

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1048/00-01
(These minutes have been seen by the
Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP/1

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 15 February 2001 at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present :

- Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP (Chairman)
- Hon CHAN Kwok-keung (Deputy Chairman)
- Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
- Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
- Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
- Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
- Hon CHAN Yuen-han
- Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
- Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, JP
- Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
- Hon SZETO Wah
- Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
- Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
- Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
- Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
- Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP

Members absent :

- Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
- Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee

Public Officers : Item III
attending

Mr Philip K F CHOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mr K K LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (7)

Mr TSANG Kin-woo, JP
Acting Deputy Commissioner for Labour

Dr LEUNG Lai-man
Occupational Health Consultant (2)
Labour Department

Item IV

Mr K K LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (7)

Dr LO Wai-kee, JP
Occupational Health Consultant (1)
Labour Department

Item V

Mrs Jennie CHOR, JP
Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Labour Relations)

Mr Ernest LEE, BBS
Executive Director (Member Protection)
Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority

Clerk in : Mrs Sharon TONG
attendance : Chief Assistant Secretary(2)1

Staff in : Ms Dora WAI
attendance : Senior Assistant Secretary(2)4

I. Matters arising

Action

(LC Paper No. CB(2)849/00-01(01))

List of follow-up actions required of the Administration

Members noted the list of follow-up actions required of the Administration.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(2)849/00-01(02))

2. Members agreed that the following two items be discussed at the next meeting to be held on Thursday, 15 March 2001 at 2:30 pm -

- (a) Report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China in the light of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Report on implementation of Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Covenant; and
- (b) Preliminary proposal for Employees Retraining Board's Self-employment Business Start-up Fund.

3. Members also agreed that labour unions and trade associations be invited to give their views on the item as referred to in paragraph 2(a) above at the next meeting and that the items on "Working Holiday Scheme between Hong Kong and New Zealand" and "Employees' compensation system" be discussed at the meeting in April 2001.

III. Draft Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Medical Examinations) Regulation

(LC Paper No. CB(2)849/00-01(03))

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (DSEM) briefed members on the proposed Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Medical Examinations) Regulation (the proposed Regulation) and related amendments to the Industrial Training (Construction Industry) Ordinance, as detailed in the Administration's paper. He pointed out that the legislative intent of the proposed Regulation was to protect the health of workers engaged in 17 designated hazardous occupations. All the occupational diseases associated with these occupations were covered by the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO) and other related ordinances. The statutory rights and benefits of workers would not be affected by the implementation of the proposed Regulation.

5. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan pointed out that under the proposed Regulation, an appointed medical practitioner (AMP) might recommend to an employer, after

Action

considering the safety and health of an employee concerned, for suspending the employee from employment in his particular occupation for a period to be specified by the AMP. Considering that a worker who was medically unfit to work in a particular occupation might be fit for other occupations, Mr LEE asked how the Administration could ensure that a worker who was recommended on temporary suspension from employment would be granted paid sickness days if his employer was unable to arrange other temporary work for him. DSEM explained that only workers engaged in seven of the 17 designated hazardous occupations covered by the proposed Regulation might be required to be temporarily suspended from employment in their particular occupation. The number of such workers was estimated to be around 20 000. He said that the hazards of the seven occupations were all related to chronic poisoning which was caused by exposure to hazardous substances for a long time, therefore only workers with long service in these occupations would be affected. In view of the long service of these workers, their accumulated paid sickness days should be sufficient to cover the period of suspension which would normally last for one to two months. Under the guidelines to be issued, an AMP would recommend paid sickness days for the employee who was recommended for temporary suspension, if re-deployment could not be arranged by the employer.

6. The Chairman expressed concern that a worker might have insufficient or no paid sickness days accumulated to cover the temporary suspension period. He said that a worker's sickness allowance benefits might be affected when he suffered from a non-occupational illness while his paid sickness days had already been exhausted by his previous occupational illness. He also asked how to ensure that the worker would not contract the same occupational disease upon his return to work and the possible consequence if the worker chose not to continue the employment.

7. DSEM explained that not all these 20 000 workers would have to be temporarily suspended from employment. Only those engaged in the seven hazardous occupations without adopting effective protective measures would be affected. He cited Singapore as an example that out of some 70 000 occupational medical examinations conducted in 1999, only 1 138 were found abnormal; and of which 1 108 were related to exposure to excessive noise at work. These workers were not required to be suspended from employment and the abnormality could be rectified by wearing protective equipment. He pointed out that under the Employment Ordinance (EO), an employee could accumulate a maximum of 120 paid sickness days. The possibility of having insufficient paid sickness days to cover the suspension period was therefore low. He further said that in theory the chance of contracting the same occupational disease again was low as the Labour Department (LD) should have inspected the workplace and recommended suitable protective measures to the employer to improve the working environment. If the worker chose to discontinue his employment, the termination would be handled as a general termination of employment contract.

8. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that paid sickness days for occupational diseases

Action

should be claimed under the ECO rather than using the worker's sickness allowance under the EO. In principle, employers should not be held responsible for the compensation. Occupational Health Consultant (2), Labour Department (OHC(2)/LD) said that if an employee was diagnosed as suffering from occupational disease, his paid sickness allowance would be made in accordance with the ECO. However, the following situations were not covered by the ECO -

- (a) if the occupational disease was so preliminary that it did not fall within the ambit of the ECO; and
- (b) if the illness was of a general nature and was caused by the personal health of a worker rather than his occupation.

9. The Chairman pointed out that there might be disputes over illnesses not defined as occupational diseases but were indeed caused by the occupation. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, OHC(2)/LD confirmed that workers engaged in the 17 designated hazardous occupations suffering from occupational diseases were entitled to compensation under the ECO or related ordinances such as the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance. The Chairman suggested that this should be expressly stated in the proposed Regulation.

10. Ms LI Fung-ying expressed concern about the protection for workers who were certified to have suffered from occupational diseases, but which did not fall within the prescribed occupational diseases under the ECO, and were required to be permanently suspended from the occupation. OHC(2)/LD said that all the possible occupational diseases associated with the 17 designated hazardous occupations were included in 49 occupational diseases prescribed in the ECO or related ordinances. Such workers would be protected under those ordinances. In reply to Ms LI's further question, OHC(2)/LD said that the cost of medical examinations of non-construction workers would be borne by employers.

11. Ms LI Fung-ying said that there might be a situation where a worker suffered illness caused by a combination of his personal health condition and his occupation and was required to be permanently suspended from employment. She asked whether there would be protection for the worker. Acting Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Ag DC for L) said that an AMP would make a judgment as to whether a worker's illness was directly caused by his job. If it was confirmed to be otherwise, the termination of employment would be dealt with in accordance with the EO. Ms LI opined that the Administration should make clear the definition of occupational disease as there had all along been many disputes in this regard. Otherwise, workers might be unable to benefit from the proposed Regulation. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the occupational diseases associated with each of the 17 designated occupations and the industries in which these occupational diseases were found.

12. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that there had been practical difficulties in

Adm

Action

determining whether a disease was purely caused by his occupation, such as in the case of occupational deafness, especially when a worker's service in the occupation was short. A clear definition of occupational disease would definitely help reduce the grey areas in this aspect. She recalled that when the proposed Regulation was studied by a subcommittee in the last legislative term, the Administration was requested to consider establishing a central occupational compensation system to overcome the grey areas. OHC(2)/LD said that whether a disease was an occupational one and whether compensation should be made under the ECO would be decided by the Employees' Compensation Assessment Board. As regards occupational deafness, he said that the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance clearly listed out the occupations covered by the Ordinance.

13. In response to Mr Kenneth TING, DSEM said that employers were welcome and encouraged to arrange other temporary work for workers during the suspension period as long as the working environment was free from hazards.

14. Referring to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the paper, Mr Andrew CHENG asked about the details of the savings provision. DSEM said that the Department of Justice had suggested to include a savings provision in the proposed Regulation such that no provisions in the proposed Regulation might affect any rights or liabilities of any employers or employees under the law. Mr CHENG requested the Administration to provide members with the wording of the proposed Regulation, especially the savings provision, as soon as possible. DSEM undertook to provide the information.

Adm

15. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah expressed support for the direction of the proposed Regulation. In order to allow flexibility, he suggested that the Administration should consider classifying the workers into two categories, viz intakes and workers currently employed in hazardous occupations. He said that an intake who was found medically unfit for an occupation should not be allowed to work in that occupation. However, those currently employed in hazardous occupations should be given a choice to continue working in that occupation, except for those suffering from critical occupational diseases. If the worker chose to stay, he should be required to undergo regular medical examinations so as to monitor his health condition and the progress of improvement in the working environment. A centralized database storing related information should be maintained to follow up the occupational diseases so that preventive and improvement measures could be adopted. Mr LEUNG also asked whether the Administration would consider setting up a short-term fund to meet the financial needs of workers currently employed in hazardous occupations being affected by the proposed Regulation.

16. DSEM said that in principle an AMP would be able to judge the degree of hazards if the worker continued to work in that occupation without taking the recommended break. Considering the short duration of the temporary suspension and for the sake of health, the worker should not be encouraged to continue the job. As employers would be encouraged to arrange other type of work for the worker during

Action

the suspension period and paid sickness days would be granted if re-deployment could not be arranged, the worker should not in general experience undue hardship. OHC(2)/LD pointed out that temporary suspension from employment was not required for workers suffering from certain occupational diseases e.g. occupational deafness. However, in the case of serious occupational diseases, such as occupational asthma, the workers concerned should not be allowed to continue their occupations as it might further risk his health. As regards the centralized database, OHC(2)/LD said that AMPs would report all detected occupational diseases to the Commissioner for Labour for follow-up actions as required under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

17. In reply to the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (7) (PAS(EM)7) said that in view of the unique characteristics of the construction industry in having a multi-layered sub-contracting system, the Administration proposed to appoint the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) as the agent for the construction industry to arrange and pay for medical examinations. He pointed out that the ultimate responsibility in respect of workers' occupational diseases would rest with the principal contractor under the ECO. He added that a report recently released by the Construction Industry Review Committee suggested that the responsibility should be shared by the principal contractor and concerned sub-contractors.

18. Mr James TIEN expressed concern about employers' responsibilities under the proposed Regulation. He opined that time limits should be set, especially for construction industry, before which an employer would not be held responsible if an intake was found having occupational disease which was most likely caused by his previous jobs. PAS(EM)7 said that workers suffered from occupational diseases, except for pneumoconiosis and occupational deafness, were compensable under the ECO provided that the prescribed criteria were fulfilled, e.g. prescribed period. The prescribed period for different occupational diseases were different. Ag DC for L added that employers were required under the ECO to take out insurance cover for employees, therefore compensation for occupational diseases would be paid by the insurer.

19. Mr James TIEN asked about the arrangement with regard to the wages to be paid to a worker on sick leave due to occupational disease. DSEM said that the employer had to pay a sickness allowance equivalent to four-fifth of the wages of the worker concerned if re-deployment could not be arranged. In response to Mr TIEN's further question, Ag DC for L said that even without the proposed Regulation, an employee could be on sick leave for one to two months. Arrangement to cover up the work of employees on sick leave would normally be dealt with by mutual agreement between employers and employees. Mr TIEN opined that the kind of sickness days under the proposed Regulation was different from the general ones as there were some limitations on both employers and employees. He commented that arranging re-deployment for a worker on temporary suspension was sometimes impractical, especially in the construction industry.

Action

Adm

20. The Chairman asked the Administration to consider the points raised by members and, if possible, provide members with the requested information before the introduction of the proposed Regulation.

IV. Occupational injuries to the arm (LC Paper No. CB(2)849/00-01(04))

21. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that it was difficult to prove that an employee was suffering from tenosynovitis and strain injuries as there might not be significant signs. It was also difficult to prove that the injuries were caused by the job. He opined that there were insufficient preventive measures in this aspect and suggested that the Administration should consider introducing rest breaks for workers engaged in highly repetitive works through legislation.

22. PAS(EM)7 said that the Administration was aware of the upward trend of workers suffering from upper limb injuries arising from the growing use of computer. The proposed Occupational Safety and Health (Display Screen Equipment) Regulation (the proposed DSE Regulation) which was being examined by a subcommittee of the Council aimed at protecting the safety and health of DSE users. The proposed DSE Regulation was premised on the concept of self-regulation. Guidelines on working with DSE would be issued to help employers and employees minimize health risks associated with prolonged work with DSE. Under the guidelines, a DSE user was recommended to perform DSE work and non-DSE work alternatively so that the posture could be changed and fatigue arising from prolonged DSE work could be relieved. If no alternative duty could be arranged, it was recommended that appropriate rest breaks be provided. As regards non-computer related work, similar guidelines were made for manual handling operations.

23. Occupational Health Consultant (1), Labour Department (OHC(1)/LD) agreed that it was sometimes difficult to confirm as to whether tenosynovitis was caused by the job. He said that in those cases with doubt, medical practitioners would pay a visit to the workers' workplaces before drawing a conclusion on whether the suspected cases of tenosynovitis were caused by the job.

24. Referring to the number of reported cases of occupational injuries to upper limbs, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung commented that the figures were still on a high side. He asked about the effectiveness of the guidelines in the prevention of occupational injuries to upper limbs. PAS(EM)7 said that the guidelines on working with DSE would help employers and employees better understand the statutory requirements under the proposed DSE Regulation in the protection of safety and health of workers performing DSE work. The guidelines would be published in conjunction with the coming into effect of the proposed DSE Regulation. It was difficult to assess the effectiveness of the guidelines at this stage. OHC(1)/LD said that the figures were not exceptionally high. Of the 27 100 and 25 843 reported cases of occupational injuries

Action

to upper limbs in 1998 and 1999 respectively, only 71 and 55 cases of tenosynovitis and strain injuries were confirmed in the two years respectively.

25. In response to Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's further questions, PAS(EM)7 said that the guidelines made under the proposed DSE Regulation would not be mandatory. The provision of rest breaks to employees as contained in the guidelines was only a suggestion for employers. He added that under the proposed DSE Regulation, an employer would be required to conduct risk assessment and carry out the necessary rectification work accordingly. An employer might be prosecuted for non-compliance with the proposed DSE Regulation.

26. Referring to the confirmed cases of tenosynovitis and strain injuries in 1998 and 1999, Ms Cyd HO enquired about the total number of claimed cases of tenosynovitis and strain injuries which had been dealt with by the occupational health clinics. She pointed out the difficulties in determining as to whether injuries to upper limbs were caused by the job. OHC(1)/LD said that these cases were confirmed as job-related tenosynovitis and strain injuries involving manual labour or frequent or repeated movements of the hand or forearm. He undertook to provide the statistics requested by Ms HO.

Adm

27. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that the Administration should focus its efforts on preventing tenosynovitis and strain injuries rather than providing general information about upper limb injuries. He also suggested that the Administration should find out what occupations were vulnerable to tenosynovitis and strain injuries and discuss with the industries concerned to identify effective preventive measures to address the problem. OHC(1)/LD said that in general, workers engaged in construction industry, manufacturing industry and office work each accounted for approximately one-third of the confirmed cases of tenosynovitis and strain injuries. Detailed figures were published in regular medical publications. He undertook to provide the detailed breakdown of occupations of patients confirmed to have tenosynovitis and strain injuries. He stressed that LD had put a lot of efforts in publicity and public education on strain injuries. Over 400 health talks in relation to strain injuries had been delivered to workers in various industries in 1999 and 2000.

Adm

V. Retirement protection for employees after the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund System — follow-up issues
(LC Paper No. CB(2)849/00-01(05))

28. Executive Director (Member Protection), Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (ED(MP)/MPFA) briefed members on the progress of implementing Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) System since its commencement on 1 December 2000, as detailed in the paper. He added that there was a rising trend on complaints

Action

received recently. About 15 to 25 cases of complaint were received each day. Up to mid-February 2001, 400 complaints had been received by MPFA. Most of the complaint cases were resolved after conciliation, only 50 cases were still being followed up.

29. Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Labour Relations) (AC for L(LR)) briefed members on the complaints received by LD in relation to the MPF System. She also informed members of the latest developments of the 19 complaint cases as follows -

- (a) eight cases had been resolved;
- (b) eight cases had been referred to the Labour Tribunal and Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board for adjudication, of which two had been resolved; and
- (c) of the three cases received in January 2001, a conciliation meeting was scheduled for one case; and the employees' decision on whether or not to lodge claim for conciliation was awaited for the remaining two cases.

She added that the number of enquiries concerning the MPF System received by LD's MPF enquiry hotline and the Labour Relations Division had dropped significantly in January 2001.

30. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked about the details of the enrolment of the construction and the catering industries in the Industry Schemes. ED(MP)/MPFA said that the number of participants in the Industry Schemes from the catering industry was less than that from the construction industry, whereas the amount of MPF contributions from the catering industry was more. About 75% of the contributions were from the catering industry and 25% from the construction industry. He pointed out that the figures might not truly reflect the situation as some people in the construction industry were joining the Industry Schemes on a self-employed person basis and the participants might choose to make the contributions on a yearly basis instead of monthly. To his knowledge, employers in the catering industry who had joined the Master Trust Schemes would gradually switch to the Industry Schemes because the Master Trust Schemes were not suitable for catering companies with a lot of casual and temporary workers. The latest figure showed that around 1 000 employers had transferred from the Master Trust Schemes to the Industry Schemes. MPFA would monitor the progress closely and enhance publicity in this aspect.

31. In response to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's question, ED(MP)/MPFA said that MPFA was fully aware of the sharp increase in the number of complaints in February 2001. Many of them were due to the long time taken by trustees in processing contributions by employers as a result of the last-minute rush. The MPFA had already taken steps with trustees concerned to improve the situation. To deter non-compliance, MPFA had, in addition to investigation of complaint cases, carried out

Action

proactive inspections. The inspection team of MPFA had conducted 100 proactive inspections each day. Through these inspections, about 20% of the proprietors inspected were found not joining the MPF schemes. MPFA would issue reminders and provide necessary assistance to the proprietors concerned. He added that some 40 cases of non-participation were being followed up by MPFA and five cases were under investigation. Should the employers involved in these five cases continue the malpractice, they might be prosecuted.

32. In reply to Miss CHAN Yuen-han, AC for L(LR) said that the eight complaint cases had been resolved without affecting the employees' rights and benefits. The outcome of these cases were as follows -

- (a) the concerned employers acceded to the employees' requests to retain the existing occupational retirement schemes;
- (b) cases on reduction of salary and related benefits were not pursued after conciliation or advice given by LD; and
- (c) the employer was willing to return the amount of MPF contributions which had been wrongfully deducted from the employee's termination payment.

33. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that a lot of employees were forced by their employers to change to self-employed persons upon the implementation of the MPF System. She expressed concern about the entitlement to compensation for work-related injuries for these "self-employed persons". AC for L(LR) said that out of the 19 complaints handled by LD, there was only one case alleging the replacement of employment contract by contract for service. The employer of the case denied the allegation and the case was referred to the Labour Tribunal for adjudication. She further said that an employer could not unilaterally vary the terms of employment. If the change of status to self-employed persons was in name only and the employer-employee relationship had not changed in essence, the employer would not be able to evade his responsibilities under the ECO and the EO.

34. Mr Tommy CHEUNG opined that the existing low participation rate of the catering industry in the Industry Schemes might be caused by an over-estimate of the number of employees in the industry. He welcomed MPFA to refer to him non-participation cases in the catering industry for follow-up. He commented that the after-sale service of the trustees of the Master Trust Schemes was unsatisfactory. ED(EP)/MPFA said that MPFA was aware of the complaints about the services of some trustees of the schemes. They had been requested to increase manpower to cope with the service demand. MPFA would closely monitor the trustees with a view to improving their services. He added that a meeting had been scheduled with the trustees the following week to review their services.

Action

35. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern about the protection of employees' benefits, particularly those in the construction industry, after the implementation of the MPF system. He pointed out that the insurance trade had indicated to the construction industry that no compensation would be given to those employees who had changed to the status of self-employed persons injured at work. The entitlement of these "self-employed persons" to employees' compensation would be adversely affected. Given the unique characteristics of the construction industry in having a multi-layered sub-contracting system, he suggested that the Administration should consider setting up a separate employees' compensation system for the construction industry.

36. AC for L(LR) said that if the change in status to self-employed persons was in name only and the employer-employee relationship did exist, the employer would be liable for compensation for employment-related injuries as required under the ECO. As for the construction industry, in practice, the principal contractors would also take out employees' compensation insurance cover for subcontractors' workers. It would be unlikely that the principal contractors would stop the practice due to the MPF System. Nevertheless, LD and MPFA would liaise closely with the construction trade associations, labour unions and the insurance trade with a view to working out possible solutions to address the problems arising from the implementation of the MPF System. She added that having regard to the fact the MPF System had just been implemented, more time should be given before any changes or new arrangements should be introduced.

37. In reply to Mr LEUNG Fu-wah, ED(MP)/MPFA said that a total of 250 000 employers, 2 000 000 relevant employees and 280 000 self-employed persons in Hong Kong were covered by the MPF System. So far approximately 180 000 employers, 1 700 000 employees and 260 000 self-employed persons had joined the MPF schemes. The 8 100 employers, 97 000 employees and 17 000 self-employed persons mentioned in paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper referred to the enrolment in the Industry Schemes.

38. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that indeed a lot of workers were forced by the employers to change to self-employed persons due to the MPF System. These "self-employed persons" would not be protected by labour laws. He suggested that LD should step up proactive inspections at workplaces to check whether the mode of operation in respect of these "self-employed persons" was no different from that of an employee. He opined that it would be much more effective for LD to deter such malpractice of employers through proactive inspections and prosecutions as "self-employed persons" might have worries in lodging formal complaints against their employers.

39. AC for L(LR) said that LD and MPFA would act on complaints and conduct proactive inspections. She explained that malpractice of employers would easily be detected by checking records of their employees, such as wages records and leave records etc. If a "self-employed person" was confirmed to be an employee, the

Action

employer concerned would be held responsible for the mandatory MPF contributions. He would be required to make retrospective MPF contributions for the employee concerned. She pointed out that information about employees' statutory rights and benefits in respect of the MPF System would be disseminated to employees during LD's general inspections. Aggrieved employees could also approach LD's inspectors for complaints against being forced to change to self-employed persons due to the implementation of MPF. Each and every cases of complaint would be followed up by LD or MPFA as appropriate. The Chairman asked the Administration to provide members with more information in this aspect in the next monthly progress report, such as the number of proactive inspections conducted.

Adm

VI. Any other business

40. Mr SZETO Wah expressed concern that shortly after the dispute concerning cargo-handling surcharge between container lorry drivers and the Mid-stream Operators' Association had been settled, some 30 drivers who had taken part in the blockade at the Kwai Chung terminal were served with letters proposing possible legal action against them. He hoped that LD could act as a mediator in the matter and assist these drivers as far as possible. AC for L(LR) agreed to convey to the Economic Services Bureau Mr SZETO's concern.

41. There being no other business. The meeting ended at 4:50 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

13 March 2001