

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)536/01-02
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP/1

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 2 November 2001 at 10:45 am
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, GBS, JP
 - Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
 - Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
 - Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
 - Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
 - Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
 - Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
 - Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, GBS, JP
 - Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
 - Hon SZETO Wah
 - Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
 - Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
 - Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
 - Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
 - Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
 - Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
- Members attending** :
- Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
 - Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Public Officers : Item III
attending

Mrs Fanny LAW, JP
Secretary for Education and Manpower

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

Mr Anson LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Atg)

Mrs Rachel CARTLAND
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mrs Pamela TAN, JP
Commissioner for Labour

Mr William SIU, JP
Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration)

Mr S S KWONG
Executive Director
Employees Retraining Board

Item IV

Mrs Fanny LAW, JP
Secretary for Education and Manpower

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

Mr Anson LAI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Atg)

Mr William SIU, JP
Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration)

Mr S S KWONG
Executive Director
Employees Retraining Board

Mr Patrick PANG
Deputy Executive Director
Employees Retraining Board

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

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

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
(LC Paper No. CB(2)124/01-02 and CB(2)189/01-02(01))

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2001 were confirmed.

List of follow-up actions required of the Administration

2. 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)189/01-02(02))

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

- (a) Industrial accident compensation insurance for workers with a self-employed status in the construction industry;
- (b) Funding arrangement for Youth Pre-employment Training Programme; and
- (c) Review of the Occupational Deafness Compensation Scheme and Rescue package for the Employees Compensation Assistance Scheme.

4. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether associations which were concerned about matters relating to occupational deafness compensation should be invited to the next meeting to express their views on the item referred to in paragraph 3(c) above. The Chairman suggested that interested associations should first send in their written submissions for members' information.

5. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah said that he and two other members in the Labour Constituency intended to jointly introduce a Member's Bill to extend the applicability of the Employment Ordinance (EO) to those who were employed by the Government on non-civil service contract terms. They also intended to make another proposal to extend the same to those who were not employed under a continuous contract i.e. persons who were employed for less than four weeks and whose working hours were less than 18 in each week. Mr LEUNG undertook to provide information on the proposals to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the Administration and for discussion by the

Action

Panel. Members agreed that the proposals should be discussed by the Panel when the relevant information was available.

6. Commissioner for Labour (C for L) said that the Census and Statistics Department was conducting a territory-wide survey on the employment conditions of employees who were not employed under a continuous contract. The survey was scheduled to complete by the end of 2001, and results of the survey were expected to be available in early 2002. She informed members that a working group comprising two employee representatives and two employer representatives had recently been formed to look into the situation. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah considered that the most effective approach to address the issue was to introduce amendments to remove the loopholes in the existing legislation.

7. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung suggested that the survey on age discrimination in employment should be discussed by the Panel. Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) said that the Administration was prepared to commission a consultancy firm to conduct the survey, and the tendering process was underway. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (DSEM) supplemented that the survey was scheduled to start in December 2001 and the findings should be available in January or February 2002.

8. The Chairman asked members to inform the Secretariat of any proposed items for inclusion in the list of issues to be considered by the Panel.

III. Report on the progress of policy initiatives for the 2000-01 session and policy programmes/reviews for the 2001-02 session
(LC Paper No. CB(2)189/01-02(03))

9. SEM referred members to the Administration's paper on the progress on key manpower and labour policy initiatives for the 2000-01 legislative session and future plans on new initiatives and programmes for the 2001-02 legislative session. Regarding the creation of jobs as announced by the Chief Executive in his 2001 Policy Address, SEM informed members that more than 6 600 jobs would be created in 2001-02, about 18 000 in 2002-03 and the remaining to be created thereafter.

10. Ms LI Fung-ying requested the Administration to provide reports on a quarterly basis on the progress of creation of jobs with a detailed breakdown on the job posts and the industries involved to facilitate public monitoring. SEM considered it too frequent to report the progress every three months. She suggested that the first report be provided for the period up to 31 March 2002 and the subsequent reports be provided on a half-yearly basis. Members agreed.

11. Mr Andrew CHENG asked whether the over 30 000 jobs to be created as announced in the Chief Executive's 2001 Policy Address were jobs which had already been committed by the Administration in the past or whether they were all newly created jobs. He also asked for a breakdown on the over 30 000 jobs to be created.

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Action

Adm 12. SEM said that the 1 400 jobs under the education arena were all additional posts to be created in the light of the Chief Executive's 2001 Policy Address, but she had no specific details on hand concerning the jobs to be created under other policy areas. The Chairman asked the Administration to include information in this regard in the progress report to be provided to members referred to in paragraph 10 above.

13. Regarding the details of jobs to be created, SEM said that about 20 000 would be created as a result of the initiatives under capital works programme; some 4 000 jobs were related to housing estate matters; 6 200 jobs would be created in the area of education, health care and welfare services; and 2 560 jobs were in the area of food and environmental hygiene. A total of nearly 33 000 job opportunities would be created.

Adm 14. In response to Mr Michael MAK, SEM said that the 3 400 jobs to be created in the area of health care and welfare services were permanent posts, which included doctors, nurses, care assistants, personal care workers, etc. She undertook to provide a detailed breakdown on this figure.

15. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired about the progress of the proposal put forward by some Members of the Legislative Council (LegCo) urging the Administration to create another 20 000 jobs to ease unemployment. SEM said that in addition to the 20 000 jobs to be created arising from the initiatives of capital works programme, the Administration had already identified around 13 000 jobs in other areas. All Government bureaux and departments were examining whether more employment opportunities could be created in their respective areas.

Adm 16. Mr Andrew CHENG requested the Administration to provide a breakdown on the 14 500 jobs created under the new job opportunities as announced in the Chief Executive's 2000 Policy Address.

17. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah expressed concern that in-service security guards would face a wage cut if the proposal to switch the two-shift system to three-shift for the improvement of security services in public housing estates was implemented. He asked whether the reduction in wage would be proportionate to the reduction in working hours. SEM said that as the Housing Department was now inviting tenders for the provision of security services, information on the wage level under the three-shift system was not available at present.

18. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah asked whether the Administration would have regard to the median wage of similar post in the market when assessing tenders submitted by service contractors. SEM said that the wage level would be determined by market forces. It was highly unlikely that the wage level of in-service security guards would remain unchanged if their working hours were greatly shortened. She hoped that the reduction in wage would not be directly proportional to the reduction in working hours. She assured members that the Administration would keep a close watch on the wage level of security guards due to the change in the shift system.

Action

19. Mr Andrew CHENG shared the same concern of Mr LEUNG Fu-wah. He suggested that the Administration should conduct a survey to identify a reasonable wage level for security jobs. It should ensure that no service providers would employ security guards at a wage level which was lower than that required by the Government.

20. SEM said that the Housing Department would make reference to information available from the Census and Statistics Department on the average wages for security jobs when assessing the tenders. The Administration would study the tender results in detail to see whether a review on the wage level for security jobs should be conducted.

21. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah asked about the basis for determining the number of training places to be provided in the Information Technology (IT) Assistant Courses for the coming three years. He also asked about the number of vacancies for IT posts registered with the Labour Department. C for L said that she did not have the requested information on hand, but undertook to provide it after the meeting.

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22. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked how the \$5 billion fund to subsidise those who wish to pursue continuing education and training programmes would operate. Mr Andrew CHENG enquired when the \$5 billion fund would start to operate.

23. SEM said that the \$5 billion fund would start to operate from April 2002. She informed members of the following four basic principles for the operation of the fund -

- (a) applicants must be adults aged 18 and above;
- (b) eligible courses must be approved by the Government;
- (c) courses must contribute to the economic development of Hong Kong; and
- (d) applicants must not enjoy double subsidy.

24. SEM further said that it could be for employees to decide whether the subsidy provided by the Government should be used as training leave subsidy or course fee subsidy. A fundamental principle was that the design parameters of the disbursement of the fund should enable it to achieve sustainable impacts and multiplying effects. She added that the details of the courses and subsidy to be provided had yet to be worked out. The Administration would carry out consultation with the stakeholders.

25. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked how employees who had to work long hours would be able to benefit from the fund, as no incentive would be provided to employers to release their staff to attend training courses. SEM said that it was practically difficult to compulsorily require employers to provide training leave for employees as the duration and nature of training courses varied. She considered that mutual agreement between employers and employees was a desirable way to handle training matters. She cited the Skills Upgrading Scheme as an example, under which mutually convenient time for employees to attend training courses was agreed between employer representatives and employee representatives of the respective industries.

26. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that mutual agreement between employers

Action

and employees on training matters might not be reached in some circumstances. He expressed concern as to whether the training opportunities that would arise from the \$5 billion fund could be evenly shared among industries.

27. SEM said that those industries which had training needs for their employees who were unable to attend training courses due to long working hours were welcome to submit applications to join the second phase of the Skills Upgrading Scheme. Upon receipt of their applications, the Administration would consider whether they should be included under the Scheme. She added that the Administration had already received applications for joining the second phase of the Scheme from a number of industries, viz hotel, tourism, hair-dressing, property management and insurance.

28. In response to Ms LI Fung-ying's question about the details of the new assessment centre to be established by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB), Executive Director of the Employees Retraining Board (ED/ERB) said that the main objectives of the assessment centre were to ensure the quality of skills of retrainees and enhance their acceptability to employers. The assessment centre would be equipped with the necessary skills training facilities to centrally administer the practical skills training and common assessment for retrainees of some skills-based popular retraining courses, such as domestic helpers. To enhance objectivity, the common assessment would be conducted by qualified assessors/verifiers registered on the central register maintained by ERB. Retraining who had completed skills-based retraining courses in the past could also seek assessment on their skills from the assessment centre and could attend modular courses organised by ERB to refresh or upgrade their skills should they fail in the assessment test. He added that ERB would play a coordination role in the above matters.

29. ED/ERB further said that as a pilot scheme of the common assessment, domestic helper retrainees would undergo an assessment on their practical skills upon completion of the retraining course starting from 2002-03. Retraining would also be required to sit for a written test in the form of multiple choice, and a practical skills test. The Chairman suggested that ERB should take account of the educational background of domestic helper retrainees when designing the written test for them. ED/ERB noted his views.

30. In reply to Ms LI Fung-ying, C for L said that the drafting of the amendments to the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations was in progress. The Administration intended to introduce the proposed amendments into LegCo in this legislative session.

31. Ms LI Fung-ying pointed out that since only construction sites having 50 or more employees were required to implement a safety management system, she asked what administrative measures would be implemented to protect the safety of construction workers of small construction sites.

32. SEM said that the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation (the Regulation), which required construction sites having 50 or more employees to implement a safety management system, had been passed by LegCo but had yet to come into operation. The number of 50 had been considered reasonable by the

Action

stakeholders, including LegCo, having regard to the manpower resources involved in implementing a safety management system in a construction site. The stakeholders would have to be consulted again if members now considered that this number was not appropriate. In the view of SEM, it might be too early to propose an amendment to the Regulation before it took effect. Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration) (DC for L(LA)) supplemented that a safety management system would have to be put in place if there were 50 or more persons working on a construction site, regardless of whether they belonged to the same company.

33. C for L said that the Labour Department would conduct safety inspections to both large and small construction sites. Inspections would be stepped up to workplaces of industries with high industrial accident rates, such as construction and catering industries. Education and publicity programmes to promote the awareness of work safety would also be conducted.

34. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah expressed dissatisfaction that the Regulation had still not come into effect since its passage by LegCo in 1998. In view of the accidents happened in the KMB depot early this year and the recent collapse of a building in Yau Tong, he urged the Administration to bring the Regulation into force as early as possible in order to reduce the possibility of the recurrence of similar accidents.

35. SEM said that the Administration was collecting views from the stakeholders on the appropriate time for bringing the Regulation into effect. This was to ensure that the trade concerned would have adequate manpower resources to meet the requirements of the Regulation. She considered that the occurrence of individual accidents should not be directly linked with a lack of safety management system. SEM added that in fact, KMB had in place a safety management system when the KMB depot accident occurred. The implementation of the Regulation would provide better protection, but might not prevent the occurrence of similar incidents.

36. C for L said that the Administration had been maintaining close contact with the stakeholders in the past two years with a view to identifying an appropriate time for bringing the Regulation into force. A survey had been conducted recently on the readiness to comply with the statutory requirements, and findings of the survey were being analysed.

37. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah opined that the Administration should pose a stronger stance over this issue. The Chairman held the view that the Administration should not withhold the Regulation indefinitely. Any measures that could help expedite the process should be implemented as early as possible.

38. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired about the results of the 200 special visits conducted to workplaces of employees engaged by government service contractors and the details of the 400 tickets issued against non-compliance with EO concerning employment conditions of these employees. C for L said that most of the cases were pending in court. She undertook to provide members with the results of the cases once available. Among

Action

the 400 tickets issued, a total of eight to nine employers were involved. Under these cases, most of the employees concerned were not granted their entitled statutory holidays/annual leave or paid leave.

39. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked when the amendment bill to empower the Labour Tribunal to make an order of reinstatement or re-engagement for cases of unreasonable and unlawful dismissal would be introduced into LegCo. DC for L(LA) replied that the drafting of the bill was in progress. It would be introduced into LegCo as soon as the drafting was completed.

40. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah pointed out that the number of accidents related to electric welding work was greater than that of gas welding and flame cutting work. He questioned why only regulation to regulate the latter was introduced. He considered that both electric and gas welding work should be regulated as their work nature was very similar.

41. DC for L(LA) said that he was given to understand that the nature of electric and gas welding work was quite different. The requirement for workers performing gas welding and flame cutting work to undergo compulsory safety training was introduced in the light of the views of the stakeholders, including relevant employers' associations and labour unions. Their general consensus was that priority should be given to gas welding and flame cutting work. Therefore, the Administration aimed at adopting a progressive approach in this regard. He assured members that the Administration would continue to attach great importance to work safety for all types of work.

IV. Promotion of job opportunities for local domestic helpers

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)189/01-02(04) and CB(2)2232/00-01(01))

42. SEM briefed members on the proposed measures to promote employment opportunities for local domestic helpers (LDHs) as set out in the Administration's paper at LC Paper No. CB(2)189/01-02(04).

43. Ms LI Fung-ying expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the proposed measures. She suggested that to tackle the root of the problem, the Administration should consider setting an upper limit for the number of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to be permitted to work in Hong Kong and/or imposing a quota on the number of FDHs to be employed by a household.

44. SEM said that the Administration commissioned a consultancy firm in October 2000 to conduct a survey on the job opportunities for domestic helpers. The survey results revealed that there was a mismatch in the demand and supply of domestic helpers in Hong Kong. The Administration therefore considered that the first and foremost task was to address the mismatch. The survey results also suggested that one of the main reasons why prospective employers were unwilling to engage LDHs was that LDHs were generally unwilling to work late or stay overnight in employers' residence. The

Action

Administration had therefore proposed a series of measures to encourage prospective employers to employ LDHs and encourage local people to take up the vacant posts of domestic helpers.

45. Ms LI Fung-ying pointed out that many FDHs were allowed to live out of their employers' residence and many employers were paying a salary of some \$1,000 to their FDHs. SEM said that the Administration agreed that the live-in requirement for FDHs should be tightened up and an amendment to the standard contract of employment for FDHs would be introduced to this effect. She pointed out that it would be an offence for an employer to pay to his FDH a salary which was lower than the minimum allowable wage. She appealed to members of the public to provide the Administration with evidence on these cases so that the necessary action could be taken.

46. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that the two major reasons why many employers were unwilling to employ LDHs were reliability of LDHs and privacy of employers' family life. He considered that the worry about reliability could be avoided if the employment of LDHs was referred by an intermediary body. He asked whether there was such a body at present.

47. SEM said that ERB would perform the role of an intermediary body. She informed members that the Administration had also studied the reasons why LDHs were less appealing to prospective employers. The main reasons identified being their working attitude and skills, reliability and sense of security. She said that the working attitude and skills of LDHs could be improved by the provision of multi-skilled training to upgrade their soft and job specific skills. On reliability, ERB would explore the possibility of arranging back-up services in the event LDHs could not turn up for work. As for security, SEM believed that the registration of personal particulars of LDHs under the central register would offer a sense of security to employers.

48. In reply to Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung's question concerning the effectiveness of ERB's retraining courses, ED/ERB said that the number of training places had increased from 1 600 in 1997-98 to over 9 000 in the last year. 80% of the retrainees were able to secure employment upon completion of the retraining courses. This high employment rate maintained despite the significant increase in the number of training places in the past few years. This demonstrated that ERB retrainees were well recognised by employers.

49. In reply to a further question from Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung, SEM said that a competence card to signify a pass in the common assessment test would be issued to LDHs. A staff card would also be issued to enhance the employers' sense of security toward LDHs.

50. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah pointed out that the policy on matters relating to the employment of FDHs (FDH policy) had been in place for nearly 32 years. In his view, some provisions had become outdated and should be reviewed. SEM said that the Administration had already conducted a review on the FDH policy but considered that no

Action

amendment was necessary.

51. In reply to Mr LEUNG Fu-wah's enquiry about the details of the operation of the proposed measures, ED/ERB said that ERB, as an intermediary body, would disseminate information on job vacancies to its eligible training bodies (TBs) in various districts with a view to delivering placements to prospective employers in the respective areas. Information on job vacancies and details of qualified retrainees would be stored under two separate central registers for centralised management and easy on-line access by TBs. He assured members that ERB would monitor the performance of TBs.

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52. As requested by Mr LEUNG Fu-wah, ED/ERB undertook to provide details of the contents of the common assessment test to be taken by LDH retrainees upon completion of a retraining course.

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53. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked whether those who allowed FDHs to live outside of their residence were usually expatriate employers and the number of such employers. SEM responded that there were nearly 100 such employers in last year but they were not all expatriates. DSEM undertook to obtain the requested figures (both local and expatriate employers) from the Immigration Department for members' reference.

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54. SEM invited members' views on the standards of accommodation to be provided to FDHs. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that FDHs should be provided with a reasonably-sized room for accommodation. He considered it acceptable if a FDH shared a room with a child that she had to take care for her employer. The Chairman requested the Administration to liaise with the Immigration Department on this matter and provide members with information on the standards of accommodation to be provided to FDHs.

55. Mr James TIEN asked whether the Administration had examined in detail whether the upsurge in the supply of LDHs was caused by a structural change in economy or it was only a short-term phenomenon caused by the economic downturn in recent years. SEM said that the Administration believed that it would be a medium to long-term problem after taking into account the result of the manpower projection conducted in last year which suggested that there would be a surplus of around 140 000 workers of low skills and low educational attainment in five years' time. Coupled with the fact that the number of FDHs in Hong Kong had now accumulated to over 230 000, the Administration considered it necessary to review whether domestic helper jobs should continue to be dominated by FDHs. In this connection, the Administration preferred to adopt a progressive approach. Any necessary measures for the promotion of job opportunities for LDHs would as far as practicable be implemented on the existing framework.

56. Mr James TIEN asked about the average salary a part-time LDH would generally be able to earn if she worked 12 hours per week and the number of part-time jobs a LDH would usually have. ED/ERB replied that the hourly salary rate of ERB's LDH retrainees was \$50 in average. Most of them were engaged in two to three part-time jobs.

Action

57. Dr LUI Ming-wah suggested that the Administration should consider imposing on employers a training levy of say \$500 per month for each FDH employed with a view to discouraging the hiring of FDHs. The level of the levy might be adjusted from time to time if the situation warranted. The levy collected could be used on training for LDHs. SEM pointed out that the actual cost of engaging a FDH, after taking into account all other expenses to be incurred, was only slightly less than a LDH. The former was in the range of \$5,000 to \$6,000 while the latter was in the range of \$6,000 to \$7,000. SEM considered that it might not be an appropriate time to impose a training levy on employers of FDHs in view of the worsening economic situation.

58. Mr Andrew CHENG expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the proposed measures to promote employment opportunities of LDHs. In his view, the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review on the FDH policy. He pointed out that the survey results revealed that nearly 60% of the households had opted for FDHs because their salaries were lower than that of LDHs. These households might not be able to engage FDHs if the live-in requirement for FDHs was tightened, but it would not mean that those who were eligible would switch to employ LDHs in view of the higher salaries or some other reasons. He asked the Administration to reconsider its proposal to tighten up the live-in requirement.

59. SEM said that a fundamental principle of the FDH policy was the provision of a full-time live-in domestic service. The Administration considered it necessary to uphold the principle and tighten up the relaxed live-in requirement. As some members had expressed concern about the gap between the salaries of FDHs and LDHs, the Administration would review whether there was a need to bridge the salary gap.

60. SEM said that the requirement of 70% employment rate imposed on TBs had been serving as a performance indicator. The Administration envisaged that when the proposed measures were implemented, it might pose a possibility that some TBs might be unwilling to place their outstanding retrainees on the central register in order to maintain a good employment rate for their own TBs. With the common assessment test to be put in place, the Administration considered that the performance of individual TBs could be measured by their retrainees' pass rate in the assessment test and the requirement of 70% employment rate should no longer be necessary. SEM welcomed members' views on the Administration's proposal to withdraw the requirement. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed reservations about the Administration's proposal and Mr James TIEN was not supportive of the withdrawal of the requirement.

61. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed strong reservations about the measures proposed by the Administration, in particular the mode of operation. She pointed out that The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions had all along proposed to appoint an intermediary body, such as a non-profit making cooperative organisation, to coordinate placements of LDHs to enhance employers' confidence in employing LDHs. The intermediary body should also assist employers and LDHs in employment-related matters. She considered that training and placement should be handled by separate bodies in order to reduce the possibility of making deceived placement records by

Action

individual TBs. SEM noted her views.

62. ED/ERB said that ERB would continue to conduct placement audits and retention surveys to obtain accurate placement information of retrainees. He informed members that ERB would cooperate with the private sector with a view to delivering a good and comprehensive domestic service to employers. SEM supplemented that the Administration was aiming to provide an employer-oriented LDH employment service. The three-month post-placement service might be extended to one year in future in the hope of achieving a longer period of employment.

63. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed reservations about Miss CHAN Yuen-han's proposal that training and placement should be handled by separate bodies. He considered that TBs might help in finding suitable employment for their retrainees as they were familiar with the retrainees' personality and ability. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed similar views. SEM noted their views.

64. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether the \$400 million provided to ERB for the Skills Upgrading Scheme was sufficient to finance the various skills upgrading courses. If the answer was in the negative, whether ERB would be provided with additional funding. SEM replied that ERB had sufficient resources to run the various training and retraining programmes at present. Additional funding would be provided should there be justified needs. As enquired by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, ED/ERB said that around 70% of the retrainees of LDH courses were looking for part-time jobs and 30% were seeking full-time jobs.

65. In reply to a further question from Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung concerning the problem of time mismatch, SEM pointed out that it might not necessarily be the same LDH to perform all types of domestic work for a family. Different types of duties might be performed by different LDHs. As regards the limitation that most LDHs were reluctant to work beyond 7 pm, she said that ERB and TBs would put in more efforts on job matching and job packaging in this regard.

66. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked what transport assistance would be provided to LDH retrainees to cope with the problem of geographical mismatch. ED/ERB said that discussion between ERB and TBs was in the process with a view to identifying feasible and effective measures to tackle the problem. One of the measures being considered was to hire vehicles to provide bus service to shuttle between places with a large supply of LDHs and places with a large number of LDH vacancies.

Action

V. Any other business

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:55 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
28 November 2001