

**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06**

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Session No. : 10

File name: EDLB(L)-e1.doc

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
EDLB(L)001	0172	KWONG Chi-kin	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)002	0173	KWONG Chi-kin	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)003	0174	KWONG Chi-kin	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)004	0175	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)005	0176	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)006	0177	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)007	0178	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)008	0179	LEUNG Kwok-hung	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)009	0180	LEUNG Kwok-hung	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)010	0181	LEUNG Kwok-hung	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)011	0182	LEUNG Kwok-hung	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)012	0504	CHAN Bernard	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)013	0505	CHAN Bernard	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)014	0506	LEUNG Yiu-chung	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)015	0507	LEUNG Yiu-chung	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)016	0562	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)017	0563	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)018	0564	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)019	0619	CHAN Wai-yip, Albert	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)020	0620	TSANG Yok-sing, Jasper	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)021	0621	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)022	0622	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)023	0623	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)024	0757	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)025	0758	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)026	0780	LI Fung-ying	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)027	0781	LI Fung-ying	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)028	0782	LI Fung-ying	90	700 General non-recurrent
EDLB(L)029	0783	LI Fung-ying	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)030	0784	LI Fung-ying	90	Employees Rights and Benefits

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
EDLB(L)031	1047	LAU Chin-shek	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)032	1048	LAU Chin-shek	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)033	1049	LAU Chin-shek	90	Safety and Health at Work
EDLB(L)034	1050	LAU Chin-shek	90	Safety and Health at Work
EDLB(L)035	1116	TIEN Pei-chun, James	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)036	1135	LEE Cheuk-yan	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)037	1139	LEE Cheuk-yan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)038	1140	LEE Cheuk-yan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)039	1141	LEE Cheuk-yan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)040	1142	LEE Cheuk-yan	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)041	1196	TIEN Pei-chun, James	90	Labour Relations
EDLB(L)042	1239	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)043	1240	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	90	Employees Rights and Benefits
EDLB(L)044	1241	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	90	Safety and Health at Work
EDLB(L)045	1283	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)046	1284	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)047	1285	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)048	1286	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)049	1287	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)050	1288	CHAN Yuen-han	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)051	1311	LAU Wai-hing, Emily	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)052	1312	LAU Wai-hing, Emily	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)053	1354	CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)054	1391	CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)055	1424	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)056	1425	WONG Kwok-hing	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)057	1479	CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)058	1480	CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)059	1481	CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando	90	Employment Services
EDLB(L)060	1587	LI Fung-ying	90	700 General non-recurrent
EDLB(L)061	1656	LEUNG Kwan-yuen, Andrew	90	700 General non-recurrent
EDLB(L)062	1663	TSANG Yok-sing, Jasper	90	Safety and Health at Work
EDLB(L)063	1781	LI Fung-ying	90	700 General non-recurrent
EDLB(L)064	1782	LI Fung-ying	90	Safety and Health at Work

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)001

Question Serial No.

0172

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

In 2004, the number of working days lost from labour disputes known was 351, representing an increase of over 100% when compared with 150 days in 2003. What was the reason for such a big increase? How many workers were involved? Will the Labour Department plan to increase/deploy staff to handle the disputes? What will be the resources involved?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

The statistics on the number of strikes, working days lost and employees involved in 2003 and 2004 are as follows:

	Year	
	2003	2004
Number of strike	1	2
Number of employees involved	300	143
Number of working days lost	150	351
Number of working days lost per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners	0.05	0.11

The increase in the number of working days lost due to strikes in 2004 was primarily the result of a longer duration in the work stoppage in the two strikes.

Since 2002-03, the Labour Department has strengthened its conciliation service by the addition of seven conciliation officers. The reinforcement will continue in 2005-06. We shall closely monitor the workload of the conciliation service and arrange for internal redeployment as necessary to cope with any upsurge in service demand.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)002

Question Serial No.

0173

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) What are the figures of complaints relating to the employment of imported workers received by the Labour Department, cases investigated, prosecutions taken and successful prosecutions in 2004-05?
- (b) Regarding the rights and responsibilities of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and their employers, apart from production of Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs), has the Administration organised relevant educational activities at places where FDHs gather during holidays? If yes, what is the number of activities held? If no, will the Administration plan to organize the relevant educational activities?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

- (a) In 2004, the Labour Department (LD) received 13 complaints related to the employment of imported workers under the Supplementary Labour Scheme. The number of cases investigated was 25, which included the 13 complaints plus 12 cases with suspected irregularities detected during routine inspections by labour inspectors. These did not give rise to prosecution.
- (b) Apart from the production of APIs, the LD organised five briefings for FDHs in 2004. We have also produced special guidebooks in five different languages to enhance FDHs' understanding of their rights under the Employment Ordinance. The guidebooks are widely distributed to FDHs free of charge through various channels, including offices of LD, the Immigration Department, District Offices, non-government organisations and at the airport.

In 2004, the LD produced two 12-minute publicity videos - one for FDHs and another for their employers - to promote the awareness of the rights and obligations of both parties. The video for FDHs is available in English, Tagalog, Indonesian and Thai while that for FDH employers is available in Cantonese and English. The videos will be distributed to the relevant consulates, migrant worker organisations, employment agencies and screened at suitable media channels (e.g. public buses) and locations where employers and/or FDHs gather (e.g. visa-issuing offices of the Immigration Department and popular meeting places of FDHs).

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Date 8 April 2005

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)003

Question Serial No.

0174

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What is the job nature of the two posts to be deleted in 2005-06? Will the work be undertaken by other staff, or by contract staff to be recruited or will it be outsourced?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

In 2005-06, two Senior Labour Officer posts will be deleted under the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme. The work involved will be rearranged through process re-engineering and will not be taken up by contract staff or outsourced.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)004

Question Serial No.

0175

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) The Labour Department plans to enhance public understanding of the Employment Ordinance through producing a user-friendly question-and-answer booklet in 2005-06. What will be the costs involved? What is the number of booklets to be produced? By what channels will the booklets be issued? Has the Administration assessed the effectiveness of the booklet in promoting the employment rights? If yes, what are the assessment results?
- (b) Apart from distributing the question-and-answer booklets, will there be any resources allocated for mounting small-scale roving exhibitions on labour legislation in areas with high pedestrian flow and for distribution of the question-and-answer booklets? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) The Labour Department (LD) will produce 30 000 copies of the question-and-answer booklet at a total cost of around \$200,000. We will distribute this user-friendly booklet free of charge to employees and employers through trade unions and employer associations, and to the general public through LD's network of offices. It will also be uploaded onto LD's Homepage. To assess the effectiveness of the booklet, we will collect feedback from readers through the questionnaire incorporated into the publication.
- (b) Apart from distributing the booklet through various channels, we will organise other promotional activities, including mini-exhibitions, so as to enhance public understanding of the key provisions of the Employment Ordinance.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)005

Question Serial No.

0176

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) Currently, the target of inspections per field labour inspector is set at 850. As wage default and infringement of other statutory rights and benefits by employers are still serious, why does the Administration not raise the target?
- (b) What is the number of field labour inspectors in 2004-05? Will the Administration consider increasing the manpower in 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) The Labour Department is fully committed to protecting employees' rights and benefits. In 2004, we adopted a tactical approach in tackling wage and statutory benefit offences by launching more targeted operations. This mode of operation has proved more effective in offence detection. We will continue to mount such operations in 2005. As more effort is needed for targeted operations in terms of intelligence collection and analysis as well as planning and investigation, the present target of inspections is set at a reasonable and realistic level.
- (b) As at 31 December 2004, there were 153 field labour inspectors. We have no plan to increase the number of field inspectors in 2005.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Date 8 April 2005

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)006

Question Serial No.

0177

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Will contractors of government service contracts be covered by inspections conducted by field labour inspectors? If yes, what is the number of staff specially deployed for this purpose? Are daily inspections of general employers affected by such deployment?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The Labour Department has assigned a team of six labour inspectors to check compliance with labour laws by contractors of government service contracts. To tie in with the implementation of a new standard employment contract for use by these contractors in 2005-06, we will deploy 12 labour inspectors from three enforcement teams to reinforce the existing team to conduct targeted inspections. We will streamline our working procedures and re-engineer our support service to ensure the optimal use of manpower resources to enhance the effectiveness in safeguarding employees' rights and benefits.

Signature _____

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Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)007

Question Serial No.

0178

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

As at the end of 2004, 3 700 applications were approved under the Special Incentive Allowance Scheme for Local Domestic Helpers (LDHs). Regarding these applications:

- (a) what was the number of applicants applying for an allowance for working across districts or during unsocial hours and what was the amount of allowance involved?
- (b) what was the average amount of allowance received by each applicant per week?
- (c) what was the number of LDHs whose amount they claimed for was up to the ceiling of \$7,200?
- (d) if the number of applicants fell short of the target of 8 000 LDHs, can LDHs who have received the amount of allowance equivalent to the maximum amount apply for allowance under this Scheme again?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) As at the end of 2004, 3 722 local domestic helpers (LDHs) have successfully applied for an allowance under the Special Incentive Allowance Scheme for LDHs. Among them, 1 674 applied for an allowance for working across districts and 2 048 for working during unsocial hours. The amounts involved were \$5,292,750 and \$8,314,950 respectively.
- (b),(c) As at the end of 2004, the average amount of allowance received by each successful applicant per month was \$722 and a total of 992 LDHs received the maximum amount of \$7,200.
- (d) The Special Incentive Allowance Scheme for LDHs seeks to cater for 8 000 LDHs. As at end-February 2005, there were still 3 800 places left unfilled. As we have not rigidly set the expiry date for the Scheme, and since most of the LDHs taking part in the Scheme have not yet reached the time-bar of 12 months or exhausted the maximum amount of allowance, we do not consider it appropriate to allow LDHs who have already received the maximum amount to apply for the allowance again.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)008

Question Serial No.

0179

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

In 2004, the Labour Department achieved a record high figure of 86 257 placements. Please specify the services received by the job-seekers, their sex and their age groups. Please also provide details on the services received by people with a disability and their ages.

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

In 2004, the Labour Department (LD) secured 86 257 placements for able-bodied job-seekers. Of these, 27 198 were through direct referrals by the LD while the others were by job-seekers successfully applying to employers for jobs registered with the LD. For the former, a breakdown by sex and age is as follows:

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
15-19	1 012	1 092	2 104
20-29	4 706	3 940	8 646
30-39	1 850	2 422	4 272
40-49	2 786	4 899	7 685
50-59	2 118	2 000	4 118
60 or above	308	65	373
Total	12 780	14 418	27 198

In addition, the LD secured 2 391 placements for disabled job-seekers in 2004. A breakdown by sex and age is as follows:

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
15-19	97	58	155
20-29	571	560	1 131
30-39	286	254	540
40-49	203	200	403
50-59	76	77	153
60 or above	8	1	9
Total	1 241	1 150	2 391

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)009

Question Serial No.

0180

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

ding employment services, has the Administration conducted research studies for policy making and assessment? please provide details in the following format:

- (a) Please provide the following details on the consultancy studies for which financial provision has been allocated in 2004-05:

Name of Consultant (if available)	Description	Consultancy Fees (\$)	Progress of Study (planning/ underway/ completed)	Action taken by the Administration to follow up the study reports and the progress made (if available)	Whether study reports completed are publicised; if yes, their channels and if not, the reasons.

- (b) Has financial provision been allocated for conducting consultancy studies in 2005-06? If yes, please provide the following details:

Name of Consultant (if available)	Description	Consultancy Fees (\$)	Progress of Study (planning/ underway/ completed)	Whether study reports scheduled for completion in 2005-06 will be publicised; if yes, their channels and if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

(a) The details on the consultancy studies for which financial provision has been allocated in 2004-05 are as follows:

Name of Consultant (if available)	Description	Consultancy Fees (\$)	Progress of Study (planning/ underway/ completed)	Action taken by the Administration to follow up the study reports and the progress made (if available)	Whether study reports completed are publicised; if yes, their channels and if not, the reasons.
Centre for Social Policies Study, Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Review of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (3 rd phase)	\$511,000	Review in progress	Not applicable as the review has not yet been completed	Not applicable as the review is still in progress
CityU Professional Services Ltd	Review of the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme*	\$335,385	Review in progress	Not applicable as the review has not yet been completed	Not applicable as the review is still in progress

* The same consultancy study is entered in (b) below.

(b) The details on the consultancy studies for which financial provision has been allocated in 2005-06 are as follows:

Name of Consultant (if available)	Description	Consultancy Fees (\$)	Progress of Study (planning/ underway/ completed)	Whether study reports scheduled for completion in 2005-06 will be publicised; if yes, their channels and if not, the reasons.
CityU Professional Services Ltd.	Review of the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme (The review straddles 2004-05 and 2005-06)	\$335,385	Report of the review is expected to be ready by end 2005	Yes, but the channel has yet to be decided

Signature _____

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)010

Question Serial No.

0181

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding labour disputes and claims handled in 2003-04 and 2004-05, please give a breakdown of figures by trade and nature of cases in the respective years.

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

The Labour Department handled 427 and 270 labour disputes in 2003 and 2004 respectively. A breakdown by industry and cause is as follows:

Breakdown of labour disputes by industry

Industry	2003	2004
Construction	196	141
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	165	91
Manufacturing	23	12
Community, social and personal services	19	11
Transport, storage and communications	13	9
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	11	6
Total	427	270

Breakdown of labour disputes by cause

Cause	2003	2004
Disputes involving principal contractor and subcontractor	172	121
Insolvency	140	69
Cessation of business	75	43
Non-payment of wages	11	17
Retrenchment	9	6
Variation of terms of employment contract	5	0
Dismissal	4	2
Lay-off	2	0
Others	9	12
Total	427	270

As regards claims, the figures for 2003 and 2004 were 33 689 and 28 396 respectively. We do not have a breakdown of claims by industry. A breakdown by cause is as follows:

Cause	2003	2004
Dismissal/termination of contract	16 040	13 004
Non-payment/deduction of wages	10 481	9 459
Non-payment of holiday/annual leave/rest day pay/sickness allowance	1 933	1 744
Cessation of business	1 044	864
Insolvency	673	546
Retrenchment	596	326
Variation of terms of employment contract	212	106
Lay-off	172	119
Others	2 538	2 228
Total	33 689	28 396

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)011

Question Serial No.

0182

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The Labour Department plans to launch the Work Trial Scheme and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme in 2005-06. Please provide details on the two schemes and the total estimated expenditure.

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

Work Trial Scheme

The Work Trial Scheme (WTS) aims to enhance the employability of job-seekers who have special difficulties in finding jobs.

During the one-month work trial period, WTS participants will take up jobs offered by participating organisations. On present plan, the Labour Department will pay each WTS participant an allowance of \$4,500 on satisfactory completion of the one-month trial period and the participating organisation will pay another \$500, bringing the total amount of allowance for the one-month trial to \$5,000. We will encourage participating organisations to offer employment to WTS participants after satisfactory completion of the work trial.

The WTS will provide work trial opportunities for 2 000 job-seekers at an estimated expenditure of about \$9 million.

Work Orientation and Placement Scheme

The objective of the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) is to encourage employers to take on disabled job-seekers.

Under the WOPS, disabled job-seekers will be provided with a short pre-employment training programme covering the latest labour market information, job-searching skills, interviewing techniques, work ethics and interpersonal skills, etc.

For each disabled person engaged, the employer will be paid a monthly allowance equivalent to half-month's wages, subject to a ceiling of \$3,000, for up to three months. Mentors appointed by employers to help the disabled employees settle smoothly into their new jobs will be given a one-off award of \$500 as a token of appreciation.

With an estimated budget of \$8.2 million, the WOPS will help place 1 000 disabled job-seekers into employment.

Signature _____

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INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)012

Question Serial No.

0504

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

It is recorded that 351 working days were lost from labour disputes known in 2004, compared to 150 in 2003. Why? Is there any implication for the rise? Which industries were involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Bernard

Reply:

The statistics on the number of strikes, working days lost and employees involved in 2003 and 2004 are as follows:

	Year	
	2003	2004
Number of strikes	1	2
Number of employees involved	300	143
Number of working days lost	150	351
Number of working days lost per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners	0.05	0.11

The increase in the number of working days lost due to strikes in 2004 was primarily the result of a longer duration in the work stoppages in the two strikes. Despite this, the number of working days lost per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners remained at a very low level in recent years, as follows:

Year	Number of strikes	Number of working days lost per 1,000 salaried employees and wage earners
2000	5	0.31
2001	1	0.26
2002	0	0.00
2003	1	0.05
2004	2	0.11

While the number of working days lost in Hong Kong is among the lowest in the world, we will continue to monitor closely our labour relations scene and provide speedy conciliation service to help employers and employees resolve their disputes.

The two strikes in 2004 involved employees of a statutory organisation and a cleaning service contractor. These cases were settled through conciliation.

Signature _____

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Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)013

Question Serial No.

0505

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

In 2004, 56 652 employee compensation claims were processed. How much compensation was involved? Which industries were the workers from?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Bernard

Reply:

In 2004, the Labour Department processed 56 652 employee compensation claims reported by employers under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO).

Among the reported cases, 44 077 cases with compensation amounting to \$279.78 million were resolved as at the end of 2004. The rest are pending assessment of permanent incapacity, expiry of sick leave or determination by the court.

With the exception of minor cases, the reported cases were classified by the following industries:

Industries	No. of cases	Percentage
Community, social and personal services	11 715	25.15%
Catering	9 829	21.10%
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	5 103	10.95%
Transport, storage and communication	4 641	9.96%
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades	4 462	9.58%
Manufacturing	4 255	9.13%
Construction	3 981	8.55%
Other industries	2 601	5.58%
Total	46 587	100.00%

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

EDLB(L)014

0506

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding employment services for young people, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) for the 18 283 trainees who have completed the courses and secured employment under the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, what was the average starting rate of pay for their jobs and the number of trainees who resigned from their jobs within half a year of their employment?
- (b) what is the progress of the special programmes tailor-made for vulnerable trainees under the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme in 2004-05? What are the targets set for 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply:

- (a) Of the 18 283 trainees who secured employment under the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, 61% were employed at a monthly salary ranging from \$4,000 to \$4,999, 30% at \$5,000 to \$5,999 and the remaining 9% at \$6,000 or above. We do not have any information on the average starting pay of trainees. Altogether 8 145 trainees did not complete the on-the-job training which ranges from six to 12 months.
- (b) In 2004-05, we placed 384 trainees under the Action S4 project, a special tailor-made programme for vulnerable youths under the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme. We will continue with this project in 2005-06 and our target is to take on 500 youths.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)015

Question Serial No.

0507

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What is the latest progress of the Graduate Employment Training Scheme? What are the targets set for 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply:

The Graduate Employment Training Scheme was a one-off project launched in August 2003 to encourage employers to employ fresh university graduates and provide them with on-the-job training. For each graduate engaged, the employer would receive a monthly training allowance of \$2,000 for up to six months.

The Scheme, which placed 1 371 graduates into employment, was concluded in June 2004.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)016

Question Serial No.

0562

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under the Programme of Employment Services, the Labour Department plans to launch the Work Trial Scheme for 2 000 unemployed persons having special difficulty in finding jobs, will the Administration inform this Council:

- (a) how much provision will be allocated for the Scheme?
- (b) how the provision will be used to assist the 2 000 persons to secure employment under the Scheme?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

- (a) The estimated expenditure for the Work Trial Scheme is \$9 million.
- (b) The amount will be used to pay an allowance of \$4,500 to each of the 2 000 Scheme participants on satisfactory completion of their one-month work trial. In addition, the participating organisation will pay another \$500, bringing the total amount of allowance to \$5,000.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)017

Question Serial No.

0563

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under the Programme of Employment Services, the Labour Department plans to implement the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to help place 1 000 people with disabilities into employment, will the Administration inform this Council:

- (a) how much provision will be allocated for this Scheme?
- (b) how the provision will be used to assist the 1 000 people to secure employment under the Scheme?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

- (a) The estimated expenditure of the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme is \$8.2 million.
- (b) Of the provision earmarked for the Scheme, \$7.5 million will be used to pay to employers joining the Scheme a monthly allowance equivalent to half of a month's wage or \$3,000, whichever is the less, for each disabled person engaged. The remaining \$0.7 million will be used for providing pre-employment training to the disabled job-seekers and publicising the Scheme.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)018

Question Serial No.

0564

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under the Programme of Labour Relations, the financial provision for 2005-06 is reduced by 1.8% or about \$106 million when compared with that for 2004-05. Will the Administration inform this Council:

- (a) specifically, the areas in which financial provision will be reduced?
- (b) how the Labour Department can ensure that the number of labour disputes handled will more or less meet the targets and indicators set for 2004-05 despite a reduction of financial provision?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

- (a) Under the Programme of Labour Relations, the estimated financial provision of \$106.2 million for 2005-06 is \$1.9 million (1.8%) lower than the revised provision of \$108.1 million for 2004-05. The reduction is mainly due to the full-year effect of the 2005 civil service pay cut.
- (b) In 2005-06, we shall continue to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the provision of conciliation service for labour disputes and claims. Since 2002-03, the conciliation service has been strengthened by the addition of seven conciliation officers. This reinforcement will continue in 2005-06. We shall closely monitor the workload of the conciliation service and arrange for internal redeployment as necessary to cope with any increase in service demand.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)019

Question Serial No.

0619

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under Programme (2), the financial provision for 2005-06 is 17% less than the original estimate for 2004-05. According to the authorities, this is due to decreased cash flow requirement for non-recurrent items. Will the Administration inform us how the authorities can effectively cope with the increasing demand of the public for employment services despite a drop in the expenditure on non-recurrent items?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The provision for the Employment Services Programme for 2005-06 is \$93.9 million (17%) less than the original estimate for 2004-05 mainly because of the following reasons:

- (a) Following the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in March 2003, a one-off financial provision of \$45 million was approved to provide 6 000 additional training places under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP). Of this sum, \$30 million was allocated in 2004-05. However, because of the steady and strong recovery in the local economy and employment market since the fourth quarter of 2003, there was no need to offer additional training places under the YPTP in 2004-05. As a result, it was not necessary to resort to the \$30 million allocated for the financial year.
- (b) A sum of \$12 million deducted from the 2005-06 envelope was originally reserved for funding on-the-job training for trainees under the YPTP in 2004-05. However, the amount was frozen with the extension in 2004 of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) which offers on-the-job training for young people.
- (c) As a result of the completion of the one-off Graduate Employment Training Scheme in 2004-05, there is no need to earmark provision for the Scheme in 2005-06. The estimated cash flow requirement for 2004-05 is \$12.5 million.
- (d) In preparing the estimates of two non-recurrent projects, i.e. YWETS and the Loan Guarantee Scheme for SARS Impacted Industries, we have reduced their cash flow requirement in 2005-06 by about \$27 million and \$12 million respectively in the light of the past experience in spending. It should be pointed out that the revision is for the purpose of cash flow projection only as the total commitment under these projects will not be reduced. More importantly, the quality of services provided will not be affected.

The financial provision allocated to the Employment Services Programme in the 2005-06 Draft Estimates will be sufficient for the Labour Department to provide its various employment services and programmes and to meet the demand for services.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)020

Question Serial No.

0620

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The number of labour disputes and claims handled by the Labour Department decreased from 34 000-odd in 2003 to 28 000-odd in 2004, but the number of working days lost from labour disputes known increased from 150 to 351. What is the main reason for this? What was the number of employees involved in the cases concerned in the respective two years?

Asked by: Hon. TSANG Yok-sing, Jasper

Reply:

There is no direct correlation between the number of labour disputes and claims handled by the Labour Department and the number of working days lost as a result of strikes. In fact, the number of strikes recorded for 2003 and 2004 only stood at one and two respectively. The number of working days lost per 1 000 salaried employees and wage earners, at 0.05 for 2003 and 0.11 for 2004, is among the lowest in the world.

The number of employees involved in the strikes concerned is 300 and 143 respectively for 2003 and 2004.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)021

Question Serial No.

0621

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide details on the rank and number of staff, expenditure involved and number of prosecutions taken in respect of the operations against illegal employment conducted between 2002-03 and 2004-05.

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

Labour inspectors of the Labour Department conduct workplace inspections and mount joint operations with other enforcement departments to combat illegal employment. As our labour inspectors also enforce labour laws, we do not have a separate breakdown of the number of inspectors and expenditure on combating illegal employment between 2002-03 and 2004-05.

Between 2002 and 2004, there was a small fluctuation in the total number of field labour inspectors mainly because of staff retirement, resignation and re-deployment to meet operational needs. A breakdown of the number of field labour inspectors by rank is as follows:

Rank	Number of inspectors		
	As at 31.12.2002	As at 31.12.2003	As at 31.12.2004
Chief Labour Inspector	6	6	6
Senior Labour Inspector	27	27	27
Labour Inspector I	91	86	90
Labour Inspector II	35	30	30
Total	159	149	153

Labour inspectors do not have the power to arrest and prosecute illegal workers and their employers. Suspected cases of illegal employment detected by labour inspectors are referred to the Immigration Department for further investigation and prosecution.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)022

Question Serial No.

0622

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged implemented in 2004-05, will the Administration provide details on:

- (a) the total number of trainees participating in the Programme;
- (b) the percentage of trainees who have completed the training;
- (c) the average cost required for training of a trainee; and
- (d) the percentages of trainees who are still employed by the employers or organisations three months and six months after completion of the training.

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

(a), (b) & (d) As at end-February 2005, altogether 9 624 job-seekers were placed into employment through the Re-employment Training Programme. The Labour Department (LD) will usually follow up with the employers one month after the job-seekers have been placed under the Programme. However, as a substantial number of employers have not claimed training allowance in respect of the employees engaged under the Programme, they normally would not inform LD of the length of employment of these employees. Hence, the information requested is not fully available. However, according to the employment information of some 2 500 placements that LD could trace, about 50% worked less than three months, 34% between three and six months, and the remaining 16% for six months or more.

(c) Since some employers have not yet applied for the training allowance, the cost per placement is not available.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)023

Question Serial No.

0623

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The actual number of labour disputes and claims handled in 2004 decreased drastically by 16% when compared with that of 2003, but the waiting time of five weeks for conciliation meetings for claims remained unchanged. Will the Administration inform this Council:

- (a) why the waiting time remained unchanged?
- (b) of the establishment, manpower and average time required for handling labour disputes and claims in 2003 and 2004?

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

- (a) While our target is to ensure that the waiting time for conciliation meetings for labour claims does not exceed 5 weeks, we are committed to reducing the actual waiting time for better service delivery. Indeed, the average waiting time for conciliation meetings was reduced from 4.1 weeks in 2003 to 3.3 weeks in 2004.
- (b) Conciliation of labour disputes and claims is the responsibility of the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department. In 2003 and 2004, one Chief Labour Officer, three Senior Labour Officers, 11 Labour Officers and 35 Assistant Labour Officers I of the Division were engaged in the provision of conciliation service. We were able to provide immediate service to employers and employees involved in labour disputes in 2003 and 2004. For labour claims, the average waiting time for conciliation meetings was 4.1 weeks in 2003 and 3.3 weeks in 2004.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)024

Question Serial No.

0757

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide details on the number of training places available, the rank and number of staff involved and the average cost for training a trainee in respect of the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme and the Work Trial Scheme to be launched in 2005-06.

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

The Work Trial Scheme (WTS) will provide 2 000 work trial opportunities for job-seekers who have special difficulties finding jobs. It will be run by existing staff of the Labour Department (LD) through internal re-deployment. We estimate the average cost for each work trial to be about \$4,500, which is the allowance for each WTS participant on satisfactory completion of the one-month work trial period. In addition to the allowance, the participating organisation will pay another \$500, bringing the total amount of allowance to \$5,000.

The Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) is designed to help place 1 000 disabled job-seekers into employment. It will also be run by existing LD staff through internal re-deployment. The average cost of training and placing one disabled job-seeker under the WOPS is estimated to be \$8,200.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)025

Question Serial No.

0758

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme implemented in 2004-05, please provide details on:

- (e) the names of the non-government organisations and non-profit making training bodies participating in the Scheme;
- (f) the expenses involved, including training, support services and relevant facilities, resources and venues for conducting business, etc.;
- (g) the average cost required for training of a trainee;
- (h) the percentage of trainees who have completed the Scheme; and
- (i) the employment figures of trainees three months and six months after completion of the Scheme; and for those who have become self-employed, the average amount of pay earned by each trainee per month.

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

- (a) The list of non-government organisations and non-profit making training bodies participating in the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme is at Appendix.
- (b) A financial provision of \$30 million has been approved for the Scheme. The breakdown of expenditure is shown below:

Item	Amount of Expenditure (\$million)
Training	9
Support Services	11
Equipment, consumables and facilities including venues for conducting business	7
Administration, promotion, insurance and general expenses	3
Total	30

- (c) Altogether 1 475 trainees have been enrolled under the Scheme. The average cost of training is about \$20,000 per trainee.

- (d) As the training provided under the Scheme lasts for one year and the trainees only commenced their training at the earliest in July 2004, the percentage of trainees who have completed the Scheme is hence not available.
- (e) As no trainee has completed the Scheme, the information requested is not yet available.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

List of Non-government Organisations and non-profit making training bodies
under the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme

**參與“青年自僱支援計劃”的
非政府機構及非牟利培訓機構一覽表**

1.	Sheng Kung Hui Diocesan Welfare Council	聖公會教區福利協會
2.	Industrial Evangelistic Fellowship Limited	工業福音團契有限公司
3.	Christian Action	基督教勵行會
4.	Caritas Youth and Community Service	香港明愛青少年及社區服務
5.	Free Methodist Church Tuen Mun Children & Youth Integrated Services Centre	循理會屯門青少年綜合服務中心
6.	The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council	鄰舍輔導會
7.	S.K.H. Lady Macle hose Centre	聖公會麥理浩夫人中心
8.	Barnabas Charitable Service Association	基督教巴拿巴愛心服務團
9.	Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Wanchai Integrated Children & Youth Services Centre	浸會愛群社會服務處灣仔綜合青少年服務中心
10.	CTU Education Foundation Limited	職工盟教育基金有限公司
11.	The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups	香港青年協會
12.	Neighbourhood and Worker's Education Centre	街坊工友服務處教育中心
13.	Methodist Centre	循道衛理中心
14.	Hong Kong College of Technology	香港專業進修學校
15.	St. James' Settlement, Youth Service	聖雅各福群會
16.	The Salvation Army	救世軍
17.	Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre	香港仔街坊福利會社會服務中心
18.	Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong	香港中華基督教青年會
19.	Hong Kong Women Development Association Limited	香港婦女發展聯會

20.	The Boy's and Girl's Club Association of Hong Kong	香港女童群益會
21.	The Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong	香港善導會
22.	The Church of United Brethren in Christ Social Service Division	基督教協基會社會服務部
23.	Stewards Limited	香港神託會

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)026

Question Serial No.

0780

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Over the past two years, the Labour Department has met the performance targets of labour relations, such as “waiting time for conciliation meetings for claims”, “waiting time for consultation meetings” and “waiting time for claims to be adjudicated after filing with the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board”. Regarding this,

- (a) what are the reasons for achieving the targets of the above items in 2003 and 2004? Is it attributable to the relaxation of the targets?
- (b) why has the Administration not adjusted the targets of the above items set for 2005?
- (c) will the Administration assess whether the targets set for the above items are too lax? Will more appropriate performance targets be set?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

Waiting time for Conciliation Meetings and Consultation Meetings

- (a) In 2003 and 2004, our targets were to ensure that the waiting time for conciliation meetings and for consultation sessions did not exceed 5 weeks and 30 minutes respectively. We were committed to meeting these targets to the best of our ability. To this end, we had re-prioritized our work and redeployed our manpower in order to cope with variations in the demand of our services. We also simplified and streamlined our work procedures on a continuing basis with a view to expediting our response time. It is only with all these efforts that we could meet in full our service targets in 2003 and 2004.
- (b) Our conciliation and consultation services are rendered through a network of 10 field offices. We have to closely coordinate the workload and manpower position of these offices so as to reduce the possibility of prolonged waiting time in individual offices. Any attempt to raise the targets has to be considered in the light of our ability to meet the revised targets and to cater for any contingencies on a service-wide basis.

Despite this, we are committed to reducing the actual waiting time for better service delivery. Indeed, the average waiting time for conciliation meetings was reduced from 4.1 weeks in 2003 to 3.3 weeks in 2004.

- (c) For the reason stated in (b) above, we have not proposed any change to the targets in 2005. However, we will continue to enhance our services to the public.

Waiting time for hearing at Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board

- (a) In 2003 and 2004, the target waiting time for claims to be adjudicated after filing with the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board was **within** 5 weeks. All along, we have been able to absorb any sudden upsurge in cases through internal staff re-deployment and re-prioritization of our work so as to ensure that all claims can be heard within 5 weeks after filing. Because of these measures, we managed to meet the targets in 2003 and 2004.
- (b) As sufficient time has to be allowed for the litigating parties to prepare for the hearing including preparation of defence statement, collection of evidence, arrangement of witnesses, and as the claims filed may be unevenly distributed, we consider that the 5-week target is appropriate.
- (c) For the reason stated in (b) above, we have not proposed any change to the target in 2005. However, we will regularly review our operation procedures and enhance our services to the public.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)027

Question Serial No.

0781

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What is the present establishment of the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department? Of this establishment, how many front-line staff are responsible for handling labour disputes? Is there any pressure to strengthen manpower? If yes, why does the Administration not propose the creation of posts in the estimate?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

At present, the establishment of the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department (LD) comprises 107 officers. Of these, 49 (including three Senior Labour Officers, 11 Labour Officers and 35 Assistant Labour Officers I) are engaged in the provision of frontline conciliation service. The remaining officers are mainly involved in the provision of consultation and other support services.

Since 2002-03, LD's conciliation service has been strengthened by the addition of seven conciliation officers. The reinforcement will continue in 2005-06. We shall closely monitor the workload of the conciliation service and arrange internal redeployment as necessary to cope with any increase in service demand.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)028

Question Serial No.

0782

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Item: 531 Trial placement scheme for
people with a disability

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner
for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under Item 531, the balance of the provision for the trial placement scheme for people with a disability is only \$130,000. How many people with a disability are expected to benefit from the scheme with the balance? Is the amount of \$130,000 sufficient to cover the expenses in 2005-06? If no, will the Administration apply for an increase in the provision?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The Trial Placement-cum-Mentor Scheme for People with Disabilities was concluded on 31 March 2005. As at end-February 2005, altogether 798 disabled persons had participated in the Scheme. The remaining provision for the Scheme, at \$130 000, is sufficient to pay for the balance of the expenses of the cases already committed in 2004-05.

In April 2005, the Labour Department will launch a new scheme - the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme - to encourage employers to employ people with a disability. Our target is to help place 1 000 disabled job-seekers into employment.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)029

Question Serial No.

0783

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Of the funding for the Labour Department, provision for Programme (4) Employee Rights and Benefits will be reduced by \$9.6 m, a ratio higher than that of the other three Programmes (Labour Relations, Employment Services and Safety and Health at Work). Regarding this:

- (a) how can the Department ensure that the work for protection of employee rights and benefits will not be affected?
- (b) when will the Labour Department's telephone enquiry service be transferred to the Efficiency Unit? What are the savings to be achieved in expenditure and manpower; and
- (c) what are the grades, ranks, length of service and conditions of employment involved in the deletion of two posts? In what way will these posts be deleted?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

- (a) The reduction in the provision for 2005-06 for Programme (4) Employee Rights and Benefits is mainly due to the full-year effect of the 2005 civil service pay cut, full-year effect of the Labour Department's transfer of its Telephone Enquiry Service (TES) and related resources to the Efficiency Unit, and the deletion of two Senior Labour Officer posts. We will continue to streamline our working procedures and re-engineer our support service to ensure the optimal use of manpower resources in protecting employees' rights and benefits.
- (b) As an efficiency measure, the Labour Department's TES was transferred to the Integrated Call Centre of the Efficiency Unit in July 2004. Following the transfer, 70% of the calls requesting connection to operators are answered within 12 seconds as compared to the previous waiting time of 65 seconds. The successful rate of connection to operators also increased significantly from 64% to 95% and the operator service was extended from normal office hours to round the clock throughout the year. With the transfer, the Labour Department transferred the recurrent cost of operating the TES to the Efficiency Unit and the labour inspectors who operated the TES were re-deployed to the Labour Department's field offices to step up enforcement of labour laws.
- (c) In 2005-06, two Senior Labour Officer posts will be deleted under the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

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INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)030

Question Serial No.

0784

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What specific work will be undertaken by the Labour Department in 2005-06 for the promotion of good practices in maintaining medical records and issuance of certificates by registered Chinese medicine practitioners? What are the expenditure, manpower and timeframe for the promotion?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

In 2005-06, the Labour Department will organise eight seminars for registered Chinese medicine practitioners and undergraduates taking Chinese Medicine programmes in local universities. These seminars will promote the good practices in maintaining medical records and the guidelines on the issuance of sick leave certificates prepared by the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board. We will also join hands with major Chinese medicine associations to strengthen understanding among the Chinese medicine profession of the medical functions, certificates and associated legal responsibilities of a medical practitioner under labour laws. A leaflet setting out the main points will be distributed to participants.

The estimated expenditure for this promotion exercise is \$133,000. The existing staff of the Labour Department will handle the administrative and other aspects of the promotional activities which will be held throughout the year.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
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INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)031

Question Serial No.

1047

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The Labour Department has adopted a new enforcement approach in detecting wage offences in 2004-05. Has the Administration assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of this practice?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Chin-shek

Reply:

In 2004, we adopted a tactical approach in tackling wage and statutory benefit offences by launching more targeted operations by labour inspectors. In 2004, the number of convicted summonses in relation to such offences that resulted from the new enforcement mode increased from 1 425 in 2003 to 1 700 in 2004, representing an increase of 19.3%.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)032

Question Serial No.

1048

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What are the details of the two posts to be deleted in 2005-06? Has the Administration assessed the implication of the deletion on its work?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Chin-shek

Reply:

In 2005-06, two Senior Labour Officer posts will be deleted under the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme. The work involved will be rearranged through process re-engineering.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)033

Question Serial No.

1049

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What are the figures of accidents which occurred in industrial undertakings and non-industrial undertakings in 2004 by industry and work type?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Chin-shek

Reply:

The occupational accident statistics for the full year of 2004 will not be available until mid-April this year. However, in the first three quarters of 2004, there were 33 062 occupational accidents comprising 13 244 industrial accidents and 19 818 non-industrial accidents. The breakdown of industrial accidents and non-industrial accidents by major economic activities is shown in **Table 1** and **Table 2** respectively below. We do not compile a separate breakdown of the figures by work type.

Table 1: Industrial Accidents in the First Three Quarters of 2004 – Analysed by Major Economic Activities

Major Economic Activities	No. of Accidents	Percentage
Catering Industry	7 058	53.3
Construction Industry	2 889	21.8
Manufacturing Industries	2 219	16.8
Mining and Quarrying, Utilities, Transport and Servicing Industries	1 078	8.1
Total	13 244	100.0

Table 2: Non-industrial Accidents in the First Three Quarters of 2004 – Analysed by Major Economic Activities (Non-Industrial Undertakings)

Major Economic Activities	No. of Accidents	Percentage
Business Services (Including Import & Export Trade)	3 586	18.1
Transport & Related Services	2 551	12.9
Retail Trade	2 086	10.5
Medical, Dental & other Health Services	1 613	8.1
Sanitary and Similar Services	1 233	6.2
Welfare Institutes (Non-Government)	1 180	6.0
Education Services	702	3.6
Hotels and Boarding Houses	651	3.3
Wholesale Trade	543	2.7
Others	5 673	28.6
Total	19 818	100.0

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)034

Question Serial No.

1050

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What are the figures on warnings issued by Occupational Safety Officers in 2004 by industry and nature of offences?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Chin-shek

Reply:

In 2004, Occupational Safety Officers of the Labour Department issued 34 053 written warnings and 1 555 improvement and suspension notices to various establishments as follows:

Industry	No. of Written Warnings	No. of Improvement and Suspension notices
Construction	12 953	800
Manufacturing	7 428	281
Catering	4 315	257
Other Industrial Undertakings	1 280	43
Non-Industrial Undertakings	8 077	174
Total	34 053	1 555

We do not compile a separate breakdown of the written warnings by nature of offence. However, the breakdown of the improvement and suspension notices issued by nature of hazards is as follows:

Nature of hazards	No. of improvement and suspension notices
Unsafe working at height	493
Non-compliance with fire precaution	455
Non-provision/wearing of personal protective equipment	170
Unsafe machinery	156
Unsafe lifting operation	72
Others	209
Total	1 555

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Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)035

Question Serial No.

1116

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

How does the Labour Department promote good practices in maintaining medical records and issuance of certificates by registered Chinese medicine practitioners? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. TIEN Pei-chun, James

Reply:

In 2005-06, the Labour Department will organise eight seminars for registered Chinese medicine practitioners and undergraduates taking Chinese medicine programmes in local universities. These seminars will promote the good practices in maintaining medical records and the guidelines on the issuance of sick leave certificates prepared by the Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board. We will also join hands with major Chinese medicine associations to strengthen understanding amongst the Chinese medicine profession of the medical functions, certificates and associated legal responsibilities of a medical practitioner under labour laws. A leaflet setting out the main points will be distributed to participants. The estimated expenditure is \$133,000.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)036

Question Serial No.

1135

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide a breakdown of cases on the basis of the time required to effect payment in respect of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund in 2004.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

The time required to effect payment from the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund in respect of applications processed in 2004 is as follows:

Payment Time	Number of Applications
4 weeks or less	10 933
More than 4 weeks to 6 weeks	3 116
More than 6 weeks to 8 weeks	2 738
More than 8 weeks to 10 weeks	1 662
More than 10 weeks	613
Total	19 062

Signature _____

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Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
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Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
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INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)037

Question Serial No.

1139

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) Regarding the latest number of placements under the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged, please provide a breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings.
- (b) The estimated expenditure of the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged for 2004-05 has been revised from the original estimate of \$20 million to \$10 million. What are the reasons?
- (c) What is the estimated expenditure of the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged for 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

- (a) As at end-February 2005, altogether 9 624 job-seekers have been placed into employment under the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged. Of these, 59% were female and 67% were aged between 40 and 50 while the rest were aged 51 and above. They were mainly placed in real estate (19%), business services (11%), community and social services (9%), import and export trades (7%), wholesale or retail (7%) and the rest in a wide variety of sectors. As regards occupations, 23% of those placed were engaged as security guards or carpark assistants, 12% as cleaners, 10% as packers, stock-keepers, messengers or delivery workers, 9% as labourers, 7% as clerks and the rest in other job titles. About 64% of them were placed in jobs with monthly wages between \$4,000 and \$6,999 and 18% with wages below \$4,000. The remaining 18% earned \$7,000 and above a month.
- (b) As some employers have not yet applied for the training allowance, we have adjusted downwards the estimated expenditure of the Programme in 2004-05 from \$20 million to \$10 million.
- (c) The estimated expenditure of the Programme in 2005-06 is \$20 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
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Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)038

Question Serial No.

1140

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The Youth Self-employment Support Scheme has a commitment balance of only \$16 million. Is it sufficient to meet the requirements for 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

The commitment balance of \$16 million is sufficient to meet the expenditure required for the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme in 2005-06.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)039

Question Serial No.

1141

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the number of placements secured through the employment services of the Labour Department for able-bodied job seekers for the past one year, please provide a breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

In 2004, the Labour Department (LD) secured 86 257 placements for able-bodied job-seekers. Of these, 27 198 were through direct referrals by the LD while the others were by job-seekers successfully applying to employers for jobs registered with the LD. For the former, a breakdown by sex and age, industry, occupational group and earnings is as follows:

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
15-19	1 012	1 092	2 104
20-29	4 706	3 940	8 646
30-39	1 850	2 422	4 272
40-49	2 786	4 899	7 685
50-59	2 118	2 000	4 118
60 or above	308	65	373
Total	12 780	14 418	27 198

Industry	No. of placements
Manufacturing	3 788
Construction	1 485
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	5 991
Transport, storage and communications	1 648
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	4 869
Community, social and personal services	4 926
Others (including government sector)	4 491
Total	27 198

Occupational Group	No. of placements
Managers and Administrators	144
Professionals	293
Associate Professionals	1 750
Clerks	8 519
Service Workers	1 956
Shop Sales Workers	1 016
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry Workers and Fishermen	155
Craft and Related Workers	1 566
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	1 056
Elementary Occupations	10 677
Others	66
Total	27 198

Earnings	No. of placements
\$4,000 or below	6 730
\$4,001 - \$5,000	4 525
\$5,001 - \$6,000	6 074
\$6,001 - \$7,000	4 600
\$7,001 - \$8,000	2 977
\$8,001 - \$9,000	879
\$9,001 - \$10,000	530
\$10,001 or above	883
Total	27 198

Signature _____

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Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
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Date 8 April 2005

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)040

Question Serial No.

1142

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the number of placements secured through the employment services of the Labour Department for disabled job-seekers for the past one year, please provide a breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings:

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

In 2004, the Labour Department secured 2 391 placements for disabled job-seekers. A breakdown by sex, age, occupational group and salary is set out below. Breakdown by industry is not available.

(a) By sex and age group

Age group/sex	Male	Female	Total
15-19	97	58	155
20-29	571	560	1 131
30-39	286	254	540
40-49	203	200	403
50-59	76	77	153
60 or above	8	1	9
Total	1 241	1 150	2 391

(b) By occupational group

Occupational group	Number of placements
Professional, technical and related workers (eg. Technician, tutor, programmer, etc.)	47
Administrative and managerial workers (eg. Office Manager, Marketing Executive, Executive Officer, etc.)	10
Clerical and related workers (eg. General Office Clerk, Courier, Receptionist, etc.)	396
Sales workers (eg. Salesperson, Card Distributor, Shop Assistant, etc.)	805
Service workers (eg. Cleaner, Security Guard, Kitchen Helper, etc.)	535
Production workers, transport equipment operators and labourers (eg. Delivery Worker, Storeworker, Packer, etc.)	598
Total	2 391

(c) By salary group

Salary group	Number of placements
Under \$3000*	1 197
\$3000 - \$3999	334
\$4000 - \$4999	363
\$5000 - \$5999	272
\$6000 - \$6999	107
\$7000 - \$7999	77
\$8000 - \$8999	34
\$9000 or above	7
Total	2 391

*mainly part-time jobs

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
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Date 8 April 2005

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)041

Question Serial No.

1196

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

As the Labour Department plans to promote good people management practices among employers and in individual industries in 2005-06, what are the objectives, contents and cost of the promotion?

Asked by: Hon. TIEN Pei-chun, James

Reply:

The objective of promoting good people management practices to employers and specific industries is to enhance harmonious labour relations and strengthen labour-management communication and co-operation.

Major planned activities include:

- (a) organising a large-scale seminar to promote good people management practices. The seminar will be a sequel to the “Good People Management Award 2004”, a major event to commend employers for their good management practices;
- (b) issuing a code of labour relations practices for the catering industry and publishing two guidebooks on good practices for employers and employees in the construction industry; and
- (c) promoting and publicising good management practices to employers in general and those in the catering and construction industries in particular through workshops, briefings, industry-based Tripartite Committees and Human Resource Managers Clubs.

The estimated cost for these promotional activities is about \$350,000.

Signature

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 8 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)042

Question Serial No.

1239

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the establishment for 2005-06, there will be a deletion of two non-directorate posts under Programme (4) Employee Rights and Benefits. Will the Administration give the reasons for the deletion and explain whether the quality of the relevant services will be affected?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

In 2005-06, two Senior Labour Officer posts will be deleted under the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme. The deletion of these posts will not affect the quality of the relevant services as the work involved will be rearranged through process re-engineering.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)043

Question Serial No.

1240

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

As for the time to start investigation of complaints by labour inspectors, will the Administration consider increasing the efficiency by starting investigation of complaints in less than one week's time (e.g. five working days)?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The planned target is to start investigation of complaints by labour inspectors within one week of receipt of the complaint. It is a planning target and is not the time required for every complaint. Our aim is to start investigation as soon as possible.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)044

Question Serial No.

1241

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the inspections under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (FIUO) and the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (OSHO), why is the number of inspections planned to be conducted in 2005 reduced by 7 261 when compared with the previous year? Will this have a negative effect on occupational safety?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The planned number of inspections is only a planning target, not a ceiling on the number of inspections to be conducted. The planned number of inspections under the FIUO and OSHO for 2004 was set at 115 400 but the actual number of inspections was 118 861. The increase of 3 461 inspections over the planned figure was due mainly to fewer serious or major incidents occurring in the year, thus freeing up the time for more inspections to be conducted. The planned figure for 2005 is set at 111 600 to reflect the reprioritisation of Labour Department's work programme and deployment of staff to focus on major hazards, including those in construction, building repair and maintenance, working at height and container handling and storage. If the number of serious accidents decreases in 2005, we will increase the number of inspections accordingly.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
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INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)045

Question Serial No.

1283

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

According to the figures, there are about 4 000 disabled job-seekers registered each year. However, the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to be launched by the Administration can only help place 1 000 people with disabilities into employment. Is this utterly inadequate? What are the support services and assistance made available to the disabled job-seekers to secure employment?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The target of helping to place 1 000 disabled job-seekers into employment under the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme is appropriate as not all the placements (e.g. Government jobs and short-term jobs) achieved by the Labour Department will qualify for the Scheme and some employers hiring disabled people may not wish to join the Scheme. It should be pointed out that the provision for this new Scheme is additional to the resources already allocated to provide employment services to the disabled job-seekers.

The Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department provides a personalised service to help people with disabilities to find jobs. A placement officer will be assigned to provide employment assistance and guidance to each registrant. To promote and enhance their employment opportunities, we have also taken the following measures:

- (a) Self Help Integrated Placement Service: The Scheme aims to encourage disabled job-seekers to be more pro-active and independent in their job search. Group counselling is arranged and job-seekers could have access to computer and other facilities in each employment office.
- (b) Special campaigns are conducted from time to time to canvass job vacancies for disabled job-seekers.
- (c) Seminars, exhibitions and award presentation ceremonies are organised regularly to promote public acceptance of people with disabilities and enhance their employment opportunities.

Signature _____

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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)046

Question Serial No.

1284

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please inform this Council of the estimated expenditure of the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme. Will the Administration put in more resources for the Scheme and disabled job-seekers to increase their employment opportunities?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The estimated expenditure of the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme is \$8.2 million. We consider the provision adequate as this is additional to the resources already allocated for providing employment services to disabled job-seekers.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)047

Question Serial No.

1285

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What was the number of people participating in the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged in the past two years? Will the content of the training programme be changed appropriately in the coming year to meet market needs? How much resource is expected to be allocated for the Programme in 2005-06?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

As at end-February 2005, altogether 9 624 job-seekers were placed into employment through the Re-employment Training Programme (RTP) for the Middle-aged.

The training content of RTP is designed by participating employers to cater for the training needs of individual employees and the operational requirements of the employers concerned. The content will be revised in the light of changes in the employment market.

The estimated expenditure of RTP in 2005-06 is \$20 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
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Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)048

Question Serial No.

1286

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The Work Trial Scheme will be launched for 2 000 unemployed persons having special difficulty in finding jobs. What are the details of the Scheme? When is it expected to be launched? What is the estimated expenditure? Besides, how will the unemployed persons be defined as those “having special difficulty in finding jobs”? What will be the criteria for such classification?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The Work Trial Scheme aims to enhance the employability of job-seekers who have special difficulties in finding jobs. These include those who have registered with the Labour Department's Job Centres for a prolonged period and remain unemployed and those who have repeatedly failed in job interviews.

During the one-month work trial period, Scheme participants will take up jobs offered by participating organisations. On present plan, the Labour Department will pay each participant an allowance of \$4,500 on satisfactory completion of the one-month trial period and the organisation concerned will pay another \$500, bringing the total amount of allowance for the one-month trial to \$5,000. We will encourage participating organisations to offer employment to Scheme participants after their satisfactory completion of the work trial.

The Scheme, which will provide work trial opportunities for 2 000 job-seekers at an estimated \$9 million, is expected to be launched in June 2005.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Development and Labour (Labour)/
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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)049

Question Serial No.

1287

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What is the number of job vacancies referred by the Labour Department (LD) to the Social Welfare Department for filling under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme in 2004-05? Are these vacancies also made available to the job-seekers registered with the LD? Has the LD compiled any statistics on the above vacancies to indicate whether they have been filled by the participants of the Scheme or by the job-seekers registered with the LD? If yes, what is the result?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The Labour Department (LD) disseminates vacancy information through its 10 job centres, Interactive Employment Service website on the Internet, and 38 vacancy search terminals installed in the Social Security Field Units of the Social Welfare Department. All job-seekers, including those registered with the LD and participants of the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, have free access to our vacancy information. As our employment services are available to all job-seekers irrespective of whether they are participants of the Scheme, we do not have separate statistics on the number of vacancies filled by them.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)050

Question Serial No.

1288

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) What are the respective figures of part-time and full-time job vacancies provided by the Labour Department in 2004-05?
- (b) In respect of the job vacancies provided by the Labour Department in 2004-05, how many of them offered a salary of below \$5,000, between \$5,000 and \$10,000, between \$10,000 and \$15,000 and above \$15,000 respectively?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

- (a) In 2004, the Labour Department received a total of 297 186 vacancies from the private sector. Of these, 253 075 were full-time vacancies and 44 111 part-time vacancies.
- (b) The breakdown by wages offered in respect of the vacancies received by the Labour Department in 2004 is as below :

Salary Range	Number of vacancies received
\$5,000 or below	107 527
\$5,001 - \$10,000	171 764
\$10,001 - \$15,000	13 720
\$15,000 or above	4 175
Total	297 186

Signature _____

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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)051

Question Serial No.

1311

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) The Administration launched the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme on a pilot basis in 2004-05. What is the expenditure involved?
- (b) How many young people are expected to benefit from the Scheme in 2005-06? What will be the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

- (a) The Youth Self-employment Support Scheme was launched on a pilot basis in May 2004 with a financial provision of \$30 million.
- (b) Altogether 1 475 trainees have been enrolled under the Scheme. The estimated cash flow requirement for 2005-06 is \$16 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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Commissioner for Labour

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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)052

Question Serial No.

1312

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) In 2004-05, how many domestic helpers have benefited from the Local Domestic Helpers Incentive Allowance Scheme and what was the expenditure involved?
- (b) In 2005-06, how many domestic helpers are expected to benefit from the Scheme and what will be the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

- (a) For the period April 2004 to February 2005, there were 2 283 successful applications under the Special Incentive Allowance Scheme for local domestic helpers (LDHs). Concurrently, \$11,333,450 was disbursed as incentive allowance.
- (b) A sum of \$60 million is earmarked for the Scheme to benefit 8 000 LDHs. As at February 2005, there were still some 3 800 places available to eligible LDHs.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)053

Question Serial No.

1354

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

What is the number of people engaged in the catering industry through the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme and the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged in 2004-05? What is the ratio of these people to the number of placements achieved?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

**Youth Pre-employment Training Programme &
Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme**

As the 2004/05 Programme for both the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) are still in progress and will be completed by October and August 2005 respectively, we can only provide the figures for the 2003/04 Programme.

The YPTP does not provide job placement services. However, according to information voluntarily reported by trainees of the 2003/04 Programme, about 1 200 trainees, representing 16.8% of all employed trainees worked in the catering industry. As regards the YWETS, 582 trainees or 7.6% of those placed in training vacancies under the Scheme were engaged in the catering industry.

Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged

As at end-February 2005, the Labour Department has placed 579 job-seekers in the catering trade under the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged. They accounted for 6% of all the placements.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)054

Question Serial No.

1391

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the “Youth Pre-employment Training Programme” and the “Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme” implemented in 2004-05, please provide details on:

- (a) the average cost required for training of a trainee;
- (b) the percentage of trainees who have completed the training;
- (c) the percentages of trainees who are still employed by employers or organisations three months and six months after completion of the training.

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

- (a) Since the 2004/05 programme year for both the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) will run until October and August 2005 respectively, we can only provide the figures for the 2003/04 programme year as follows :

	YPTP	YWETS
Number of participating young people	11 327	13 000
Total expenditure	\$77 million	\$141 million
Average unit cost	\$6,800	\$10,800

- (b) During the 2003/04 programme year, 87.5% of YPTP trainees completed training. As for the YWETS, 58% of trainees had either completed or were still undergoing on-the-job training at the end of the programme year.
- (c) As trainees who have secured employment after completing training or on-the-job training under YPTP and YWETS do not have to report the length of employment in their jobs to the Labour Department, information on whether the trainees are still employed by the same employers/organisations three and six months after completing the training is not available.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
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Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)055

Question Serial No.

1424

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, what was the number of participants last year? How much resources will the Government allocate for the Programme this year? How many training places are expected to be provided?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The Youth Pre-employment Training Programme runs from September of the year and ends in October of the following year. In respect of the programme year 2004/05, the second phase of the training is still in progress. For the 2003/04 programme year, there were 11 327 trainees. We have earmarked about \$80 million for the programme in 2005/06 to provide 12 000 training places.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)056

Question Serial No.

1425

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

- (a) What was the number of applicants for the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme last year? On average, how much resources were allocated for training and assisting each applicant to become self-employed last year?
- (b) In connection with the above, will the training and assistance provided under the Scheme be reviewed and modified this year? How much resources are expected to be put in?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) During the application period from 24 May to 31 October 2004, the Labour Department received a total of 5 191 applications for enrolment into the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme. Of these, 1 475 applicants have been selected to undergo training under the Scheme. The average cost of training per trainee is \$20,000.
- (b) The Labour Department is reviewing the effectiveness of the Scheme and the report is expected to be completed by end-2005. Meanwhile, we expect to spend \$16 million under the approved commitment for the Scheme in 2005-06.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)057

Question Serial No.

1479

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide the breakdown of expenses and unit cost of Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme in items of Training Subsidy to Employers, Course and Examination Subsidy to Trainees, and Case Management and Training Fees to Training Body during the period from July 2002 up to December 2004.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando

Reply:

Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme

As training subsidy will only be reimbursed to employers upon proof of wage payment to trainees and that training bodies will only be paid when they submit claims for payment of services already provided, the expenses paid during any specified period would not reflect the actual expenses incurred for that period.

During July 2002 to end-December 2004, the Labour Department paid a total of \$119.7 million as training subsidy to employers. Basically, the unit cost is \$2,000 per month for each trainee engaged for up to 12 months. During the same period, in respect of courses and examination fees, we made reimbursement of \$3.7 million for 2 492 approved applications, or an average of \$1,485 per application. As regards the services provided by training bodies, we paid a total of \$9.1 million for induction training courses or an average of \$1,360 per trainee and \$6.2 million for case management services at an average cost of \$46 per hour for up to 50 hours per trainee.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)058

Question Serial No.

1480

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide the breakdown of expenses and unit cost of Re-employment Training Programme for Middle-aged in items of Subsidy to Employers and administration costs during the period from May 2003 up to December 2004.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando

Reply:

Since some employers have not yet applied for the training allowance in respect of the employees engaged under the Re-employment Training Programme, the unit cost per placement is not available.

During May 2003 to 31 December 2004, the amount of training allowance paid to employers was \$4.9 million and the administration costs were \$1.2 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)059

Question Serial No.

1481

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme: (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Please provide the budget details in 2005-06 of the proposed Work Trial Scheme for the 2 000 unemployed persons having special difficulty in finding jobs and also the implementation details, such as target groups, age group, contents of service and etc.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando

Reply:

The Work Trial Scheme aims to enhance the employability of job-seekers who have special difficulties in finding jobs, such as those who have registered with the Labour Department's (LD) Job Centres for a prolonged period but remain unemployed and those who have failed in job interviews repeatedly. There will be no age limit for participants of the Scheme.

During the one-month work trial period, Scheme participants will take up jobs offered by participating organisations. On present plan, the LD will pay each participant an allowance of \$4,500 on satisfactory completion of the one-month work trial period and the organisation concerned will pay another \$500, bringing the total amount of allowance for the one-month trial to \$5,000. We will encourage participating organisations to offer employment to Scheme participants after their satisfactory completion of the work trial.

The Scheme will provide work trial opportunities for 2 000 job-seekers and will cost an estimated \$9 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)060

Question Serial No.

1587

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Item: 539 Youth Self-employment
Support Scheme

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under Item 539 Youth Self-employment Support Scheme, there is a balance of \$16 million. Is this balance sufficient to cover the expenses for 2005-06? If no, will the Administration increase the provision for the Scheme? If yes, will the Administration revise the contents of the Scheme to benefit more young people who wish to start their own business? What are the details if the Administration will do so?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The commitment balance of \$16 million is sufficient to meet the expenditure required for the Youth Self-employment Support Scheme in 2005-06. As the Scheme is a pilot project and will be completed later this year, there will be no intake of new trainees in 2005. The Labour Department is reviewing the effectiveness of the Scheme. In the light of the result of the review which is expected to be available by end-2005, we will consider the way forward.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
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Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)061

Question Serial No.

1656

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Regarding the \$3.5 billion Loan Guarantee Scheme for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome impacted industries, what are the distribution rates of applications from different industries since the implementation of the Scheme? Why is a total of only \$40-odd million spent under the revised estimated expenditure for 2004-05, which is less than 2% of the total commitment? Does the Administration expect an increase or a decrease in the expenditure for 2005-06? Will the Scheme be modified or cease operation in the coming years?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwan-yuen, Andrew

Reply:

The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Loan Guarantee Scheme (the Scheme) was set up by the Government in May 2003 with a commitment of \$3.5 billion to help those industries worst hit by SARS. The objective was to help those affected industries, including restaurants, hotels, travel agents, tourist coach operators, retail outlets, cinemas and karaoke establishments, to tide over the difficult period and preserve jobs. The Scheme was closed for application on 31 July 2003.

Altogether 1559 applications with an aggregate loan amount of HK\$499,204,781 were approved. A breakdown of the approved applications and loan amounts by industry is as follows:-

Industry	Number of approved applications	Percentage of the total approved applications	Approved loan amounts
Retailing Business	890	57.1%	\$163,826,041
Restaurant	462	29.6%	\$267,106,792
Travel Agent	151	9.7%	\$52,685,317
Tourist Coach Operator	51	3.3%	\$14,498,996
Hotel / Guesthouse	4	0.2%	\$788,000
Karaoke	1	0.1%	\$299,635
Cinema	0	-	-
Total	1 559	100%	\$499,204,781

Under the Scheme, the Government provides 100% guarantee to the loans extended by the participating lending institutions (PLIs) to the borrowers. Borrowers are allowed a maximum repayment period of 30 months, including a six-month grace period for repayment of the loan principal. Only if a default in repayment is confirmed will the PLI claim payment from the Government under the guarantee.

The amount of \$41.76 million under Item 050 of Subhead 700 in the revised estimate for 2004-05 is an estimated amount set aside to meet claims for guarantee payments made by PLIs and related administration expenses in the year.

As the expenditure to be incurred in 2005-06 will depend entirely on the actual default situation, it is not realistic to assess whether there will be an increase or decrease at this stage. For planning purpose, we have included \$49.88 million in the 2005-06 draft Estimates for the purpose.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
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Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)062

Question Serial No.

1663

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

The target number of inspections under the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance will be revised downwards substantially from the original 5 680 to 4 630 in 2005. What are the main differences between the future and the past targeted inspections? What were the respective figures of accidents involving boilers and pressure vessels in the past two years? What were the major causes of the accidents? With reduced number of inspections, will the rate of occurrence of such accidents be inevitably higher in future?

Asked by: Hon. TSANG Yok-sing, Jasper

Reply:

The planned number of inspections is revised downwards to reflect the re-focusing of resources on high-risk pressure equipment and equipment more prone to failure.

There were three incidents involving pressure equipment in the past two years: two in 2003 and one in 2004. The main reasons were improper operation and a lack of safety awareness on the part of the operator. With careful monitoring, the planned inspection programme for 2005 should not unduly affect the good safety record for such equipment.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)063

Question Serial No.

1781

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title): 700 General non-recurrent

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

Under Item 536 “Incentive allowance for local domestic helpers (LDHs)”, the revised estimated expenditure for 2004-05 is \$16.5 million. Please give a breakdown, by places of residence or work, on the number of LDHs who have been and have not been granted the allowance. How many LDHs are expected to be granted the allowance in 2005-06? What is the total expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

From April 2004 to February 2005, there were a total of 2 283 successful applications under the Special Incentive Allowance Scheme for local domestic helpers (LDHs). The breakdown is as follows :

Residence of LDH applicants	Number of successful applications	Number of unsuccessful applications
Central and Western	41	0
Wan Chai	25	0
Eastern	176	3
Southern	50	0
Yau Tsim Mong	67	2
Sham Shui Po	76	9
Kowloon City	59	7
Wong Tai Sin	158	1
Kwun Tong	323	1
Kwai Tsing	226	6
Tsuen Wan	47	6
Tuen Mun	211	2
Yuen Long	152	1
North	118	1
Tai Po	259	2
Sha Tin	244	5
Sai Kung	18	4

Islands	33	4
Total	2 283	54

A sum of \$60 million was earmarked for the Scheme to benefit 8 000 LDHs. As at February 2005, there were still some 3 800 places available to eligible LDHs.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

EDLB(L)064

Question Serial No.

1782

Head: 90 – Labour Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour) /Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Economic Development and Labour

Question :

In the matters requiring special attention in 2005-06, there are 5 major new plans for 2005-06. Please provide details on the contents, time frame of implementation and manpower and expenditure required under each new plan.

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

We have five major new plans in the occupational safety and health programme for 2005-06. Details of these plans are as follows:-

- (1) Launching enforcement and publicity campaigns targeting at working at height and scaffolding work in construction sites and building repair and maintenance works to ensure that duty-holders comply with safety requirements

We plan to organise two special enforcement campaigns targeting at working at height and the safe use of truss-out scaffolds in building repair and maintenance works. One will be held in June 2005 while the other in the second half of the year, each lasting for one month. About 125 Occupational Safety Officers (OSOs) will participate in the exercises. As our OSOs will also carry out other normal enforcement duties like accident and complaint investigations and court attendance during the campaign period, we will not be able to give a separate breakdown of the estimated manpower to be deployed to the campaign.

On the publicity front, we plan to step up our efforts to put across our messages. A large-scale promotional campaign aimed at enhancing the safety and health awareness of employees in the construction industry, with particular emphasis on working at height and scaffolding work, will be launched in October 2005 and will run for five months. The campaign will be organised jointly with the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) and key players in the industry, including major trade associations, employee unions, related organisations and other government departments concerned. It will feature a territory-wide competition on safety and health performance. Other publicity activities will include roving exhibitions, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, promotional visits, video broadcast of award-winning sites on RoadShow, radio programmes and a fun day. An award presentation ceremony will also be organised. The campaign is estimated to cost \$1.8 million. The Labour Department will contribute \$0.1 million, with the balance to be met by the co-organisers.

As for the promotion of safety in building repair and maintenance works, a series of publicity activities such as roving exhibitions, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, video broadcast on RoadShow, and advertisements in MTR stations will be launched for one month in the latter half of 2005. This programme is estimated to cost \$0.44 million.

Seven OSOs will be involved in organising the above publicity campaigns in addition to their other promotional duties.

(2) Heightening the occupational safety awareness of employers and employees in the container handling and storage sector and catering industry through a series of promotional and enforcing activities

To enhance the safety awareness of both employers and employees engaged in the container handling and storage sector and the catering industry, two special enforcement campaigns, each lasting for one month, will be organised in the latter half of 2005. One campaign will focus on the safe use of container handling equipment in the container handling and storage sector, while the other will focus on housekeeping and machinery safety in the catering industry. About 122 OSOs will participate in the operations. As our OSOs also carry out other normal enforcement duties like accident and complaint investigations and court attendance during the campaign period, we will not be able to give a separate breakdown of the estimated manpower to be deployed to the campaign.

We will also organise promotional activities to heighten the occupational safety awareness of employers and employees in these industries. A series of publicity drives will be launched in the latter half of 2005 for three months in the container handling and storage sector. Activities will include the preparation and distribution of safety publications, roving exhibitions and Announcements in the Public Interest on radio. This programme is estimated to cost \$0.22 million.

For the catering industry, a large-scale promotional programme will be launched in August 2005 and run for five months to enhance the occupational safety and health awareness of employers and employees. It will be organised in collaboration with the OSHC and key players in the catering industry, including major trade associations, employee unions, and related organisations. It will feature a territory-wide competition on occupational safety and health performance. Publicity activities such as seminars, roving exhibitions, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, video broadcast of award-winning catering establishments on RoadShow, radio programmes, a fun day and an award presentation ceremony will also be organised. This programme is estimated to cost \$1.55 million. The Labour Department will contribute \$0.1 million, with the balance to be met by the co-organisers.

Seven OSOs will be involved in organising the above publicity campaigns in addition to their other promotional duties.

(3) Stepping up inspections of warehouses to ensure adequate protection of warehouse workers from inhalation of air impurities

Altogether of 450 inspections of warehouses will be undertaken to ensure adequate protection of workers from the inhalation of exhausts from forklifts and vehicles. The inspection programme will commence in April 2005 and will be completed by year-end. The inspections will be conducted by two Occupational Hygienists and one Science Laboratory Technician in addition to their other duties. The estimated expenditure is \$0.05 million.

(4) Strengthening publicity efforts to promote the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders in office workers

The prevention of musculoskeletal disorders in office workers will be promoted through Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, mobile advertising media, occupational health talks, exhibitions and distribution of posters and information booklets. The activities will commence in April 2005 and continue throughout the year. They will be taken up by one Occupational Health Officer, one Occupational Hygienist, one Nursing Officer and one Registered Nurse in addition to their other duties. The programme will be funded by the Labour Department and other non-government organisations. Labour Department's estimated expenditure is \$0.07 million.

(5) Issuing Guidance Notes on the safe use of fork-lift trucks, flammable liquids and monitoring of air impurities in the workplace.

Preparation for the Guidance Notes will start in April 2005 and the publications are expected to be available by December 2005. The estimated expenditure for artwork design and printing of the three Guidance Notes

is \$0.17 million. The preparation and issuing of the above Guidance Notes will be taken up by one Senior Mechanical Engineer, one Senior Chemist, one Occupational Hygienist and six Occupational Safety Officers in addition to their other duties. The publications will also be uploaded onto the Labour Department's homepage for access by members of the public.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour (Labour)/
Commissioner for Labour

Date 9 April 2005