Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Economic Development and Labour
Session No. : 9
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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)01

Question Serial No.

SV19

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 relation to Hon WONG Kwok-hing's concern about measures to protect labour rights, the Administration is requested to provide further information on:

(a) the measures that have been taken/to be taken to help the construction workers of Dickson Construction Co Ltd. to recover their outstanding wages, including the possibility of instituting legal proceedings against Dickson Construction Co Ltd. for non-payment of wages:

(b) in connection with item (a), the concrete timetable for implementing the measures; and

(c) other measures that have been taken/to be taken in conjunction with other bureaux/departments for protecting employees' rights in respect of non-payment of wages.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

(a) The Labour Department has been taking all possible measures to assist the employees of Dickson Construction Co. Ltd. (Dickson) and those of its sub-contractors to recover their outstanding wages. These include :

(i) urging Dickson and its sub-contractors to clear outstanding wages to employees under their employment;

(ii) urging Dickson to shoulder its vicarious liability under the Employment Ordinance and pay the first two months' unpaid wages to the employees of its sub-contractors;

(iii) assisting the employees to file their claims at the Labour Tribunal for adjudication;

(iv) assisting the employees to apply for ex-gratia payment from the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund;

(v) referring the employees to the Legal Aid Department for assistance in the presentation of winding-up/bankruptcy petitions against Dickson and the sub-contractors as appropriate; and

(vi) commencing full investigation on suspected wage offences. If there is sufficient evidence, we will take out prosecution.

(b) We have been implementing all the measures listed in (a)(i) to (vi) above.

(c) We are working closely with other relevant bureaux and departments on possible measures to further safeguard the labour rights and interests of employees engaged in public works contracts. Measures being explored include tighter sub-contractor management; payment of workers' wages through auto-pay; wider use of written employment contracts; employment of on-site labour relations officers to monitor payment of wages; and imposing penalty on contractors who default payment of wages.

Signature	
Name in block letters	MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG
Post title	Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Labour)/ Commissioner for Labour
Date	18 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)02

Question Serial No.

S32

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 organised 11 large-scale job fairs for job-seekers living in remote areas in 2005. Of the 11 821 vacancies provided, 88% offered a monthly salary below $8,000, which was rather low. If such large-scale job fairs are to be held in future, will a travel allowance for working across districts be provided?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply

The purpose of these job fairs was to bring employment opportunities to job-seekers living in remote districts. These fairs also enabled the job-seekers to attend job interviews on the spot and subsequently get employment without having to travel to urban areas for job applications. As the job fairs have achieved the purpose of saving the time and money of job-seekers in travelling to urban areas to seek employment, we do not have plans to provide travelling allowance for them.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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

Date 20 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)03

Question Serial No.

S38

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 2005, 11 large-scale job fairs were organised for job-seekers living in remote areas. The total expenditure for staging the 11 job fairs was $748,000, with each job fair mounted at an average cost of $68,000. However, only a total of 1 568 on-the-spot placements were recorded and it is not clear how many job-seekers were placed in employment after the job fairs. Will the Labour Department reassess the cost-effectiveness of these job fairs?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The job fairs provided opportunities for job-seekers residing in remote areas to have information on job vacancies available for selection. These fairs also enabled job-seekers to attend interviews with prospective employers. If found suitable, some of them would be employed on the spot while others could also be interviewed after the job fairs and be offered employment subsequently. By bringing vacancies to remote districts, the job fairs also saved the time and money of job-seekers in travelling to urban areas for job applications. Feedback from employers and job-seekers was very positive. Overall, we consider that these job fairs were effective in helping job-seekers find employment and employers recruit suitable staff.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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

Date 18 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)04

Question Serial No.

S39

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 :

Trainees under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme may choose from 186 training courses on computer application and over 300 training courses on job-specific skills in the 18 job categories. What are the institutions providing these courses?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

The 186 training courses on computer application were provided by 48 training bodies. A list of the major training providers is at Annex I.

As for the over 300 training courses on job-specific skills, they were provided by 64 training bodies. The major training providers are listed in Annex II. Some training bodies offer courses on both computer application and job-specific skills.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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

Date 18 March 2006

Annex I
附件 I

List of major training providers offering module C (Computer Application Training) under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme :

爲“展翅計劃”提供單元三(電腦應用技能訓練)課程的主要培訓機構：

New Territories Association Retraining Centre
(新界社團聯會再培訓中心)

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
(香港青年協會)

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
(香港小童群益會)

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association
(香港基督教女青年會)

Christian Action
(基督教勵行會)

HKFTU Occupational Retraining Centre
(香港工會聯合會職業再訓練中心)

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
(香港職工會聯盟)

The Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions
(港九勞工社團聯會)

CityU Professional Services Limited
(城大專業顧問有限公司)

Heung To College of Professional Studies
(香島專科學校)

UNiSOFT Education Centre
(軟硬體)

Annex II
附件 II

List of major training providers offering module D (Job-specific skills Training) under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme :

爲“展翅計劃”提供單元四(職業技能訓練)課程的主要培訓機構：

Caritas Hong Kong
(香港明愛)

Christian Action
(基督教勵行會)

New Territories Association Retraining Centre
(新界社團聯會再培訓中心)

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association
(香港基督教女青年會)

Hong Kong Employment Development Service Limited
(香港職業發展服務處有限公司)

HKFTU Occupational Retraining Centre
(香港工會聯合會職業再訓練中心)

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
(香港職工會聯盟)

The Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions
(港九勞工社團聯會)

Neighbourhood and Workers' Service Centre
(街坊工友服務處)

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups
(香港青年協會)

Vocational Training Council
(職業訓練局)

H.K.& KL.N. Restaurant & Café Workers' General Union Vocational (Day/Night) School
(港九酒樓茶室總工會職業(日/夜)學校)

HK Travel & Tourism Training Centre
(香港旅遊專業培訓中心)

Irene Beauty Professional Training Institute
(愛妮美容專業培訓學院)

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)05

Question Serial No.

S33

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 table giving a breakdown by nature of illness under Question Serial No. 0902, 1 814 cases were confirmed as caused by work. Is there any further breakdown by statutory occupational disease?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

Of the 1 814 patients, 216 had diseases or injuries caused by work. Of these 216 patients, 174 suffered from occupational injuries and 42 from occupational diseases prescribed in the Second Schedule of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282), including 39 cases of tenosynovitis of hand or forearm and 3 cases of occupational contact dermatitis.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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

Date 18 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-EDLB(L)06

Question Serial No.

S34

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 the breakdown by industry of cases involving arrears of wages, the Labour Department only maintains figures on cases involving more than 20 employees. This cannot fully reflect the situation of non-payment of wages in various industries. Will the Labour Department change its mode of collecting information (e.g. by keeping records by amount of wages in arrears per employee and industry)?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

At present, the Labour Department compiles statistics on breakdown of labour disputes (i.e. cases involving more than 20 employees) by industry but does not keep such breakdown in respect of labour claims (i.e. cases involving 20 employees or less). Maintaining additional breakdown statistics on labour claims would require considerable resources in view of the vast number of such claims (totalling 25,952 for the year 2005). Moreover, the existing statistics on labour disputes already gives a good indication of the wage default problem in different industries. For these reasons, we have no plan to compile additional breakdown statistics on labour claims at present.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MATTHEW CHEUNG KIN-CHUNG

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

Date 18 March 2006