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\$100,000 'deal' on Pollux factory

By JAMIE ALLEN

THE Pollux Bleaching and Dyeing Works in Sai Kung will pay the Government \$100,000 for a special one-month licence so it can continue non-dyeing operations, a senior government lands official said yesterday.

It is also possible the factory site could be used for some non-polluting industrial activity in future, if the company successfully petitions the Executive Council in the next five months.

Last Friday, Pollux asked the Government to allow it to use part of its factory for non-dyeing operations such as office work, sewing, packing and storage of goods.

Mr Mo Chan-ming, Principal Government Land Agent (Specialist) in the Building and Lands Department, said the Government believed the request was a reasonable one as the factory had already cut off its fresh water supply and could not pollute the river at the moment.

"Our main objective is to eliminate pollution," he said.

Although the Government had originally taken a tough line against the factory — saying the closure notice or "re-entry" order meant the whole factory had to close and the land must be returned to the Government — it had decided to take a more flexible approach after

the owners of Pollux made their request.

"We have to deal with people reasonably. If the request is a reasonable one we will have to consider it," Mr Mo said.

Asked what powers the Building and Lands Department had under the Crown Rights (Re-entry and Vesting Remedies) Ordinance, Mr Mo said: "The Governor can dispose of any land and we have delegated authority from the Governor to dispose of land. It is not in any ordinance."

Mr Mo said Pollux had not yet petitioned the Executive Council and it was too early to predict whether a petition would succeed and, if so, how the land would be used.

But he added: "If a relief is granted I would predict that one of the terms of cancellation of re-entry would be that no industrial activity which causes pollution would be allowed."

If a petition succeeds and Pollux decides not to close its factory by the end of the year as it has threatened, it could use the building for general storage purposes or switch to some non-polluting industrial activity.

It is understood "non-polluting industrial activity" could include bleaching and dyeing if a good treatment system was installed and the factory met all government standards.