

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Thursday, 11 November 1982****The Council met at half past two o'clock****PRESENT**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR EDWARD YOUDE, K.C.M.G., M.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF SECRETARY
SIR CHARLES PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, K.B.E., C.M.G., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
MR. JOHN HENRY BREMRIDGE, O.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR. JOHN CALVERT GRIFFITHS, Q.C.

THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS
MR. DENIS CAMPBELL BRAY, C.M.G., C.V.O., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ROGERIO HYNDMAN LOBO, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DAVID AKERS-JONES, C.M.G., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE DAVID WYLIE McDONALD, C.M.G., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS

DR. THE HONOURABLE HARRY FANG SIN-YANG, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LO TAK-SHING, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS YUAN-HAO TIEN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH WALLIS JOSEPH TOPLEY, C.M.G., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

THE HONOURABLE ALEX WU SHU-CHIH, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHEN SHOU-LUM, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LYDIA DUNN, O.B.E., J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE HENRY HU HUNG-LICK, O.B.E., J.P.

THE REVD. THE HONOURABLE PATRICK TERENCE MCGOVERN, O.B.E., S.J., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALAN JAMES SCOTT, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT

THE HONOURABLE PETER C. WONG, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG LAM, O.B.E., J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE THONG KAH-LEONG, C.B.E., J.P.
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE ERIC PETER HO, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

DR. THE HONOURABLE RAYSON LISUNG HUANG, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHARLES YEUNG SIU-CHO, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN MARTIN ROWLANDS, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE JAMES NEIL HENDERSON, J.P.
COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR

DR. THE HONOURABLE HO KAM-FAI, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALLEN LEE PENG-FEI, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW SO KWOK-WING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE GERALD PAUL NAZARETH, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.
LAW DRAFTSMAN

THE HONOURABLE HU FA-KUANG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG PO-YAN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM DORWARD, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

THE HONOURABLE JOHN MORRISON RIDDELL-SWAN, O.B.E., J.P.
DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

THE HONOURABLE DONALD LIAO POON-HUAI, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING

THE HONOURABLE GRAHAM BARNES, J.P.
REGIONAL SECRETARY (HONG KONG AND KOWLOON), CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES
ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM CHARLES LANGDON BROWN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-CHUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN JOSEPH SWAINE, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE SELWYN EUGENE ALLEYNE, J.P.
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE COLVYN HUGH HAYE, J.P.
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS. SELINA CHOW LIANG SHUK-YEE, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE IAN FRANCIS CLUNY MACPHERSON, J.P.
REGIONAL SECRETARY (NEW TERRITORIES), CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE MARIA TAM WAI-CHU, J.P.
DR. THE HONOURABLE HENRIETTA IP MAN-HING

THE HONOURABLE PIERS JACOBS, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE DAVID GREGORY JEAFFRESON, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

ABSENT

THE REVD. THE HONOURABLE JOYCE MARY BENNETT, O.B.E., J.P.

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MRS. JENNIE CHOK PANG YUEN-YEE

Government business

Motion

MOTION OF THANKS

Resumption of debate on motion (10 November 1982)

SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES:—Sir, I should like to start, if I may, by congratulating Dr. FANG and all others concerned on the very successful Third F.E.S.P.I.C. Games held from 31 October to 7 November in the marvellous setting of the Jubilee Sports Centre. The gracious presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent to mark the commencement of the Games and of the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled and Mrs. ROSSI, at the closing ceremony, together with Your Excellency and Lady YOUDE, have added lustre to the occasion. The incredibly high standards attained and the spirit shown by the contestants from the 23 regional teams is ample demonstration of the soundness of the basic philosophy behind the Government's approach to rehabilitation: that the disabled have more abilities than disabilities. The good showing put up by the Hong Kong team deserves our highest commendation, and, of course, our ability to compete over the wide range of events is also an indication of the opportunities made available to the disabled in Hong Kong through our Rehabilitation Programme Plan. Sir, if confirmation is considered to be necessary, then the success of the Third F.E.S.P.I.C. Games from every point of view must be conclusive proof that our efforts on behalf of the disabled are rewarding not only to our disabled themselves but to the whole community.

Rehabilitation Division and Special Education

Miss BENNETT is dismayed that responsibility for special education has remained with the Rehabilitation Division of the Social Services Branch. It appears to me that she should not be surprised, much less bewildered, as the 1976 Green Paper 'The Further Development of Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong' recommended, and the 1977 White Paper 'Integrating the Disabled into the Community: A United Effort' specifically stated that a new unit, now known as the Rehabilitation Division of my Branch, would be set up to supervise the development of rehabilitation services. And special education and training are clearly included among those rehabilitation services in both documents. Furthermore, Miss BENNETT herself welcomed in this Council on 27 October 1977 the proposals in the Rehabilitation White Paper: this is recorded in the third paragraph on page 123 of Hong Kong Hansard for the Session 1977-78 and there is nothing therein to indicate that she disassociated herself from the proposal for the new Rehabilitation Division in my Branch.

When the establishment of the Education Branch was decided on last year consideration was given to the education and training content of the Rehabilitation

Division's schedule which then, and still does, comprise over 50 per cent of its work load. It occurred to us that a dissection of the Rehabilitation Division's schedule of responsibilities might have the effect of nullifying the integrated approach to rehabilitation adopted in the 1977 White Paper: an approach which made us pioneers in this field and which was working well in practice. Just *where* the Division should be located is another matter: with a largely health schedule or with the Education Branch and I believe the Chief Secretary will have something to say about this later on in the debate.

Miss BENNETT is also confused between the executive department and the policy branches in the education field. Let me assure her that the Special Education Section of the Education Department is an integral part of that department, and that there is only one Education Department under a single Director of Education responsible for the education of able bodied and disabled children. The experts in special education are all members of the Education Department and not of my Branch (or the Education Branch for that matter). Their proposals are considered in the Rehabilitation Division of my Branch, invariably in consultation with the Education Branch. Sir, I can only assume Miss BENNETT's reference to 'ill-conceived schemes ... unsound educational and psychological premises' indicates differences of view between herself and the special education experts of the Education Department. In response I need only say that the advisory committee arrangements established are there to resolve possible differences of this sort before any new proposals are finalized.

I believe the specific instances of delays in special school projects alluded to by Miss BENNETT refer to the proposed re-provisioning of the special school for the deaf at Hammer Hill Road, in East Kowloon, and the proposed school for maladjusted children within the St. Christopher's Home site at Tai Po. Although she did not mention it, I also understand that Miss BENNETT was a registered manager of the school for the deaf from 1969 to 1974, and that she remains a member of the Executive Committee of St. Christopher's Home.

The proposal for the re-provisioning of the School for the Deaf was submitted to the Education Department in 1975. By 1979 a schedule of accommodation was finalized in consultation with the school. Following approval by the Finance Committee, the school was formally notified of the financial arrangements for the project in July 1981. Since then, the school has submitted revised plans for the project including an updated schedule of accommodation and revised estimates, and these are under examination within the Government. A major problem in the way of the project is the clearance of illegal domestic structures straddling the school boundary and encroaching into the school grounds. A plea for help was addressed to the Education Department in November 1981 which immediately sought the expert assistance of other Government departments, including the Housing Department. However, the site belongs to the school and the legal responsibility for the eviction of these squatters must rest with them. Of course, the Government's land staff are prepared to make suggestions as to how the school could proceed, but the

decision and responsibility for initiating action rests firmly with the owners of the land: the school body concerned.

The construction of a new special school for the maladjusted is tied to the sponsor's comprehensive re-development proposals for their entire site—a not inconsiderable parcel of land. Following Finance Committee approval of the financial commitments for the school project in April 1980, discussions were entered into between the lands staff of Tai Po District and the sponsor regarding their comprehensive re-development proposals. However, not unexpectedly, discussions became protracted and it was agreed in June 1981 between the parties concerned that the school project should be held in abeyance for twelve months pending resolution of the problems associated with the comprehensive re-development scheme. There still remain some problems outstanding and negotiations are continuing.

Sir, if I were to use Miss BENNETT language—which I quoted a few moments ago—to describe her allegations of the causes of delay in the two cases I have examined, I would say they were illogical, unfounded and misleading!

Correctional Institutions

Miss BENNETT again suggests that remand and probation cases should be placed under the Correctional Services Department and implies that a similar recommendation was made by Mr. JARMAN, the British Adviser who was invited to Hong Kong to review the correctional institutions of the Social Welfare Department. In fact Mr. JARMAN's recommendation was made in the context of separate accommodation being required for young people under remand, probation and care and protection orders and not because of doubts on the social work approach in dealing with remand or probation cases. These factors have all been fully taken into account in changing the name of 'Prisons Department' into 'Correctional Services Department' at the beginning of 1982, without affecting the social welfare institutions.

As I explained in last year's debate on the Motion of Thanks, the advantage of the present system is that it offers the courts a number of alternative treatment programmes and allows the magistrate to decide on the treatment that is best suited to the individual case having regard to the nature of the offence, the offender's personality, temperament and background.

Having accepted Mr. JARMAN's recommendation on separate accommodation, action is now in hand to segregate, as far as possible, boys and girls in need of care and protection from remand and probation cases so as to alleviate the risk of contamination between the offender and the non-offender and to facilitate defining the goals of treatment, the time span, the degree of security and the style of programme. There is a particular problem in relation to appropriate treatment of girls on care and protection orders as many of them have considerable histories of involvement in 'girlie' establishments. Priority is therefore being given to establishing a purpose-built home in a secure setting, with gradations of security within the home itself. A site in Tuen Mun has been

identified. With the establishment of the Pui Chi Boys' Home (in the former Quarry Bay School premises) for younger boys under probation, the overcrowding in Begonia Boys' Home will be reduced. In future, not only can boys under care and protection there be better looked after, the segregation of these boys from those on remand and older boys on probation can also be attained.

Miss BENNETT suggests that the staff of the Social Welfare Department institutions could benefit from psychological services available in the Correctional Services Department. If she implies that psychological expertise is not available within the Social Welfare Department, I am afraid she is wrong again! There are four clinical psychologists in post in the Social Welfare Department and although there is a great demand for their services, they are always available to advise institutional staff on the diagnosis of problem behaviour, the formulation of appropriate intervention or the undertaking of individual or group treatment. The Department also intends to develop Mr. JARMAN's recommendation that the psychologists be involved in staff training. Meanwhile other recommendations on induction training and in-service training to improve and develop the particular skills for working in institutions are in hand.

Coordination of Services for the Elderly

The Director of Social Welfare will be speaking on services for the elderly, but as regards co-ordination Mr. Peter C. WONG may wish to know that the Programme Plan on Services for the Elderly is regularly reviewed by a Central Coordinating Committee convened by my Branch with representatives from the voluntary sector and Government departments concerned, including Social Welfare, Medical and Health and Housing. This Committee is responsible for monitoring progress and for ironing out any problems arising. The annual review of the Five-year Plan on Social Welfare Development in Hong Kong provides a forum whereby the voluntary sector and Government departments review and roll forward their planned services. In addition, the advice of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee or the Medical Development Advisory Committee is sought where appropriate.

Social Security

I agree entirely with Mr. So that a good social security system is conducive to putting our people's hearts at ease. I think we can also agree, this time to differ, on whether contributory social insurance schemes are the most appropriate means for achieving these ends in our circumstances.

The proposal for a centrally administered contributory sickness, injury and death benefit scheme, has been the subject of discussions in this Council on various occasions and I last answered Mr. So in full on this point on 23 December 1981 (and this is recorded at pages 282 and 283 of Hansard for the last session). Basically, the Government does not believe that contributory schemes will have the willing support of our work-force at the present time because of the absence of insurance habit among our people. We believe they

would rather keep their earnings in their own pockets. If we take the Singapore Central Provident Fund as an example, current contributions by employers are at 22% and by employees 23% of wages up to a specified level. Can there be any doubt about whether our employees (to say nothing of our employers) would wish to contemplate contributions of this magnitude despite recognizing that contributions at too low a level would only yield meagre benefits? Moreover, in Singapore workers normally mortgage their provident fund accounts to acquire a family home. In Hong Kong, we believe we can eventually attain the same goal through the expansion of the Home Ownership Scheme.

The Government position is that the Public Assistance Scheme has been and should remain the central pillar of our social security system, providing as it does a safety net for those proven to be in need. Assistance is concentrated on those least able to help themselves and we feel this is the right approach to social security in Hong Kong. We should also bear in mind that if there should be a further down turn in the economy leading to higher unemployment, the Government is fully committed to meeting all public assistance outlays which may then result. This is the one item of public expenditure which cannot, and will not, be artificially restrained because of any financial stringency.

As you, Sir, have stressed in your address we are a Government concerned with the welfare of our people. In the context of social security, especially in the present economic climate, we shall continue to keep under regular review the levels of payment due under the Public Assistance and Special Needs Allowances schemes in order that they should keep pace with the movement in prices. Meanwhile, an amendment Bill to provide for better sickness benefits, and a death grant to cover deaths of employees whilst in employment, will be introduced for consideration by this Council shortly. And for those cases where a death grant is not payable by the employer, a similar grant will be provided by the Government under the Special Needs Allowances scheme.

Severance Payment

Both Father MCGOVERN and Mr. SO have referred to the need for improvements in the system for severance payments. When considering changes to the present system, it is worth remembering that the purpose of severance pay on redundancy is to compensate an employee for loss of such employment opportunity. It arises only from dismissal due to redundancy and not where there is any element of volition or fault on the part of the employee. In this context, the existing provision whereby an employee is eligible for severance payment if his employer moves his place of business will require careful review, for commonsense indicates that loss will only arise if significantly longer travelling is involved. Furthermore, one of the aims of the Government's District Administration policy is to enable the territory as a whole to be developed within a unified framework, and the development of our transport infrastructure is intended to facilitate a free flow between Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories; thus the basis for the maintenance of such specific territorial demarcation in the severance payment legislation will need

some reconsideration. In addition, there is the question of what constitutes a reasonable qualifying period for eligibility for severance payments, and the rate of such payments, when quite a number of enlightened employers have been making concessions over and above the present statutory requirements. I am afraid therefore that it may take some little time before firm proposals can be put before this Council for consideration.

Companies in Receivership

As Your Excellency has indicated, the Government is concerned about workers affected by the recent cases of business closures. I am now glad to report that the invitations to representatives of employers and employees to join the *ad hoc* Working Group announced by you, Sir, in your address have all been accepted. In addition to the Commissioner for Labour who will be chairman of this Working Group, the other members will comprise two employees representatives and two employers representatives from among the members of the Labour Advisory Board, together with representatives of the Secretary for Economic Services, the Registrar General and the policy branch responsible for labour matters. The Working Group, as directed by you, Sir, will examine this issue in detail taking into account the reasonable claims of the workers in companies which have gone into receivership, the wider consequences for the economy as a whole and the experiences and practices of other countries. The first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group will be held on 16 November.

Medical and Health Planning

In responding to Dr. FANG's points on medical development planning I must first acknowledge the generosity of his reference to the staff of the Social Services Branch. May I also point out that he is over-extravagant in suggesting that long term planning and policy formulation is wholly in my hands. Of course, I am answerable to you, Sir, and the Chief Secretary for this programme area, but we must not denigrate the role of the Director of Medical and Health Services and his department. Suffice it for me to say that in the nature of the Government machine new policy initiatives may come from his side or mine, but neither would just charge ahead on his own. We consult together and, more often than not, input from the resource branches is needed before any new policies can be formulated for approval. However, I understand that the Chief Secretary will be saying more about the organizational aspects of this matter when he winds up this debate.

As regards medical service development and manpower planning, the basic teams are actually located within the Medical and Health Department under two Assistant Directors supported by a total of one Principal Medical and Health Officer and one Medical and Health Officer, two Administrative Officers and one Senior Training Officer among the senior staff, as well as a statistical unit headed by a Senior Statistician. Apart from the Administrative Officers, whose deployment is a recent development, the Senior Training Officer and the statisticians, all the senior staff concerned have, to date, invariably been fully qualified medical officers. Of course, the D.M.H.S. and his Deputy responsible

for planning are also doctors. I trust this will demonstrate that the professional medical input into the planning process is far from minimal.

I am grateful to Dr. FANG for his acknowledgement of our progress in attaining the major objectives of the 1974 White Paper. The D.M.H.S. will be elaborating on these developments and I shall confine myself to Dr. FANG's apparent suggestion that we should side-step M.D.A.C. and draw up a fresh ten year plan, possibly with the aid of overseas experts.

Of course, we should learn from the experience of others. In this connection I notice from a recent issue of *The Economist* (16-22 October 1982) that the preoccupation of health and welfare experts in the developed west these days seems to be on cutting back their over-ambitious schemes introduced in the more palmy past. I trust Dr. FANG does not have such surgical operations in mind when making his suggestion.

I would remind Dr. FANG that the proposals in the 1974 White Paper were based on the 1973 Report of the Medical Development Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Albert RODRIGUES. Since that time the M.D.A.C. has not only been up-dating its programme annually but also incorporating new services when considered desirable, so that we have a rolling ten year plan of development.

My worry is whether we will be able to attain the increasingly ambitious targets of the M.D.A.C. So unless Dr. FANG really does have surgery in mind I feel we would be well advised to continue on our well established path, taking fully into account Hong Kong's special needs and problems.

I would also like to congratulate Dr. IP on her thought provoking maiden speech. She is absolutely right that our children are the most adorable, and I would add precious, sector of our community. As the father of three children, whatever their faults, shortcomings or blemishes, I must agree with her entirely. She is also right in suggesting that we should keep under review how the public sector of our medical and health services should develop in the years ahead, even though she did not indicate her own thinking of the preferred route or her reasons for it. But these are early days and I look forward to Dr. IP developing her ideas in the months ahead. In order to assist her in this process I would make two points:

- (a) our policy aims in this field are to safeguard and promote the general public health of the community as a whole, and to ensure the provision of medical and personal health facilities for the people of Hong Kong, especially that large section of the community which relies on subsidized medical attention; and
- (b) in regard to the development of medical insurance schemes the Government's definitive position is set out in the then Chief Secretary's speech in this Council on 13 April 1978 (at pages 789 and 790 of Hong Kong Hansard for Session 1977-78) which I quoted in full in last year's debate on the Motion of Thanks. Rather than repeating these remarks once again I

would just say that the Government welcomes the development of medical insurance schemes, but sees no case for them being administered by the Government or subsidized from public funds. We consider our efforts are best concentrated on the provision and development of the basic services set out in the ambitious programme which is rolled forward annually on the advice of the M.D.A.C.

The Mentally Handicapped

While I find it difficult to accept Dr. Ip's suggestion that the closing of residential care centres for severely handicapped children on account of infectious diseases may be attributable to inadequate staffing, she may be pleased to know that considerable improvements in the staffing standards for boarding care has recently been approved. Furthermore, the general question of staffing standards for boarding care in special schools will be further reviewed by a working party being set up in the Education Department.

The provision of pre-school training places for the mentally handicapped is examined annually with the Rehabilitation Programme Plan. On the advice of the Rehabilitation Development Co-ordinating Committee, the provision of places in special child care centres which provide pre-school training and education for the severely physically and mentally handicapped children is being increased by 120 a year in each of the four years to 1985 when full provision should be met. Furthermore, I have recently established a joint Government/voluntary agency working party to conduct a comprehensive review on pre-school care, training and education of the disabled children.

Placements for moderately mentally handicapped school leavers are provided in the form of vocational training, employment in sheltered workshops and day care in work activity centres. Plans are in hand to increase the provision of vocational training places by more than 100% in the next five years from 676 to 1 432 by 1987-88. The provision of sheltered workshops is being examined by a Working Party set up last year to conduct a comprehensive review of sheltered workshops in the overall rehabilitation process. The findings of this Working Party are also expected to have a bearing on the provision of work activity centres which provide training to those disabled unable to benefit from sheltered employment. Meanwhile, provision of both sheltered workshops and work activity centres is being increased each by 300 places a year.

I appreciate that the educational needs of the autistic children may well be different from those of the mentally handicapped. The Director of Education is considering whether such differences should be reflected in the relative staffing standards.

The Mentally Ill

I entirely agree with Mr. Peter WONG that vocational and in-service training needs for staff engaged in the provision of services for the mentally ill should deserve our urgent attention. May I assure him that this and other matters

concerning the mentally ill have been in the fore-front of the deliberations of both the Medical Development Advisory Committee and the Rehabilitation Development Co-ordinating Committee in their recent reviews. A range of vocational and in-service training facilities are provided by both the Medical and Health and Social Welfare Departments: these include post-graduate overseas training in psychiatry for doctors who have served in the mental health service for four years, post-graduate specialist overseas training in psychiatric social work for selected social workers and in-service training courses and seminars for social workers working in both Government and the voluntary sector. In addition, the establishment at the Hong Kong Polytechnic of an inservice training course for general rehabilitation workers working with the mentally ill, and the provision of post-graduate psychiatric social training at the University of H.K. is being actively explored.

As to legislative measures, a Mental Health (Amendment) Bill dealing with the detention of mentally disordered persons is currently under consideration by the Law Reform Commission. In addition, the Working Party set up to review the handling of mentally disturbed persons may also have some suggestions to make in this matter.

Sir, I apologize for having spoken at this length but I support the Motion.

DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES:—Sir, once upon a time, a question was asked of a Director of Medical and Health Services, as to whether he thought that there were enough medical and health facilities in Hong Kong. The answer was ‘Yes, except that there are too many patients.’ (*laughter*)

In spite of the fairy tale beginning of my story, this somewhat paradoxical answer in fact points the finger on the real root of our problems, i.e., relentless population pressure.

Therefore, any elaboration on the developments in the medical and health services in the last decade cannot be viewed in isolation but only against the background of certain spectacular events, resulting in significant changes in the demographic picture during this period in Hong Kong.

It must be remembered that population pressure has a particularly crucial impact on my Department as we are in an area of Government service which is extremely susceptible especially to any immediate and massive demand. This is because there are no means test or criteria governing the utilization of the services which are available practically free of charge to anyone.

From the early 1970s to 1978, the additions to the Hong Kong population have been largely through natural increase, i.e., by births with some contributions from immigration, totalling on an average 70 000 annually. However, in 1979, with the now well known ‘Vietnamese boat people’ problem and the constant and increasing immigration of people into Hong Kong, this somewhat stable population picture was dramatically changed. In that year

alone, our population increased by 226 000 people and the population growth rate rose sharply from a normal 1.9% to 6%.

Thus, from 1979 and up to the end of 1981, i.e., in a short space of only three years, the population increased by 600 000, more than two-thirds of which were by immigration alone.

Further, quite aside from the overwhelming numbers, the level of health among many of the new arrivals is generally lower than that which we are accustomed to in Hong Kong. Therefore, it should not be surprising if our hitherto high health standards were diluted if timely measures were not taken to meet the challenge.

Fortunately, the process of constant review just mentioned by the Secretary for Social Services, in which the first ten-year planning period is rolled forward each year and forecast for demand for services are updated promptly and effectively in the light of changing circumstances such as new population growth, changing pattern of diseases, occupancy and utilization rates of hospital beds and facilities, stood us in good stead.

Thus, the Government has taken timely and effective measures which have not only been able to absorb the shock of sudden and overwhelming demands but have maintained and even improved our standards of medical and health care in spite of the adverse demographic events of the last few years.

In the Hong Kong context and circumstances, therefore, the emphasis must be on the need for a continuing review rather than the presentation of a new programme only at the end of a ten-year period as the updating process has in fact produced another ten-year plan from the 1974 White Paper and our schedule of developments have now been extended to the early 1990s.

Since 1973 to the present, four major hospitals and ten major extension projects have been completed. These developments represent an increase of more than 5200 beds or over 30% in addition to the bed provision in 1973.

During the same period, no less than ten clinics and polyclinics were completed. These, together with the reprovisioning of three clinics, have also increased the number of consulting rooms by 77 and represents an increase of more than 30% for such facilities.

The 1974 White Paper calls for a balanced development of both curative and preventive health facilities. To this end, preventive health services such as health education, family health services, incorporating maternal and child health services and family planning, occupational health services, community nursing, school dental services, child assessment, have been developed and are being expanded simultaneously.

Appropriate staffing complements to match these developments are, of course, not forgotten. Thus, within the planning decade under reference, the overall establishment of the Medical and Health Department has increased

from 13 475 to 20 534 posts or 52% more over the establishment in 1973. In more detail, the establishment of doctors have increased from 826 to 1 310; nurses from 4 968 to 8 294; para-medicals from 896 to 1 440 and other staff from 6 785 to 9 490, representing an increase of 59%; 67%; 61% and 40% respectively.

That we are proceeding in the right direction is borne out by the fact that our health indices are comparable to some of the best in the world as mentioned by Your Excellency in your address to this Council.

We in the Medical and Health Department are by no means complacent and are well aware of the daunting challenges ahead in our attempts to implement our ambitious plans. The ill-informed and the prejudiced will no doubt continue to harp on the inevitable problems, real or imaginary, without being able to offer any constructive or helpful solutions. You, Sir, has stated that we should not live beyond our means. Thus, we on our part, within all available resources, will continue to strive our utmost in bringing about those improvements in the medical and health services which we all desire.

Mr. Peter WONG suggested that Government should review the priorities of various programmes in the light of changing circumstances. He will no doubt be pleased to hear that this is precisely the practice by the Medical Development Advisory Committee (M.D.A.C.) in their annual review of projects and their priorities. In regard to my Friend's suggestion to upgrade the priority for a hospital in the Eastern District, this subject has been well ventilated in public recently. I should like, however, again to emphasize the principles behind the setting of priorities for projects, bearing in mind that resources, in terms of both finance and trained manpower, are not unlimited and that there is constant and severe competition for resources among projects in the medical plan. The M.D.A.C. reviews and advises Government on the necessity and the priorities for medical projects. Various factors such as population needs, the overall availability of medical and health services in areas and regions, the availability of basic resources, both financial and human, and the Public Works Building Programme, are but some of the more important and complex ones that have to be considered and finely balanced against one another before decisions are reached on relative priorities. Such an exercise must of necessity be a time-consuming, difficult and unenviable process. It follows that once the relative priorities are set, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to modify the timing of any one of the projects without affecting the whole development programme and upsetting other equally, if not more important, areas of development.

Dr. IP suggested that more should be done to improve our obstetrical and neonatal services so that morbidity during the perinatal period could be reduced. Honourable Members are no doubt aware that the perinatal period as presently defined by health authorities is that period which covers the time from the 28th week of gestation to the first week of life of the new-born. The definition of the perinatal period enables the calculation of the perinatal

mortality rate which is one of the common internationally recognized health indices whereby all health authorities in the world may measure and compare the standard of their health services such as maternal and child health, including obstetrical and neonatal care with those of other countries. It may be relevant at this point for me to state that the perinatal mortality rate in Hong Kong for the last year is 10.7 per 1 000 total births. This rate, when compared with other Southeast Asian countries, and, indeed, some advanced countries in Europe and America, is lower than many and is, with monotonous regularity, among the lowest in the world.

Nevertheless, Dr. IP will be glad to hear that we are by no means resting on our laurels but will continue to strive for better obstetrical care and neonatal services.

Our existing facilities in this direction consist of a good and comprehensive system of maternal and child health services, easily accessible to mothers and their children throughout Hong Kong. In recent years, facilities for genetic counselling, pre-natal diagnostic services and cyto-genetic laboratory services have also been established at 11 major hospitals and our excellent health indices in regard to the mother and child bear witness to the effectiveness of such developments.

In regard to Dr. IP's doubts that the same ratio of nurse to patient should be applicable to children as well as adults, it must be remembered that a nurse to patient ratio is largely determined by the medical conditions of the patients themselves and the level of nursing care that is necessary and consistent with the patient's illness, rather than on the patient's age group per se. Therefore, even in the same paediatric unit itself, the nurse to patient ratio varies for different patients depending on whether they are general ward cases or those who may require more intensive care.

Dr. IP asked why there should be specialist hospitals for tuberculosis, cancer and children's bone diseases. The reasons for the existence of these hospitals are historical. For example, the children's orthopaedic hospital at Sandy Bay was built in 1956 to deal specially with two important communicable diseases in children, namely, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis which were prevalent at that time. In those days when the ravages of poliomyelitis and tuberculosis were rampant, the after-effects of these two fearsome diseases manifested themselves very often in deformities and disabilities in their young victims. However, I am glad to say that because of the tremendous advances in medicine as well as the sterling efforts of our staff in preventive medicine over the last two decades, both poliomyelitis and tuberculosis of the bones and joints have not only been brought under control but practically eradicated. Due to the diminishing number of orthopaedic cases in children as a result of poliomyelitis and tuberculosis, the facilities are being modified and utilized also to cater for other types of cases. Thus, the one and only children's orthopaedic hospital is now in the process of adjusting its services to a welcome change in the pattern of diseases, in line with the regionalization of medical and health services.

The changing pattern of diseases also calls for a similar adjustment in the special hospitals for tuberculosis, namely, the Ruttonjee Sanatorium and the Grantham Hospital. The facilities in these hospitals are being redeveloped to accommodate general cases and other chest diseases rather than only tuberculosis.

As for the treatment of cancer, it must be remembered that most cases of this disease are being treated actively in the general hospitals and clinics. Only those cases which require longer term treatment or terminal care are placed in the Nam Long Hospital simply because it is just prudent for such cases to be there so as to free the acute beds for more urgent requirements.

The subject of a children's hospital has, of course, been thoroughly ventilated and debated at different times and at various levels in public. This matter was also discussed in this Council at the Annual Policy Debate on 16 November 1978. I shall not repeat the details but would like to quote the recommendation contained in para. 3.18 of the 1979 Review of the Medical Development Programme on the principles for hospital development which took into account modern trends and practices in medical development and I quote: 'New general hospitals should be built with a comprehensive range of specialties and facilities to provide treatment for men, women and children suffering from various forms of illness. They should be centrally located and within easy means of access. Development of special hospitals is not considered advisable. Such hospitals tend to be isolated from the general body of medicine and lack the support of other disciplines. They also give rise to uneven distribution of facilities and expertise, restrict flexibility in use and often lead to under-utilization in some areas...?'

In the context of Hong Kong, therefore, it is only logical and appropriate to aim for the provision of good and up-to-date paediatric facilities attached to general hospitals rather than to provide for specialist hospitals on their own in any specific locations.

Having three children of my own and being a match for the Secretary for Social Services in this respect (*laughter*), I entirely agree with Dr. IP that this adorable sector of the community should be well taken care of.

Thus, our present plans include the establishment of modern and well-equipped paediatric facilities, including mother/child rooms for the benefit of sick children within the extension and development projects in the general hospitals.

Finally, the School Medical Service Scheme has also been the subject of cogent discussions in this Council on a number of occasions in the last few years. I am grateful to Dr. IP for the opportunity to report on the latest situation in regard to this scheme.

According to the Annual Report of the School Medical Service Board for the year ending 31 March 1982, the number of eligible pupils for the scheme is

805 497. The total participation of such pupils for the year 1981-82 is 244 864 representing a participation rate of 30.4%. This indicates an increase of 18% over last year. The Board further envisages that one in three eligible pupils will be participating in the scheme by early next year. The number of participating doctors for 1981-82 is 232 as compared with 211 doctors for last year, i.e., an increase of 10%.

However, as with many other subjects, such statistics should be considered in their proper perspective and against the background of the basic objective of the scheme and benefits that may be derived.

This is a scheme which is operated by an independent statutory Board and incorporated by an Ordinance with the basic aim of providing economical medical treatment for pupils of schools participating therein.

It is important to note that the scheme is school based and enrolment into it is entirely voluntary. It affords opportunities for the doctors and the school authorities on the one hand and the pupils and their parents on the other complete freedom of choice to serve and to be served.

Because it is a school based scheme, the Board feels that the best way of improving its enrolment is to encourage liaison between the participating doctors and the school authorities. This measure is being continuously pursued by the Board.

At the moment, the contribution to the cost of the service from Government is \$50 per pupil with \$5 from each participating pupil. The Board appears reasonably satisfied with this arrangement. In its expression of appreciation to participating doctors in its Annual Report, it states: 'This report would be incomplete without an expression of appreciation for the unfailing support of participating doctors, for whom the remuneration can only be a nominal consideration. Some have served since 1964 during which time the number of doctors taking part has varied little, but should enrolment requires more it is certain that they will come forward to contribute to this form of community service.'

Bearing in mind that the scheme is entirely voluntary and that alternative and similar areas of medical services are available in both the public and private sectors, the school medical service scheme is still regarded as one that is providing a worthwhile service at very low cost and beneficial to the ¼ million children who have opted for it.

Sir, I support the Motion.

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE:—

Housing and Services for the Elderly

Sir, I shall speak this afternoon about the very old and the very young, both ages in life's passage in which we need at times a helping hand or a watchful eye to

guide us on our way. Most of us here fall happily somewhere in between. As Dr. JOHNSON has it, life declines from 35 (*laughter*); on this side of the world, at 55 a man is supposed to come out like a tiger from his cave. I am thus most heartened and encouraged by the response of my Unofficial Colleagues on this Council—Mr. Roger LOBO, Mr. WONG Lam and Mr. Peter C. WONG and, from a younger generation, Dr. Ho Kam-fai (*laughter*)—to Your Excellency's announcement of the Government's intention to purchase flats in private housing developments with surpluses from the sale of gold coins for the purpose of providing sheltered housing accommodation for the elderly. The provision of some 700 additional places for elderly people who, for whatever reasons, are not able to live with their families, will make a substantial contribution to reducing the number of people now on waiting lists for hostel accommodation in public housing estates, and I would like today to give some further indication on the way this scheme—the gold coin home scheme (and I am looking for a happy and harmonious rendering of this into Chinese)—could be developed and integrated into the network of social welfare provided for the elderly.

The Government's objective, in the field of services for the elderly, is to provide a wide range of services to enable old people to remain in the community for as long as they can. Adequate housing is, of course, fundamental to the maintenance of a happy and secure way of life, but social and economic factors in Hong Kong often make it difficult for old people, those without the support of a family, to afford decent self-contained accommodation. Many of them are still in good health, many with a minimum of support, are able to take care of themselves and it is for this group, in particular, that the provision of sheltered housing is appropriate—a home of their own as opposed to more institutional forms of residential care.

I fully take Dr. HO's points about the importance of creating conditions which allow residents to feel 'at home'. Residents should not be subject to too many rules and regulations. It is the intention that accommodation will be for groups of four or five persons and every attempt will be made, when we come to the design and fitting out of the flats, to allow for personal privacy so as to reduce the possibility of conflict arising between residents. The gold coin scheme calls for the purchase of some 120 flats initially; management could be arranged for groups of 40-50 flats, say, either through the Social Welfare Department or through appropriate voluntary agencies who already have some experience of working with old people. I am glad to say that we have already located a number of suitable flats in Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin and are looking for others in the older built-up urban areas.

I would like to see that living conditions for the elderly residents are as near as possible to those of the general community. What we have in mind is that day-to-day supervision will be limited to the provision of wardens, looking after groups of flats in particular domestic blocks. Their responsibility will be to resolve any routine problems that arise and to be on call in case a resident should suddenly fall ill, say, or be in need of some special service.

I fully agree with Dr. Ho that the sheltered housing scheme should be backed up by a range of support services in case residents need to make use of them. As I am sure he is aware, the programme plan on services for the elderly sets out the Government's plans for the development of the range of community support services to which he has referred. In selecting suitable locations for the purchase of flats under the scheme, we have very much borne in mind the importance of having appropriate community support services in the area. Multi-services centres for the elderly, which include a social centre, canteen, laundry service, a base for home help service and, in many cases, a day care centre for the more infirm elderly, are planned to serve all major population areas of 250 000 people. Seven such centres are already in existence serving Wan Chai, Chai Wan, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan, Kowloon City, Mong Kok and Yuen Long. Three more centres are scheduled to open in 1983-84 in Tuen Mun, Sha Tin and Tai Po.

In addition to multi-service centres, social centres for the elderly are planned to serve a local population of 30 000. 86 social centres are already in operation and a further 61 are planned over the next five years. Particular emphasis is also being given to the expansion of home help services which play such a vital role in enabling the elderly to remain in the community. Improved pay scales for home helpers are being introduced this year and through a systematic expansion of the service to meet territory-wide demand we aim to provide an additional 100 home helpers each year until full demand for the service is met.

Dr. HO has also stressed the importance of ensuring adequate building maintenance and inspection of flats and, as a general point, is of the view that the Social Welfare Department must assume overall responsibility for the efficient operation of the scheme. I would envisage that, whether the flats are under the direct supervision of my department or a voluntary agency, they should remain Government property and thus will be maintained to proper standards. The actual responsibility for day-to-day supervision and internal maintenance of fixtures and fittings will be the subject of further discussion with the agencies concerned, but we shall be establishing guidelines on procedures to ensure the safety and comfort of residents and the proper maintenance of the property itself.

I fully endorse Dr. HO's wish that these flats should become, in every sense, 'homes away from home' for the elderly people who occupy them. So, whilst I accept the importance of efficient management and supervision of this scheme I consider it equally important to encourage all the residents to develop a sense of pride in their home—their very own gold coin home—and a desire to maintain them in as clean, bright and pleasant a state as possible.

This brings me to the points raised by Mr. Peter C. WONG on the need for improvement in care for the elderly who are weak and infirm. Mr. WONG Lam has also pointed out that one of our objectives must be to reduce the number of old people, currently occupying hospital beds, who could be adequately cared for in institutions with a much less sophisticated degree of medical support.

In planning for the care of the infirm elderly, our paramount consideration must again be the desire to maintain old people in informal home-like surroundings for as long as possible. This is why we continue to place so much emphasis on providing a range of residential care for the elderly which will enable them to remain in contact with the community and not become isolated in 'institutions' if this can be avoided.

Of course one of the principal difficulties is that the needs of individuals change as they become more and more frail and in need of more personal care. In recognition of this fact the Government's plans for the development of residential care emphasize the need for flexibility.

For example, hostels for the elderly are planned in all public housing estates with three thousand housing units or more. These hostels cater for old people who are largely able to take care of themselves, but they also include a section which provides meals and assistance with housekeeping and laundry, similar to those provided in old people's homes. This combination of services means that should someone in the self-care section of the hostel suddenly find himself unable to cope and look after himself as well as before, he can transfer, with the minimum of upset and disruption, to the section which provides a higher degree of support.

Similarly, wherever possible, old people's homes are planned in conjunction with care and attention homes or include a small care-and-attention unit to provide for those residents whose condition deteriorates, but where it is desirable to avoid the anguish of a transfer to another home. It is true, as Mr. Peter C. WONG has pointed out, that there exists a long waiting list for places in care and attention homes. However, a recent research project, conducted by the University of Hong Kong, confirms my belief that we should explore alternative means of meeting the needs of the infirm elderly, as well as building more care and attention homes. Specifically, the suggestion is that if day care for the elderly were more widely available, the demand for residential care and attention homes would be reduced from a possible 8.8 places per 1 000 elderly population to five places per 1 000, or not greatly in excess of our present planning target of four places per 1 000.

Day care centres provide personal care and limited nursing care to old people whose families cannot take care of them during the day. In order to provide more impetus to their development, it is now planned to provide at least one such centre in all urban and New Territories districts. At present there are 60 places in day care centres and a further 160 places are planned to open in 1983-84. Nevertheless I would hasten to assure Members that I am not in any way complacent about the adequacy of our planning target for the provision of care and attention homes and this is now under review. Our present plans provide for an additional 3 000 places in such homes by 1986-87 bringing the total number of places to nearly 3 400. This represents a ratio of nearly five places per 1 000 elderly population in that year exceeding the strict planning target by some 25%.

We must however accept the fact that, once an elderly person becomes so infirm as to be bedridden and in need of almost constant nursing care, the facilities in a care and attention home will no longer be adequate to meet his needs. It then becomes necessary to consider admission to a medical infirmary. This takes us into the province of my colleague, the Director of Medical and Health Services who I believe has his own plans for an expansion of provision in this area. In the meantime, as an interim measure, it has been agreed that small infirmary units should be set up in some larger care and attention homes to provide the higher degree of nursing care required by some residents whom it is not possible to transfer to an infirmary.

As regards concessionary travel and recreational activities for the elderly, Mr. Peter WONG will be pleased to know that we are considering the proposal to offer concessionary fares on public transport to elderly people during off-peak hours. A number of maxi-cab operators have in fact voluntarily introduced a scheme of half-fare travel to old and disabled people.

Elderly people already have access to a wide range of cultural and recreational activities on a free or minimum charge basis. Tickets for many performances staged at the City Hall are at nominal fees and elderly people can visit the Urban Council's Space Museum in groups at reduced fees. Organizations concerned with the welfare of old people do from time to time obtain concessionary rates for various forms of entertainment and for example, free or low cost admission tickets are available to centres such as the Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park and Ocean Park. I am confident that with increasing public awareness of the needs of the elderly for leisure activities, more offers and opportunities for entertainment will become available.

I hope I have given some indication to honourable Members without going into too much detail, of the complexities of the task of planning services for old people and of the Government's commitment to a flexible approach in meeting the wide range of needs with care, with sympathy and with foresight.

Child Abuse

Dr. Henrietta IP drew attention to the problem of child abuse, one which is particularly distressing since it is directed at innocent helpless victims. I fully agree with Dr. IP that we must spare no effort in containing, if not completely eradicating, this problem. As she says, public education and the availability of adequate support services to help families under stress are likely to be the most effective measures. In recent years we have strengthened our family life education programmes to improve the quality of family life, to promote better relationship at the personal level, to encourage responsible parenthood and to reduce marital conflicts. Social workers in our family service centres are well placed to identify the 'at risk' families and through counselling and the provision of support services such as day care and home help, we aim to strengthen the family bond, and try to reduce stress and hence the incidence of child abuse. This is a complex issue to which we already devote considerable

effort and resources and this is something we must continue to do. Sadly, it must be admitted that a few cases do go wrong even with the closest supervision and the best of intentions. In all child abuse cases the decision to remove the abused child from his or her family, whether temporarily or permanently, is never an easy one since inevitably the interests of the child and those of the family are inextricably linked. I can assure Dr. Ip that our procedures for handling child abuse cases will be reviewed regularly, particularly in the light of the evidence of specific court cases, to ensure that they will remain responsive and adequate to meet the need, and a review is now in fact underway in the light of the recent amalgamation of the medical social worker grade with the social worker grade in the Social Welfare Department.

Child abuse is a social problem in which every one of us as citizens can and should play a part, by reporting any case that he knows about. In October 1980 the Social Welfare Department established a hot-line on the telephone to facilitate, *inter alia*, voluntary reporting of suspected child abuse cases. The response has been encouraging and we will continue to do our best to publicize this service. The Police will of course act on any reports that are received and we will also move promptly through our case workers in family service centres operated either by the voluntary agencies or the Social Welfare Department.

Sir, I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION:—Sir, I am grateful to Dr. Henry HU for his remarks about the establishment of a second Polytechnic. A site of 12.2 hectares on Tat Chee Avenue has been selected and approved for this purpose. This site is very well placed, close by a major transport interchange, so that students will be able to attend conveniently from all parts of the territory. Under the chairmanship of Sir S. Y. CHUNG, the Planning Committee for the second polytechnic has made excellent progress; it has already announced an architectural competition for the design of the new polytechnic, and has made proposals for legislation and the conditions of service of staff. The Committee has also considered, in detail, the future course structure, the academic and administrative structure and the student profile of the new institution. The key post of Director has been advertised. This is an important step because the first Director will be expected to perform a major role in the planning of the new polytechnic. All this may sound like mere bureaucratic business to some people, but I know that Members of this Council will appreciate the importance of careful preparations for the launching of a major academic institution of this nature.

We are bringing our minds to the requirement for, and the appropriate characteristics of, a third tertiary institution at university level and an open university. Here our work is much less advanced, but we have these developments in mind and in view. We are also, as you, Sir, have stated, vigorously developing our two existing Universities and the Hong Kong Polytechnic. In addition, we are giving special attention to the financing of Baptist College and to its course structure.

The Government could not undertake these activities by itself. Institutions of higher education are extremely complex, even at the undergraduate level, and Governments are not equipped to understand their needs fully; we rely to a very considerable extent upon the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee for advice about the higher education system and appropriate developments within it. This Committee which provides expert and impartial advice to the Government, is without executive powers, and consists of distinguished local members with real knowledge of the local community and of overseas academic members from Britain, Australia and Canada. The Committee gives intensive study to University and Polytechnic financial requirements and reviews the need for developments in higher education as necessary.

This unique Committee is sometimes criticized for bulking too large in the decision making process of higher education and in being too heavily weighted with overseas members. I believe these criticisms to be wide of the mark. U.P.G.C. does look carefully at what the institutions propose but does not involve itself in the institutions' own governance. The U.P.G.C. assesses block grants but does not approve or even see detailed final budgets, much less interfere in teaching. The overseas members collectively bring great expertise to Hong Kong and the committee and its sub-committees meet frequently inside and outside Hong Kong. In the process, the local members acquire a working knowledge of academic affairs which they can then bring to bear upon Hong Kong affairs, which they already know well. The overseas members provide a necessary knowledge and impartiality. Our system of higher education institutions does not appear to be large enough as yet for local academic membership of U.P.G.C. to be tried successfully.

It would be a miracle, of course, if the institutions themselves were always entirely content with Government decisions based on U.P.G.C. advice and sometimes I have heard it said that they wish they could deal with the Government direct. In fact they do so on a number of reserved items, such as conditions of service, land grants and appointments to governing bodies. But there is, I know, a feeling in some quarters that it would be better to talk to the Government direct on every topic. Such persons cannot have the experience of negotiating with the Finance Branch of the Secretariat (*laughter*)! The standards of proof required before resources are approved and released are very stringent. The Government, by a self-denying ordinance, has agreed not to look behind the financial recommendations of U.P.G.C. and does not normally see the university and polytechnic proposals. There is no three-way argument!

There will always be those, of course, who believe that their favourite institution has the right to those funds for which it asks for its own purposes without any outside restriction or question. They will never be happy with any sensible public sector arrangements; these must provide for keeping within bounds the ambitions of individual institutions and for a degree of coordination between institutions of their activities. There is no way of providing beyond doubt what Universities and Polytechnics need; it is a matter of

judgement and it is informed and experienced judgement which U.P.G.C. provides. It is a judgement which is arrived at with some expense of pain. Committee members, both overseas and local, give generously of their time to their own inconvenience. However, like all persons in public life, they may be criticized and no doubt will be. I hope that I may have said something which will cause some critics to dry up and others to direct their attention more profitably elsewhere (*laughter*).

We, as a community, want good institutions of higher education with adequate freedom to get on with their job. At the same time we strongly disapprove of waste or misapplication of money. I am sure that our U.P.G.C. provides the organizational means to achieve these disparate ends.

I am most grateful to Mr. Allen LEE for his remarks about the Vocational Training Council. Since its beginning in February, the V.T.C. has, under the chairmanship of my Friend Mr. Francis TIEN, made remarkable strides. It has settled its own management structure and rules of procedure; it has reconstituted the complex of training boards and committees which lapsed with the former Hong Kong Training Council; it has seen to it that industrial training schemes turn into operational plans; and it has prepared its programme of activities for the three years from 1 April 1982. At the same time it has provided continuity of management for the existing technical institutes, so that there has been no disruption.

I understand that the planning is well advanced for the two new buildings needed to put into effect nine industrial training schemes and construction work could start early next year if funds are granted. Action is well advanced on another training scheme for graduate engineers to encourage those employers who now provide training for graduate engineers to do more, and to encourage other employers to make a useful start. Arrangements for training subsidies have been settled and information for employers and graduates is being prepared. Planning is in train for the new technical institutes at Tuen Mun and Sha Tin and the Council will shortly focus its attention on measures for making more intensive use of technical institutes.

Mrs. Selina CHOW points out that the demand for tertiary education is great, that present opportunities are limited but the potential is unlimited. I am grateful to her for these observations. They are entirely apt. The Government is not unmindful of these matters but requires to attend to items in turn in a businesslike way and I have, therefore, this afternoon given some account of recent activities intended to give impetus and direction to major works. I have, accordingly, foregone philosophical discussion of our broad intentions. I will, however, remind Members that substantial increases in student numbers at existing institutions of higher education are underway. Thus opportunities for students will markedly improve and the community will be served with a larger number of well-prepared graduates.

Sir, I support the motion.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:—Sir, I am glad that education is one of the major topics of this debate: with well over a million children in our schools it is proper that their welfare should be of such concern. I am grateful, therefore, to Miss BENNETT, Mrs. CHOW, Dr. IP and Mr. CHEONG for their comments on the education service, which is still growing rapidly in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is only right that we should continue to evaluate and debate our educational policies and their implementation to help ensure that the school system will be properly shaped and developed to meet the needs both of our children and of our community.

Miss BENNETT has expressed strong views on the standards of private independent schools with bought places and the need to do something about them. I can assure her that this is a matter to which the Education Department has always attached great importance. In many years, private independent schools receive the same treatment as Government and aided schools. Like public sector schools, they are served by our supervisory and advisory inspectors and can call on them for administrative and professional advice during school inspections and indeed at any other time. We provide in-service training and refresher courses for their teachers, who also have full access to our various teaching centres and our media production services unit. Private independent school teachers can, and do, participate in curriculum development activities and in devising new syllabuses and teaching strategies. When Educational Television was extended to secondary schools, television receivers and video recorders were provided free of charge to private schools with bought places, and E.T.V., which costs millions of dollars each year and which is to be expanded, brings free the expertise of specialists in English, Chinese, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science subjects into classrooms that particularly need them. This year, as part of our 'Language Package', we are also supplying these schools with a wire-free induction loop system to assist them in the teaching of languages and other subjects.

These are but some examples of the valuable day to day help the Education Department is providing for private independent schools with bought places. However, I fully appreciate that the key to improving the quality of education in private schools must be adequate salaries for the teachers of these schools, which is why we particularly reflect this when we approve increases of fees annually. We ensure that improvements in private independent school teachers' salaries match inflation and the percentage increase in the salaries of teachers in the public sector. In addition, we provide a margin which is sympathetically flexible to give teachers in private schools *more*, so that they will remain in the schools in which they are employed, and we do our utmost to enable schools to employ additional teachers. With those measures we need, of course, to ensure that too great a strain is not placed on parents because not all the places in private schools are bought places.

Arrangements for improving indirect Government financial assistance to private independent schools through the funding of bought places have been

discussed, agreed and welcomed by the various private school associations, whose representatives I meet every three months. These associations have also been advised of the control measures which the Department will take to ensure that the teachers will indeed receive the salary increases intended for them.

What I have outlined is not a dramatic new scheme, but it describes positive help to private schools for which we are seldom given credit. The circumstances of individual private schools are so different that it is neither feasible nor desirable to require all of them to conform to a single elaborate formula for financial assistance; but they should not be forgotten that following the publication of the 1978 White Paper on Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education, the Education Department invited private independent schools to turn non-profit-making and be upgraded to fully aided schools. To my disappointment, only *one* school took up the offer.

This brings me to our long term intentions and plans regarding bought places in private independent schools. As the last 39 schools in the approved Secondary School Building Programme of 130 new schools are completed over the next few years, it will be possible for us to phase out the bought places in the less satisfactory private independent schools. Consideration is now being given to an extension of the Building Programme which will enable us to make further headway in this direction. Meanwhile, it is my hope that the increased indirect financial assistance given to the private schools in the bought place scheme will be of some help in improving the quality of these schools which are either unwilling or unable to become fully aided. The development in this area will be closely monitored.

Another aspect of secondary education, the Junior Secondary Education Assessment systems, has been commented on by Mrs. CHOW. Here, I am pleased to report that the alleged adverse effects of the system were much less marked in the recently completed second cycle of the J.S.E.A. as teachers, students and parents became more familiar with its procedures. This year some 65% of those eligible qualified for public sector places in Form IV and 80% of these were in their own schools. I can only repeat the advice I gave Mrs. CHOW the last time she raised the subject in this Council: please do not communicate your fears to your children—they are less concerned by the J.S.E.A. than you are.

In the 1978 White Paper, subsidized Form IV—V education was not made universal, *not* because the Government wished to save money but because it was felt that some students could be better catered for in other educational institutions such as the Technical Institutes. I agree entirely with Mrs. CHOW that ideally such streaming of students should be done through choice on the part of the schools, the parents and the students. However, given the preference of most students and parents for academic senior secondary education, the J.S.E.A. is necessary and it is still the fairest means of selecting students for Form IV—V education. It goes without saying that a successful student is not obliged to take up the Form IV place offered if he gains admission to another post-Form III institution.

I should like to make two further points about the J.S.E.A. First, as I have said earlier, the Education Department, like Mrs. CHOW, also believes that self-selection is the best policy. For this reason, we have deliberately included careers and counselling as one of the specific areas in secondary schools which should be strengthened as they get their additional teachers. Second, I hope Mrs. CHOW will not mind if I say that her criticism of the first Annual Report of the J.S.E.A. is not quite fair. The report is no more than a review of the first J.S.E.A. cycle and is *not* the formal review which has been promised for 1983 when, amongst other things, the Hong Kong Certificate of Education results of the first cohort of J.S.E.A. students will be available.

Mrs. CHOW has also made a number of comments on pre-primary education. In general, I share her concern about the need to upgrade and regulate the standard of education for young children as quickly as possible. I readily acknowledge that because of the priority which had to be given to the development of primary and secondary education, we were not able to make an early start in the pre-primary area. Nevertheless our commitment has now been clearly indicated in the 1981 White Paper on Primary Education and Pre-Primary Services. I should like to assure Mrs. CHOW that if the developments of some of the White Paper appear to have been delayed, this is not because there is lack of a sense of urgency, but because we do not intend to sacrifice quality for initial speed. The lead time required for the various improvements, and the need for phasing, do not admit instant results, but the better services planned should materialize from the mid-1980s.

As to Mrs. CHOW's proposal for the early setting up of a special working group with unofficial input and participation to assess the entire area of pre-primary education, I have to say that two hardworking parties under a steering group chaired by the Secretary for Social Services did precisely this over a period of two years to produce a Green Paper, which all interested parties had ample opportunity to debate, before the production of the White Paper on Pre-primary and Primary Services in July 1981. Since then, and as I promised when this subject was last raised in this Council in July 1982, the Education Department has started a useful dialogue with six unofficial bodies with an interest in kindergarten education. These talks will be extended to include other interested bodies and parties and it is intended that regular consultative meetings will be held in future. Any proposals arising will continue to be processed in the interdepartmental standing committee which co-ordinates the work of the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department in supervising and servicing pre-primary education and care.

Dr. IP made reference to bisectionalism in primary schools. My comment is that while it would be unrealistic to plan for a complete reversion to whole day schooling at this stage, the 1981 White Paper has clearly stated our intention to encourage whole day operation in those schools where this is considered feasible and practicable. And in accordance with this in September 1982, 21 schools converted to whole day operation.

I turn now to Mr. CHEONG's comments on the new Primary One Admission System. He started by asking what is so fundamentally wrong with putting pressure on young children via entry examinations or tests. While I cannot disagree completely with his view that our existence is built upon our ability to compete, surely some regard must be paid to the age of the children who are put under the sort of competition and pressure that the new admission system seeks to minimize? Mrs. CHOW expressed worries about the pressures exerted by the J.S.E.A. on 15 year-olds, and Dr. IP reminded us, quite rightly, that we must not treat our children like miniature adults lest they grow up to be oversized children. Is Mr. CHEONG sure that he wants to impose, or reimpose, pressure and anxiety on *five* year-olds, and indeed on the *four* year-olds in kindergarten as well?

Mr. CHEONG then questioned whether under the new system, schools really have freedom to choose their students, pointing out that the filling of the discretionary places is subject to the points system. If we were to set aside the new admission system and consider for a moment what possible ways of selecting students were open to primary schools in the past, we might perhaps conclude that a school could either hold an entrance examination, or hold a lottery, or choose children from its neighbourhood, or choose children who have some connections with the school. If we agree that entrance examinations are undesirable and lotteries are unacceptable, the two remaining options are the only ones which are feasible. They were in fact the methods adopted by some schools up to the present. The principles underlying the Primary One Admission System, which is based on these two methods, are therefore not entirely new. I cannot claim that the system is perfect, but I can say that it has been finalized only after most careful consultation with all major schools councils, none of whom disagreed with the underlying principles of the new system although a number of very helpful comments was received on points of detail. Even now, comments on details continue to be made by the public. These are given careful consideration by my Department and will be taken into account in subsequent reviews of the new system.

Mr. CHEONG's next point concerned the freedom of parents to choose. My first comment is that while the new system may *appear* to have reduced the freedom of parents to choose, it does not necessarily follow that if the previous arrangements were reintroduced, parents would have a better chance of success in gaining admission to the school of their choice because of the competition of other parents who would also be free to apply. And we would be back to the situation where five year-olds were forced to queue up in front of one primary school after another to sit iniquitous entrance examinations, some of them of three hours duration. I am glad that parents have been deprived of the freedom to impose *this* on their children.

My other comment on the question of the freedom of parents to choose concerns Mr. CHEONG's proposal that those primary schools which he described as popular should be allowed to go private. I have to remind Mr. CHEONG that

popular primary schools do not consist solely of the schools he obviously has in mind. Within each New Town, for example, there are some schools which are very popular and well over-subscribed, and one would immediately be faced with the question whether these schools should be allowed to go private as well.

Technically, *any* aided school can go private so long as it complies with the conditions in the Code of Aid for withdrawing from subsidy. But is Mr. CHEONG *seriously* suggesting that we should deliberately aim at creating a two-tier educational system consisting of some schools for the wealthy and other schools for the rest? In my view, this approach, more than anything else, would represent the kind of interventionism that Mr. CHEONG deplors. The educational system of Hong Kong may not be perfect, but I have yet to hear complaints that our schools are turning away children simply because they are not wealthy enough. In fact, I believe that many members of our community, including those of the ‘sandwiched society’, have started from rather humble backgrounds, to progress successfully in life after a good education in a good school and through hard work. I think it would be a great pity if the educational system were deprived of its ability to generate and provide opportunity for the social mobility which has helped to make Hong Kong such a success.

These considerations aside, I do not think many schools will be keen to go private. It may interest Mr. CHEONG to know that since the Primary One Admission System was announced, I have not received a single application from aided primary schools to go private although the possibility has been the subject of occasional public comment. What is perhaps even more significant is that during the same period, I have rather unexpectedly received as many as 16 applications from private non-profit-making primary schools to turn fully aided.

Having said all this, I take fully Mr. CHEONG’s point that schools in the public sector are not, and probably will never be, homogeneous. Yet I think as a matter of policy we must aim to narrow rather than widen gaps, and we must aim to level *upwards* and not *downwards*. I am very grateful to Mr. CHEONG for highlighting the challenges facing us. In the context of these challenges, the comments and counsel of Mrs. CHOW on the quality of pre-primary education, Dr. IP on primary education and Miss BENNETT on secondary education are particularly relevant and valuable. To echo my opening statement, this debate has, I think, focussed attention on the fact that we must have consistent long term strategies and pragmatic shorter term implementation plans in our efforts to shape and develop the school system to meet the needs both of our children and of our community, now and in the future. The stakes are too high for us to do anything less.

With these remarks, Sir, I am happy to support the motion.

4.05 p.m.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—At this point Members might like a short break. Council will accordingly resume in fifteen minutes.

4.20 p.m.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—Council will resume.

SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION:—Sir, I am grateful to Dr. HUANG, Mr. HU, Mr. YEUNG, Mr. BROWN and Miss TAM for their interest in District Administration and for their advice.

District Administration is not new to Hong Kong. There have been District Officers in the New Territories since the turn of the century and in Hong Kong and Kowloon since 1968. It has, thus, been a part of the consultative network of Government for a long time but it needed renewal and reform and a more systematic and less patchy framework in which to operate. It needed to move into the nineteen eighties and it needed to move quickly to keep pace with the speed with which Hong Kong itself is changing. And, above all, it needed the close support and involvement of the people.

In the New Territories, for example, we knew we had to be ready to greet the seven thousand people who are moving into Sha Tin every month this year, and in even greater numbers in the years to come, with something more sophisticated than your ‘friendly District Officer’. But, quite separately from the new town building programme, parts of the older urban areas were changing rapidly. A moment’s reflection will show that Western, Eastern and Southern Hong Kong are totally changed today from the Hong Kong of the sixties. Then again we have, as Dr. HUANG has pointed out, a much better educated society than ten years ago, with secondary education for all, eleven thousand students at the Universities, another eleven thousand full-time equivalents at the Polytechnic, thousands at other institutions and thousands returning to Hong Kong from institutes of higher learning overseas.

It was for these reasons that a brief experiment with a specialized Advisory Committee in Tsuen Wan in 1976 was extended to the whole of the New Territories in 1977. The spontaneity and vigour with which the local community in the New Territories responded to this limited initiative was clear evidence of the timeliness and constructive value of the measures introduced. With the support and advice of Executive Council and this Council, we moved, in a little over two years, from Green Paper to White Paper, to the enactment of legislation, the establishment of District Boards, the holding of elections in eighteen Districts and the appointment of unofficial and official members. I cannot accept Dr. HUANG’s admonition that we are ‘dreadfully conservative, and slow and loathe to make progress’!

It is not a paradox, as Mr. YEUNG suggests, that I, who he flatteringly describes as your ‘most important adviser in matters concerning the daily lives of the public’, have no direct executive authority to deal with them. It is not an oversight that the District Boards themselves have no executive power. This is not the way Hong Kong works. Hong Kong is too small to be divided into a number of warring kingdoms continually at loggerheads with the central

Government, each pursuing locally decided policies, each with its own revenue and public works programme. The power of the District Boards lies in the strength and accuracy of their advice to the central Government of Hong Kong and in their ability to convey in the other direction the decisions of the Government taken in the light of that advice. As for the platforms of opinion, which Dr. HUANG mentions, there are 385 of these platforms, that is to say Advisory Committees covering every conceivable activity, and they, in addition to the District Boards, amount to a fairly formidable edifice. There will no doubt be differences of opinion, but we establish, by these channels of communication, a consensus. And that is what gives us our strength, because, by its nature, a consensus commands broad support and is removed from the political arena. And a consensus arrived at by consultation certainly provides a sound basis for sound decisions. There are plenty of examples throughout history of governments that have ignored the consultative process to their great and evident regret.

This is why, Sir, the District Boards are not a 'fraud' as it is reported they were described last week. The Boards have been criticized, too, because they are not wholly elected. Let me defend the appointed members: they are there because of their special skills or knowledge or because of the contribution they are already making to the life of the district. Their expertise will be extremely valuable at this time. As for the elected members, the people of Hong Kong are not easily deceived and that is why a quarter of a million people turned out to vote in the elections in September. The people were ready for change and the change has been made.

These last few weeks have seen District Board members touring their Districts and expressing their dissatisfaction with problems which are all too prevalent in our city. These problems cannot be cured immediately, but the District Boards supported by the Management Committee of departmental representatives, who have the executive authority for which Mr. YEUNG is looking and are answerable to the Boards, can now give local execution to their resolutions.

Following this line of thought, Miss TAM has asked whether District Boards can contribute towards integrating recent immigrants into the fabric of society. The Wong Tai Sin Board has already investigated this and executive action has been taken to further this objective. If these problems are significant in other districts similar steps will be taken.

Sir, next March, seven hundred thousand people have the right to vote for their candidates in the Urban Council elections. This is also an integral part of the reform of district administration. This, too, is not a fraud and a deception. The Urban Council has a vital role to play in the day-to-day management of our city. The link with the work of the District Boards is an obvious one, and this is recognized in the seats the Urban Councillors will occupy on the Boards. I hope this message will get across to the voters in the urban area, and that they give these elections the same enthusiastic support which they gave to the District Boards.

Finally, Sir, Mr. BROWN said that the District Boards should be seen only as a first step towards the greater involvement of the people in the decision-making process. Dr. HUANG, too, before the dust of the District Board elections had settled, was suggesting further constitutional change. So far as the District Boards are concerned, we must, please, be allowed a brief period of consolidation and now allow the Boards to get on with their job.

The Boards cover the whole Territory; they have a wide ambit to advise on matters affecting the well-being of the people; they are in touch with hundreds of thousands, indeed millions of our people. They draw the people together. They will make their contribution to the stability and prosperity and good government of Hong Kong.

Sir, I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS:—

Air Pollution

I am obliged to descend from the heights of philosophy to the mundane problem of pollution in order to acknowledge Mr. LO's contribution as Chairman of the U.M.E.L.C.O. group dealing with the Air Pollution Control Bill. The subject is not only technically quite complicated, it involves the reconciliation of conflicting interests. This reconciliation is essential for it is not enough simply to enact law, or even to have powerful enforcement. Pollution control depends much more on co-operation than enforcement. This co-operation will only be forthcoming if the control measures are seen to be reasonable. So Mr. LO is fully justified when he says it takes time to get the law right.

In the meantime major undertakings with great potential for serious pollution have been designed to minimize it. The coal furnaces at Tap Shek Kok and Lamma Island have been in action for some months and our environmental scientists are very pleased with the environmental control systems built into the design. No doubt we shall hear more of all this when the Bill returns to this Council.

Freedom of the Press

Mr. LOBO and Mr. BROWN referred in passing to the role of the news media in forming opinion on speculation about the future.

Mr. BROWN suggested that the reporting of casual comment overseas contributed to uneasiness. This sort of reporting is difficult. I have in the past read with pleasure prominent headlines in Hong Kong papers which seemed to suggest that during some obscure parliamentary debate in Westminster the whole house had echoed to cheers for Hong Kong. I had in fact been present on the occasion in an almost empty gallery looking at an almost empty chamber. Equally, anonymous interviews and reports from undisclosed sources about every imaginable option on our future have sometimes been given a prominence scarcely justified by the significance of the original event. The emphasis given to

such stories is decided by editorial judgement. In Hong Kong this judgement is exercised by the paper's editorial staff. If they get it right they will prosper. If they get it wrong often enough they will get fired. While we can, as Mr. LOBO has done and as I do now, urge restraint from over-dramatization or sensationalization, the Government is in no position to dictate what emphasis the media should adopt.

Nor I am sure would any Member wish to find himself in a society where the Government was able to do so.

People in the public eye have a love hate relationship with the media. We love them when they portray us as wide, far-seeing, considerate and conscientious. We hate them when we are attacked as foolish, short sighted, selfish and unscrupulous, particularly when we think they have done little or no homework. We tend to describe them as responsible when they back our causes: and irresponsible if they say what we would rather not hear (*laughter*).

The fact is that neither the reporters nor the reported on are infallible. Assessment of the value of the news media must be based on their long term performance day in and day out, on their balance in reporting of events, and on the standard of their commentary.

By these standards Hong Kong is remarkably well served.

The best of our news media bear comparison with those anywhere else both for coverage of local events, especially for their coverage of world news, and for the often high calibre of their commentaries. Of course the standard is uneven but I doubt if their abundance and breadth of political sympathy is available to any other community of five million people. Some 45 morning papers and ten evening papers are published every day. Our radio and television networks broadcast 229 news bulletins daily. 423 periodicals are produced here. The output is enormous and the appetite for it seems insatiable.

Not every one agrees with everything that is said—indeed such a variety of views is published that it would require a mind of remarkable dexterity to do so—but the media themselves give a great deal of time and space to almost anyone who has anything to say. There are ample opportunities to answer back in phone in programmes on the radio and in letters to the editor.

We take all this for granted. We feel righteous indignation when we are affronted and satisfaction when we are applauded. But we seldom pause to reflect that that the colour and variety of our news and comment spring directly from the freedom of a highly competitive press. We do wrong to take this for granted. There are a great many places where such freedom is not to be found. Hong Kong would be a very much duller and more dangerous and unstable a place without it. We may not need to be so dramatic as Voltaire when he said 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.' Just occasionally though it is worth recalling the old man's words.

Sir, I support the motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY:—

Introduction

Sir, reflecting the wide-ranging scope of your Address opening the current session of this Council, Unofficial Members have dwelt upon some 35 different subjects of concern, although several subjects, normally hardy annuals, such as transport, land production, environmental protection, culture and recreation and equal rights for women, were barely mentioned. I would like to think that this reflects Members' general satisfaction with our efforts in these areas. In winding up the debate on this motion of thanks, it falls to me to deal with the role of Unofficial Members, the consultative process, the organization of the Government's internal administration and Hong Kong's future.

Prisoners of War

But, with your permission, Sir, I should like to begin by referring to the controversy which has recently surrounded the Government's treatment of those who were P.O.W.s in Hong Kong during the war. This subject was not raised in this debate but, in view of the petitions received in support of a campaign for pensions for all P.O.W.s as of right, I think Members would wish to know that Your Excellency called for a review of the papers. A senior officer without previous involvement in the subject, was detached from his normal duties and assigned to this task.

The officer concerned completed his task over a month ago and he came to six main conclusions. The *first* was that pensions payable to ex-P.O.W.s or their dependents under the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions Ordinance in respect of disability or death are paid at the same rates and on the same conditions as applicable to members of Her Majesty's regular forces. The *second* conclusion was that medical treatment available to P.O.W.s living here compares favourably with that in the United Kingdom. The *third* conclusion was that, although it was the concern of the Government of the day that charitable funds set up after the war should benefit all who suffered personal injury as a result of the Japanese occupation and not just P.O.W.s, it is the latter who have been among the main beneficiaries of the War Memorial and Far Eastern Relief Funds. At current levels, the grants paid by these funds to beneficiaries are much higher than those available through the local public assistance scheme, and are fair and reasonable in relation to average presentday household incomes in Hong Kong. The *fourth* conclusion was that the medical considerations brought to light in the Richardson Report on former Canadian P.O.W.s of the Japanese have been fully taken into account. They contributed to the special arrangements introduced in 1977 for medical treatment of P.O.W.s living here and to the extension of the scope of the War Memorial Fund Ordinance in 1979 whereby the benefits of the Fund were extended to cover P.O.W.s who were incapacitated, but without their having to prove that their condition was directly attributable to their captivity. The *fifth* conclusion reached was that, by using most of the money realized by the sale of

Japanese assets for community projects, particularly the endowment of the University of Hong Kong, rather than by distributing it equally among P.O.W.s, the Government of the day did not intend any slight on the P.O.W.s' services. The Government simply recognized that, in Hong Kong, their particular suffering could not be fairly distinguished from that of the rest of the community. Since neither equal nor fair allocation of the money to all who had suffered was possible, it was decided to use it for the long term benefit of the community, which decision had public support at the time. The *final* conclusion was that, although the Canadian Government now pays compensation at disability pension rates to all former Canadian P.O.W.s of the Japanese, including members of Commonwealth and Allied forces domiciled in Canada at the time of their enlistment, there is no case for Hong Kong to change its policy of paying pensions only to those assessed as disabled during service or to the widows and orphans of those killed. The basis for this conclusion was that it would be invidious to make a distinction between Hong Kong's P.O.W.s and the civilian population which also suffered grievously as a result of the war for Hong Kong, unlike Canada, was actually occupied by the enemy.

However, although it is not considered that there is any case for pensions as of right to be paid to all P.O.W.s, the Government and the community as a whole have always recognized a special debt to those who served Hong Kong loyally during the war, including the P.O.W.s. The Hong Kong War Memorial Fund was established to ensure that all who were incapacitated and in need should be adequately provided for. The Fund has an independent committee comprising leading citizens appointed by the Governor who themselves experienced war time suffering or have knowledge of our war victims. The Government has full confidence that this Committee is, and will continue to be, generous in their determination of grants and allowances payable to P.O.W.s and other eligible beneficiaries. The Government has, of course, guaranteed that the War Memorial Fund Committee will always have the means to pay such grants and allowances.

In this connection, as at 1 October 1982 the assets of the Fund stood at just under \$19 million. Its estimated annual income is about \$2 million and annual outlay, at current rates, is of the order of \$3.6 million. On the basis of these figures, it will be some years before the Fund will need to call on the Government's guarantee.

Sir, apart from the main conclusions reached by the officer assigned by you to this task, a number of points of detail also emerged which the Government will bring to the attention of the War Memorial Fund Committee for their further consideration. In addition, it was noted that no formal appeals procedure existed under the Volunteer and Naval Volunteer Pensions Ordinance. Your Excellency has therefore decided that you will consider petitions in individual cases, and in appropriate cases you will seek the advice of Executive Council.

Sir, I sincerely hope that the review which you personally ordered, and the attention which has been given by Executive Council to the conclusions, will

satisfy those concerned that all that can reasonably be done for our P.O.W.s is actually being done; and that the somewhat distressing controversy that has surrounded this subject recently will now be closed.

Legislative Council and the Role of Unofficials

I turn now to the working party set up to review the Standing Orders, conventions and practices of this Council in order to improve procedures and to reflect more clearly the contributions made by Unofficial Members to the making of new legislation. Like Mr. LOBO I am taking a personal interest in the activities of this working party. It is chaired by the Director, Councils and Administration Branch, and its members include the Law Draftsman, who has been concerned with the Standing Orders of legislatures in several territories, the Secretary-General of the U.M.E.L.C.O. Office, who is well placed to represent the views of Unofficial Members, and the Clerk of Councils and the Deputy Clerk of Councils, both of whom have considerable experience of the workings of this Council.

A number of areas have been identified in which there may be scope for more effective use to be made of the existing Standing Orders, without the need for any major amendments. For example, the provisions dealing with adjournment debates and select committees could be invoked to greater effect, which may or may not cover what Mr. YEUNG had in mind. Some necessary minor amendments to Standing Orders have also been suggested.

When the working party has completed its review, which should be within the next few weeks, I shall immediately discuss its recommendations with Mr. LOBO, with a view to deciding what further action should be taken on them.

To allay any misconceptions, I should just interpolate here that the scope of this review was never intended to go beyond the procedures followed by this Council in its meetings. It certainly was not intended to cover the constitution of, or appointment of Members to, this Council, which are matters prescribed in the Royal Instructions; and it is not proposed to recommend any changes to them at this time.

I must say that I am personally attracted by Mr. LO's interesting—not to say quite imaginative—suggestion that, in due course, the old Supreme Court building should be converted to provide a Council Chamber and offices and perhaps even the U.M.E.L.C.O. Office and common rooms. The Supreme Court building could have a renewed lease of life if adapted to these purposes and, as an architect, the Secretary for Lands and Works is quite seized with the idea (*laughter*). But there are other factors which will have to be taken into account and so I cannot offer more than a cautious and personally enthusiastic response until they have been evaluated and Executive Council consulted.

The Consultative Process

The Secretary for City and New Territories Administration has dealt with the role the Government sees for the district boards in the District Administration

Scheme and their advisory role generally. The review of functional—or subject-oriented—advisory boards and committees to which you referred, Sir, in your Address has now been put in train. This review will be completed within the next three months or so. All heads of Secretariat branches and heads of departments have been asked to give the most careful consideration to both the terms of reference and the membership of these three hundred and more boards and committees, with a view to ensuring that they reflect current conditions in Hong Kong and are so composed as to be able to provide sound and relevant advice to the Government. I have no difficulty in agreeing with Dr. HUANG that these boards and committees should have a ‘... meaningful and effective role’ and with Miss TAM that, in due course, we should be able to look to district boards for recruits for some of these subject-oriented boards and committees.

Government Organization

Sir, in your Address, you referred to some of the major changes which have been made to the organization of Government’s internal administration during the past year or so. You also emphasized that we must continue with our efforts to adapt the central government organization in order to meet changing circumstances and to develop a more responsive and coherent relationship between the Secretariat and departments.

As part of this continuing process, in 1981 we replaced the former Environment Branch, which had become far too large and cumbersome, by the Lands and Works Branch and the Transport Branch; we established the Education Branch; and we merged the Home Affairs Department and the New Territories Administration into a new single territory-wide department, namely, the City and New Territories Administration. At the same time, the Home Affairs Branch, which relinquished responsibility for the Home Affairs Department, took over the functions of the former Information Branch and responsibility for environmental affairs. The Recreation and Culture Division of the Home Affairs Branch also became a department in its own right.

During 1982, we have split up two major ‘federal’ departments, the Public Works Department and the Trade, Industry and Customs Department, and thus ended what had become rather awkward working relationships between them and policy branches in the Secretariat. In place of the Public Works Department, we created five autonomous departments, i.e. the Building Development Department, the New Territories Development Department, the Water Supplies Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and the Engineering Development Department (less traffic engineering, which was transferred to the Transport Department). At the same time a new Lands Department was set up, with territory-wide responsibilities for land administration, surveys, and town planning, which functions were previously split between the Crown Lands and Survey Office of the Public Works Department and the old New Territories Administration.

In place of the Trade, Industry and Customs Department, we created three separate departments, the Trade Department, the Industry Department and the Customs and Excise Department. Concurrently we established a new policy branch, the Trade and Industry Branch, in the Secretariat and transferred responsibilities in these two areas of trade and industry to this new branch from the Economic Services Branch. The Trade and Industry Branch also has housekeeping responsibilities for the Customs and Excise Department, but policy responsibilities are shared between this Branch (in respect of trade controls), the Security Branch (in respect of anti-contraband activities) and the Finance Branch (in respect of revenue protection duties). Also, as part of this exercise, the directorate level staff of the former Trade, Industry and Customs Department were merged into the Administrative Service. At the same time, the Councils and Administration Branch took over responsibility for the Hong Kong Government Office in London and for the overseas trade offices in Brussels, Washington and Geneva, which consequently assumed the status of Hong Kong Government Offices.

Again, during 1982, a new Technical Education and Industrial Training Department was formed, under the policy direction of the Secretary for Education, to take over responsibility in these fields from the Education and Labour Departments respectively, and to act as the executive arm of the newly established statutory Vocational Training Council.

At the same time, there has been a fairly continuous process of reforming and recasting the internal organization of branches and departments; and this is still going on. So much for what we have done during the past two years. I shall now describe what we plan to do in the very near future in order to achieve more appropriate groupings of policy programmes and a better balance of responsibilities between policy branches in the Secretariat.

First, I should like to refer to Dr. FANG's suggestions that thought should be given to the creation of a Secretary for Health to oversee the development of our medical and health services and his firm suggestion that the post should be filled by a medically qualified person. Both suggestions were, I think, supported by Miss BENNETT and Dr. IP. There can be no doubt about the range and complexity of the administrative problems connected with our health and medical services. The scope and depth of these services have been graphically described this afternoon by the Secretary for Social Services and the Director of Medical and Health Services. But, as a matter of principle, I am not in favour of creating a new Secretary to deal with policy matters for a single programme area which is also handled by a head of department of equal seniority, as this tends to lead to a duplication of effort and confusion over respective responsibilities. Nor would I consider it essential for a professionally qualified officer to fill such a post, even if it was created although, consistent with the policy of opening up all directorate level posts to members of departmental cadres as well as the Administrative Service, there would be no reason why it should *not* be.

Having said that, I accept that our medical and health services do deserve more attention at the highest policy level; and this will be done by removing responsibility for rehabilitation and labour matters from the present Secretary for Social Services and re-titling his post as Secretary for Health and Welfare. At the same time, responsibility for environmental protection and environmental hygiene, subjects which are closely associated with the health of the community, will be transferred to the new Secretary for Health and Welfare from the Secretary for Home Affairs. Thus the schedule of responsibilities of the new Secretary for Health and Welfare will become medical and health services (including public health), social welfare (including child welfare) and environmental affairs (both protection and hygiene).

Secondly, and consequential to this change, the Secretary for Education will take over responsibility for rehabilitation and labour matters from the Secretary for Social Services; and he will consequently be re-titled Secretary for Education and Manpower. So his schedule of responsibilities will be broadened to cover all levels and types of education, i.e. to say kindergarten, primary, secondary, tertiary (including the U.P.G.C.), technical education and industrial training (including the Vocational Training Council), rehabilitation (including special education for handicapped children, referred to by Miss BENNETT, as well as the training of the disabled) and finally labour matters. As there are close links between education, rehabilitation, industrial training and employment, this new schedule should also result in a more appropriate and effective grouping of policy responsibilities.

Thirdly, the Secretary for Home Affairs, as a result of passing over responsibility for environmental affairs to the new Secretary for Health and Welfare, will be able to devote more attention to some of his other responsibilities, particularly those relating to information and public relations and the monitoring of public opinion. He will also be able to pay more attention to identifying people of the right calibre and experience to man our ever developing network of advisory boards and committees.

Fourthly, the Secretary for City and New Territories Administration will be re-titled Secretary for District Administration, in order to be consistent with the recent standardization of the titles of district staff throughout the urban areas and the New Territories, but his schedule of responsibilities will remain unchanged. His constant pre-occupation will, of course, be the nurturing of the district board system and he, together with the Secretary for Home Affairs, will be concerned with resolving any immediate interface problems which may arise between district boards and the various subject-oriented advisory boards and committees, or between the Urban Council and the district boards. In the longer term, the Secretary for District Administration will eventually be concerned with any modifications to the District Administration Scheme which may be indicated by experience and longer term interface problems.

Finally, there is now an obvious case for having a multi-purpose presence in the United States and Europe as well as in the United Kingdom. Accordingly, it

has been decided to expand, and upgrade the level of, our representation in the United States by opening a new office in New York. The officer in charge will be known as the Hong Kong Trade Commissioner in the United States. His responsibilities will include keeping under review commercial and economic developments in the United States, which may affect Hong Kong's interests, in concert of course, with the Counsellor (Hong Kong Commercial Affairs) in Washington; controlling and co-ordinating the various activities the Hong Kong Government undertakes directly in the United States; he will be concerned with maintaining contact with the offices of the Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourist Association in the United States; and he will be concerned with disseminating information about Hong Kong and establishing personal contacts with individuals and organizations with a view to improving Hong Kong's image throughout the United States. The officer selected to fill this post is Mr. W. DORWARD who will take up this appointment in April next year. The expansion of the present role of our Brussels Office, which is already headed up by an officer with the diplomatic rank of Minister, will follow later on.

The reorganization of the Secretariat will become effective as soon as possible and a working group under the chairmanship of the Director, Councils and Administration Branch is now working out all the detailed arrangements relating to schedules of business, staffing, accommodation and official membership of advisory and administrative committees (and I must say I would like to see some pruning here), subject to one over-riding proviso that there is to be no net increase in staff as a result of these changes.

Other changes will undoubtedly become necessary fairly soon. For instance, it may be necessary to create a small unit within the Secretariat, probably attached to the Councils and Administration Branch, at least initially, and responsible directly to the Chief Secretary, to co-ordinate the use of Government's scientific and technical resources, (excluding those in the engineering and medical fields), in a more efficient and effective manner.

A development of immediate interest, although one which is quite separate from those which I have just described, is the creation of a new post of Secretary (General Duties) located in the Chief Secretary's Office, to provide support and assistance to you, Sir, and myself in dealing with additional work arising from the talks on the future of Hong Kong. As Members will have seen from the press release and Gazette Notice published last Friday, the officer appointed to fill this post is Mr. L. M. DAVIES, who will not now be going to the post of Commissioner for Narcotics as previously announced. The new Commissioner for Narcotics will be Mr. G. L. MORTIMER.

Associated with the re-organization of policy branch schedules which I have described, but also very necessary in its own right, a short and medium-term postings plot has been developed on the basis of the general principle that there is an optimum period for service in any post, particularly a senior one; and regard in developing this plot has been had to the open directorate concept and

the importance of making the administrativization of the directorate staff of the former Trade, Industry and Customs Department a reality by cross-postings. All these postings will be announced in a series of press statements and internal circulars, in due course.

Future of Hong Kong

Understandably, for it is such a vital subject, many Members devoted a great deal of attention to the question of the future in their interventions in this debate. They did so with a strong sense of responsibility, realizing that it is also a sensitive subject. As Members bring to this Council a profound knowledge of the concerns and aspirations of this community, I can assure them that their advice will not go unheeded.

As you, Sir, said in your Address, meetings have begun in Peking to follow up the Prime Minister's discussions with Chinese leaders. I have no doubt that this diplomatic endeavour reflects, in Dr. HO Kam-fai's words, the desire of the two Governments 'to settle the Hong Kong issue as soon as possible'. I am grateful for the restraint shown by Members in recognizing that the talks must remain confidential. Mr. LO, for example, referred to 'the necessity for confidentiality at this stage.' But I can assure Members that, when there is something which can be said about the content of the talks, or about Hong Kong participation in them, statements will be released, Executive Council, of course, being informed beforehand. If the timing permits, these statements will take the form of public announcements made in this Chamber, for I take Mr. BROWN's point that this is 'the correct and proper place' for developments about the future to be made known publicly.

Miss DUNN maintained that 'Hong Kong people accept that the issues to be resolved are (necessarily) complex' and argued that 'they can be relied upon to follow the course of the talks ... calmly', *provided* 'they feel confident that their interests and wishes are taken into account'. I can assure Members that it will be the constant endeavour of Her Majesty's Government to do just that. Meanwhile, nothing is to be gained by an unmerited crisis in confidence, particularly if the causative factors are speculative expressions of personal views. Almost every day, we read hearsay stories in the press about what the position of one side or the other may be; and sometimes there is much circumstantial detail. Such stories have an unsettling effect even though on occasions they have no basis in fact; so I would caution people against believing all that they read or hear. Rumour so often feeds on itself. To quote Mr. SWAINE: 'The danger is that people will worry themselves into a crisis'; or, as Dr. HO Kam-fai put it: 'Nervousness and panic are contagious'. We must not allow that contagion to spread. Instead, we should bear Mr. CHAN Kam-chuen's advice in mind: 'the only *true* information will be the *official* announcements made from time to time arising from the *official* Sino-British talks on our future'.

I believe the people of Hong Kong will look at the situation as it unfolds in its proper context. They will recall the joint statement issued after the Prime

Minister's meeting with Chairman DENG Xiaoping. This referred to the discussions with Chinese leaders which had taken place 'in a friendly atmosphere' and announced the agreement reached 'to enter talks through diplomatic channels, following the visit, with the common aim of maintaining the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong'. No-one should underestimate the significance of that common objective.

You said in your Address, Sir, that, given the common objective, you shared the Prime Minister's belief that the differences between the two sides could be reconciled and that an agreement could be reached which would be acceptable to the British and Chinese Governments and which would be welcomed by the people of Hong Kong. Mr. CHAN Kam-chuen gave us a timely reminder of some of the reasons for faith in the outcome of the talks in Peking. Pre-eminent amongst them is the overwhelming mutual interest of all concerned in the continuing prosperity and stability of this place. If that prosperity and that stability were to be undermined no-one would benefit here or elsewhere.

As Mr. WONG Lam rightly pointed out, the key to continuing prosperity is confidence. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines confidence, which is a mental attitude, as 'firm trust, assured expectation'. Translated into Hong Kong terms, confidence in the future involves having an expectation that familiar, predictable and well tried socio-economic and legal systems will not be disturbed, for they have been the framework within which Hong Kong has emerged as a modern, diversified economy, a major force in world trade and a financial centre of global significance.

We should also retain a sense of historical perspective. Dr. Rayson HUANG noted that 'we have lived with and triumphed over economic and political uncertainty before'. Miss DUNN reminded us that 'during the past 40 years our stability and prosperity have been threatened and, indeed, impaired, on many occasions'. Yet those qualities which distinguish Hong Kong people has ensured our survival.

Steady nerves will be required of all of us over the coming months. And we must all work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust. The Government will play its part in developing such an atmosphere through the consultative system and, particularly, by working in close concert with Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils.

Meanwhile, as you said, Sir, the Government will continue to 'invest vigorously in the future of Hong Kong and its people'. I need not add to what the Financial Secretary has said in elaboration of that theme. I shall only reiterate that this Government cares for the people of Hong Kong from wherever, and whenever, they have come here. In Mr. LOBO's words 'nothing that is happening has taken away from us the will and the duty to improve the living and working conditions of all classes in our community'. So I would conclude by echoing Miss DUNN: 'this whole community is engaged in, and committed to, a common enterprise which is to see this city of ours safely

through this present phase in its history'. I echo these words for it is the Government's firm intention that Hong Kong shall remain, as a free society, a desirable, rewarding, and challenging place to live and work in.

Sir, I beg to move.

Question put and agree to.

VALEDICTORY TO MR. L. M. DAVIES

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—Honourable Members, before adjourning this sitting I would like to pay tribute to the services of Mr. Lewis DAVIES who has just retired from this Council after more than eight years membership as Secretary for Security. I would like to put on record my appreciation, and I am sure it is the Council's appreciation, of his outstandingly loyal and valuable services in this Council.

As you have recently heard Mr. DAVIES has now taken up an appointment as Secretary (General Duties), and so we shall still have the benefit of his wide experience for some time to come. I am grateful to him that he has so willingly agreed to postpone a well earned retirement from the public service to continue in that service.

Mr. LOBO:—Sir, the Unofficial Members would wish to be associated with the warm and well deserved tribute which Your Excellency has paid to Mr. DAVIES.

His period of office, as the Government's chief spokesman on security affairs, has seen some momentous events. While it is difficult to single out any specific crisis; illegal immigration and the influx of Vietnamese refugees are but the two that spring immediately to mind.

Over the period of his loyal and dedicated service as Secretary for Security, Mr. DAVIES has spent many hours with us inside and outside this Council, answering our queries and examining problems with us.

He has brought to our deliberations and to this Council eloquence, courage, dedication and unfailing patience.

On behalf of my Unofficial Colleagues, may I wish Mr. DAVIES every success in his new role, and we extend to both he and Mrs. DAVIES every good wish for the future.

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, 24 November 1982.

Adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes past five o'clock.