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Replies to supplementary written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Transport and Housing

Session No. : 14

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)01

(Question Serial No. S0037)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (4) Services to Ships

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Maisie CHENG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Subsequent to Reply Serial No. THB(T)061, will the Government further advise on the following:

- (a) in view of the low pass rates for Sea-going Certificate of Competency and River Trade Certificate of Competency in the past three years, will the Government implement any measures to help those who wish to join the seafarer industry to acquire the certificates for their sustainable development in the industry, and for alleviation of the succession problem in the industry? If yes, what are the measures and the implementation timetable?
- (b) will the Government consider conducting preparatory courses for examinations for certificates of seafarers and producing official course materials for the examinations to facilitate seafarers to acquire the certificates so as to attract new blood to the industry and promote upward mobility within the trade?
- (c) how will the Government step up its co-operation with trade unions to help those who wish to join the industry to develop their career, and alleviate the problem of shortage of manpower?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

- (a) To help seafarers meet the necessary competency standards to acquire the certificates, the Marine Department (MD) is in regular dialogue with different training institutes including the Maritime Services Training Institute (MSTI) and the Institute of Vocational Education on the examination requirements and candidates' performance to enable these training bodies to prepare students adequately for the seafaring examinations.
- (b) The MSTI will conduct preparatory courses for prospective candidates sitting for the

Certificate of Competency examinations. The pilot course for deck cadets will be held in mid-June 2016. The preparatory course for engineer cadets is being developed. To facilitate better understanding of the examination requirements, the MD will provide a list of reference materials to the MSTI. The reference materials are also available in the library of the Hong Kong Seamen's Union.

- (c) In collaboration with trade unions and training institutes, the MD will hold career talks to encourage students to pursue a seafaring career. In addition, the MD also conducts pre-sea talks and provides mentorship to students and cadets of training institutes.

Besides, the Government has implemented a number of programmes under the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund to encourage in-service seafarers to undertake professional training by providing a refund of up to 80% of the fees for approved courses or examinations, attract new blood for the local vessel trade by providing financial support of up to \$30,000 for eligible deck or engine room ratings newly employed by the trade, and support maritime career promotional initiatives, such as school talks and reaching out efforts undertaken by the trade and non-profit organisations, as well as a maritime internship network scheme.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)02

(Question Serial No. S0036)

Head: (158) Government Secretariat:
Transport and Housing Bureau
(Transport Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Air and Sea Communications and Logistics Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
(Joseph YT LAI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

According to Reply Serial No. THB(T)105, the Government provided various schemes for the manpower development and training of the maritime and aviation sectors. However, there is a succession problem for marine staff of the inner harbour routes, such as seafarers and maintenance staff. Is the Government aware of the problem and does it provide support to the manpower development of such positions in its initiatives?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

The Government is aware that the local vessel trade is facing difficulties in attracting new blood. To alleviate the problem, we launched a "Local Vessel Trade Training Incentive Scheme" in 2014 under the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (MATF), which provides financial support of up to \$30,000 in total for eligible deck or engine room ratings newly employed by the local vessel trade. So far, 34 persons have joined the scheme.

To encourage in-service practitioners of the local vessel trade to join professional development programmes, we have implemented the "Professional Training and Examination Refund Scheme" under the MATF, which provides refund of up to 80% of the fees for approved courses or examinations, subject to a cap of \$18,000.

In addition to the above schemes, the Government also undertakes active promotion work, such as participating in career expos and seminars, with a view to arousing the younger generation's interest in the maritime sector.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)03

(Question Serial No. S0035)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) District Traffic and Transport Services

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Pursuant to Reply Serial No THB(T)173:

- (1) there were hundreds of accidents involving “Escalator / Travelator” and “Platform gap” in the past one year. Please provide the five stations with the highest numbers of accidents involving these two types of rail equipment, and the associated numbers of accidents.
- (2) further to the above question, in view of the large numbers of accidents at the stations concerned, has the Government adopted additional measures to enhance safety, and studied whether the design within the stations has room for improvement?
- (3) about accidents due to animals into track in the reply, will the Government advise on the numbers and kinds of animals which mistakenly entered the track area and were killed by trains in the past three years?
- (4) what are the number of incidents caused by suicide / attempted suicide, passengers' own sickness and trespassing, and the number of fatalities?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

- (1) The five stations with the highest numbers of accidents involving “Escalator / Travelator” and “Platform gap”, and the associated numbers of accidents in the past year (i.e. from March 2015 to February 2016) are as follows:

Escalator / Travelator		Platform gap	
Station	Number of accidents	Station	Number of accidents
Hong Kong	32	University	27
Mei Foo	29	Admiralty	23
Kowloon Tong	22	Causeway Bay	13
Tai Wai	22	Mong Kok East	13
Mong Kok	20	Lo Wu	12

- (2) The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) regulates escalator / travelator safety and railway safety. To enhance safe use of escalators and boarding / alighting trains, the EMSD has requested the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to adopt various improvement measures. On escalator / travelator safety, the EMSD has requested the MTRCL to deploy more station assistants to remind passengers of the proper ways to use escalators / travelators and provide assistance to passengers whenever necessary. On safety in relation to boarding / alighting trains, the EMSD has regularly reminded the MTRCL to put in place suitable measures, such as reducing platform gap by platform gap fillers where applicable, making use of public announcement and signs to remind passengers about the platform gap, and arranging platform assistants to assist passengers in boarding and alighting. The EMSD also promotes safe and courteous behaviour of passengers by organising various safety campaigns, including safety carnivals and open days, and by producing publicity and educational materials, such as safety booklets, posters and videos.
- (3) Since August 2014, the MTRCL has started to keep statistics on incidents of intrusion of animals into tracks of heavy rail lines. From August 2014 to December 2015, there were 31 incidents. Of these, four dogs were found dead.
- (4) According to the MTRCL's information, the number of incidents caused by suicide / attempted suicide and trespassing, and the number of fatalities in 2013 to 2015 are as follows:

	2013		2014		2015	
	Number of incidents	Number of fatalities	Number of Incidents	Number of fatalities	Number of Incidents	Number of fatalities
Suicide / attempted suicide	8	3	6	3	4	1
Trespassing	39	1	31	0	27	1
Total	47	4	37	3	31	2

There are no statistics about the number of incidents caused by passengers' own sickness.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)04

(Question Serial No. S0038)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) District Traffic and Transport Services

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Pursuant to Reply Serial No. THB(T) 168, there is an increasing trend in the numbers of elderly casualties and their proportions over the past three years. What measures have been undertaken by the Government to protect the safety of the elderly on road use?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

The Government has been monitoring the trend of elderly casualties. The Road Safety Council (RSC) has been collaborating with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Transport Department (TD), amongst others, in undertaking publicity and educational activities to enhance road safety of the elderly. Some examples of the publicity campaigns organised by the RSC in the past three years are:

- 2013-14
 - Elderly Road Safety Quiz
 - Elderly Road Safety Campaign Kick-off Ceremony cum Bus Parade in Yuen Long 2013
 - Road Safety Tips to Elderly Broadcast by the Radio Television Hong Kong
- 2014-15
 - Elderly Road Safety Mini Film Kick-off Ceremony
 - Road Safety Council 41st Anniversary Ceremony cum Elderly Road Safety Campaign 2014
 - Elderly Road Safety Campaign Kick-off Ceremony cum Bus Parade in Yuen Long 2014
- 2015-16
 - Elderly Pedestrian Road Safety Quiz Competition
 - Sharp Smart Elderly Pedestrian Safety Promotion Campaign
 - Elderly Pedestrian Safety Happy Classroom

In addition, road safety messages targeting at the elderly are disseminated through various channels, such as television, radio, posters, and other printed materials and Road Safety Bulletins. Road Safety Buses and Road Safety Towns in North Point, Sau Mau Ping, Shatin and Tuen Mun with exhibits simulating road environment are also used for raising road safety awareness of the elderly.

In 2016-17, the TD will conduct a study that aims at identifying suitable smart device for fitting into the current traffic signal system so that the device can be used for detecting smart cards held by the elderly and persons with disabilities as an indication of their demand to cross the road. An appropriately longer green time for pedestrian signal will then be provided. This will enable the elderly to have sufficient time to cross the road and attract them to use signalised crossings more, thereby enhancing their safety on roads. The retrofitting of lifts to existing footbridges and elevated walkways under the “Universal Accessibility” Programme will also attract the elderly to use these facilities more for crossing roads and help improve road safety.

The Government will continue its efforts to enhance road safety of the elderly.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)05

(Question Serial No. S0039)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) District Traffic and Transport Services

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Pursuant to Reply Serial No. THB(T)174, the Government will subsidise the franchised bus operators to provide additional display panels for real-time arrival information. Given that there are currently franchised bus operators broadcasting advertisements on their display panels, how will the Government deal with the profits reaped by operators from subsidised display panels?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

The Public Bus Services Ordinance (Cap 230) provides that both fare revenue and non-fare box revenue (covering any other revenue, including revenue from advertisements, derived from the use of fixed assets used to provide franchised bus service) of franchised bus companies are considered as operating receipts and shall be included in the franchise accounts. The existing bus franchises also state that the operating receipts of franchised bus services include fare revenue and non-fare box revenue. In fact, the Government has been encouraging franchised bus companies to increase their non-fare box revenue so as to relieve the pressure for fare adjustments.

As per the aforementioned statutory and franchise requirements, revenue earned by individual operators from advertisements shown on display panels subsidised by the Government would be counted towards the franchise accounts and would be taken into account in the assessment of a fare adjustment application, if and when it is received. The subsidy by the Government for the installation of display panels will cover the capital cost (and associated installation cost). The expenditure arising from the operation (including electricity and data transmission expenses), maintenance and repair of these facilities will be borne by the franchised bus operators.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)06

(Question Serial No. S0040)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Planning and Development

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Pursuant to Reply Serial No. THB(T)170, the Government is requested to provide further information on the following:

- (a) Will the Government consider setting up a bicycle rental system at MTR stations, large public transport interchanges and along cycle tracks to facilitate the public to use bicycle for commuting so that cycling will become a mode of transport for short-distance commuting?
- (b) On fostering the bicycle-friendly policy, will the Government request the public transport operators to relax the requirements so as to allow passengers to carry bicycle on board at designated hours thus promoting cycling culture?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

- (a) The Transport Department (TD) completed a consultancy study entitled "Traffic and Transport Consultancy Study on Cycling Networks and Parking Facilities in Existing New Towns in Hong Kong" in 2013. Overseas experience, among other things, was studied in examining the feasibility of developing a self-service bicycle rental system in new towns. Conclusions of the study are as follows:
 - (i) a self-service bicycle rental system needs to provide public bicycle rental service at various locations at the same time to facilitate rental, return and change of bicycles by locals and tourists. Only then would the system attract patronage;
 - (ii) a self-service bicycle rental system requires frequent transfer of bicycles to ensure that there are adequate bicycles available for rental at various rental points. The bicycles also need to be regularly maintained. Back-up bicycles should be

available to replace those under repair or stolen. Thus, the operating costs are relatively high; and

- (iii) the existing private rental services can already meet the current market demand and there is no need for a public rental system.

In addition, land in Hong Kong is limited. It will be difficult to provide public bicycle rental systems at numerous locations. Therefore, we have to carefully examine the matter. At the moment, we have no plan to introduce a self-service bicycle rental system.

Having said that, we note that the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) has launched a pilot self-service bicycle rental scheme at the waterfront promenade of the West Kowloon Cultural District, with two bicycle stations set up for public use. The WKCD will continue to assess and improve the service before the commissioning of the park.

The Government will continue to foster a “bicycle-friendly” environment where road safety and conditions permit, especially in new towns and new development areas, so as to promote cycling as a green mode for short-distance commuting, and to reduce the use of mechanised transport.

- (b) The Government encourages public transport operators to allow the carriage of bicycles on board provided that safety and passenger convenience are not compromised. Given that public transport is mainly used for carrying passengers and that about 90% of the commuters travel by means of public transport, the operators have set appropriate requirements for the carriage of bicycles by passengers having regard to actual occupancy situation as well as passenger safety and convenience. For example, the MTR Corporation Limited allows passengers to carry bicycle on board the train but requires them to fold up the bicycle or remove the front wheel of the bicycle. As for franchised buses, passengers may carry properly folded bicycles on board, provided that the bicycle does not occupy any seats or cause obstruction or hazard to other passengers. The TD will continue to keep in view the situation.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)07

(Question Serial No. S0041)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Licensing of Vehicles and Drivers

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Pursuant to Reply Serial No. THB(T)172, the Government is requested to provide further information:

- (a) How many complaint cases are still under processing?
- (b) In the past three years, there were some 700 complaint cases concerning driving tests but only two were substantiated. As for the unsubstantiated cases, please provide the breakdown figures by reasons for not establishing the complaints.
- (c) Will the Government consider reviewing the driving test procedures and complaint mechanism to make driving tests more fair, impartial and transparent, so as to strengthen protection for candidates?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

- (a) As at 7 April 2016, 21 complaint cases concerning driving test matters are under processing.
- (b) When processing complaints, the Transport Department (TD) examines information and evidence that can be collected concerning the case and carry out investigation. For cases in which the investigation outcome does not support the allegations in the complaint, the complaint would be concluded as not substantiated. The TD does not keep any information on rejection reasons for each complaint case.
- (c) The TD has been and will continue to conduct driving tests in a fair, impartial and transparent manner. This can be reflected by the small number of complaint cases (an average of about 240 cases per year) received when compared to the considerable

number of driving tests conducted (about 136 000 tests on average per year) in the past three years. The existing complaint handling mechanism which includes the channel for seeking review by the Transport Tribunal as provided by law is effective in ensuring the proper handling of all complaints received by the TD. The TD will review the driving test procedures and complaint handling mechanism from time to time and identify areas for improvement (if any) to ensure that good driving test services are provided to the public.

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