

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 286/01-02

Ref : CB2/H/5

House Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 3rd meeting
held in the Legislative Council Chamber
at 2:30 pm on Friday, 2 November 2001**

Members present :

Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon HUI Cheung-ching, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum

Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok

Members absent :

Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP

Clerk in attendance :

Mrs Justina LAM Clerk to the House Committee

Staff in attendance :

Mr Ricky C C FUNG, JP	Secretary General
Mr Jimmy MA, JP	Legal Adviser
Mr LAW Kam-sang, JP	Deputy Secretary General
Mr LEE Yu-sung	Senior Assistant Legal Adviser

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Ray CHAN	Assistant Secretary General 3
Miss Kathleen LAU	Chief Public Information Officer
Mrs Anna LO	Principal Assistant Secretary (Administration)
Ms Bernice WONG	Assistant Legal Adviser 1
Miss Connie FUNG	Assistant Legal Adviser 3
Mr Stephen LAM	Assistant Legal Adviser 4
Mr Arthur CHEUNG	Assistant Legal Adviser 5
Mrs Vivian KAM	Chief Assistant Secretary (Complaints)
Mrs Constance LI	Chief Assistant Secretary (2)5
Mrs Betty LEUNG	Chief Assistant Secretary (3)1
Miss Betty MA	Senior Assistant Secretary (2)1

Action

I. Confirmation of the minutes of the 2nd meeting held on 26 October 2001
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 207/01-02)

The minutes were confirmed.

II. Matters arising

(a) Report by the Chairman on her meeting with the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)

2. The Chairman said that CS had undertaken to let the Legislative Council (LegCo) have the Legislative Programme for the 2001-02 session as soon as possible.

3. Regarding the implementation of the agreed proposal to extend the scrutiny period for subsidiary legislation, the Chairman said that according to the Director of Administration (D of Adm), a bill was being drafted and it would be included in the Legislative Programme.

(b) Director of Administration's letter dated 1 November 2001 on proposed priority in the scrutiny of bills by Members

4. The Chairman said that D of Adm had suggested that priority be accorded to the scrutiny of the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2001 and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2001, should Members decide to form Bills Committees to study the two Bills. She further said that the Legal Service Division reports on the two Bills would be discussed under agenda item III(a) below.

III. Business arising from previous Council meetings

(a) **Legal Service Division reports on bills referred to the House Committee in accordance with Rule 54(4)**

(i) **Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2001**

(LC Paper No. LS 2/01-02)

5. Referring to the report, the Legal Adviser said that the Bill sought to separate the duties and functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) by creating the office of Chief Executive Officer in KCRC.

6. The Legal Adviser further said that although the Administration intended to separate the functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer of KCRC, the respective functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer had not been specified in the Bill. Instead, a general empowering provision was proposed in the Bill to the effect that the functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer should be the functions assigned to them by the principal Ordinance and any other functions that KCRC might assign to them. The Legal Adviser pointed out that in some legislation providing for the establishment of statutory corporations for which the governing body comprised a Chairman and a Managing Director or a Chief Executive Officer, there was an express provision for the areas of responsibility of either the Chairman or the Managing Director or the Chief Executive Officer.

7. The Legal Adviser added that the Legal Service Division had asked the Administration whether it would consider setting out in the Bill the duties and functions of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer or at least their respective areas of responsibility. The Administration had replied that this would not be appropriate as it was important for KCRC to retain the flexibility to determine and fine-tune the relationship between the managing board (led by the Chairman) and the executive (led by the Chief Executive Officer) to suit its operational needs.

8. The Legal Adviser said that while it was legally in order to confer powers and functions on the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer of KCRC by a general empowering provision as proposed in the Bill, Members might wish to consider whether their respective functions or areas of responsibility should be reflected in the Bill.

9. Mr Andrew CHENG said that the relevant Panel had not been consulted on the Bill. Members belonging to the Democratic Party considered that a Bills Committee should be formed to study the policy aspect of the Bill and the Administration should be asked to explain the reason for the proposed change in the governance structure of KCRC.

10. Mr LAU Chin-shek expressed support for a Bills Committee to be formed as the respective areas of responsibility of the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer were unclear.

11. The Chairman proposed that a Bills Committee be formed and priority be given to the scrutiny of the Bill, as requested by the Administration. Members agreed. The following Members agreed to join : Mr LAU Chin-shek, Mr LAU Kong-wah (as advised by Mr IP Kwok-him), Mrs Miriam LAU, Ms Emily LAU, Mr Andrew CHENG and Ms LI Fung-ying.

12. The Chairman added that the Bills Committee could commence work immediately as vacant slots were available.

(ii) **Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2001**
(*LC Paper No. LS 14/01-02*)

13. The Legal Adviser said that the Bill was to increase the maximum amount of home loan interest deduction for the years of assessment 2001/02 and 2002/03 from \$100,000 to \$150,000 and also to provide for transitional matters.

14. The Legal Adviser further said that according to the Administration, the earliest date by which the provisional salaries tax for the year of assessment 2001/02 would be 2 January 2002. For these taxpayers, the application for holding over must be made no later than 5 December 2001, i.e. 28 days before the day by which the tax was to be paid.

15. Dr YEUNG Sum said that on behalf of Members belonging to the Democratic Party, Mr Albert HO would move an amendment to the Bill to raise the maximum amount of home loan interest deduction from \$100,000 to \$180,000. Dr YEUNG further said that he did not consider a Bills Committee necessary as it might unduly delay the passage of the Bill. The Administration could be invited to give a briefing to explain the details of the Bill if Members so wished.

16. The Chairman said that under the Rules of Procedure, a Bills Committee should be formed if Members considered that a bill referred to the House Committee, in accordance with Rule 54(4), required detailed scrutiny. The Chairman further said that as there was one more vacant slot, a Bills Committee on the Bill could start work immediately, if Members decided to set up a Bills Committee.

17. Mr Eric LI said that he supported the Bill in principle. He pointed out that the Bill must be enacted as soon as possible to enable eligible taxpayers to apply to have the payment of the whole or part of their provisional salaries tax in relation to the year of assessment 2001/02 held over. He added that he was consulting the accountancy profession on the Bill.

18. Mr LAW Chi-kwong said that setting up a Bills Committee might defer the passage of the Bill, which would not be in the interest of those taxpayers whose provisional salaries tax for the year of assessment 2001/02 would be due in January 2002. He further said that setting up a Bills Committee to consider the proposed increase in the maximum amount of home loan interest deduction might not be necessary as the matter was a policy consideration, and not a legal question.

19. Mr IP Kwok-him asked whether the amendment to be proposed by Mr Albert HO would give rise to the question of charging effect.

20. The Legal Adviser said that in accordance with general principles, the proposed amendment might be caught by the charging effect provisions of the Rules of Procedure. However, it would be a matter for the President's opinion upon receiving the notice of Mr HO's amendment.

21. In response to the Chairman, the Secretary General said that according to D of Adm's letter, the Bill would need to be enacted by mid November 2001 at the latest, in order that qualified taxpayers might pay less tax in January 2002.

22. Miss Margaret NG said that the policy and the legal aspects of a bill were equally important. She disagreed that because there was urgency in passing a certain bill, detailed scrutiny of its legal aspect could be dispensed with. She was of the view that administrative arrangements or measures should not be allowed to interfere with the due process of scrutinising a legislative proposal. She further said that a Bill Committee should be set up to study the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2001 and the Bills Committee should work expeditiously.

23. The Chairman said that although there was urgency in enacting the Bill, it was the responsibility of LegCo to study each and every legislative proposal carefully. The Chairman proposed that a Bills Committee be formed and priority be given to the scrutiny of the Bill, as requested by the Administration. Members agreed. The following Members agreed to join : Mr James TIEN, Mr Eric LI, Miss Margaret NG, Mr CHAN Kam-lam, Mr SIN Chung-kai, Dr YEUNG Sum, Ms Emily LAU and Ms Audrey EU.

24. The Chairman added that as there was a vacant slot, the Bills Committee on the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2001 could commence work immediately.

(b) Legal Service Division report on subsidiary legislation gazetted on 26 October 2001

(LC Paper No. LS 15/01-02)

25. The Legal Adviser said that a total of 10 items of subsidiary legislation were gazetted on 26 October 2001. Referring to the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Amendment) Regulation 2001, the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Animal Traders) (Amendment) Regulation 2001 and the Food Business (Amendment) Regulation 2001, the Legal Adviser explained that these three Regulations prohibited the transportation and sale of live quails together with other birds, and required carcasses and offal of water birds to be separately processed for sale.

26. The Legal Adviser said that when the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene discussed the proposals on 10 July 2001, some members had expressed concern that the trade would be adversely affected.

27. The Legal Adviser further said that according to the LegCo Brief on the Regulations, the Administration had consulted the quail farmers, wholesalers and retailers. The farmers and wholesalers were prepared to accept the proposals provided that they were compensated. The retailers' reaction was that the sale of live quails was not very profitable and that they would simply not sell live quails if it was Government's policy to segregate live quails from other birds.

28. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that a subcommittee should be formed to study these three items of subsidiary legislation in detail.

29. The Chairman proposed that a subcommittee be formed. Members agreed. The following Members agreed to join : Ms Cyd HO, Mr Fred LI, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mr WONG Yung-Kan, Mr Arbaham SHEK, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Michael MAK and Dr LO Wing-lok.

30. Regarding the Rules of the District Court (Amendment) Rules 2001, the Legal Adviser said that the Rules introduced a number of amendments. The Legal Service Division was still scrutinising the drafting aspects of the Rules and would provide a further report if necessary.

31. The Legal Adviser further said that the remaining six items of subsidiary legislation were notices made to implement the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea. The Legal Adviser added that they had already come into operation on 26 October 2001.

32. The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for amending these items of subsidiary legislation was the Council meeting on 28 November 2001, or 5 December 2001 if extended by resolution.

IV. Further business for the Council meeting on 7 November 2001

(a) Questions

(LC Paper No. CB(3) 88/01-02)

33. The Chairman drew Members' attention to the new oral question to be raised by Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung.

(b) Members' motions

(i) Proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance

(Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 84/01-02 dated 29 October 2001.)

34. The Chairman said that the above proposed resolution would be moved by Mr James TO.

(ii) Proposed resolution under section 34(4) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance

(Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 77/01-02 dated 26 October 2001.)

35. The Chairman said that the above proposed resolution would be moved by Mr IP Kwok-him.

V. Business for the Council meeting on 14 November 2001

(a) Questions

(LC Paper No. CB(3) 89/01-02)

36. The Chairman said that 20 questions (six oral and 14 written) had been scheduled for the Council meeting on 14 November 2001.

(b) Bills - First Reading and moving of Second Reading

Juvenile Offenders (Amendment) Bill 2001

37. The Chairman said that the Bill would be introduced into the Council on 14 November 2001 and considered by the House Committee on 16 November 2001.

(c) Government motion

38. The Chairman said that no notice had been received from the Administration.

(d) **Members' motions**

(i) **Motion on "Improving the business environment"**

(Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 95/01-02 dated 31 October 2001.)

39. The Chairman said that the above motion would be moved by Mr Kenneth TING.

(ii) **Motion on "Reducing the fares of various public transport services"**

(Wording of the motion issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3) 97/01-02 dated 1 November 2001.)

40. The Chairman said that the above motion would be moved by Mr LAU Kong-wah.

41. The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for giving notice of amendments, if any, was 7 November 2001.

VI. Bills Committee and subcommittee reports

(a) **Position report on Bills Committees/subcommittees**

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 193/01-02)

42. The Chairman said that there were 13 Bills Committees and seven subcommittees in action as well as nine Bills Committees on the waiting list. The Chairman added that the two vacant slots would be taken up by the Bills Committee on the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2001 and the Bills Committee on the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2001.

(b) **Report of the Bills Committee on Massage Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2001**

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 212/01-02)

43. Mr James TO, Chairman of the Bills Committee, said that the Bill proposed to repeal the provision in the Massage Establishments Ordinance (MEO) which exempted the premises of hairdressing or beauty parlours where face or scalp massage was administered to female customers only or in the full view of customers from licensing. The Bill also proposed to streamline the existing licensing procedures.

44. Mr James TO further said that the Bills Committee had suggested that a comprehensive review of the MEO should be conducted. He added that the Bills Committee was of the view that the Administration should in particular consider whether the provision of massage service or treatment should be regulated from the angle of health protection or consumer protection.

45. Mr James TO informed Members that in response to the Bills Committee's concerns, the Administration would amend the definition of full-body massage to mean a massage service or treatment provided to a person for that part of his body below the shoulders and above the knees, including or excluding arms. The Administration would also move Committee Stage amendments (CSAs) to add a provision to the effect that the premises of a hair salon or a beauty parlour where massage was administered in the full view of customers would be excluded from the application of the MEO. Mr TO further said that the Administration would also add provisions to exempt the premises for practising Chinese medicine operated by a registered Chinese medicine practitioner (as defined under the Chinese Medicine Ordinance) and the premises for chiropractic operated by a chiropractor (registered under the Chiropractors Registration Ordinance) from the application of the MEO.

46. Mr James TO said that the Bills Committee supported the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill on 14 November 2001.

47. The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for giving notice of CSAs was 5 November 2001.

(c) Report of the Bills Committee on The Ombudsman (Amendment) Bill 2001

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 226/01-02)

48. Miss Margaret NG, Chairman of the Bills Committee, said that the Bill sought to make The Ombudsman a corporation sole and to provide a legal basis for certain functions now performed by the Ombudsman.

49. Miss Margaret NG further said that the Bills Committee had sought clarification from the Administration about the criteria for determining which cases could be dealt with by mediation. The Bills Committee considered that the Bill should as far as practicable set out objective standards for cases which might be recommended for mediation. She informed Members that to address the Bills Committee's concern, the Administration had agreed to move an amendment to specify that only those cases which involved "no or only minor maladministration" could be dealt with by mediation. The Administration had also accepted the views of the Bills Committee and would amend the relevant provision to the effect that the person appointed to be the Ombudsman would not act as a mediator personally.

50. Miss Margaret NG said that as the Administration did not consider it necessary or appropriate to impose a restriction on the number of terms of re-appointment of the Ombudsman, the Bills Committee had decided to move a CSA to restrict the re-appointment of the Ombudsman to not more than one further period of five years.

51. Miss Margaret NG said that the Bills Committee supported the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill and the Administration's proposed CSAs. Miss NG added that the Administration had not yet decided on the date of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

(d) **First report of the Subcommittee on subsidiary legislation relating to Chief Executive (CE) election**
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 236/01-02)

52. Mr IP Kwok-him, Chairman of the Subcommittee, said that the Subcommittee had completed scrutiny of the five items of subsidiary legislation relating to the CE election which were gazetted on 5 October 2001 and the deliberations of the Subcommittee were detailed in the report. Mr IP informed Members that the Administration would move amendments to three of the five items of subsidiary legislation. Mr IP said that the Subcommittee agreed to support these five items of subsidiary legislation, subject to the amendments to be moved by the Administration.

53. Mr IP Kwok-him added that the Subcommittee had started to study the six items of subsidiary legislation relating to CE election which were gazetted on 12 October 2001. The Subcommittee would hold its next meeting on 13 November 2001 to continue discussion with the Administration.

54. Mr IP Kwok-him further informed Members that he would move a motion at the Council meeting on 14 November 2001 to extend the scrutiny period of these six items of subsidiary legislation to 21 November 2001.

(e) **Report of the Subcommittee on Rehabilitation Centres Regulation**

55. Mr James TO, Chairman of the Subcommittee, said that the Subcommittee would hold another meeting immediately after the House Committee meeting. The Subcommittee would report its deliberations in writing to the House Committee on 9 November 2001.

56. Mr James TO further said that subject to the extension of the scrutiny period of the Regulation to 14 November 2001, the deadline for giving notice of amendments was 7 November 2001.

(f) **Fourth report of the Subcommittee on Members' Remuneration and Operating Expenses Reimbursement**
(LC Paper No. AS 36/01-02)

57. Mr NG Leung-sing, Chairman of the Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee had examined the issue of retirement benefits for LegCo Members and had also issued consultation papers to Members seeking their views on the issue.

58. Mr NG Leung-sing said that based on the outcome of its consultation with Members, the Subcommittee recommended that there should be a pension scheme for LegCo Members and that the Administration should be requested to draw up a proposed scheme for Members' consideration.

59. Members endorsed the Subcommittee's recommendations. The Chairman said that she would write to CS on the matter.

VII. Invitation to the Chief Secretary for Administration to attend a meeting of the House Committee to discuss major issues including 24-hour operation at boundary control points

60. Ms Cyd HO said that she had proposed that CS should be invited to attend a House Committee meeting to discuss major issues including 24-hour operation at boundary control points because the issue had significant impact on the economy of Hong Kong as well as the passenger and vehicular traffic between Hong Kong and the Mainland. She considered that CS should explain to Members Government's policy, the implementation timetable and the progress of discussion with the Mainland authorities on the issue.

61. Mr IP Kwok-him said that Members belonging to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong had no objection to inviting CS to attend a meeting of the House Committee if CS was willing to come. However, he doubted whether a House Committee meeting was the most appropriate forum to discuss policy issues, as the House Committee should primarily be concerned with preparation work for Council meetings. He further said that Members might wish to consider inviting CS to attend a meeting of the relevant Panel(s) to discuss the issue of 24-hour operation at boundary control points and the meeting should be open to all Members. He pointed out that the Panel on Financial Affairs (FA Panel) periodically invited the Financial Secretary (FS) to brief Members on macro-economic matters.

62. Mr Fred LI said that CS last attended a meeting of the House Committee in May 2001. He considered that it was opportune time to invite CS to meet with Members again to discuss major issues, such as operation of the boundary control points. He suggested that the Chairman should raise the proposal at her meeting with CS on Monday, 5 November 2001.

63. Miss Margaret NG and Dr YEUNG Sum concurred with Mr LI. Miss Margaret NG added that a House Committee meeting was an appropriate forum to discuss major issues which straddled a number of policy areas. She pointed out, for instance, that the 2001 Population Census Summary Results published recently were very important, but the subject matter did not seem to belong to any Panel. She added that it was not appropriate for a question on the Summary Results to be raised at a Council meeting because there would not be sufficient time for Members to seek related information from the Administration and the Council's question time was not for discussing policy issues.

64. Mrs Miriam LAU said that there would be wide-ranging implications if boundary control points were to operate round-the-clock. However, the main concern of the public was the impact on the local economy and the passenger and vehicular traffic. She considered that at the present stage, discussion about the issue should focus on economic and transport matters which could be dealt with at a joint meeting of the Panel on Economic Services and the Panel on Transport.

65. Ms Emily LAU said that she did not object to the two Panels holding a joint meeting to discuss the issue. However, CS should still be invited to attend a meeting of the House Committee.

66. Mr James TO said that as the issue of 24-hour operation at boundary control points would have significant impact on many aspects, the Administration should consider issuing a Green Paper or a White Paper to gauge public views. He further said that the LegCo Secretariat should conduct related research studies to facilitate Members' consideration of the issue. Ms Emily LAU added that she had earlier requested the Secretariat to conduct such studies. Deputy Secretary General advised that a paper had been prepared by the Secretariat to provide background information on the operation of boundary control points and a brief account of past discussions on measures to ease congestion at control points. The paper would be circulated to Members shortly.

67. Mr James TIEN said that he supported the proposal of inviting CS to attend a meeting of the House Committee to discuss major issues. However, as regards the issue of 24-hour operation at boundary control points, he agreed with Mrs Miriam LAU that discussion on the issue should focus on economic and transport matters. Mr TIEN pointed out that the main concern of the public was the impact on employment opportunities, property prices and other economic matters, and not the provision of schools or medical services.

68. Ms Cyd HO was of the view that the public was also concerned about other related problems, such as medical services for the elderly who returned to live in the Mainland and arrangements for children to cross the boundary to attend schools. She said that these matters could not be dealt with at a joint meeting of the Panel on Economic Services and Panel on Transport. She added that if CS agreed to attend a House Committee meeting, she hoped that the discussion should be confined to the issue of 24-hour operation at the boundary control points.

69. The Chairman pointed out that CS's public remarks made recently in relation to the issue of 24-hour operation at boundary control points had given rise to much public concern because the issue had important and far-reaching implications for Hong Kong in many aspects. The Chairman was of the view that CS should be invited to attend a House Committee meeting to discuss the issue. The purpose was to enable Members and the public to better understand

Government's policy and position, and not to discuss technical and operational details. The Chairman added that the relevant Panels could arrange follow-up discussions with the Policy Bureaux concerned after the meeting with CS.

70. Mr James TO expressed support for the Chairman's view. He suggested that the Administration should be requested to provide Members with relevant information on the issue prior to the meeting. Ms Emily LAU said that CS should also brief Members on his earlier meeting with Mr CHEN Zuoer in Shenzhen.

71. The Chairman said that if Members had no objection, she would raise the matter at her meeting with CS on Monday, 5 November 2001. Members agreed.

VIII. Invitation to the Financial Secretary to attend a meeting of the House Committee to brief Members on his recent visit to Beijing

72. Regarding Ms Emily LAU's proposal of inviting FS to attend a meeting of the House Committee, the Chairman advised that a similar proposal was discussed last year and FS subsequently attended a meeting of the FA Panel in June 2001. She suggested that the same arrangement be adopted and Ms LAU's request be referred to the FA Panel for follow-up.

73. Ms Emily LAU said that she had no strong views as to whether FS should attend a meeting of the House Committee or the FA Panel to brief Members on his recent visit to Beijing, provided that the meeting would be arranged at the earliest possible time.

74. Mr Ambrose LAU informed Members that it had been the practice for FS to brief the FA Panel on the macro-economic situation of Hong Kong in June and December each year. The FA Panel would discuss arrangements for the next briefing by FS at the meeting of the Panel on 5 November 2001. Assistant Secretary General 1 informed Members that subject to the Panel's views, the tentative date of FS's briefing was 3 December 2001.

75. The Chairman proposed that Ms Emily LAU's request be followed up by the FA Panel. Members agreed.

IX. Any other business

2001 Population Census

76. Miss Margaret NG said that the demographic projections contained in the Summary Results of the 2001 Population Census published recently by the Administration were very important for planning the future development of

Hong Kong. She asked how LegCo should follow up the Summary Results.

77. Ms Cyd HO informed Members that the Panel on Environmental Affairs had discussed the subject matters of "Sustainability and Development for the 21st Century" and demographic projections before.

78. The Chairman said that as population census was within the policy purview of the Secretary for Financial Services, it would be appropriate for the FA Panel to invite the Commissioner for Census and Statistics to give a briefing on the Summary Results. Dr YEUNG Sum concurred with the Chairman. Dr YEUNG added that non-Panel Members should also be invited to the briefing.

79. Miss Margaret NG said that should such a briefing be arranged, sufficient time should be allowed for Members to ask questions. Miss NG further said that the Administration should take the initiative to brief Members on such important matters instead of just briefing the media. Ms Emily LAU shared Miss NG's view.

80. Ms Emily LAU said that while she had no strong views as to which Panel should invite the Administration to give the briefing, she was concerned whether Members' questions could be fully answered by the Commissioner for Census and Statistics as the subject matter of demographic projections straddled a number of policy areas. Miss CHOY So-yuk expressed a similar concern.

81. Ms Cyd HO said that it would be more appropriate and efficient for individual Panels to follow up the related issues within their respective ambit after the briefing. Mr Fred LI and Mr James TO concurred with Ms HO.

82. The Chairman proposed that the FA Panel should request the Administration to give a briefing on the 2001 Population Census Summary Results and individual Panels should follow up the related issues within their policy purview. She would also raise with CS that the Administration should take the initiative to brief Members on major reports or publications. Members agreed.

83. Ms Emily LAU requested the LegCo Secretariat to provide individual Panels with the relevant parts of the Summary Results to facilitate their follow-up work.

84. There being no further business, the meeting ended at 3:45 pm.

