

Legislative Council Question No. 11
(Written Reply)

Asked by : **Hon. CHOY So-yuk**

Date of Sitting : **30 April 2008**

Replied by : **Secretary for Home Affairs**

Question:

In July 2006, this Council passed the amendments to the Betting Duty Ordinance (Cap. 108), one of which was to add a provision stipulating that the Secretary for Home Affairs ("the Secretary") must, in any licence issued for the conduct of horse race betting, require the holder of the licence (i.e. the Hong Kong Jockey Club ("HKJC")) to conspicuously display notices in every premises where it accepts bets (i.e. off-course betting branch), and the notices shall "contain a warning of the seriousness of the problems caused by excessive gambling" and "provide information on the services and facilities available in Hong Kong to problem gamblers and pathological gamblers". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether the Secretary has specified the size of the letters/characters on such notices and the locations to display them; if he has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (b) whether it can provide details of the numbers, sizes and locations of such notices displayed in various off-course betting branches; and
- (c) of the respective numbers of complaints received, since the aforesaid provision came into operation, by the Government and HKJC in relation to the display of such notices, together with a breakdown by the subject matters of the complaints; as well as the details of the follow-up actions taken by the Government and HKJC on these complaints?

Reply:

Madame President:

- (a) and (b) : The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) has to comply with the requirement by the Government that it must conspicuously display signs of reasonable size and clarity in its premises where it accepts bets (that is, areas in the racecourses which accept bets and the Off-course Betting Branches (OCBBs)) and on its website where it accepts bets, in a manner clearly visible by its patrons in the premises or its account holders who place bets through its website, and in a manner clearly visible by passers-by outside the premises as far as practicable, the message on the warning of the serious consequence arising from excessive gambling, and information on services available in Hong Kong for problem and pathological gamblers.

Notices printed by the Government and the HKJC alerting patrons of the dangers of excessive gambling, and providing guidelines for responsible gambling, are posted in all betting premises. Information leaflets are available at all customer service counters pointing out the signs and consequences of problem gambling. Similar notices and messages are also included on Club betting websites, betting tickets and all Club betting marketing materials. In addition, the notices about age restrictions are posted at the entrances to all betting premises and on all betting windows, betting terminals and betting ticket dispensers.

The number of notices displayed at various OCBBs amounts to around 10 per OCBB on average, and the size of notices by both the Government and the HKJC averages about 71 cm X 46 cm. Life-size, cut-out security guards are also mounted at the entrance of all the OCBBs to reinforce the message that entry of persons under 18 is strictly prohibited.

- (c) : The Government and the HKJC have not received complaints related to the display of notices.

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