAT THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED FOR THE INCREASE OF SOME MINOR FEES WHICH HAD NOT BEEN RAISED SINCE 1977 ALONG WITH CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) RULES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MOVE TO APPOINT VICE CHAIRMAN

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A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL BY THE GOVERNOR WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON G.A. HIGGINSON, SAID THE PROVISION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN WAS TO ALLEVIATE THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY AND WORKLOAD OF THE CHAIRMAN, PARTICULARLY IF THE CHAIRMAN WAS PRECLUDED BY TEMPORARY INCAPACITY OR ABSENCE FROM DISCHARGING HIS DUTIES.

THE BILL ALSO SOUGHT TO AMEND THE CONSUMER COUNCIL ORDINANCE SO THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WOULD CEASE TO BE AN EX OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL, AND THAT THE TITLE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHOULD BE CHANGED TO THAT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HE SAID.

THESE TWO MINOR AMENDMENTS WERE AIMED AT REFLECTING MORE ACCURATELY THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, WHICH PROPOSED THESE AMENDMENTS, SUPPORTED THE BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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PILOTAGE PROPOSAL REFLECTS PORT ACTIVITY

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THE REQUIREMENT FOR COMPULSORY PILOTAGE REFLECTED THE HIGH LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN THE PORT OF HONG KONG AND WOULD IMPROVE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON G.A. HIGGINSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PILOTAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, MR HIGGINSON SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL WAS TO AMEND THE PILOTAGE ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR COMPULSORY PILOTAGE FOR SHIPS NAVIGATING WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS.

THE MAJORITY OF OCEAN-GOING SHIPS IN THE PORT OF HONG KONG ALREADY USED THE SERVICES OF PILOTS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS, HE SAID. BUT, IN VIEW OF THE INCREASING NUMBER, SPEED AND SIZE OF SUCH SHIPS, IT WAS DESIRABLE TO INSIST THAT THEY DO SO.

/+THE BILL

+THE BILL DECLARES THE WATERS OF HONG KONG TO BE A PILOTAGE AREA AND REQUIRES COMPULSORY PILOTAGE IN THOSE WATERS FOR ALL SHIPS SPECIFIED IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE.

+IT ALSO EXEMPTS CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF SHIPS FROM COMPULSORY PILOTAGE AND EMPOWERS THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, AS THE PILOTAGE AUTHORITY, TO EXEMPT CERTAIN OTHER SHIPS SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES SO REQUIRE,+ MR HIGGINSON SAID.

FERRIES AND HYDROFOILS OPERATING TO AND FROM MACAU AND THE PEARL RIVER AND ALSO CERTAIN WORKING CRAFT OPERATING WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS WERE EXEMPTED FROM THE PROVISIONS.

+THE MASTERS OF THESE VESSELS ARE EXPECTED TO BE TOTALLY FAMILIAR WITH LOCAL CONDITIONS AND, UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD NOT REQUIRE THE SERVICES OF A PILOT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

COMPULSORY PILOTAGE WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THREE PHASES.

THE INITIAL PHASE OF COMPULSORY PILOTAGE WOULD COME INTO EFFECT ON AUGUST 1 THIS YEAR.

THIS PHASE WOULD PROVIDE FOR COMPULSORY PILOTAGE TO APPLY TO THREE CLASSES OF SHIPS: ALL SHIPS OVER 10 000 GROSS REGISTERED TONNES; ALL SHIPS OVER 1 000 GROSS REGISTERED TONNES PROCEEDING TO AND FROM CERTAIN SPECIFIED POINTS OR CARRYING SPECIFIED DANGEROUS GOODS= AND SHIPS OF 300 GROSS REGISTERED TONNES OR OVER WHICH ARE DISABLED FOR ANY REASON OR WHICH ARE LIKELY TO POSE A THREAT TO PROPERTY.

IT WAS HOPED THAT THE SECOND PHASE FOR ALL SHIPS OVER 5 000 GROSS REGISTERED TONNES AND THE THIRD PHASE FOR ALL SHIPS OVER 1 000 GROSS REGISTERED TONNES WOULD COME INTO FORCE IN 1987 AND 1989 RESPECTIVELY.

+THE REASON FOR THE PHASED INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY PILOTAGE IS TO ALLOW TIME FOR NECESSARY OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS TO BE MADE AND FOR ADDITIONAL PILOTS TO BE RECRUITED AND TRAINED,+ HE EXPLAINED.

MR HIGGINSON SAID THESE PROPOSALS HAD BEEN DRAWN UP IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE HONG KONG PILOTS ASSOCIATION, THE PORTS COMMITTEE, THE PORTS OPERATION COMMITTEE AND THE PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, ALL OF WHOM ENDORSED THE NEED FOR COMPULSORY PILOTAGE IN THE MANNER SUGGESTED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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DUTIABLE COMMODITIES BILL GOOD PIECE OF LEGAL DRAFTING
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THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES BILL IS A GOOD PIECE OF LEGAL DRAFTING, THE HON PETER WONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH TAX LEGISLATION WOULD APPRECIATE THAT IT WAS BY NO MEANS EASY TO DRAFT A BILL WHICH WAS PRECISE ENOUGH TO COVER THE TAX INTENDED AND YET SIMPLE ENOUGH FOR THE AVERAGE PERSON TO UNDERSTAND AND FOR THE TAX AUTHORITIES TO APPLY.

+IN MY VIEW THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 IS A GOOD PIECE OF LEGAL DRAFTING, PARTICULARLY THE DEFINITIONS OF COSMETICS AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, AND TO A LARGE EXTENT MEETS THE GENERAL CRITERIA DESCRIBED ABOVE,+ HE SAID.

THERE WERE, HOWEVER, THREE SPECIFIC AREAS IN WHICH HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OR CLARIFICATION. HE WAS PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD AGREED TO THREE AMENDMENTS WHICH HE WOULD MOVE AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

FIRST, ONE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS UNDER THE NEW SECTION (2A) IN CLAUSE 5(B) DETERMINING THE NORMAL PRICE OF ANY DUTIABLE GOODS MANUFACTURED IN HONG KONG STATED THAT THE SELLER WOULD BEAR 'FREIGHT, INSURANCE, COMMISSION AND ALL OTHER COSTS, CHARGES AND EXPENSES INCIDENTAL TO THE SALE AND THE DELIVERY OF THE GOODS TO THE BUYER'.

THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY DEFINED 'FREIGHT' AS THE HIRE OF SHIP OR AIRCRAFT FOR TRANSPORTING GOODS OR THE TRANSPORT OF GOODS IN CONTAINERS.

SINCE THIS SECTION WAS INTENDED TO APPLY ALSO TO GOODS MANUFACTURED AND USED LOCALLY, 'FREIGHT' WAS PERHAPS NOT THE MOST APPROPRIATE WORD. +LOCALLY MADE GOODS FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION ARE NOT NORMALLY TRANSPORTED BY AIR OR SHIP OR IN CONTAINERS,+ MR WONG SAID.

IT HAD THEREFORE BEEN AGREED THAT THE WORD 'TRANSPORT', WHICH CARRIED A MORE GENERAL MEANING, SHOULD BE USED INSTEAD.

SECOND, DEFINING 'COSMETICS' AS 'ANY PREPARATION TO IMPROVE, BEAUTIFY AND GENERALLY INCREASE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE PERSON BY EXTERNAL APPLICATION' WAS SOMEWHAT SUBJECTIVE AND MAY GIVE RISE TO DIFFICULTIES IN INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION.

TO REMOVE DOUBT, IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE WORD 'DESIGNED' SHOULD BE ADDED AFTER 'PREPARATION' AND THIS WOULD EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATE THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT.

/THIRD, THE

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THIRD, THE WORD 'FASTIDIOUSNESS' IN THE DEFINITION OF COSMETICS WAS BOTH SUPERFLUOUS AND UNDESIRABLE.

THERE WERE NO SCIENTIFIC OR ARTISTIC STANDARDS AS TO WHICH PREPARATION WAS LIKELY TO PROMOTE FASTIDIOUSNESS.

INDEED, SOME PEOPLE WHO USE THE PRODUCTS UNDER THIS CATEGORY - TALCUM POWDER, DEODORANT, DEPILATORY, ANTIPERSPIRANT, SUN TAN PRODUCTS OR A SALT OR FOAM FOR THE BATH - MIGHT FEEL OFFENDED BY BEING DESCRIBED AS 'FASTIDIOUS'.

+I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF ANYONE WOULD OBJECT TO THE DELETION OF THIS SOMEWHAT 'FASTIDIOUS' WORD ALTOGETHER,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD GIVEN NOTICE THAT HE WOULD BE MOVING TWO AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL.

+THEY APPEAR TO BE IN ORDER AND THEREFORE HAVE MY SUPPORT,+ HE SAID.

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FOUR BILLS PASSED
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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE: THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT)(NO. 3) BILL 1985, THE ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 AND THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985.

NINE BILLS WERE INTRODUCED AND READ A SECOND TIME, AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED.

THEY ARE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (POWERS AND PRIVILEGES) BILL 1985, THE DANGEROUS GOODS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE TRUSTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985, THE CONSUMER COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 AND THE PILOTAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED TO MAY 29.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1985

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COUNCIL HOLDS FIRST BUSINESS MEETING

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THE LEVEL OF HONORARIA AND OFFICE RENTAL ALLOWANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WERE DECIDED AT ITS FIRST BUSINESS MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

A PROPOSED ALLOWANCE OF \$28 000 PER MONTH FOR THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, \$14 000 FOR THE VICE-CHAIRMAN AND \$7 000 FOR ALL THE ORDINARY MEMBERS WAS ACCEPTED BY THE COUNCIL MEMBERS.

THE LEVEL REPRESENTED ABOUT 75 PER CENT THAT OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE URBAN COUNCIL.

+THE SLIGHTLY LOWER HONORARIA WAS PROPOSED ON THE BASIS THAT MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO PERFORM THE FULL RANGE OF FUNCTIONS OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE URBAN AREAS,+ A COUNCIL SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WILL NOT HAVE THE SAME DELEGATED STATUTORY POWERS OR FINANCIAL AUTHORITY OVER EXPENDITURE SINCE THE COUNCIL WILL BE ONLY PROVISIONAL AND ADVISORY IN NATURE IN ITS FIRST YEAR.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE 13 SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE URBAN COUNCIL HELD AN AVERAGE OF 330 MEETINGS A YEAR AND IT WAS ANTICIPATED THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WERE UNLIKELY TO REACH ANYWHERE NEAR THIS LEVEL IN ITS FIRST YEAR OF EXISTENCE.

IN ARRIVING AT THE LEVEL OF HONORARIA, THE COUNCIL ALSO TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION THAT THE AMOUNT OF TRAVELLING EXPENSES PER JOURNEY LIKELY TO BE INCURRED BY MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL MAY BE GREATER THAN THAT OF THEIR URBAN COUNCIL COUNTERPARTS OWING TO THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

A MAXIMUM OF \$1 750 PER MONTH IN OFFICE RENTAL ALLOWANCE WAS ALSO PROPOSED FOR MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL, COMPARED TO THE \$2 000 FOR THEIR URBAN COUNCIL COUNTERPARTS.

IN EXPLAINING THE DISCREPANCY, THE SPOKESMAN POINTED TO THE GENERALLY LOWER RENT LEVELS FOR OFFICE PREMISES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES COMPARED TO SIMILAR ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE OLD URBAN AREAS OF HONG KONG AND KOWLOON.

DURING THE 1-1/2-HOUR MEETING, THE COUNCIL ALSO DISCUSSED THE STANDING ORDERS WHICH GOVERN THE PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL MEETINGS SUCH AS THE RULES OF CONDUCTING A MEETING, OF DEBATE, OF VOTING, LINES OF AUTHORITY AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO COUNCIL PROCEDURES.

/MEMBERS OF

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1985

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MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WERE BRIEFED BY THE DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL SERVICES, MR TONY HAMMOND, ON THE WORK AND ORGANISATION OF THE DEPARTMENT WHILE SECRETARY FOR THE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT, MRS PAMELA TAN, ADVISED MEMBERS ON THE SUPPORTING ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT.

THE MEETING, HELD AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, ALSO RECEIVED A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FITTING-OUT WORK STILL BEING CARRIED OUT AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER IN TSUEN WAN.

ARRANGEMENTS WERE THEN MADE FOR MEMBERS TO VISIT THEIR CHAMBER FACILITIES WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR OCCUPATION IN SEPTEMBER.

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY FEE APPROVED

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) GAVE THE GO-AHEAD FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SPEND JUST OVER \$2 MILLION TO ENGAGE THE UNITED KINGDOM ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY AS CONSULTANTS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE DAYA BAY NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT.

WHILE THIS SUM IS \$672 000 MORE THAN ESTIMATED AT THE END OF LAST YEAR BEFORE THE CONSULTANCY BRIEF HAD BEEN FINALISED, THE ADVICE FROM THE U.K.A.E.A. WILL BE EXTREMELY DETAILED AND FAR REACHING.

IT WILL INVOLVE THE PRODUCTION OF SEVEN, IN MOST CASES HIGHLY TECHNICAL, REPORTS OVER A PERIOD OF MORE THAN 18 MONTHS, TOGETHER WITH THE PROVISION OF EXTENSIVE TRAINING, COMPUTER SOFTWARE AND PUBLICITY MATERIAL.

THE ORIGINAL COMMITMENT, APPROVED IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, WAS \$1 425 000. HOWEVER, SINCE THEN A DETAILED CONSULTANCY BRIEF HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE U.K.A.E.A. WHICH RESULTED IN THE FINAL FIGURE OF \$2 097 000.

/THE BRIEF

THE BRIEF REQUIRED THE CONSULTANTS TO UNDERTAKE FIVE STUDIES:

- * TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF THE RADIATION MONITORING PROGRAMME;
- * PRODUCTION OF A PRELIMINARY CONSEQUENCE MODEL FOR HONG KONG;
- * DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR HONG KONG;
- * PROVISION OF TRAINING; AND
- * ADVICE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

THE PLANNED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NUCLEAR POWER STATION AT DAYA BAY IN 1991 GENERATED PUBLIC CONCERN, AND AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS RESPONDING TO VIEWS EXPRESSED THE GOVERNMENT DEVELOPED A RADIATION MONITORING PROGRAMME TO UNDERTAKE ROUTINE ENVIRONMENTAL RADIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE WITHIN HONG KONG.

THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE MONITORING PROGRAMME WILL BE TO DETERMINE THE EXISTING LEVELS OF BACKGROUND RADIOACTIVITY TO PROVIDE A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT BASIS FOR COMPARISON AGAINST WHICH ANY CHANGES IN RADIATION LEVEL, FOLLOWING THE COMMISSIONING OF THE POWER PLANT, CAN BE MEASURED.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RECOGNISES THE NEED TO ASSESS THE PROBABILITY OF A NUCLEAR-RELATED ACCIDENT OCCURRING, AND TO ESTABLISH ADEQUATE MEANS TO DEAL WITH IT. THE PROBABILITY OF VARIOUS ACCIDENTS WILL BE ASSESSED THROUGH THE USE OF A CONSEQUENCE MODEL BASED UPON WHICH A CONTINGENCY PLAN DETAILING COUNTER MEASURES AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE DEVELOPED.

IN ORDER TO PROPERLY DEVELOP THE CONSEQUENCE MODEL AND ADVISE ON THE MONITORING PROGRAMME AND THE CONTINGENCY PLAN, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED EXPERTISE WAS REQUIRED FROM AN OUTSIDE CONSULTANT WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR SAFETY.

AROUND THE SAME TIME AS THE U.K.A.E.A. WERE APPROACHED THE GOVERNMENT SET ASIDE THE \$1 425 000, THEN AN ESTIMATE OF WHAT THE FEE WOULD BE.

TODAY, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVED THE INCREASE OF \$627 000.

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SOCIAL WORKERS' ROLE IN DRUG FIGHT STRESSED
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THE CONTACT BY OUTREACH SOCIAL WORKERS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN COMBATING THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE IN HONG KONG, THE COMMISSIONER OF NARCOTICS, MR GORDON MORTIMER, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE POINTED OUT THAT STATISTICS INDICATED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WERE MOST AT RISK TO THE DANGERS OF DRUG ABUSE AFTER THEY HAD LEFT SCHOOL.

SPEAKING AT A SEMINAR FOR OUTREACH SOCIAL WORKERS, MR MORTIMER APPEALED TO THEM TO HELP REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR ILLICIT DRUGS BY PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK, ASSISTING FAMILIES WITH DRUG PROBLEMS AND PERSUADING ADDICTS TO SEEK TREATMENT.

BY REDUCING DEMAND THIS WAY AND BY THE ACTION OF THE POLICE AND CUSTOMS IN REDUCING SUPPLY, SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS COULD BE MADE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

MR MORTIMER NOTED THAT IN 1984, THERE WAS A 14.8 PER CENT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES NEWLY REPORTED AS DRUG ABUSERS COMPARED WITH 1983 FIGURES, AND A 21 PER CENT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 21.

+HOWEVER,+ HE ADDED, +THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY.+

MR MORTIMER SAID THAT HEROIN ADDICTION CONTINUED TO BE A SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEM.

+THE ABUSE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS, WHICH CAN BE JUST AS HARMFUL AS HEROIN, IS NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN HONG KONG ACCORDING TO PRESENT INDICATIONS,+ HE SAID.

THERE WAS NO PERCEPTIBLE DRUG-RELATED DETERIORATION IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS AND THERE WAS NO UPSURGE IN ABSENTEEISM AT SCHOOLS OR IN THE WORK PLACE.

HE SAID IT WAS, HOWEVER, NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE HOW MANY PEOPLE MIGHT BE ABUSING THESE DRUGS ON AN OCCASIONAL OR CASUAL BASIS AND WHO HAD NOT YET FELT IN NEED OF MEDICAL TREATMENT.

THE NARCOTICS DIVISION CONTINUED TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CAREFULLY THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF REPORTS TO THE CENTRAL REGISTRY OF DRUG ABUSE (CRDA), THROUGH SPECIAL SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY CERTAIN REPORTING AGENCIES, AND THROUGH THE SEIZURES OF ILLICIT PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS.

/THE SEMINAR,

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THE SEMINAR, ENTITLED +DRUGS COMMONLY ABUSED IN HONG KONG+, IS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE NARCOTICS DIVISION, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, AND THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE. IT IS THE FOURTH OF ITS KIND TO BE HELD IN RECENT MONTHS AND IS AIMED AT PROVIDING OUTREACH SOCIAL WORKERS WITH UP-TO-DATE KNOWLEDGE OF DRUG ABUSE IN HONG KONG SO THAT THEY COULD PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN HELPING THE COMMUNITY TO FIGHT THE PROBLEM.

ALSO SPEAKING AT THE SEMINAR WERE MR ISAAC CHOW, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SECURITY OF THE NARCOTICS DIVISION; DR S.L. CHAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES; MR STEPHEN CHAN OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICE OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT; AND MISS IVY CHAN, SOCIAL WORKER OF THE HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

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TWO SUSPECTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS CAUGHT
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A PRE-DAWN ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION OPERATION IN THE NEW TERRITORIES RESULTED IN THE ARREST OF TWO SUSPECTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA.

THE OPERATION, JOINTLY CONDUCTED BY OFFICERS OF THE INVESTIGATION DIVISION OF THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT AND YUEN LONG POLICE STATION, WAS CARRIED OUT SHORTLY BEFORE 6 AM TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN MA TIN TSUEN, YUEN LONG.

A 22-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS ARRESTED INSIDE A HUT WHILE ANOTHER, AGED 30, WAS SUBDUED WHEN TRYING TO ESCAPE IN THE FIELDS.

BOTH ARE BEING DETAINED BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY STRESSED THAT SUCH OPERATIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS HIDING IN HONG KONG WOULD CONTINUE.

+THERE WILL BE NO AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND THEY WILL BE REPATRIATED WHEREVER THEY ARE FOUND,+ HE SAID.

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FOURTH QUARTER CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT FIGURES RELEASED
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THE TOTAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK CARRIED OUT BY ALL CONTRACTORS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1984 WAS 4.1 PER CENT HIGHER AT \$9 129 MILLION THAN THE PRECEDING QUARTER BUT 0.4 PER CENT LOWER THAN THE SAME QUARTER IN 1983.

ACCORDING TO THE QUARTERLY SURVEY OF CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT RELEASED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, THIS BROUGHT THE TOTAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK BY ALL CONTRACTORS IN 1984 TO \$34 848 MILLION, marginally higher than in 1983.

CONSTRUCTION WORK PERFORMED BY MAIN CONTRACTORS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1984 WAS \$5 942 MILLION, REPRESENTING AN INDEX OF 90.2, OR 0.8 PER CENT LOWER THAN THE PREVIOUS QUARTER. THIS WAS ALSO FIVE PER CENT LOWER THAN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1983. THE QUARTERLY AVERAGE FOR 1982 WAS TAKEN AS 100.

THE DECLINE IN CONSTRUCTION WORK BY MAIN CONTRACTORS WAS MAINLY DUE TO THE DECLINE IN VALUE OF WORK CARRIED OUT AT SOME MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION SITES.

CONSTRUCTION WORK PERFORMED BY MAIN CONTRACTORS DURING 1984 WAS VALUED AT \$23 792 MILLION, 1.3 PER CENT LOWER THAN IN 1983.

COMPARED WITH THE FIGURE ON CONSTRUCTION WORK BY ALL CONTRACTORS, THE FIGURES FOR MAIN CONTRACTORS ARE FREE FROM THE EFFECT OF DOUBLE-COUNTING VALUE DUE TO THE PRACTICE OF SUB-CONTRACTING PREVALENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THE GROSS VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK BY MAIN CONTRACTORS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1984 AMOUNTED TO \$4 724 MILLION, 0.7 PER CENT LOWER THAN THAT RECORDED IN THE PREVIOUS QUARTER AND 10.2 PER CENT LOWER THAN FOR THE SAME QUARTER IN 1983.

THE GROSS VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORK BY MAIN CONTRACTORS AT OTHER MINOR WORK SITES AND ERECTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES DECLINED SLIGHTLY, BY 1.3 PER CENT FROM THE PREVIOUS QUARTER, REVERSING THE CONTINUOUS UPWARD TREND IN THE PAST FEW QUARTERS. HOWEVER, AT \$1 218 MILLION, IT STILL REPRESENTED AN INCREASE OF 22.7 PER CENT OVER THE SAME QUARTER OF 1983.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS ROSE FURTHER IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1984 TO \$1 672 MILLION. IT WAS THE HIGHEST QUARTERLY FIGURE RECORDED BY THE SURVEY TO-DATE.

COMPARED TO 1983 FIGURES, CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS ROSE BY 17.7 PER CENT.

/THE OUTPUT

THE OUTPUT VALUE OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1984 WAS 2.6 PER CENT HIGHER AT \$596 MILLION THAN IN THE PREVIOUS QUARTER, BUT WAS STILL 31.1 PER CENT LESS THAN FOR THE SAME QUARTER IN 1983.

THE OUTPUT VALUE OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS WAS RELATIVELY LOW THROUGHOUT 1984. WITH AN ANNUAL TOTAL OF \$2 621 MILLION, IT WAS ONLY ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL 1983 VALUE.

THE RECOVERY IN THE CONSTRUCTION VALUE OF INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE BUILDINGS THAT STARTED IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1984 CONTINUED IN THE FOURTH QUARTER TO \$270 MILLION, AN INCREASE OF 10.2 PER CENT OVER THE PRECEDING QUARTER BUT A DECLINE OF 9.4 PER CENT OVER THE SAME QUARTER IN 1983.

COMPARING BOTH YEARS, THE CONSTRUCTION VALUE OF INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE BUILDINGS WAS DOWN 25.1 PER CENT.

DURING THE SAME QUARTER, THE OUTPUT OF TRANSPORT FACILITIES DROPPED TO \$903 MILLION. THIS WAS A DROP OF 11.6 PER CENT FROM THE PREVIOUS QUARTER AND 33.1 PER CENT DOWN FROM THE SAME QUARTER IN 1983. THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO THE DECLINE IN THE CONSTRUCTION VALUE FOR A NUMBER OF MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY PROJECTS FOR THE ISLAND LINE.

THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT SURVEY IS PRIMARILY AIMED AT DEPICTING THE QUARTERLY CHANGES IN CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT. ANNUAL ESTIMATES MAY BE DERIVED BY SUMMING UP FIGURES RELEASED FOR EACH QUARTER, BUT THESE ESTIMATES SHOULD BE TREATED AS PROVISIONAL FIGURES ONLY.

THE DEPARTMENT ALSO PUBLISHES ANOTHER SERIES OF ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO SMALLER ERRORS BY VIRTUE OF A LARGER SAMPLING SIZE.

THE QUARTERLY SURVEY REPORT, AT \$2 A COPY, MAY BE PURCHASED AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT CENTRE, OR AT THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES COUNTER, KAI TAK COMMERCIAL BUILDING, 317 DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL. REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION MAY ALSO BE ARRANGED.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SURVEY MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AT TELEPHONE 3-7224490.

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NEW OFFICE OPENING
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THE KWAI CHUNG WEST SUB-OFFICE OF THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICE WILL MOVE TO NEW PREMISES AT THE CONVERTED TAI WO HAU ESTATE TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

RESIDENTS WHO WISH TO MAKE USE OF THE VARIOUS SERVICES, ORIGINALLY PROVIDED IN THE OLD OFFICE AT KWAI CHUNG ESTATE, SUCH AS THE PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICES CENTRE, SHOULD NOW CALL AT NO. C12-14 OF THE COMMERCIAL CENTRE AT TAI WO HAU.

THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, MR CHAN SUI-JEUNG; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI DISTRICT BOARD, MR HO TUNG-CHING; AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WEST KWAI CHUNG AREA COMMITTEE, MR MA HIM, WILL OFFICIATE AT A CEREMONY TO MARK THE OPENING.

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POSTAL SERVICES RESUME
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INTELPOST SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND SWEDEN, SUSPENDED SINCE MAY 8, 1985 FOLLOWING A STRIKE BY THE SWEDISH POST OFFICE, HAS RESUMED, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE GENERAL POST OFFICE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT THE SAME TIME, SPEEDPOST SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, WHICH HAS BEEN SUSPENDED SINCE MAY 11, 1985, HAS ALSO RESUMED.

AIRMAIL AND AIR PARCEL SERVICES TO QUEENSLAND ARE ALSO BACK TO NORMAL, HE ADDED.

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SIGNBOARDS TO BE CLEARED

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TWENTY-FOUR OBJECTIONABLE AND ABANDONED SIGNBOARDS ON TWO BUILDINGS IN YAU MA TEI WILL BE REMOVED IN SEPARATE OPERATIONS TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE FIRST OPERATION WILL INVOLVE 22 SIGNBOARDS AT TOUGH MANSION ON NATHAN ROAD. FIFTEEN OF THESE ARE OBJECTIONABLE AND SEVEN ARE ABANDONED ONES.

TWO RE-ERECTED SIGNBOARDS AT 66, PARKES STREET WILL ALSO BE DEMOLISHED. A SIMILAR CLEARANCE TOOK PLACE AT THE SAME BUILDING LAST MONTH WHEN 16 OBJECTIONABLE SIGNS WERE TORN DOWN.

TOMORROW'S EXERCISES ARE INITIATED BY THE OWNERS' CORPORATIONS OF THE TWO BUILDINGS, AND ASSISTED BY THE DISTRICT OFFICE.

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SAI KUNG TOWN HALL READY SOON

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THE SAI KUNG TOWN HALL WILL BE READY IN A FEW MONTHS, PROVIDING LOCAL RESIDENTS WITH BETTER FACILITIES FOR CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, THE DISTRICT OFFICER, MR KEVIN HO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 25TH TERM OF THE SAI KUNG RURAL COMMITTEE, HE NOTED THAT RURAL COMMITTEES WERE PLAYING A DISTINCT AND IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

THEY PLAYED THEIR PART BY WIDENING THEIR CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNITY SO AS TO EFFECTIVELY EXERT THEIR INFLUENCE.

MR HO ALSO PRAISED THE EFFORTS OF PAST CHAIRMEN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN PROMOTING AND PARTICIPATING IN DISTRICT AFFAIRS.

THROUGH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SAI KUNG RURAL COMMITTEE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD MANAGED TO RESITE HAWKERS INTO THE NEW SAI KUNG MARKET COMPLEX, WHICH WAS OPENED LAST MONTH. THIS HAD RESULTED IN A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT TO THE DISTRICT'S ENVIRONMENT.

ALSO PRESENT AT TODAY'S INAUGURATION WERE THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR WILLIAM WAN, AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK CHAIRMAN, MR LAU WONG-FAT.

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