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\$47m price tag for Treasury's saviour

By Matthew Leung

THE Government is considering loosening its purse strings to purchase a state-of-the-art computer for the Treasury.

The new computer, estimated to cost \$47.2 million, would have sufficient power to meet a mounting workload up to 1994. It would replace the Treasury's overworked, obsolete computer.

Its purchase has been planned to coincide with the Treasury's move to

Wan Chai Tower 2 building in the middle of 1990.

The proposal was endorsed by the Computer Committee last October.

Legislative Councillors will vote on the proposal at next Wednesday's Finance Committee meeting.

The cost of replacing the Treasury's original mainframe computer at about \$47.2 million would save \$1 million a year in recurrent expenditure.

The Treasury's existing

computer was installed in 1983 and enhanced to form a dual processor configuration in 1985.

It has capacity for 30 operations, including Ledger, Accounting and Financial Information System (LAFIS), payroll, pension, payment of creditors, rates billing, crown rent billing and a maintenance cost control system.

It is used, on average, 75 percent of the time, 24 hours a day. Though, dur-

ing peak hours it is often used constantly, leaving little or no capacity for unexpected urgent tasks.

And, as the tasks increase in volume through natural growth, it takes longer to process routine applications, leaving little processing time for project development work.

A second mainframe computer was installed to help ease the load last year. It allowed for the off-loading of major tasks and

gives Treasury enough operating capacity to keep everything ticking over.

But, by 1990, when the Treasury moves to its new premises, it will need more processing power.

The Government logic is that by 1990, the existing system will be reaching the end of its useful life.

It was decided the most cost-effective solution was to purchase a more advanced computer.