

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 4th meeting
held at the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 20 December 2000, at 9:30 am**

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kwok-keung (Chairman)
Hon NG Leung-sing (Deputy Chairman)
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok

Members absent:

Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP

Public officers attending:

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| Mr Stanley YING, JP | Deputy Secretary for the Treasury |
| Mr D W PESCOD, JP | Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service |
| Mr Philip CHAN | Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Industry |
| Mr Lawrence S P WONG | Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise |
| Mrs Stella AU-YEUNG | Customs Civil Secretary, Customs and Excise Department |
| Mr W S CHAN, JP | Deputy Secretary for Works |
| Mr Helius NG Kai-ming | Chief Assistant Secretary for Works |
| Mr Kevin HO, JP | Deputy Secretary for Transport |
| Mr LO Yiu-ching, JP | Director of Highways |
| Mr CHAI Sung-veng | Principal Government Engineer (Railway Development), Highways Department |
| Ms Zina WONG, JP | Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Bus Development) |
| Mr Brian GROGAN | Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Planning) |
| Mr Robin GILL, JP | Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare |
| Miss Mary TSANG | Principal Assistant Secretary for Health and Welfare |
| Mr Stephen PANG | Commissioner for Rehabilitation |

Clerk in attendance:

Miss Polly YEUNG Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3

Staff in attendance:

Ms Alice AU Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

EC(2000-01)18

Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (GDS(C)2) in the Customs and Excise Department from 14 January 2001 to 13 July 2002 to assist in carrying out the duties of the Vice-Chairman of the World Customs Organisation for the Asia Pacific Region

Members noted that the item had been discussed by the Panel on Trade and Industry at its meeting on 13 November 2000.

2. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2000-01)19

Proposed upgrading of one permanent post from Chief Engineer (D1) to Government Engineer (D2) in the Works Bureau of Government Secretariat to reflect its expanded responsibilities and increased complexity of work

3. Members noted that the item had been discussed by the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works at its meeting on 6 November 2000.

4. Mr NG Leung-sing sought elaboration on the role of the proposed Principal Assistant Secretary (Professional Services) (PAS(PS)) post as a contact point in the Administration for the Mainland authorities concerning the construction industry and related systems in Hong Kong. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Works (DS(W)) advised that under the proposed arrangements, at least two regular meetings would be held with the Mainland authorities every year while conferences and study missions would also be conducted in the Mainland. PAS(PS) would be responsible for co-ordinating and conveying the views put forward by the local construction industry on various issues of concern to the Mainland authorities for discussion at such meetings. The local construction industry would also be briefed on the outcome of the meetings.

5. Referring to the construction personnel registration system to be established under the leadership of PAS(PS), Mr NG Leung-sing enquired about the planned timetable for its implementation. In reply, DS(W) explained that since late last year, the Administration had been consulting various industry organizations and representatives on details of the registration system with a view to finalizing the necessary legislative proposals next year. According to this timeframe, the registration system was expected to be implemented in early 2002.

6. Responding to Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung on whether existing qualified construction personnel would be exempted from the registration requirement, DS(W) said that the registration system would apply to all construction personnel. It was estimated that at present, there were about 200 000 construction personnel in Hong Kong, with 150 000 working in construction sites and the remaining 50 000 in interior decoration works. Taking into account the views expressed by the industry during consultation, a one-off exemption arrangement for very experienced workers would be provided upon the implementation of the registration system.

7. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2000-01)20 Proposed -

- (a) making permanent of two posts: one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2);**
- (b) creation of one permanent post of Government Engineer (D2) to be offset by deletion of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2);**
- (c) creation of one permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) to be offset by deletion of one permanent post of Government Engineer (D2); and**
- (d) re-distribution of duties and responsibilities among the directorate staff**

in the Transport Bureau of Government Secretariat to maintain its directorate support to deal with the workload arising from the new and current railway projects and other major initiatives

8. Members noted that an information paper on the proposal was circulated to the Panel on Transport for its meeting held on 15 December 2000 and the item had been discussed by the Panel at a special meeting held immediately before the present meeting of this Subcommittee. In reply to Mr Howard YOUNG, the Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS(T)) reported that the present proposal, as well as the following one (EC(2000-01)21), were supported by the Transport Panel.

9. Mr Howard YOUNG sought clarification on the proposed conversion of one supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) post to a permanent Government Engineer (GE) post and of one permanent GE post to a permanent AOSGC post in the Transport Bureau (TB) under the proposed re-distribution of duties and responsibilities among its directorate staff, and asked whether the related duties had been suitably re-aligned. In reply, DS(T) explained that the two conversion proposals were related to each other. After re-distribution, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (7) would become a permanent GE post staffed by a professional grade officer to take up the duties in relation to the detailed planning and implementation of new railway projects recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS-2000), while the supernumerary Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (8) (PAS(T)8) post would be converted into a permanent AOSGC post for undertaking the required duties relating to transport planning as an integral part of the overall long-term strategic planning in Hong Kong.

10. To supplement, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury advised that the Administration had to report changes in the deployment of directorate posts to this Subcommittee even though the proposed re-distribution of duties did not involve any net deletion or creation of posts.

11. Whilst acknowledging the need to maintain directorate support to plan and implement new railway projects, Mr Henry WU was concerned that the Administration might seek to justify the creation of the proposed permanent posts by inflating their functions. Referring to Enclosure 9 to the discussion paper, he queried whether the duties in relation to the Disney Theme Park and Penny's Bay Rail Link (PBRL) should be put under the permanent PAS(T)8 post as both projects would be completed within the next few years. He suggested that the Administration should in future consider grouping short-term functions under one supernumerary post where appropriate.

12. While noting Mr WU's concern, the Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (DS(CS)) assured members that the question on whether a proposed post should be created on a permanent or supernumerary basis would be considered very carefully by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and where necessary, advice would also be sought from relevant advisory bodies. In the present case which involved the creation of permanent directorate posts, the Administration was obliged to obtain the approval of the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDSCS). SCDSCS was satisfied that the creation of permanent posts as proposed was fully justified on a functional basis.

13. On the proposed duties of PAS(T)8, DS(T) clarified that the work in relation to Disney Theme Park and PBRL was a component of the post-holder's main duty of providing policy input to major developments in Northshore Lantau such as Yam O, Tai Ho and Tung Chung as transport planning for Penny's Bay would have to tie in closely with the overall development of Lantau Island. Noting the Administration's explanation, Mr Henry WU said that such information should in future be clearly presented in the discussion papers to facilitate members' consideration.

14. On behalf of Members of the Democratic Party, Mr Albert CHAN expressed strong reservation on this item and the following item (EC(2000-01)21) which were related staffing proposals for TB, Transport Department and Highways Department to take forward RDS-2000 railway projects. He said that when the two proposals were discussed by the Transport Panel, he had raised his objection and expressed grave concerns about the recent spate of disputes and livelihood problems caused by TB's administrative blunders in the implementation of railway projects. Notwithstanding his stance on the issue, Mr CHAN hoped that if the proposed directorate staff was approved, TB would carefully review and learn from past mistakes to ensure that future railway projects would be delivered in a more acceptable manner.

15. Referring to the large number of permanent directorate level posts proposed under the present item and the following one, Mr Albert CHAN queried the equity of the Administration's policy and practice of creating permanent posts at the senior

director level while engaging junior and frontline staff on non-civil service contract terms.

16. In response, DS(CS) disagreed with comments about disparities in the treatment of staff at different levels. He explained that while certain posts could be created under delegated authority, all proposals for the creation of permanent directorate posts and supernumerary directorate posts lasting more than six months would have to be endorsed by this Subcommittee and the Finance Committee (FC). In order to provide greater flexibility in the wake of the freeze on civil service recruitment, individual departments were allowed to employ temporary staff on contract terms to meet their service needs. Hence, different staffing requirements would be met by the creation of posts at the appropriate levels through normal budgetary control mechanisms, taking into account the nature and duration of the staff functions to be performed.

17. In response to Mr HUI Cheung-ching's concern about the compatibility of the proposed creation of permanent directorate posts with the implementation of the Enhanced Productivity Programme (EPP), DS(T) assured members that TB and its executive departments were committed to achieving the targets of productivity gains set under EPP.

18. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2000-01)21

Proposed -

(a) creation of two permanent posts of one Principal Government Engineer (D3) and one Government Engineer (D2) to be offset by deletion of one supernumerary post of Principal Government Engineer (D3) with immediate effect, and creation of one permanent post of Chief Engineer (D1) with effect from 1 April 2001 in the Highways Department; and

(b) creation of two permanent posts of one Chief Engineer (D1) and one Principal Transport Officer (D1) in the Transport Department with effect from 1 April 2001

to take forward the planning and implementation of the priority railway projects recommended by the Railway Development Strategy 2000 and to ensure the timely delivery of current railway projects

19. Members noted that an information paper on the proposal was circulated to the Panel on Transport for its meeting held on 15 December 2000 and the item had been

discussed by the Panel at a special meeting held immediately before the present meeting of this Subcommittee.

20. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2000-01)22 **Proposed creation of two permanent posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Health and Welfare Bureau of Government Secretariat and increase in the establishment ceiling in 2000-01 from \$39,753,000 by \$3,568,320 to \$43,321,320 to provide the necessary support to the Women's Commission**

21. Members noted that the item had been discussed by the Panel on Home Affairs at its meeting on 14 November 2000.

22. Expressing support for the staffing proposal, Mr NG Leung-sing sought further information on the timeframe for the establishment of the Women's Commission (the Commission) as well as liaison work to be carried out with local women's groups. In reply, the Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare (DS(HW)) said that while it was the Administration's intention to set up the Commission as soon as possible, the timeframe would also need to take into account the creation of posts for supporting the Commission. FC's approval of the present establishment proposal would be sought in January 2001 and the plan was to set up the Commission with all the necessary staffing support as soon as possible thereafter. As regards liaison with local women's groups, he said that large-scale focus group meetings would be organized by the Commission two or three times every year to hear from and exchange views with different women's groups in the community.

23. Noting that many aspects of the work of the Women's Commission were in fact related more closely to the work of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) rather than that of the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB), Mr MAK Kwok-fung questioned the rationale of establishing the Commission under the purview of the Secretary for Health and Welfare. In response, DS(HW) said that the question had been subject to extensive debate. Women's issues cut across many policy areas including education, health, welfare, employment and childcare and the Women's Commission would serve as a central body to ensure that women's concerns and needs were effectively addressed. It was necessary for a policy bureau to provide executive support to the Commission and to ensure effective co-ordination between Government offices. Having considered the proposed functions of the Commission at length, the Administration had come to the view that the proposed institutional arrangement would help ensure that some early achievements could be gained in the areas of health and welfare. In this connection, Mr MAK remarked that while he was in support of the proposal, he found it difficult to accept the Administration's explanation as it seemed to have pre-empted the possibility of the Commission's early success if being

put under the purview of other policy bureaux.

24. Given that handling women issues was the core function of the Deputy Secretary (Women), Mr HUI Cheung-ching asked whether the Administration would be inclined to appoint a female officer to fill the post. In reply, DS(HW) said that it would be a matter for CSB to identify the most suitable candidate for the proposed post.

25. While supporting the establishment of the Commission in principle, Mr Henry WU sought elucidation on the exact nature and scope of the responsibilities of the Principal Assistant Secretary (Women) (PAS(Women)) in co-ordinating the collation of sex-disaggregated data and setting up a comprehensive database within the Government. In response, DS(HW) explained that in order to promote women's interests in Hong Kong, it was necessary to collect statistical data on the situation of women in certain sectors of the community. While some sex-disaggregated data had been collected by the Census and Statistics Department, other useful data was being collected by other departments and would need to be collated to form a comprehensive database. Moreover, while some basic women-related statistics such as the labour force participation rate, median monthly employment earnings, political participation rate and percentages of male and female undergraduates, were being collected, this data would need to be broken down by sex and analyzed.

26. Mr Henry WU considered that most of the data mentioned was readily available and he was not entirely convinced that a senior directorate officer was required to oversee these areas of work. In response, DS(HW) advised that the said duty was only one of the many duties on PAS(Women)'s schedule. Nevertheless, the importance of such work should not be overlooked because systematic data collection and research could bring about a better understanding of the problems faced by women in society.

27. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah said that with the establishment of the Women's Commission and a dedicated Women's Division in HWB to promote the well-being of women in Hong Kong, the Administration should keep in view the policy implications, if any, on existing legislation prohibiting sex discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. His view was echoed by Mr Howard YOUNG who referred to possible adverse impact of going too far down the road. He and Mr Henry WU expressed the view that the Administration should also consider men-related concerns in policy formulation. Noting the views expressed by members, DS(HW) advised that the objective of setting up the Women's Commission was to specifically address women's issues. If there were issues of concern to the opposite gender that needed to be addressed, the Government would be prepared to consider them in a positive light.

28. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2000-01)23

Proposed creation of one permanent post of Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2) in the Health and Welfare Bureau of Government Secretariat to be offset by deletion of one permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) to undertake the duties of Commissioner for Rehabilitation

29. Members noted that an information paper on the proposal had been circulated to the Panel on Welfare Services for its meeting held on 11 December 2000.

30. The item was voted on and endorsed.

31. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 10:15 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

11 January 2001