

ABORTION: GOVT LOOKS AT IDEA TO EXTEND LAWS

HONGKONG'S controversial abortion laws may be expanded if the Government accepts recommendations in a report to be submitted by a working party assigned to find a solution to our rehabilitation needs.

Usually reliable sources said the team — comprising officials from the Medical and Health, Education and Social Welfare departments — had in its draft report

recommended that doctors be allowed to carry out abortions on women whose unborn babies may be born with abnormalities.

Colonial Secretariat within one month.

Fizz out of fireworks at Phil's 'Dvorak feast'

A MAMMOTH collection of nods and yawns was the prime feature of Saturday's concert by the Hongkong Phil — and this raises the question: is it really necessary to ram an all-Dvorak collection down our throats in the midst of the summer's heat?

Tchaikovsky goulashes bedevilled the concerts of former Hongkong maestro Lim Kek-tjiang, and all-Chopin and Mozart programmes have plagued the Arts Festival. Even with the world's top artists, they are not entirely successful — so it is hardly surprising that our local orchestra, smitten as it was by langours, should evoke little other than boredom in a concert devoted entirely to the works of one unfortunate composer.

The programme began happily enough with a well-rehearsed Slavonic Dance where the cellos sounded unusually cheery, and the changes of tempi were nicely handled by guest conductor Helen Quach. But this only lasted for ten minutes.

Then came the B minor cello concert with much acclaimed US artist Stephen Kates. He began with a certain tepid sweetness amid extremes of caution from the trombones and nasality from the violins. He continued in a well-battered fashion to the end.

Woodwind supported Mr Kates ably in the Adagio, but for the rest the orchestra showed little sympathy. He appeared to carve his own tempi — and even his own pitch — while they lagged somewhat less than gamely behind. Despite the fact that that concerto has featured on their programmes before, there were some very dicey bits in the general orchestral ensemble.

The concluding item — the inevitable New World symphony — sounded soggy. Timpani were horrendously out of tune, which spoilt the big bangs; while excessive care and attention to trivia slowed down the third movement and took all the fizz out of the fireworks. — **Kate McRae.**

The sources said the team had "realised that abortion should not be considered as a measure to prevent abnormalities, but it recognises the need for a review of existing laws to allow doctors to carry out abortions at the request of parents where medical diagnosis indicates that the child will be born with abnormalities."

Other sources said this recommendation would almost certainly meet opposition from a number of organisations, including the Church and the Society for the Protection of Birth Rights.

Both the Church and the Society have opposed a recent move by the Government, on March 25 this year, to make trial abortion laws permanent.

The working party, among other recommendations, will also submit reports in relation to the rehabilitation of physically or mentally handicapped children, the placement of such children in ordinary nurseries and other social needs, the sources said.

The working party on rehabilitation needs has been working on its draft report for more than a year and is expected to submit it to the