

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 28th October 1976

The Council met at half past two o'clock

PRESENT

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR CRAWFORD MURRAY MacLEHOSE, GBE, KCMG, KCVO
THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF SECRETARY
SIR DENYS TUDOR EMIL ROBERTS, KBE, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
MR CHARLES PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, CMG, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR JOHN WILLIAM DIXON HOBLEY, CMG, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS
MR DENIS CAMPBELL BRAY, CVO, JP
DR THE HONOURABLE GERALD HUGH CHOA, CBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE IAN MacDONALD LIGHTBODY, CMG, JP
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING
THE HONOURABLE DAVID HAROLD JORDAN, CMG, MBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
THE HONOURABLE LI FOOK-KOW, CMG, JP
SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE DAVID AKERS-JONES, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES
THE HONOURABLE LEWIS MERVYN DAVIES, CMG, OBE, JP
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY
THE HONOURABLE DAVID WYLIE MCDONALD, JP
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
THE HONOURABLE KENNETH WALLIS JOSEPH TOPLEY, CMG, JP
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
THE HONOURABLE IAN ROBERT PRICE, CBE, TD, JP
COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR
THE HONOURABLE DAVID GREGORY JEAFFRESON, JP
SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE ALAN JAMES SCOTT, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE
THE HONOURABLE GARTH CECIL THORNTON, QC
SOLICITOR GENERAL
THE HONOURABLE EDWARD HEWITT NICHOLS, OBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
THE HONOURABLE THOMAS LEE CHUN-YON, JP
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE
THE HONOURABLE DEREK JOHN CLAREMONT JONES, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
DR THE HONOURABLE CHUNG SZE-YUEN, CBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LEE QUO-WEI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE OSWALD VICTOR CHEUNG, OBE, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE ROGERIO HYNDMAN LOBO, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE PETER GORDON WILLIAMS, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE JAMES WU MAN-HON, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE JOHN HENRY BREMRIDGE, OBE, JP
DR THE HONOURABLE HARRY FANG SIN-YANG, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE MRS KWAN KO SIU-WAH, MBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LO TAK-SHING, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS YUAN-HAO TIEN, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE ALEX WU SHU-CHIH, OBE, JP
THE REV THE HONOURABLE JOYCE MARY BENNETT, JP
THE HONOURABLE CHEN SHOU-LUM, JP
THE HONOURABLE MISS LYDIA DUNN, JP
DR THE HONOURABLE HENRY HU HUNG-LICK, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LEUNG TAT-SHING, JP
THE REV THE HONOURABLE PATRICK TERENCE McGOVERN, SJ, JP
THE HONOURABLE PETER C. WONG, JP
THE HONOURABLE WONG LAM, JP

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE LI FOOK-WO, OBE, JP

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MRS LOLLY TSE CHIU YUEN-CHU

Government business

Motions

Address of Thanks to His Excellency the Governor

Resumption of debate on motion (27th October 1976)

MR ALEX WU:—Your Excellency, we began this session of the Council in considerably better shape than we were a year ago. I refer not only to the shape of this Chamber although that in itself reflects a most welcome change. When we assembled a year ago it was in an atmosphere of hope and expectation that we were emerging from the worst of the economic difficulties which we had shared with the rest of the world.

Here in Hong Kong we are painfully aware that we do indeed share the world's economic troubles and suffer more from world economic conditions than most other places. We are particularly vulnerable, as we know, to all shifts in the pattern and the volume of world trade. The fact that we suffered so little and that we recovered so quickly is due in equal measure to the natural resilience of the people of Hong Kong with their commercial and industrial enterprise, and to the prudent management of our affairs by the Administration in a difficult period. I should like to add my own sincere appreciation of Your Excellency's personal leadership during that time. Sir, we know how disappointed you must have been at the set-back, however temporary, to the projects for social improvement in many fields which you had planned and for which we must now work even more diligently and effectively.

In your address to this Council earlier this month Your Excellency told us that we could now advance once more on several social fronts. This is welcome news. I should like to refer briefly today to the ways in which the Unofficial Members of this Council might play a more active part in this direction.

We now have an enlarged Council. Most people in Hong Kong appreciate the progress which you, Sir, have been able to make in widening the scope of our membership. I hope that, in time, representation on this Council may be widened still further.

Meanwhile we must make sure that the community benefits from this development. The way to prove that we are not a form of "window dressing" is to play a more positive role in the handling of affairs affecting Hong Kong.

It has often been said that the world of business and industry was too heavily represented on the unofficial side of this Council. While it is certainly right that those who provide the opportunities for employment upon which everyone in Hong Kong depends ultimately should be represented it is also right that, as far as possible, their views should be balanced on the unofficial side by those of equally responsible members of the community who are personally involved and personally experienced in other aspects of our life.

I have recently attended, on behalf of the Hong Kong Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Australasian Parliamentary Seminar. This brought home to me most dramatically the special nature of our role in Hong Kong. It is not easy to define. Many people here misunderstand our function. The "Westminster-

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style" parliamentary system encourages conflict. Criticism is forceful. The logical conclusion of such severe criticism is to show that the government in power is so incompetent that it should be replaced—by its critics. In a parliamentary situation of that kind, the idea of "consensus" is suspect. A government which claims to be seeking consensus support will be accused of trying to avoid criticism and confrontation.

Our situation is totally different. No matter how much we wish to see representation on this Council broadened, no matter what views we may have on the method by which the Council can be representative, we are not an "Opposition" which offers itself as an alternative government. In these circumstances, therefore, the concept of consensus is realistic.

With energy and determination it is possible for this Government to devise and carry out policies which meet the needs of the community. People well versed in political theory may think it unnecessary to state that this obvious fact. I believe that some people are encouraged to judge the performance of the Unofficial Members of this Council simply by the vehemence of their criticism of the official side. This is a misconception.

Now, with an enlarged Council, and with new tasks ahead of us, it is a good time to demonstrate the real contribution which the Unofficial Members of this Council can make towards progress in Hong Kong.

We function, broadly speaking, in three areas: we are the legislature. Without the approval of this Council no law is passed. Without the approval of this Council no taxes may be levied. These are fundamental and well established powers.

In two other areas our responsibilities are less clearly defined. Unofficial Members have a certain advisory role in the examination of proposed legislation. But we do not initiate legislation. We do not even have a very large part to play in its early preparation. This is a subject which I should like to examine on another occasion. There is a good reason why I should not do this now. We are in a stage of our development when a number of important programmes have been established. It is generally agreed that they are based upon correct policies and the right priorities. The main problem is that

these programmes received a severe set-back due to economic circumstances. Our present concern is therefore to implement these policies efficiently and speedily.

It is for this reason that I prefer to concern myself today with the third role of the Unofficial Members of this Council, namely, the work they can do to push forward with the programmes which, by consensus, are recognized to be necessary and urgent.

I am sure that I will be reminded that there is a great network of advisory bodies covering almost every field of Government activity. I know it. Like all of my colleagues here I serve on more than one of those bodies. I am thinking of something more immediate, definite and practical than the examination of proposed policies and programmes. I suggest that the time has come to involve the Unofficial Members of this Council with the processes by which our programmes are implemented and monitored.

It can hardly be denied that in the field of education, for example, we have made several false starts. I can hardly count how many reports on educational policy there have been in the last fifteen years —or how many reports upon reports. The whole process has been agonizingly slow. Education is not a matter to be taken lightly. Neither is it a field in which decisions should be taken speedily for the sake of speed. But education is a vital factor in the progress of our community. When decisions have been made, they should be implemented energetically. At that stage, the managerial skills which have made Hong Kong what it is today and are represented on this Council, are as appropriate to educational development as they are to economic or industrial progress.

We badly need public monitoring of the progress of our various social development programmes.

As far as the average person can see we seem to move only from year to year. At budget time we describe how many houses we shall build, how many school places we shall make available and budget accordingly. Then a year later we are told whether or not we have reached our target. It is not a system which would be accepted in any modern Hong Kong enterprise. There is no reason why Government programmes should not be subjected to the same kind of reporting and forecasting as in the private sector.

I do not doubt that my honourable Friend the Financial Secretary does in fact provide himself with these figures for his own guidance.

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Would it not be simple and sensible to lay the figures of monthly or quarterly progress on essential programmes before the Finance Committee of this Council so as to give the Unofficial Members the opportunity of helping to maintain the momentum which is necessary? I believe that on the unofficial side of this Council we have the skill and experience which could well be used to complement the same attributes possessed by the Civil Service. I will be asked whether the organizations to do this job do not already exist. I am bound to say that the various committees of this Council, the numerous advisory bodies on which members of this Council and many many others already sit, and the UMELCO *ad hoc* committees formed from time to time are valuable. But none of them put the civil servant and the Unofficial Member working side by side to get a public programme moving and to keep it moving until it achieves its object on time.

It is by no means a question, as I am sure my honourable Friend the Financial Secretary would be quick to point out, of taking off the financial brake and pumping unlimited sums of money into our programmes so as to realize them faster. He and his predecessors have long warned us that money by itself does not produce results in the fields that I have mentioned. We also know that it is positively dangerous to unbalance our economy by the sudden injection of public funds into a particular sector of public development. But efficiency and economy are the standards by which business and industry in Hong Kong have flourished and without such efficiency some Hong Kong enterprises would have perished. That is the key-stone of our economic philosophy.

There is nothing in the least revolutionary about this proposal. Over the years, in the office of the Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils there has developed an informal system of committees where we are able to contribute constructively in the areas of public administration where each of us have the most experience and the most interest. Although we are never denied co-operation from the Civil Service in examining matters which come before us a gap nevertheless exists. It is a gap which would not be allowed to exist in a well run company between its Board of Directors and its management. Public administration cannot, of course, be equated entirely with running a business. But there are many areas of public administration where the methods of a well conducted business could be applied with a resultant gain in economy and efficiency.

In conclusion, Sir, I would recommend for consideration that the committee system of this Council be overhauled so as to involve Unofficial Members more effectively and more directly in the implementation of the programmes outlined by Your Excellency.

Sir, with these remarks I support the motion.

REV JOYCE BENNETT:—Your Excellency, I rise to join my Un-official Colleagues in supporting the motion before Council. In doing so, I wish to say a few things about communications, education, medical and health services and law and order.

Communications

In your address opening this session, Your Excellency referred to the development of new towns and the need to provide adequate communications. As one who has worked in the new city of Kwun Tong for the last ten years and lived there for the last seven years, I entirely agree and I hope that attention will be paid to the adequacy of roads in the new towns, particularly inside the new industrial estates, to prevent tedious delays in the transporting of goods and to provide for the convenience of buyers, executives and workers. Not only must the roads be wide enough but it is essential to have at least two access roads to each estate.

Kwun Tong is still hampered by the limitation of access to this vast new city. The new two-lane Kowloon Bay Road is offset by the reduction of the old Kwun Tong Road from a three to a two-lane highway. The planned road from Clear Water Bay Road to Sau Mau Ping was available for use over two years ago, when a bad traffic accident blocked the Clear Water Bay Road. However, since then, it has been given over to the contractors engaged in forming the new estates there and is not available for general use. Thus, any unfortunate incident on the Kwun Tong Road completely paralyses the traffic in the area. There is no relief, no way of escape. This was evident recently when the fire at the Weatherite Factory snarled up the Kwun Tong traffic and the extensive flooding at Choi Hung hampered the rescue work to the landslide victims at Sau Mau Ping. Your Excellency will remember the BBC report that rescue operations had to be carried out by sea. *(laughter)* Sir, I hope the lessons learned from Kwun Tong will be applied to the new towns and the road from Clear Water Bay Road to Sau Mau Ping will be completed and put into use as quickly as possible.

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I am pleased to see Your Excellency's reference to the improvement of the quality of junior secondary school places, for not enough attention has yet been paid in this respect and much more can be done. Firstly, I have learnt with interest of the suggestion made in recent weeks that the Government is to shed its responsibility for running primary schools. If this is the case, the Education Department could concentrate its efforts and devote more attention to advising and assisting all schools to improve the quality of teaching, to implement new methods of instruction and to assess better the progress of students. This is where it is good to welcome the monitoring of the standard of primary schools by means of aptitude tests. In addition, following our replacement of the Secondary School Entrance Examination, I hope that serious reconsideration can be given whether primary examinations are needed in Primary 5 and 6 in such subjects as Social Studies, Nature Study, Handwork, Music and Art. Children in primary classes should be taught in groups in these disciplines—examinations at these levels should be avoided.

Secondly, another obvious way of improving the quality of education is to ensure that more schools have more trained teachers. I am thinking especially of the private schools in which the Government is buying places. Cannot some scheme be devised by which a proportion of the teachers in those schools must have received proper training? The proportion could be related to the number of places bought and could gradually be increased over the years. There are trained teachers available: they deserve a job properly paid and one which enables them to contribute to the Teachers' Provident Fund. It is only in such ways that our many well-run private schools can attract better teachers and improve the quality of the education they are providing.

Thirdly, I am pleased to learn that 35 new schools will be built in the next two years "to improve the quality of junior secondary places". I have, however, learnt that some sponsoring bodies are being rebuffed and not allowed the funds to complete their plans for building secondary schools in urban areas, for which Government has earlier promised support and which have already been passed by the PWD. Instead, these voluntary bodies were asked to divert the money for their original schemes to sponsor further schools in the new towns. The public are sensitive to earlier promises being broken and are uneasy at demands made to them to change their committed plans.

It is essential in Hong Kong for Government and voluntary bodies to continue to work closely together in mutual trust and co-operation and Government could not achieve its planned developments without the assistance of voluntary bodies. I am mindful that we as Legislative Councillors swear allegiance to our sovereign, her heirs and successors. Likewise I think the Government has a similar responsibility towards the governed in that promises given earlier should be honoured. Of course this is not to say Government policy cannot change, but to emphasize that due warning must be given of changes of policy that involve voluntary agencies and private bodies. In this connection, I am sure that if the sponsoring bodies concerned receive a reasonable response from the Education Department to carry out their programmes long planned, they will be willing to continue to raise money from their supporters to sponsor further schools in the new towns.

This need for the maintenance of good relations of trust and confidence between Government and the voluntary bodies brings me to another matter of concern, which is already under discussion. I refer to the Chinese University Bill, which has alarmed educationists in the University's Foundation Colleges. Each of those three colleges has provided its special contribution to the Chinese University. Their individual characteristics and qualities must be safeguarded. I hope that these can be provided for before the bill takes its final shape.

Medical and Health Services

It is most encouraging to learn of the very real advances planned in the Medical and Health Services, particularly that at last, serious consideration is being given to the subvention of Community Nursing. From my work in the past years, I know the very many problems a family faces when one of its members has to be hospitalized. It is essential that the stay in hospital should be as short as possible. Clearly the hospital echoes this feeling, as beds are in such short supply. However, once the patient has returned home, he suffers from post-hospital shock, (which many Members of this Council will have experienced if they have been in hospital). How much worse this is for those in the poorer sections of our community, where the educational standards may be so much lower, and where ignorance and prejudice hamper the healing process.

I commend to you the work of the Community Nursing Service of the United Christian Hospital and Nethersole Hospitals where the organizers are trying to achieve a healing community where the whole family is taught to care for their sick, the handicapped and the aged.

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Certainly in Kwun Tong, I know the tremendous advantages that the families have received from this service. In addition, the Health Education given by the Community Nurses in connection with the Community Health Project of the United Christian Hospital has already borne fruit among the secondary school students of the area. However, overseas support for Community Nursing will soon end. I therefore support Government's intention to subvent Community Nursing, thus enabling this work not only to be maintained but also to be expanded. Costs to Government are small in comparison with the tremendous benefits to be gained by the whole community: hospital beds are freed, the doctors can give more time to the serious cases and in addition the family concerned and their neighbours can accept responsibility for caring for their sick members.

I am delighted to learn of the building of a dental centre with its children's dental clinic. This has for long been a gap in our services and I hope that the children's dental clinic will do more than extract bad teeth. It can be a traumatic experience for a child to lose many teeth at an early age. Even the loss of just one or two front teeth may have far-reaching effects on that child's psychological development. My experience in the past has been that not nearly enough is being done to help children who have lost their teeth and provide denture service economical enough to attract the parents who may otherwise not care about their child's dental needs.

I have one more request in the medical field: that is, early provision should be made to improve the facilities for the testing of vision for school children and ensuring that they get the correct spectacles and the orthoptic treatment to improve squints and other sight defects. A survey made in my school a few years ago showed that many girls needed spectacles and did not have them, while many who were wearing spectacles had been provided with unsuitable lenses.

In order to ascertain the needs of our school-children in these fields, School Social Work should be expanded. Each school must be given the opportunity to engage a social worker. Since Your Excellency spoke we have been able to examine the Green Paper on the Further Development of Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong. The proposals in this paper will go far to help improve our services to the handicapped. The field of prevention must not be neglected.

Law and Order

Far more workers will be needed in supportive roles to help the children from disturbed and problem families. Far better training will be required for those who manage and run the various residential homes, and schools for handicapped children and adolescents.

Perhaps at this point I should mention another very real concern of mine that we should improve our reformatory institutions and those for the care and protection of the young. That the educational standards and methods of some of these Government institutions are so low is a disgrace to our society. We recognize that girls need to be removed from their home environment for their own good, but we have not yet provided a satisfactory substitute home for them. I have seen the Ma Tau Wei Girls' Home twice in connexion with my recent work on the Advisory Panel to the Juvenile Courts. I am not satisfied and I believe improvements could be made with little or no expenditure. I would like to seek an assurance that these improvements will be made immediately to improve the life of those in the present institution, and without waiting for the new home which is to replace the existing building in a year or two. The sort of improvements I have in mind are the supply of textbooks suitable to the age of the girls; better (though not necessarily more expensive) materials and designs for knitting and handwork; fuller utilization of the available recreational equipment; and more real supervision and concern for each girl on a personal basis. These girls are not under punishment. They are there to receive care and protection to combat the evils of their own homes. They should be receiving a vision of how to create their own homes in the future—many will soon marry and raise their own families. This is our chance to help create better homes in the future.

Social workers are needed within both schools and the community to help develop in young people the ability to stand out against in-timidation and to search out the causes of crime and so prevent it.

I agree that there is some improvement in the attitudes of the police but I am surprised to learn that it is still possible to enter the police without any secondary education—the figure of 10% applying to enter the police without any secondary schooling was mentioned by Your Excellency.

It is important for police entrants to have had five years of secondary schooling. I have known police unable to write their reports easily because they could not write down the Chinese characters. I would suggest that one of the reasons for the delays in the report rooms

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of our police stations at the moment is the low educational standard of many of the police taking down statements.

May I suggest that serious consideration be given to taping all statements as they are made to the police and making the tape available for reference by the persons concerned. There has been too much questioning recently in the courts of the validity of statements made to the police. New methods must be discovered for combatting the distrust that still remains in the minds of many of those in the less privileged strata of our society about our police force. Justice must not only be done, but also be seen to be done.

I know there are many, many fine young people eager to serve their community in which they have been born and brought up. There is a new generation of students eager to care for and take responsibility for the less-privileged members of our society. Do not let us lose their enthusiasm. Let us in this Legislative Council give the lead to these enthusiastic young people by showing our care and responsibility in providing adequate social services to improve the quality of our society.

Sir, with these remarks, I support the motion.

MR CHEN:—Sir, as a novice, I have listened with great excitement and interest to your Policy Address to this Council on the 6th October which outlined a very comprehensive programme of economic and social development for the betterment of our people. It was most heartening to hear that the improvement in our economy has made it possible for plans for social improvement to be programmed with renewed confidence and determination. In supporting the motion before Council, I would like to make some observations on two specific areas, namely, Technical Education and Labour Legislation.

First the question of Technical Education. Without any doubt, the progress made in recent years in the development of technical and vocational education has been impressive by any standard. Since its inception in 1972, the Polytechnic has been undergoing a very rapid expansion programme and with the present rate of build-up, it will by 1980-81 be able to provide for 11,400 full-time and equivalent part-time students. The development of Technical Institutes is equally impressive. Prior to 1975, we had only one Technical Institute at Morrison Hill with a little over 1,200 full-time equivalent places. Since then, two more have been established in Kwun Tong and Kwai Chung with a

further two scheduled for operation by 1977 and 1979, thus bringing the total capacity to some 6,650 full-time equivalent students.

Having gained so much ground in the development of the Polytechnic and the Technical Institutes within a relatively short space of time, now perhaps is the moment for an objective review before further advancement is contemplated. On closer examination of the statistics of student population, I am somewhat alarmed by the ratio of student distribution between the Polytechnic and the Technical Institutions. Taking 65% of the Polytechnic total as being the number of technical students (the present proportion is 65% technical and 35% non-technical), when the capacities of the Polytechnic and Technical Institutes are fully utilized, the ratio of full-time technical places would be about 1:1 or higher. Even if we take into account the fact that some of the Technical Institute courses would be run on a day-release basis, this ratio appears to be very much on the high side if we take the average ratio of technologists: technicians: craftsmen as being 1:5:10 (in United Kingdom this ratio is about 1:4:7.5). The man-power surveys of the Hong Kong Training Council give an average ratio of about 1:5:10. This strongly indicates that although individually the development of the Polytechnic and Technical Institutes has been quite remarkable, there is a need for closer co-ordination. At this point in time, perhaps we should ask ourselves. Firstly, are we producing the right quantity of graduates at the right technical level? Secondly, are we in fact over or under producing trained personnel relative to the demands of commerce and industry? There are no simple answers to these questions, but one thing is certain, namely, there is the need for a high-powered co-ordinating body representing technical education, industry and commerce such as a Board of Technical Education advocated by my honourable Friend Dr CHUNG not so long ago, to be the principal adviser to Government on technical education, and to co-ordinate the planning and development of the entire spectrum of technical education, from prevocational schools to the universities.

What is more, if we were to have technical education of the right type, in the right quantity and of the right quality, this body must work closely with the Training Council. The reason why I have to stress this mutual co-operation is that unless technical education is planned hand in glove with industrial training and takes account of the practical needs of industry, we would be producing mere "paper" graduates and not graduates who would be of practical value to industry. Such overall planning and co-operation do not, to the best of my knowledge, exist at the moment.

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I now turn to the subject of Labour Legislation. It is indeed a right and admirable decision to set a target for achieving a level of legislation governing safety, health and conditions of employment to match the best of our Asian competitors of similar economic, social and cultural background. However, the question of priority must be given the most serious consideration because it is very obvious that not everything can be achieved at once. This is true also for our neighbours. For instance, one country may prefer to give holidays with pay to its working people and another may place priority on other more pressing needs. What about Hong Kong? I, and I think in company with many others, consider that the most urgent need for our working people is not necessarily paid holidays but better social security. One immediate area I suggest would be the provision of medical care. To the bulk of our working people, illness is a constant worry both in respect of the security of their job and the adverse financial effect it will have on their family. Therefore, improved benefits in this direction would be of greater practical value to them than paid holidays. To this end, one might perhaps consider the possibility of providing a medical insurance scheme to be financed by money which would otherwise be used on paid holidays.

At this juncture, I must make myself clear that I support whole-heartedly any proposal—paid holidays, medical care, unemployment benefits, *etc.*—that would improve the conditions of the working people of Hong Kong. But I must emphasize that priority must be correctly identified, especially if we should find ourselves not being able to afford them all or all at the same time.

It is well recognized that better working and employment conditions should improve working efficiency and hence productivity and profitability. Therefore, if we genuinely believe that paid holidays should take preference over other more urgent needs such as those I mentioned earlier, the legislation you mentioned, Sir, must ensure that employers and employees are statutorily obliged to give and to take the holidays so provided, if the benefit were to be truly and properly shared by them. Without proper control, this well meant legislation would lose its intended purpose and become just another burden to our industries.

Sir, with these observations, I support the motion with much pleasure.

MISS DUNN:—Sir, I wish to speak on three subjects mentioned in Your Excellency's address: home ownership, tertiary education and the proposed extension of the public assistance scheme.

Home Ownership

I support the concept of home ownership and I am glad that the original flats for sale proposal is being broadened to include people other than existing public housing tenants. In addition to the obvious merits in terms of additional housing and cash flow, the broader scheme now being devised has far reaching social implications. It will foster a sense of belonging—an identification by the owner with Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a transient city for some and a place to earn a living for many. It is socially undesirable and politically unfortunate that there is not a stronger sense of identity with Hong Kong on the part of the majority of the population. By providing the security of a home and the pride of ownership, such a scheme will encourage those who live and work here to identify themselves with this place.

I think it is most important, therefore, that the scheme should be broadened to include not only those who are presently in rented public housing but, for example, the young white and blue collared group whose income levels are above the eligibility limit for public housing, but below the level which would enable them to afford to buy their own flats in the private sector.

Tertiary Education

It is gratifying that by 1980, Government will be able to provide school places in the public sector for all for 6 years of primary and 3 years of secondary education. Nine years of schooling must be considered the minimum acceptable to equip our young people for today's society.

However, in planning the growth of tertiary education, we must take due account of the demand by commerce and industry for highly educated people. We must ensure that we do not raise the aspirations of our young people to such an extent that they cannot realistically be met. I would not wish to suggest that higher education does not have an intrinsic value irrespective of the career opportunities which follow; nor am I unaware that under provision of higher education is a source of community discontent. I am also conscious of the fact that supply to an extent can create its own demand. However, I feel bound to say that, if we expand facilities for higher education more rapidly than

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the economy's capacity to provide suitable jobs, the outcome can only be frustration and even discontent.

I hope, therefore, the working party on the future course of senior secondary and tertiary education will ensure that the socially and politically desirable aim of expanding educational facilities does not conflict with career expectations which Hong Kong may not be able to provide. But apart from giving due consideration to employment opportunities generally, the government must pay special attention to the requirements of commerce and industry in terms of the supply of managers and technicians. To this end, Government must also ensure that a proper balance is struck between academic education as such, on the one hand, and technical and professional education, on the other.

Extension of Public Assistance

I commend Government's proposal to extend the present Public Assistance Scheme to include able-bodied persons between 15 and 55 who are unemployed. Indeed, it is not logical that this group of people should be excluded from assistance when, as during the recession in 1975, they were unable to support themselves through no fault of their own.

You said, Sir, that arrangements will be made to prevent abuse. I take this to mean that the rules of eligibility will be carefully defined and suited to Hong Kong's circumstances. We have a work force which is diligent, adaptable and which has a proud belief in the value of its own exertions. It is the underlying engine of growth in Hong Kong. I hope, therefore, that the rules of the scheme will preserve, rather than destroy, the Chinese characteristics of self-reliance and independence, thrift and the will to work. I hope above all that the gap between the level of public assistance and prevailing wage rates will not be so narrow as to act as a disincentive to seek full time employment.

Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

DR HU:—Sir, originally I thought it would not be necessary for me to speak in this first debate because in general I support what was said in Your Excellency's Speech. But the footnote to a photograph taken in this Chamber and published by one of our most prominent English newspapers on the 7th October 1976 which described me simply

as an Urban Councillor has prompted me to make this speech. (*laughter*) First of all, as my speech will also be related to the Urban Council in some respects, may I take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of the Urban Council my very sincere thanks to Your Excellency for your kind remarks about the Council.

Your Excellency's concern for the protection of our labour force is to be highly commended as, indeed, is your attitude of mutual care and respect for the general welfare of the whole community. May I render my wholehearted support to these principles. It only remains for us to consider how these principles could be implemented, in what way and at what speed.

Social Welfare

In order to achieve cohesion in our community, active social services are preferable to passive ones. I consider cash payments as a kind of passive social services. Other kinds of social services such as homes for the aged, rehabilitation services, employment service, nurseries, youth guidance, school social work and recreational services are illustrations of active social services. During my recent UMELCO visit to Sai Kung on 25th October 1976 I had the opportunity of seeing the Sai Kung Camp, which has been proposed to be turned into an outdoor recreation centre. I think this is an excellent project, as part of our active social services, to provide meaningful recreation for the public, particularly for the workers, who will be given more holidays by our new labour legislation. Such active social services should be given priority and be manned by trained personnel, as they will not only give us better value for the money we are to spend in this field but will directly improve the quality of life. They can also foster a community spirit and mutual dependence. In this connexion, I would like to see that the roles of voluntary agencies are looked into and enhanced and that sufficient financial support is given to them. I would also wish to see that the Five Year Plan for Social Welfare Development is closely examined and re-assessed.

Housing

As for the needs of the general public, I think housing still ranks number one. I always advocate that public housing is a great stabilizing force in our community. Once people have decent accommodation to live in, they would find it much easier to ward off any blows economic or otherwise during bad times. I therefore also support the Home Ownership Scheme provided the problems of management and selling prices could be solved.

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I think that the rents of public housing should be kept low and should not compare with open market rents. Government must continue to subsidize public housing as it did with the old Resettlement Department, and not urge the Housing Authority to "balance" its budget. The adjustment of the rents of public housing should be based on considerations which are different from those in the case of private housing. I advocate that any increase of rents should be gradual and in any event the rents should not represent more than 15% of the income of the families affected. Our tax structure based on a unified tax rate for all tax-payers justifies low rents for public housing. A person with an income of \$50,000 per year and another with \$5,000,000 per year will pay tax at the same rate. It is only fair that the less fortunate people falling within the prescribed low income brackets should have the right to live in public housing, which is built with the money from tax-payers with higher income, as in other countries the latter would have to pay tax at a much higher rate.

On this logic, I further propose that the income brackets for people qualified for public housing should be revised not only because the old yard-stick is no longer realistic, but also because, in order to solve our housing problem, the means test should apply to existing tenants. The results of applying means test to existing tenants would be one of the following three possibilities. The first is that a resident can continue to live by paying a low rent. The second is that a resident should pay a higher rent because his family's income is more than the qualified level. The resident is not required to move out if he agrees to pay the higher rent. It is only when a resident whose income is more than the qualified level and who does not wish to pay the higher rent that he would be asked to vacate the accommodation. If we conduct the means test in such a way, I don't think there would be great disturbance to the residents of the estates. On the other hand, we must aim at achieving the target for any person who has been in Hong Kong for 5 years or more and whose income is below \$2,000 per month to be offered a flat in public housing, subject to this means test. We should at the same time improve without delay the quality of our housing. There should be different rents for the same accommodation depending on the family's income. In other words, I suggest that a points-system taking account of a family's income should be adopted in determining rents.

Elected Membership for Public Bodies

Perhaps it is not without reason that in Your Excellency's speech no mention was made of any constitutional reform. But I think that many of our young people treat Hong Kong as their permanent home. A gradual increase of elected elements in our various Councils and Boards would be desirable, partly because this would satisfy the aspirations of the young people and partly because this would test the efficiency of such a system. In the meantime, Government may consider appointing an unofficial as chairman of the Housing Authority and having two public meetings per year to air the members' views on important issues. I should stress that the official chairman has been doing a very good job but that an unofficial chairman may have more independent and detached views which could only benefit the housing administration.

Labour and Social Reforms

We all know that in Hong Kong there is a lack of natural resources. Our existence depends on harmonious labour relationships, ingenuity of our people and international investments. It therefore follows that social and labour reforms should not hamper Hong Kong's flexibility, viability and initiative in its economic and industrial development.

Government's timely moves in introducing labour and social reforms has made a strong labour movement less necessary. A strong labour movement may lead to political agitations which are undesirable in the circumstances of Hong Kong, where production always takes precedence over distribution, as indeed, in the case of any sound society. We should create wealth before we can spend it.

Government's social reform is based on 6% national growth up to the end of this decade. I hope that this would be a correct estimate. In order to promote international and local investments and to increase our public revenue, I think we should maintain our low tax structure, which is essential in ensuring Hong Kong's economic viability and social stability.

Hawking

People may expect me to say something about hawking (*laughter*). Sir, I think that following the broad principles just enunciated, hawking should still be considered as an economic safety-valve and an indispensable service in our community. We should maintain it at the proper level and protect it as any other legitimate trade or business in

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Hong Kong. As hawking is a matter for the Urban Council, the Legislative Council Chamber may perhaps not be a proper venue for speaking in detail, but I would say that it was due to the prompt action of the Urban Council that the newspapers vendors' strike at the end of September this year was averted. I would also wish to say that mandatory confiscation of hawkers' goods has caused them disproportionate hardship. Such power of confiscation should be left to the discretion of the magistrates, judging on individual merits of each case.

With these remarks, Sir, I have great pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR LEUNG:—Your Excellency, as a new-comer to this Council I was over-whelmed with encouragement at your eloquent address at the opening session of the Legislative Council. Among many other topics of general interest to the community as a whole you, Sir, have enlightened and inspired certain sections of both the public and private sectors, leading to the general acceptance that Hong Kong is becoming a better place to work and to live in.

May I make reference to the Government scheme towards the imminent regionalization of the Medical and Health Services, which will undoubtedly be one of long awaited and most welcomed Government schemes for many years past. The people of Hong Kong generally, and those whose habitat is in the New Territories and its remote rural areas in particular, have felt and endured the inadequacy of medical care and health services, particularly in terms of general hospital beds. The New Territories has been developing rapidly from the former townships to the present day large and populous satellite industrial towns, and the former villages to their present forms of residential complex. The population in the New Territories has been growing in enormous proportions. There is an urgent need for more general acute district hospitals to be situated in the various parts of the New Territories.

Sir, if I may take an example, I will say that in the industrial town of Tsuen Wan, together with the neighbouring vicinities of Kwai Chung, Tsing Yi, and Ma Wan, where the population has, during the past few years, been increased to well over half a million people, there exists merely one Government subsidized hospital with only one hundred beds. In fact and for practical purposes, a larger general hospital needs to be provided, or at least the existing one needs expansion. I appeal to Government to look into this aspect of social demand.

In the field of labour I must congratulate Your Excellency and the Government for the determination in bringing about the improved terms and conditions of employment and in making the working environments safer through legislation. Thanks to you, Sir, and to the Commissioner for Labour, the working population of Hong Kong are thus better protected and are beginning to be inspired with blessings of social benefits and security. May I assure you, Sir, that you will receive the utmost support and encouragement of the workers in all your continued legislative programmes in your defined targets in social fields.

I venture here to submit for Government consideration a few points of interest to the Hong Kong workers, following your address to the opening session of this Council. Paid annual leave for workers is one thing that we workers longed for all these years and needed most desperately particularly by the younger lot. The one week's annual holiday with pay suggested to be provided from 1978 has yet to be compared favourably with those offered to our counter-parts in our neighbouring countries. Those of us working in the Government service and the public sector are generally enjoying two weeks paid annual leave. We do not see the wisdom of leaving those working for the private sector alone with only one week, nor can we see that the reasons for such discrimination are justified.

We are still tolerating our young workers to be engaged in overtime work in the evenings. This cannot be acceptable because, besides going against the international practice and apart from numerous other reasons, our youth need time-off to be educated and trained, even though they may have to be satisfied with evening classes. They need to integrate themselves into the modern trends of technology in industry for higher industrial productivity and for better domestic living.

My learned friend Dr the honourable S. Y. CHUNG has dealt, very wisely and in great depth, with the issue of social benefits and social security for workers in industry. I congratulate him on this very fine and gratifying contribution, and I like to offer my sincere appreciation to him for speaking ably on workers' behalf. I am sure that Dr CHUNG's recommendation will receive the fullest support not only of this Council but also of the public at large. I go along with his views in that a central fund system for retirement benefit and provident fund be established under the direct control of, or supervision by the Government to suit the needs of and to help the Hong Kong workers who are the noticeably less privileged wage earners.

Earlier, I made some minor comparisons on fringe benefits enjoyed by workers in the Government service and the public sector with those

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working in the private sector. Whilst I applaud Your Excellency's proposition on "Home Ownership", I am perplexed over the current Government policy on rent and other allowances to senior grades of the civil service. Let us not forget the dire need for housing for the multitude of lower paid Government workers. A small percentage of the number of housing units are offered to eligible minor staff of the Government service. The decision on this percentage was taken years ago, and if it remains the case now, I will say this has become out-of-date and requires revision. An increasing number of such workers have, by now, become eligible for such allocation and there is a real need now to revise the percentage figure quantitatively to meet the demands of the bewildering multitude of low paid Government workers.

Your Excellency, I take pride in supporting the motion of thanks for your address, and I thank you most sincerely for the enlightenment and inspiration you have given us.

REV MCGOVERN:—Sir, I confine myself to one topic. The gist of what I have to say is that I heartily welcome the extension of the public assistance scheme to men who are unemployed through no fault of their own, and equally welcome the proposed legislation to improve employment and working conditions as outlined in Your Excellency's address. I eagerly await the expansion of the details of this programme by the Commissioner for Labour.

In the meantime I have one general observation. In my opinion, especially in the matter of one week's holiday with pay from 1978, the time of one week is too little, and the time for implementation is too slow. I suggest it should be possible to legislate for about fourteen working days paid holidays, and in 1977 rather than 1978. Or at least some provision could be made for an increase according to years of service.

If I were to make a long speech I could anticipate the arguments which are sure to be brought up against this suggestion and refute them one by one. As an aside I use the word "refute" not in the sense of some Hong Kong spokesmen and journalists who really mean deny without proof. I use the word in its proper sense of proving wrong or rebutting by argument. But that is an aside—I apologize—I could not resist the temptation of knocking a word that is so frequently abused. Without a long speech I will content myself with venturing the statement that any argument brought forward against a more rapid and

more realistic improvement in living conditions of workers could be found, in germ at least, in Adam SMITH's Wealth of Nations. It is a coincidence that the Wealth of Nations was published in 1776. It will save a lot of time in argument if I merely mention that this is 1976 and a lot of economic and social change has taken place in 200 years. (*laughter*)

Another strange phenomenon in the thinking of, for want of a better word—Big Business—in Hong Kong, is that whenever there is mention of social improvement here there is almost inevitably a reference to the evils which have followed cradle to grave Social Welfare in Great Britain. This is a red herring. Nobody in Hong Kong that I know of wants cradle to grave social welfare. We do want a reasonable improvement in labour legislation and social benefits to protect the weakest section of our community, who also happen to be the backbone of our economic prosperity, namely our work force.

I base my suggestion for more rapid improvement, not on abstract economic theory ancient or modern, nor on comparisons with other countries whether developed, bankrupt or developing, (*laughter*) but on the same argument which Your Excellency used so aptly in your address, namely that it is "timely, right for our society, and but common justice".

There are two elements involved—the time and the cost. As regards the time I think it is fair to point out that the work force has already waited a long time. Everyone suffered to some extent in the recession. But looking at the available statistics it can be clearly seen that the work force has suffered gravely and over a longer period than is perhaps commonly realized. The most recent Half Yearly Economic Report Table 34 Indexes of Average Daily Wages (excluding fringe benefits) in Manufacturing Industry 1971 to 1976 shows that there was a positive reduction in real wages starting with the drastic minus 9.3 per cent in the figures for September 1973. There were further reductions until the first upturn in the figures for September 1975. But the picture is worse than that. In spite of considerable wage increases in the meantime, the latest figure given for March this year 1976 shows that real wages had not yet quite reached the amount given for September 1971. In other words living conditions of workers reflected in wages—which after all are the basic necessity—not only suffered a positive loss for more than a year. They have been stagnant to the extent that in March this year they had not yet recovered to the level of September 1971. That is four and a half years lost ground. Though the contemplated legislation is not directly concerned with wages, my

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argument is that anything in the line of labour legislation to improve the living conditions of workers should be as rapid as possible in order to make up for that lost time. For a man with rising rent to pay, and a family to feed, every month counts. With four and a half years already lost, 1978 is a long way off.

As to costs: presuming, (and I have reservations about the presumption)—presuming that the proposed improvements are going to cost employers something, the question naturally arises as to whether or not employers can now afford to pay. There are some signs that they can. I take just a few. The current Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner for Labour, Table 13, Applications for Registration of Industrial Establishments, shows one sign of prosperity. Taking the same period as I took for the decline in real wages, that is 1970-71 to the most recent figure, even when one cancels out applications with-drawn and refused and registrations cancelled, it is notable that at no time during those years did the number of applications fall below 600. In other words, even in the bad years, businessmen who by reputation are hardheaded and in business for profit, considered Hong Kong to be still a place in which to expand industrial activity.

A good reason why this should be so can be found in the Inland Revenue Annual Departmental Report for 1975-76, Schedule F, on Profits Tax Collected. Unfortunately a break-down of these totals was not available as it would be of interest to get a detail of what amounts were collected from manufacturing industry. However, the total figure is useful because as much of the proposed new legislation will apply to all sectors. Taking it that profits tax collected is a relative indication of profits actually earned we find the rather surprising fact that, even including the worst years from 1970-71 down to last year before the change of rate, there was an increase in profits each year without exception. Even if one indexes these nominal figures in the same way as nominal wages, and makes allowance for other factors, my calculations if correct, still give an increase in real profits every year. Even if there are some factors which my amateur calculations omitted, the overall picture is sufficiently clear to justify the conclusion that the statement in Your Excellency's address that ... "the recession hit the shop floor much harder than the board room" could even be a mild understatement. While wages decreased or stood still, profits each year maintained some real increase. My conclusion therefore is, even if the new legislation brings some short-term lessening of the growth of profits,

the board room can well afford it. At least they are in a better position than the shop floor to put up with some delay in growth.

I said earlier that I had some reservations on the subject of costs. From the experience of developed countries when they were at our stage of social advance, I do not believe that better working conditions, especially more paid holidays, will necessarily cause any loss of profits. On the contrary the effect of such benefits on the work force will most likely result in better health, better morale, and therefore greater productivity. Increased productivity means greater profits to be shared justly for the benefit of both employer and employee.

Our business community has rightly earned its reputation for ingenuity in adversity and courage in the use of capital for new ventures. I am confident that this ingenuity and courage can also enable them to positively promote better social conditions for their employees, in the knowledge that what is socially just, is in the long run, also economically profitable. This is particularly true in the basic areas of stability and productivity.

My last observation is more tentative. I know it is a general rule elsewhere that labour legislation is usually geared to standards below the actual practice of good employers. It is aimed chiefly at bringing laggards into line with some decent minimum standards that must be observed by even those who do not want to observe them. Given the peculiar situation of Hong Kong, particularly the weakness of organized labour, I suggest that perhaps we need to be a little different. Perhaps we should think in terms of legislating, at least to some extent, towards standards more in keeping with those which would prevail if we had more commonly in our community collective bargaining agreements between management and labour. To what extent this should be or could be attempted I leave to the experts.

With these observations and my plea for more benefits in a shorter time I support the motion.

MR PETER C. WONG:—Your Excellency, it is with hope and faith in this expanded Council that as a newly appointed member I rise briefly to allude to an ideal which I believe is close to the heart of every citizen in Hong Kong—an enlightened Government with imaginative leadership, unhampered by external pressures, strengthened by close ties with the people and deeply committed in maintaining and improving the quality of life for everyone.

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Sir, your address to this Council on the 6th of this month has re-inforced my belief that our Government possesses the necessary essentials and the will to achieve this ideal.

Your reassuring forecasts of the progress of our economy until the end of this decade and the ambitious and laudable social programmes designed to elevate Hong Kong to a position where it can hold its head high in this and in other parts of the world, certainly augur well. Without doubt, the duties and responsibilities of Government do not end with forecasts, planning or beneficial or corrective legislation. The confidence of the governed and its active participation in the processes of Government is the key to social progress, contentment and stability.

The plans you have outlined, Sir, will go a long way towards meeting some of the more important social needs in our society.

Sir, I now refer briefly to a matter of considerable concern to the community—law and order. Statistics appear to show an improvement in efforts to reduce crime. But statistics do not necessarily reflect accurately what they purport to show, and the man in the street is inclined to treat bare figures with some scepticism.

The public, perhaps unjustifiably, is still not satisfied that Government's efforts are reducing crime to a substantial extent. This lurking suspicion should be dispelled by relentless efforts on the part of Government to reduce the incidence of crime and to pursue its declared objectives with vigour and determination. I have no doubt that this will be the case.

It is relevant in this connexion to mention that if efforts to detect crime and apprehend offenders are to meet with increasing success it must be seen that offenders are fairly treated in the lower Courts. We have a good Legal Aid system, which is constantly improving and expanding, to ensure that accused persons receive a fair trial. I feel that since Government is expanding social services covering a wide spectrum, perhaps the time has come to consider extending Legal Aid to the Magistrates' Courts. It is often overlooked that these Courts have power to impose custodial sentences up to a maximum of 3 years. The bulk of criminal cases are tried in these Courts, and it is repugnant to our social conscience that people appearing in these Courts, often from the poorer section of our community, are at present unable

to receive some form of Legal Aid in serious cases. I know it may be some years before any expansion may be implemented, taking into account the expenditure, the technical and administrative difficulties involved and the qualified personnel required. If eventually, and I think I am being optimistic, the Legal Aid system is extended to the Magistrates' Courts, then our conscience will be clear should the public clamour for heavier deterrent sentences.

Sir, may I now touch upon the lack of a Legal Advice Scheme, which, as far as I know, has been in operation in England and Wales since 1959 under the provisions of the 1949 Legal Aid and Advice Act. Legal Advice consists of oral advice on legal questions given by a qualified person employed whole time or part-time for the purpose. I believe there is a need for such a scheme in Hong Kong, particularly so now that our legislation is increasingly becoming more sophisticated and complex. I have no doubt that such a scheme will bring considerable benefit to a fairly large section of our community who can ill afford to pay the fee for professional advice. I therefore urge Government to give this matter some serious thought.

Another matter which is of concern to the public is the traffic congestion on our roads. This has reached intolerable proportions in many areas particularly during peak periods and on week-ends. It is to be hoped that Government will persevere in tackling this problem by constant monitoring and experiment.

Sir, I said I would speak briefly. Let me conclude by a quotation—and I quote—"The essential thing in life is not in conquering but in fighting well." I am convinced that my Unofficial Colleagues will strive to achieve that which is worth exerting every effort to achieve and that now more than ever this spirit will be amply demonstrated in this Council in the months to come.

Sir, I do support the motion.

MR WONG LAM:—Your Excellency, I wish to confine what I have to say to the topic of Mutual Aid Committees.

First, I am very pleased to learn that the Government has drawn up long-term and positive plans to expand the Mutual Aid Committee Scheme—by forming each year 600 such Committees in the urban area and 120 in the New Territories. Your Excellency has also pointed out the need to maintain the quality of MACs by stating that their numbers should not outrun the staff increase of the Home Affairs Department, which supports them.

[MR WONG LAM] Motions

On the face of it, the expansion of the MAC scheme depends on a corresponding increase in the staff of the Home Affairs Department. But the problem does not end there. A careful analysis of the problems confronting MACs in both private buildings and public housing estates reveals that their future expansion and development are closely concerned with many Government departments other than Home Affairs, and involve a good number of problems other than staffing.

The most obvious problems related to MACs in private buildings are:—

- (1) Formation—At present a Mutual Aid Committee can be formed in any building with the consent of only twenty percent of the units in that building. The desirability of such a low percentage is highly debatable, particularly in multi-storey buildings with hundreds of units. The effectiveness of a MAC is undoubtedly called into question if it has the support of only 20% of the units, and the remaining ones are either indifferent or apathetic. We should avoid giving undue stress on the number of MACs to be formed. Their quality and effectiveness are equally, if not more, important. To play a meaningful role, a MAC should have the support of the majority, if not all, of the residents.
- (2) Government's assistance—Admittedly the Home Affairs Department has assigned a large number of officers to help and advise the MACs, but there still exist a number of problems which are beyond their ability to solve. In the case of security, for instance, there are a good number of MACs which are keen on installing iron gates, but because of the existence of commercial units or, worse still, vice-establishments in their buildings, they are forced to drop the idea. There are also buildings the roof-tops of which are illegally occupied by squatters or others for unlawful purposes, but because of the reluctance of certain Government departments concerned to take action, the MACs cannot adopt security measures to ward off undesirable characters. In the case of financial matters, many MACs have experienced difficulties in collecting management or other miscellaneous fees from the residents. Under existing laws, nothing can be done to help them. The Small Claims Tribunal is of

precious little if any help. Furthermore, there are civil servants who adopt an indifferent attitude towards MACs, giving rise to doubts in the minds of MAC office bearers about the Government's sincerity in helping them.

- (3) Training of office bearers—Many MAC members have not had the opportunity to receive suitable training for their work. Training courses tend to be either too long or too short. The result is that many members are unable to understand or discharge their duties efficiently.
- (4) Loss of enthusiasm—The basic purposes of forming MACs are to improve security and cleanliness in buildings and promote a sense of mutual aid amongst the residents. However, after having somewhat achieved such purposes, many MACs go into as it were hibernation. And in no time the old problems reappear. This does not only waste and negate all past efforts, but also greatly affect the morale of the residents. It is therefore incumbent upon the Government to find means to sustain the enthusiasm and activities of MACs. Perhaps one way to achieve this is by making use of MACs as consultative bodies and as channels of communication between the public and the Government.

Apart from facing problems similar to that of private building MACs, public housing MACs are confronted with a myriad of other problems, such as:—

- (1) Security—Despite the fact that many MACs have formed security patrol teams, as yet the Government has not officially recognized their legal status. Such teams are merely "tolerated" by the Police. Their legality is of paramount importance because of the possible clashes they may have with triads or unlawful characters. In addition, there are racketeers who are ready to seize every opportunity to use the name of patrol teams to extort money from residents. It is therefore imperative that problems related to patrol teams should be studied closely by the authorities. Further, it is my belief that many triads are casting a greedy eye on MACs, hoping to infiltrate them to their advantage. Effective counter-measures should be devised by the Police and the Home Affairs Department.
- (2) Financial matters—The funds of public housing MACs very often run into tens of thousands. Unless properly managed, disputes over financial problems can easily give rise to rows

[MR WONG LAM] **Motions**

and conflicts amongst residents, much against the original mutual aid purpose for which these committees are formed.

- (3) Building management—Public housing MACs do not have a voice in the management of their own buildings. On the other hand, seldom do the authorities concerned treat MACs as consultative bodies on building management matters. The opportunity is therefore not taken to make use of MACs as channels of communication between the Government and the governed.

It is obvious from the foregoing paragraphs that the expansion of MACs should involve many Government departments other than Home Affairs. The Government should avoid treating MACs as merely the babies as it were of the Home Affairs Department. HAD should more properly take on the role of a co-ordinating department, co-ordinating the somewhat duplicated services of other offices. For example, the "Good Neighbourhood" scheme of the Social Welfare Department is hardly distinguishable from MACs and yet efforts are being made to set up such units in blocks where MACs already exist. The work of CYOs, RSOs and CDOs in the fields of sports and recreation is obviously overlapping. There is undoubtedly much room for improvement as far as co-ordination is concerned.

On the other hand, the Government should make better use of the resources of welfare and medical voluntary agencies to service the MACs. A closer tie between the MACs and the voluntary agencies will probably work to the advantage of the residents.

To sum up, apart from drawing up long term expansion plans, the Government should also devise plans to maintain and improve the quality of MACs. Increasing the staff force of Home Affairs Department, though desirable, is not the panacea to the whole problem. The Government should have a thorough understanding of the problems confronting MACs and work out an overall solution. The Home Affairs Department should perhaps play a co-ordinating role co-ordinating the work of other Government departments and the voluntary agencies, to assist the MACs in their growth and development. The Government should also clearly define the legal status of security patrol teams, provide sufficient training courses, make use of MACs as consultative bodies and bridges between the Government and the people, and find means to sustain the enthusiasm of MAC officials

etc. In this way a good balance could probably be struck between the continued quantitative expansion and the qualitative improvement of MACs.

Sir, I support the motion.

Motion made. That the debate on this motion be adjourned—
THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

Question put and agreed to.

Second reading of bills

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING (CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

LIMITATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (LAND RESUMPTION AND RELATED PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) (NO 4) BILL 1976

Resumption of debate on second reading (13th October 1976)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order No 43(1).

Committee stage of bills

Council went into Committee.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING (CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 to 5 were agreed to.

DISTRICT COURT (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

LIMITATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 to 10 were agreed to.

MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (LAND RESUMPTION AND RELATED PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) (NO 4) BILL 1976

Clauses 1 to 8 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

Third reading of bills

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL reported that

Industrial Training (Construction Industry) (Amendment) Bill 1976

Bankruptcy (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 1976

District Court (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 1976

Limitation (Amendment) Bill 1976

Mass Transit Railway (Land Resumption and Related Provisions) (Amendment)
Bill 1976

Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) (No 4) Bill 1976

had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the third reading of each of the bills.

Question put on each bill and agreed to.

Bills read the third time and passed.

Adjournment and next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday the 10th of November.

Adjourned accordingly at five minutes past four o'clock.

Price: \$26.00
Code No.: G411876

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