

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Wednesday, 25 May 1988****The Council met at half-past Two o'clock****PRESENT**HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)

SIR DAVID CLIVE WILSON, K.C.M.G.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF SECRETARY

MR. DAVID ROBERT FORD, K.B.E., L.V.O., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

MR. PIERS JACOBS, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

MR. JEREMY FELL MATHEWS, J.P.

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE HU FA-KUANG, O.B.E., J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE DONALD LIAO POON-HUAI, C.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-CHUEN, O.B.E., J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, O.B.E., J.P.

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

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE HENRIETTA IP MAN-HING, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YING-LUN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS. RITA FAN HSU LAI-TAI, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS. PAULINE NG CHOW MAY-LIN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE PETER POON WING-CHEUNG, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KIM CHAM YAU-SUM, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN WALTER CHAMBERS, O.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE CHENG HON-KWAN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, C.B.E., J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE CHIU HIN-KWONG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHUNG PUI-LAM

THE HONOURABLE THOMAS CLYDESDALE, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HO SAI-CHU, M.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE HUI YIN-FAT
THE HONOURABLE RICHARD LAI SUNG-LUNG
DR. THE HONOURABLE CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING
THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, Q.C., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE DESMOND LEE YU-TAI
THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, J.P.
THE HONOURABLE LIU LIT-FOR, J.P.
THE HONOURABLE NGAI SHIU-KIT, O.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE POON CHI-FAI
PROF. THE HONOURABLE POON CHUNG-KWONG
THE HONOURABLE HELMUT SOHMEN
THE HONOURABLE SZETO WAH
THE HONOURABLE TAI CHIN-WAH
THE HONOURABLE MRS. ROSANNA TAM WONG YICK-MING
THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG
DR. THE HONOURABLE DANIEL TSE, O.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WONG WANG-FAT
THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, M.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE GRAHAM BARNES, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS
THE HONOURABLE RONALD GEORGE BLACKER BRIDGE, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER
THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL LEUNG MAN-KIN, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT
THE HONOURABLE EDWARD HO SING-TIN, J.P.
THE HONOURABLE GEOFFREY THOMAS BARNES, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY
THE HONOURABLE PETER TSAO KWANG-YUNG, C.P.M., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE MARIA TAM WAI-CHU, O.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE YEUNG PO-KWAN, O.B.E., C.P.M., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE JACKIE CHAN CHAI-KEUNG
THE HONOURABLE PANG CHUN-HOI, M.B.E.

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR. LAW KAM-SANG

Papers

The following papers were laid on the table pursuant to Standing Order 14(2):

Subject *L.N.No.*

Subsidiary Legislation:

Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance Hawker (Urban Council) (Amendment) By-laws 1988.....	146/88
Shipping and Port Control Ordinance Shipping and Port Control Ordinance (Exemption) (No.2) Notice 1988.....	147/88

Sessional Paper 1987-88:

No. 62—Report of the Police Complaints Committee 1987

Address by Member presenting paper**Report of the Police Complaints Committee 1987**

DR. TSE: Sir, on behalf of both the old and the new Police Complaints Committee, may I table the committee's annual report for 1987.

The committee is an independent monitoring group first appointed by Your Excellency's predecessor in early 1986 to take over the work previously performed by the former UMELCO Police Group. It comprises one chairman and two vice-chairmen, all drawn from the OMELCO, and nine Justices of the Peace, with the Attorney General as the only official representative on the committee. I feel honoured to have been appointed chairman by you, Sir, in January this year to succeed Mr. S.L.CHEN.

The year 1987 was one of further consolidation and development of the work the committee had undertaken in 1986. The committee, through the support of an independent secretariat, had been able to vet in detail each and every complaint case processed by the Complaints Against the Police Office of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force. During the year under report, the committee had examined a total of 3 997 complaint cases, embracing 6 117 allegations. During the process of vetting these complaint cases, the committee had also proposed a number of reviews of, and changes to police practices, procedures and instructions with a view to improving the overall effectiveness of the complaints system and helping the Commissioner of Police in identifying and rectifying areas which were perceived as conducive to the generation of public complaints.

Although there were about 4 000 complaint cases and various forms of legal, disciplinary or internal action taken against 1 417 police officers in 1987, these figures should be seen and interpreted in the light of at least 3.3 million potential police-public confrontation situations, including 2 million persons stopped and checked through the police operational nominal index computer system and 1.3 million traffic summonses and tickets issued by the police, in the same year. The difficult nature of the front line duties the police are tasked to perform to protect the community should also be borne in mind. Having said this, the committee would like to pledge its continued determination to safeguard the integrity of investigations into complaints against the police, and to try its best to be worthy of the trust you have placed in the committee.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the government departments concerned, in particular the Commissioner of Police and all officers in his Complaints and Internal Investigations Branch, for their co-operation and assistance rendered to the committee and its secretariat. I would also like to record my appreciation for the contribution and support by all Members of this Council. Thank you.

Oral answers to questions

Shortage of Secondary I places in the north-eastern New Territories

1. MR. CHEUNG asked (in Cantonese): *Will Government inform this Council what effective measures will be taken to tackle the problem of the serious shortage of Form I places in the new towns of the north-eastern New Territories without affecting the quality of education?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, measures being taken to tackle the regional shortfall in secondary school places in Sha Tin, Tai Po and North districts were detailed in a reply to a question in this Council on 3 June 1987. They include the following:

- adding seven more schools to the school building programme, for completion by September 1991. This brings to 30 the number of new secondary schools being built in the region;
- advancing the completion dates of new schools to the maximum extent that site constraints allow;
- advancing the opening of new schools by having two schools share a newly completed building in its first year of operation;

- reducing the number of discretionary places from 10 per cent to 5 per cent and limiting them to students from the same district;
- adding one extra floating class to all existing schools and adopting a modified class structure for new schools.

The effectiveness of these measures can be judged from the number of additional Secondary I places they are expected to provide. If no special measures had been taken, then in September this year almost 4 000 children, and in each year from 1989 more than 5 000 children would be travelling out of the region to attend Secondary I classes. By introducing all these remedial measures, we have provided almost 1 000 extra Secondary I places for the coming September, and almost 4 500 extra places for September 1989. In 1990 and 1991, assuming that buildings are completed on schedule and our population projections are accurate, we now foresee a slight surplus of Secondary I places in the region, instead of shortfalls of 5 000 or 6 000 places.

The situation in 1992 and beyond is being reviewed in the light of updated population projections, based on the 1986 by-census, which have recently become available. If these projections indicate a need for additional schools, then I shall do my best to ensure that they are provided.

Sir, I believe that we are doing everything possible to minimise out-of-region travel by secondary students in the eastern New Territories. While some of these measures do make things more difficult for the schools concerned and their teachers, I am confident that the quality of education received by the children in the region will not be affected.

MR. CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *Sir, according to the figures obtained in our surveys carried out in 1987, even if we are going to increase the number of floating classes in that region, there would still be a shortfall of more than 3 000 places. Will the Government inform this Council what measures will be taken to arrange for students to attend schools in other regions? In the next few years, there will be an additional 5 000 people moving into that region every month. What measures will be taken to resolve the transport problems?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the original question is concerned about what we are doing. I have explained what we are doing and this does in fact solve the shortfall for the next few years, up until 1992. From 1992 onwards, we shall look again and do our best to do what is needed.

MRS. FAN: *Sir, I am pleased to hear that the Secretary is confident that the quality of education received by the children in this region will not be affected. May I ask whether the Education Department intends to use objective methods to confirm that the quality of education received in this region is not affected?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, a survey was conducted in relation to similar methods adopted in the north-western New Territories and did come to the conclusion that the quality of education was not affected. Whether you call it objective or subjective, people do these things as objectively as they can but there is obviously an element of subjective judgement involved.

MR. ANDREW WONG: *Sir, I might be the culprit because I asked the original question on 3 June 1987. May I refer to the Secretary's answer when he says, 'assuming that the population projections are accurate.' May I ask what sort of population projections is the Secretary relying on in terms of total population for the New Territories East by 1991, and the Form I population by 1991?*

In answering the original question Mr. Michelangelo PAGLIARI said that 12 new schools would be built by 1993. Mr. BRIDGE is saying that seven new schools will be completed by September 1991. May I ask why only seven and not 12? And is the Government prepared to build only seven schools by 1991 and then five schools within the following two years from 1991 to 1993?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: The population projections, on which the figures I have given have been based, are the old ones, before the '86 bi-census. We are about to analyse the bi-census figures and as I said, we will take them into account in further building beyond 1992.

The 12 schools referred to in Mike PAGLIARI's reply were intended to be built for completion after 1992. It referred to a proposal which we were then considering to try to persuade existing schools from areas of surplus in the urban area to move to the New Territories. As to the number of new schools we shall need to build for the period after 1992, we will review now in the light of the latest bi-census figures and decide how many schools are needed after we have analysed the figures.

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *Sir, may I refer to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the answer; that is, there will be an increase of floating classes within existing schools. I would like to know how many classrooms are there in existing schools and how many floating classes are there in each school? Will the extra floating classes be additional burdens to existing schools?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, for a three-year period the existing 30-class schools will have 31 classes; one additional floating class for a period of three years is now planned.

MR. ANDREW WONG: *Sir, may I go back to my original question and ask what are the existing projections for 1991 in terms of total population for New Territories East, and for Form I places in New Territories East? Is the Government prepared to have a certain percentage of these Form I students going out of the New Territories East to attend schools in Kowloon?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: The actual population projections are available in published documents but I will make copies available to Mr. WONG.

Our present planning is intended to provide for no movement out of the region except on a voluntary basis.

MR. TAI: *Sir, will the Secretary take special note of the age of the new residents when updating the population projections for school places in 1992, so as to get a more accurate estimation of secondary and primary school needs in that particular area?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Yes, Sir, the projections do take account of the age profile of the people in the area.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: I have one more supplementary waiting to be asked and that will be the last one for this question.

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *Thank you very much, Sir, I do not think the Secretary has fully answered my question. My question is how many classrooms are there in existing schools at present? Is it a 24-class structure? If that is the case, there are six floating classes already, and if you added one extra floating class, that would be altogether seven floating classes. So, are there 24 or 26 classrooms?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: I think Mrs. NG is right; we have 24 classrooms with 31 classes.

Wastage in the Civil Service

2. DR. LAM asked (in Cantonese): *Will the Government inform this Council of the number of civil servants who resigned from the service in the past three years; whether the number of resignations from the Civil Service is on the increase; and whether these resignations affect the efficiency of the Administration?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, in 1985-86, 2 701 civil servants resigned from the service. The figure for 1986-87 was 2 494 and for 1987-88 it was 4 065. Between 1985-86 and 1986-87 it fell, while in 1987-88 it rose. It is not possible, therefore, Sir, to predict with any certainty what will happen this year.

The figures at the directorate and senior professional level are of interest, Sir. At the directorate level, the present total strength is 1 024, the number of resignations over the last three years is 13 in 1985-86, three in 1986-87 and seven in 1987-88. At the senior management/senior professional level, the present total strength is 1 837, the figures for resignations are: 24 for 1985-86, 18 for 1986-87 and 28 for 1987-88.

As can be seen from the above figures, the number of civil servants resigning has remained small and has been made up mainly of officers in the lower ranks, that is below the senior professional level. By and large, the vacancies created have been successfully filled by suitable candidates. As in any large organisation, Sir, we monitor very closely wastage and resignation rates. Our judgement is that the efficiency of the Administration has not so far been affected by these resignations to any significant extent.

To see the situation in the overall context, it is useful to look at the figures in terms of the percentage of resignations to total strength. On this basis, the average resignation rate since 1981-82 has been some 2.2 per cent of total strength. The figures for the past three years have been 1.5 per cent, 1.4 per cent and 2.2 per cent. These figures remain low when compared with many large companies in the private sector, where I understand, Sir, that rates of around 10 per cent are not uncommon.

DR. LAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government inform this Council whether the policy of localisation in certain government departments has been adversely affected and delayed owing to resignation or early retirement?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, I do not think the figures that I have for the resignation rate in government departments, even in the worst cases, have affected in any material way the localisation policy. Our policy on localisation is that it should be at the recruitment level and there is no shortage of recruits from local officers in any of the major fields of activity of the Government.

MR. POON CHI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government inform this Council which department sees the highest resignation rate, and what are the causes?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, some of the smaller departments are losing at a greater rate than the others. For example, the Audit Department; there have been four auditors who have left in the last year over a strength of 27, which is a resignation rate of 14 per cent. As for assistant librarians, the figures are similar, at 11 per cent; physiotherapists at 14 per cent; and in the social welfare officer grade, the rate is about 10 per cent. But I am citing these as the worst cases in answer to Mr. POON Chi-fai's question, Sir. Overall, as I have explained, the figures are extremely low. As to the reasons why people are leaving the service, civil servants are not required to give reasons why they should resign. Various reasons are, however, given voluntarily. They include joining the private sector due to more attractive offers there; continuing their education; emigration; and family reasons.

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, will the Administration inform this Council of the number and percentage of civil servants in the senior professional level seeking early retirement in the last three years?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, I do not have the figures specifically for early retirement. I will let Mr. Martin LEE have those figures. (See Annex I)

MR. CHEONG: *Sir, I am heartened by the Chief Secretary's statistics because it goes contrary to the common claim that Government is rendered ineffective due to the great loss of civil servants. However, I am puzzled by reports that various heads of departments have complained about the trend of officers leaving the Civil Service, whether through resignation, early retirement or otherwise. For example, the latest is that the Director of Fire Services has gone on record as saying that he has experienced difficulties.*

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: Will you ask your question, please, Mr. CHEONG?

MR. CHEONG: *Can the Chief Secretary further elucidate the differences between the statistics he has presented and the statistics as presented by other department heads from time to time?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, it is difficult for me to speculate as to why heads of departments may be concerned about particular aspects of their strength. In the case of the Fire Services Department, the figures themselves, certainly at first reading, do not show any sign for alarm. In the officer grade, for example, the wastage rate from resignations over a period of about three years has been 0.34 per cent, 0.66 per cent and 1.42 per cent. And in terms of the rank and file 0.4 per cent, 0.7 per cent and 1.07 per cent. Since these figures have come to me, Sir, in answer to this question. I intend to discuss the matter further with the Director of Fire Services.

MRS. CHOW: *Sir, may I ask for the total number and percentage of civil servants of all ranks who have resigned for reasons of emigration in the last three years?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, as I have explained in my answer, civil servants are not required to give reasons as to why they should resign. Some are prepared to give reasons, and some give dual reasons. Many of them do give dual reasons, for example, to go into the private sector and to emigrate. Therefore, it is not possible to give in any meaningful way a breakdown of the statistics which Mrs. Selina CHOW required.

MR. LAI: *Will the Chief Secretary inform this Council whether he is satisfied with the rate and implementation of the localisation policy within the Government?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, the localisation policy has been in operation for many years and as I have explained in answer to a previous question, it applies at the recruitment level. It is a steady policy which is intended to make best use of local talent wherever it is available. It has been progressing well over the years and

has not been affected by any of the wastage or resignation rates within departments. That does not mean to say that we do not see a continuing role, also, for expatriate officers. We expect to see, up to and beyond 1997, a continuing role for expatriate officers, and indeed, there will be a substantial number of expatriate officers as heads of departments by the time 1997 arrives.

It is a question of maintaining the balance between the international experience which some expatriate officers can provide, and a natural requirement to localise the service, Sir. I am satisfied with the progress so far.

Fatal accidents in rock climbing

3. MRS. TAM asked (in Cantonese): *Will the Government inform this Council of the number of deaths and injuries involved in mountain climbing in Hong Kong over the last three years; the locations where accidents are mostly prone to occur and whether Government has taken any measures to warn mountain climbers of these black spots so that they are advised to take some other routes?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, in Hong Kong, mountaineering is restricted to rock climbing. During the last three years, there have only been one death through rock climbing and two other injuries. The former involved a young man climbing unaccompanied and ill-equipped on Lion Rock main crag in February this year.

During the same period, there have been three deaths and 32 incidents involving 115 hikers or hillwalkers, mostly occurring within country parks but not at any particular spots. It should be pointed out that in most cases, the accidents were the result of a pre-existing medical factor, or conditions such as sunstroke or dehydration and did not involve falls or other mishaps directly connected with the activity itself.

Regarding Government efforts to publicise any black spots, it is the very nature of mountaineers to seek new challenges. Government publicity on specific areas would not deter experienced climbers and may have an undesirable effect of attracting less experienced climbers to such locations. In general, however, the Council for Recreation and Sport has a committee dealing with safety in outdoor pursuits, and is responsible for producing publicity materials and films on safety in outdoor activities as part of its ongoing 'play safe' campaign.

MRS. TAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government inform this Council where the four deaths connected with mountain climbing occur? If all these cases occurred at the same location, would the Government consider, through publicity material, advising mountain climbers to beware of these accident prone locations?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, three of the four deaths referred to happened on Lion Rock, and the other one on Ping Chau. All were classified as 'falls by accidents'. Government will draw public attention to this in future publicity on safety measures about rock-climbing.

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, will the Secretary for District Administration give an undertaking to this Council that he will not repeat, will not supply a list of these black spots to His Excellency?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: I shall not do so, Sir.

MR. CHAN KAM-CHUEN: *Sir, mountaineering amateurs may get some thrill in the publicity for their foolhardy misadventure but it is not only their lives and limbs that are at risk, but also our uniformed personnel, and public expenditure is involved. Are there any professional mountaineers or associations which can train, guide and regulate these amateurs with an aim to cut down accidents to the minimum?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, as I have said in my reply, the Council for Recreation and Sport has published a very well-written pamphlet called 'Stepping Out' and in this document there are a number of organisations which provide such training.

MR. SOHMEN: *Sir, as the Secretary is personally well aware there are varying degrees of difficulty in the hill-walks in Hong Kong. Does the Government encourage the relevant councils to erect warning signs at the beginning of such trails that might have a degree of difficulty to warn off the inexperienced hill-walkers?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, there are really no peaks in Hong Kong which can be classified as dangerous for mountaineering purposes, other than probably the few rock-faces at Lion Rock. Most of the walks are fairly safe from the mountaineering point of view and so there is really no need to warn people of the danger, unless they try things which they should not be doing.

Feasibility of Hong Kong hosting an Exposition in 1997

4. MR. CHEONG asked: *Sir, may I first thank you for giving me permission to ask this question. In view of the fact that the Bureau International d'Expositions will have a meeting on 31 May 1988, will Government inform this Council what progress has been made by the ad hoc committee chaired by the Chief Secretary to study whether or not the Hong Kong Government is to request the British Government to register an interest at the bureau that Hong Kong is studying seriously the feasibility and viability of being the venue for an exposition to be organised in 1997?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, may I preface my answer by clarifying some facts about the way the Bureau International d'Expositions (BIE) functions. The rules under which the BIE operates provide that a bid to host an exhibition of this nature must be registered six years before the event. A bid can also be registered at any time before that date but there is no necessity to do so. The meeting of the bureau on 31 May is simply the BIE's regular annual general meeting. This date, therefore, in no way represents a deadline.

Sir, the bureau is already aware of Hong Kong's interest in hosting an Expo in 1997. No further notification of interest is required at this stage.

The feasibility of Hong Kong hosting a World Exhibition is under active study within the Administration. It is, as Members will appreciate, a complex question which involves a number of branches and departments within the Government. We have, however, a sufficiently long time until 1991 in which to examine in depth the feasibility of the proposal. The Government considers that it is in Hong Kong's best interest to examine the proposal carefully and thoroughly.

Sir, with permission, may I anticipate my hon. Friend's next question, I cannot at this stage provide a timetable for the finalisation of the feasibility study. I can, however, assure him that when we have arrived at a conclusion on the feasibility of Hong Kong undertaking this venture, a decision will be made as to whether or not to register a formal bid for Hong Kong to host a World Exhibition in 1997.

MR. CHEONG: *Sir, the Secretary did not anticipate my next question. In fact, my next question is, in paragraph 2 of the Secretary's answer he states that the BIE is aware of Hong Kong's interest. Does that mean BIE has been notified formally by a United Kingdom representative of our interest? If not, is it Government's view that the effect of learning of Hong Kong's interest through media reports has the same significance to the bureau, as formally raising it during the meeting?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, as I understand it, the main proponents of this proposal have been in touch with the bureau and therefore, the bureau is aware of Hong Kong's interest. That awareness, of course, does not make it unnecessary for Hong Kong to register should it be decided eventually that we would wish to do so. No registration at this stage is necessary, and I think that is really the point. We are looking at the feasibility and until that is done, we cannot go on to the second step.

PROF. POON: *Sir, according to the first paragraph of the Secretary's answer, he implied that the date of 31 May is not the deadline. In that case, may I ask whether the Government is aware of any development within BIE which may alter the present six-year rule? If so, would the Government consider prudently, to take out an insurance policy to request the British Government to register Hong Kong's*

interest? After all, registration of interest does not carry a firm commitment on either side.

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, we do not participate directly in the bureau's work; therefore I have no direct knowledge as to what is on the agenda of the annual general meeting on 31 May. However, I do understand that the question of the frequency of World Expositions generally may well be on the agenda. I think it is fair to say that whatever decisions may be taken on 31 May this year by the bureau, these decisions will apply to registrations made both before and after that date. So, any decision taken would apply to any registration that may or may not be made in the future.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: I already have a long list of Members who wish to ask supplementary questions. I shall give as many Members as possible a chance to speak, but if I have many requests I shall have to draw a line at some point.

MR. ANDREW WONG: *Sir, considering the widespread public interest in the idea of staging an Expo in Hong Kong in 1997, will Government assure this Council that the community will be involved in its feasibility study, and will the Government inform this Council of its first thoughts as to how the community is to be involved in the feasibility study?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, at this preliminary stage, the issues being investigated are basic issues which relate to strategic planning, infrastructural constraints, so on and so forth, and which fall within the government's ambit. Once these issues have been clarified, it is our intention to involve the private sector.

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, can the Administration assure this Council that a new airport will soon be built in Hong Kong, and if so, that the new airport will be completed well before 1997 so that the existing airport can be turned into a site for a World Exhibition in 1997?*

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: Financial Secretary, are you able to help?

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Fortunately, Sir, I was paying attention. I think the Chief Secretary is also anxious to partake in this.

I cannot give an assurance that we will have a replacement airport by 1997. We are working very hard on this project. As Members of this Council know, we have a number of feasibility studies in progress at the moment. We hope to be able to announce decisions progressively over the next 12 months.

MR. DESMOND LEE: *Sir, as to whether the exhibition is intended to cover a period extending beyond 1 July 1997, should the expression of interest be made by Britain in conjunction with China?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, if it were decided that the proposal was feasible, an approach would then be made to the Chinese Government to seek their views.

DR. HO: *Sir, in order to facilitate the Government to come to a conclusion on the feasibility of hosting an Exposition in Hong Kong, will Government consider firstly to engage the professional services of those experts who have had experience in planning international Expositions? Will the Government also conduct surveys to assess the support of the community for an Exposition, or otherwise?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, there are many practical aspects for the Government to consider at this stage. If expert advice from outside the Government is required, consultants could be engaged.

As to the second question, Sir, I think we will be able to assess without a formal survey the response from the public, later in the consideration of this particular project.

MRS. CHOW: *Can we seek an assurance from the Government that any conclusion on the viability of the concept will not be drawn until a feasibility involving the relevant professional consultants has been conducted, given that a project as huge as an Expo would require multi-discipline professional, administrative and commercial expertise of both the Civil Service and the private sector?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Yes, Sir.

MR. NGAI (in Cantonese): *Since it is the wish of the general public to maintain the prosperity of Hong Kong and since the period of the World Expo proposed will straddle the 1 July deadline, should both the British Government and Chinese Government be brought into partnership? If so, will this contravene the Joint Declaration?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, the British Government, certainly, is aware of the proposal as well as the initial reaction in Hong Kong. As I stated earlier, if it were decided that the proposal was feasible, then an approach would be made to the Chinese Government to seek their views.

MR. HO SAI-CHU (in Cantonese): *Sir, if the British Government has already been contacted, what is their initial response?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, it is clearly recognised that it is the responsibility of the Hong Kong Government to assess the feasibility or otherwise of the proposal first. Meanwhile, the British Government has not taken a view on the proposal.

MR. SOHMEN: *Sir, I realise it is early days, but the most important prerequisite for an Expo is sufficient land space and that is perennially short in Hong Kong. Is the Government confident that this basic requirement can be met before time and effort is spent on the investigation of all the other aspects?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, among the subjects that are being studied by the group under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary is the question of the site and that point will certainly be addressed.

MRS. FAN: *Sir, the Secretary has made it quite clear to us that the difference between a bid which is a detailed proposal, and the registration of the interest. He has also made it quite clear that no official notification of Hong Kong's interest has been made. May I ask what harm would it do if the British Government is requested to register officially an interest on behalf of Hong Kong, but with no commitment?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, it is not a question of harm or no harm being done. Rather, it is a question of finding the appropriate point in time at which an interest should be registered. As I stated earlier in my first reply, the bureau is aware of our interest. We are undertaking a feasibility study within Government. As soon as it becomes clear that this project is feasible, further steps will be taken.

MR. EDWARD HO: *Sir, the Secretary has mentioned that there is a sufficiently long time until 1991 in which to examine in depth the feasibility of the proposal. Is the Secretary aware that by 1991 we must have ready the formal bid which includes a total package of design and other various proposals? Therefore, in fact, we do not have that much time for the feasibility study, consultation, preparation of detailed proposals and designs.*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, I do apologise if I did not make myself clear when I made a reference to 1991. I had meant to say that 1991 was the absolute deadline and that 31 May 1988 was not the deadline. Somewhere in between, obviously, if we wish to do anything, these things will be done during that period, not necessarily in 1991.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: *Sir, can an assurance be given by the Secretary that every effort will be made to complete the feasibility study within the next 12 to 18 months, which seems to me to be a reasonable period in view of the latest date for registration being 1991?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, I can assure Members that the work on this particular subject is being undertaken enthusiastically, thoroughly and carefully. I would suggest that internally, we should be able to come to a view well before the timetable set by Mr. Hiltion CHEONG-LEEN.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: I have the names of two more Members who wish to ask supplementary questions. I will draw a limit at that point.

MRS. TAM: *Sir, since the Administration is now actively studying the feasibility of Hong Kong hosting a World Exhibition, have any problems relating to the organisation of the Expo in Hong Kong so far been identified? And if so, what are they?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, we have had one meeting under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary involving all the secretaries concerned with the subject matters that might conceivably be covered in such a study. We will be having another meeting shortly. At this stage, Sir, it is too early to say whether any problems are going to arise.

MR. CHEONG: *Sir, I cannot understand why the Secretary cannot give this Council a timetable for the completion because after a few weeks they have only had one meeting. Can I seek an assurance from the Secretary that this is not going to be a delaying tactic deployed to kill the idea in its infancy?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, at the first meeting we were each told to go away and do our individual work. For example, the Secretary of Lands and Works was asked to investigate into the question of possible sites. Other secretaries were instructed to deal with other aspects of the project such as air-transport, finance and so on. And this is why I say work is not being delayed; it takes time for these answers to come back and it is right for the Chief Secretary, I think, to hold another meeting shortly to get answers from various officials involved. I can assure Mr. CHEONG that there is no intention whatsoever to kill the project. Quite to the contrary, we are working enthusiastically, carefully and thoroughly, with a view to seeing whether or not the project, in fact, is feasible.

Part-time degree programme in primary education for school heads and senior teachers

5. MR. SZETO asked (in Cantonese): *It is recommended in the Education Commission Report No.2 that a degree course on primary education programme for primary school heads and senior teachers should be introduced in a university. In the recent enrolment of students to this degree course in the Chinese University*

of Hong Kong, primary school teachers are also eligible to apply. Will Government inform this Council which one of the above two sets of entry requirements should be adopted and whether as a kind of incentive, improvements will be made to the career structure of those primary school heads, senior teachers and teachers who have successfully completed the course?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the Education Commission recommended the development of a bachelor degree programme to promote leadership and managerial ability in primary and special schools. This recommendation has been accepted by the Government.

The introduction of a four-year part-time bachelor degree programme in primary education by the Chinese University of Hong Kong from September 1988 is in line with this decision. Selection of candidates for the course will be a matter for the university, but because of the purpose of the course, we expect that priority will be given to school heads and senior teachers.

Turning now to the second half of the question, we propose to regrade headship posts in primary schools with 17 or more classes in 1992, when the first group graduates from the course. Subject to the provision of funds by the Finance Committee of this Council, the heads of government and aided primary schools with 24 or more classes will then be eligible for a maximum salary three points higher than their present maximum, but these three new salary points will only be available to those heads who have obtained the new qualification.

MR. SZETO (in Cantonese): *Sir, if school heads and senior teachers take this particular course, they will be able to get their fees partly refunded. In addition, those school heads with more than 24 classes will have three more points added to their maximum salary after graduation. However, school teachers who take the same course will neither have their fees refunded nor have their career structure or pay improved. Does this mean that when you have teachers taking such courses, it is not really considered beneficial to primary school teaching?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the course is primarily designed to help school heads in their job. It is directed at them primarily.

PROF. POON: *Sir, since there is a clear incentive to encourage school heads to register for the new degree course, would the Secretary inform this Council of the current enrolment rate or demand for the course? Will there be enough places to meet the demand?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, there have been more than 300 applications for the course, 55 of those have been from primary school heads. The number of places is 30 a year. The number of applicants is therefore greater than the number of places and that is fairly normal for any course. The size of the course cannot be extended during the coming triennium from 1988

to 1991, because tertiary institutions have already decided their academic development programme for that period. We shall certainly look at whether there is a case for further expanding the course in the next triennium, that is, from 1991 to 1994.

MRS. FAN (in Cantonese): *Sir, could the Secretary inform this Council whether it is stated very clearly in the rules for admission to the Chinese University that school heads and senior teachers will enjoy priority? There are only 30 places. Would the Administration consider liaising with the Chinese University with a view to informing primary school teachers clearly of such a condition so that they will not be disappointed?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, I understand this question was discussed recently at a meeting of the Board of Education with a representative from the Chinese University. My understanding was that the university did give an undertaking on those lines. But Mrs. FAN would be much more familiar with this than me because she is the chairman of the board.

MR. SZETO (in Cantonese): *Sir, when teachers in government primary schools attend such courses, their course fees cannot be refunded. Is this fair?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, my understanding is that those who attend the course can be refunded. I am not quite sure what the point of unfairness is that Mr. SZETO Wah is raising.

MR. SZETO (in Cantonese): *According to a circular, heads and senior teachers can get refund and the amount of refund is based on the number of pupils in the school. There is, therefore, a situation whereby in the bigger schools where there are more pupils, the heads will be able to get a bigger refund, but in the smaller schools the amount of refund will be smaller. So is this fair?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, I am not aware of any unfairness in the arrangements but I will certainly look into it and let Mr. SZETO have a further reply. (See Annex II)

Utilisation of community centres

6. MR. CHEONG-LEEN asked: *According to a survey done by the Government in August 1987, 10 out of 44 existing community centres have a daily average utilisation rate of below 50 per cent. Will Government inform this Council of the reasons for the low utilisation rate of these centres and whether any action is being taken to increase the utilisation rate so as to reduce the wastage of public funds?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, Members may first wish to note that the results of the survey conducted in August last year indicated that the overall utilisation rate of the 44 community centres referred to by Mr. CHEONG-LEEN was 73 per cent.

As to the 10 community centres in question, their utilisation rates were affected by a number of factors.

At the time of the survey, eight of them were not provided with air-conditioning while two were partially closed as work to install air-conditioning was in progress.

Of these 10 centres, six were built before 1970. Their designs are out of date and the halls are either too small or not suitable for sports and other activities. Another two were commissioned just before the survey and the voluntary agencies accommodated in the welfare blocks had not come into full operation.

Notwithstanding the above, the relatively low utilisation rates of the 10 centres were only confined to the mornings and afternoons. In the evenings, the utilisation rates of these centres varied from 50 per cent to 96 per cent, or an average utilisation rate of 75 per cent.

Since last year, the Government has introduced a programme to provide better facilities in the community centres and promote their usage. For example, work has already started to install air-conditioning in all the centres. In addition, requests for funds to upgrade the equipment in these centres will be submitted shortly to Finance Branch. Consideration is also being given to reprovisioning some of the older centres whose usage is being affected by poor design. Furthermore, local organisations and district boards are being encouraged to make more use of the centres for their activities and programmes.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: *Sir, will it be possible to have the air-conditioning for the eight which do not yet have air-conditioning facilities to be completed during the current financial year? And as regards the reprovisioning plans for the older centres, will the review for reprovisioning be completed during the current financial year, so that we can have an idea as to what funds are required for such reprovisioning?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, as I have mentioned, there is an ongoing air-conditioning programme and, at present, it is estimated that the programme will be completed towards the end of summer, 1989. As for the reprovisioning, some of these centres will actually be turned into something else, and more modern facilities will be provided in the vicinity.

MR. HUI: *Sir, will Government consider inviting voluntary agencies to help in providing programmes appropriate to the needs of the community in order to increase the utilisation rate of community centres, especially in the mornings and afternoons?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, I am grateful for Mr. HUI's suggestion that voluntary agencies might assist in providing suitable programmes in community centres, particularly during the hours when some of these centres are not fully utilised. We shall be happy to look into the suggestion.

MR. NGAI: *Sir, will Government tell us what criteria are used to determine the number and location of the community centres? The relatively low utilisation rate of some of the centres may indicate that the criteria may not be appropriate and need to be reviewed and adjusted?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, the reason of the relatively low utilisation rate of a small number of community centres is the lack of air-conditioning or bad design. The great majority of the community centres are modern and they are well planned and very well utilised.

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *When you examine the utilisation rate of the community centres, have you considered the location of the centres? Some centres are located in very remote areas, their environment may be very poor and the street lighting dim. Since most activities are held in the evening and because of the security problems, many people therefore refrain from going to such centres. Have you looked into this aspect please?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, as I have mentioned, the results of our survey indicate that even the 10 community centres referred to are well utilised in the afternoon, and for some centres the utilisation rate is between 50 and 96 per cent. Although some are not fully utilised, because of lack of air-conditioning, they are not as bad as generally thought.

Legislation to introduce improvements to the long service payment scheme and to set up the Occupational Safety and Health Council

7. MR. TAM asked (in Cantonese): *Will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *when it will introduce amendments to existing legislation to improve the long service payment scheme for workers and legislation to establish the Occupational Safety and Health Council; and*
- (b) *why it has taken so long to prepare these legislative proposals?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, barring unforeseen circumstances we hope to introduce both Bills to this Council during June.

The proposed amendments to the long service payment scheme will provide for payment on grounds of ill health, old age, or on the death of the employee. Drafting has proceeded smoothly in general, except that it has proved rather complicated to set out in legal language the provisions for payment upon the death of an employee and to make sure that the payment went to the right person. After careful consideration and four drafts of the Bill we are now satisfied that we have got it right. Members will be able to judge for themselves within the next few weeks.

The Occupational Safety and Health Council is to be funded by a levy on employees' compensation insurance premia. The mechanism for collecting the levy has required extensive discussion with those concerned, and it was not until earlier this month that agreement was finally reached.

MR. TAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, does the Government know that some old or ill workers are waiting for the amendment to the long service payment scheme in order to get the sum they deserve? The delay has resulted in unfair treatment to the workers. What remedial measures will the Government take?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, we are, indeed, anxious to get on with the legislation as fast as we can. I think that is all we can do, Sir.

MR. TAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government consider giving the proposed amendment retrospective effect so that the workers can get back pay for the long service payment?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, we do not normally include retrospective provisions in legislation of this sort.

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, will the Administration inform this Council whether it intends to introduce unfair dismissal legislation to ensure that employers will not be able to take advantage of the many loopholes in the present law?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, we do not have in mind to introduce unfair dismissal legislation.

Employment of the disabled

8. MR. NGAI asked (in Cantonese): *Will the Government inform this Council the latest statistics of handicapped people employed in the industrial sector and the publicity programmes undertaken at the moment to encourage more manufacturers in light industries to employ handicapped people in the production process?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, disability statistics are much more difficult and complicated than may appear at first sight and no country has

yet found a way to maintain accurate figures of the numbers of disabled people. This means we also have difficulty in maintaining accurate figures of the number of them in employment and in particular types of employment.

We maintain a Central Registry of the Disabled. However, its accuracy depends on voluntary registration and we know from operational experience that it is not complete. For planning purposes, we therefore have to supplement the figures in our central registry with estimates based on the advice of local experts and studies conducted in Hong Kong and elsewhere. We take a great deal of trouble over these estimates and have gradually improved them over the years; but they still need to be treated with great caution.

In the last quarter of 1986, the Rehabilitation Development Co-ordinating Committee and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service conducted a joint survey on the employment of disabled people. The survey was based on a sample of 3 415 people chosen at random from our Central Registry of the Disabled. Its results were analysed and were published in December 1987. They indicated that about 36 per cent of disabled people aged between 15 and 60 were then in open employment and, of these, 58 per cent were in the industrial sector. This percentage is close to that also indicated by Labour Department figures. The number of disabled people placed in jobs by the Labour Department's Selective Placement Service has increased from 113 in 1980 when the service started to 1 033 last year. Of these, about 60 per cent found jobs in production related work.

By applying these percentages to our estimate of the total number of disabled people of working age, we estimate that there are about 34 000 disabled people in open employment, of whom about 20 000 work in the industrial sector. Our experience is that most of them are engaged in light industrial work such as garment-making, toy-making, electronics, plastics and printing.

I will now turn to the question of publicity. In August, we will be launching a rehabilitation of the disabled campaign to promote the employment of the disabled in the industrial and commercial sectors. These promotional activities will be directed at employers in these sectors; at disabled people to bring home the importance of vocational training; and at the public at large to bring home the importance of the social integration of disabled people. The campaign will continue on a year-round basis. Publicity will mainly take the form of television announcements of public interest, radio announcements of public interests, poster displays at selected sites throughout the territory, and a comprehensive leaflet in English and Chinese on services relating to the employment of disabled people. In addition, regular visits will be paid by the Labour Department to various establishments to promote understanding of the working abilities of disabled people and to secure suitable job vacancies.

MR. NGAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, according to the understanding of Government, to what extent are the handicapped people interested in working in the industrial*

sector? The Government has launched some publicity campaigns and are there any indications that employers are more willing to accept handicapped people in the field of production?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, on the second part of the question, I think publicity has had some effect, in the sense that interest in employment of the disabled is gradually increasing, although I think the situation is still very far from satisfactory. As I said in the recent Budget debate, some employers are much better than others and this suggests that there are still many employers who have not really fully taken on board that this is a very useful potential source of employees.

On the other half of the question, we have no reliable information. I can only give my subjective impression. I think the disabled generally are very keen to find employment but I think one has a similar problem with them as with the rest of the community, that people tend to prefer white-collar jobs and tend to avoid working in industry. This is a problem through out in fact.

MR. LIU (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government consider using some incentive to encourage more manufacturers to employ disabled people in the industrial sector?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the main incentive we have at the moment is that there is an Employaid Fund, funded by the Community Chest, which provides subsidies for employers adapting equipment in order to employ disabled people. This fund is not fully utilised, so I am glad of this opportunity to give some publicity to it, to try and draw employers' attention to this opportunity.

DR. IP: *Sir, I am grateful to know that 36 per cent of the disabled people surveyed were in open employment. Could the Secretary for Education and Manpower inform this Council, in detail, what do the rest of them, namely, 64 per cent of all disabled persons do, namely, around 60 000 persons, using the same method of estimation that he has used?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the main results of the survey were that 35.7 per cent of the five main categories of disability, aged between 15 to 60, were in open employment. 7.5 per cent were in sheltered workshops. The rest of them fell into categories of unemployed job-seekers, 9.9 per cent; unemployed non-job-seekers, 22.1 per cent; students, 10.4 per cent; homemakers, 10.4 per cent and the retired, 4 per cent.

MR. TAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government consider some more effective measures? For example, can we learn from other countries and make it mandatory that employers should employ a certain ratio of disabled people?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, we have from time to time considered this idea which, as Mr. TAM says, has been tried elsewhere. It is an idea on which opinions are very divided. The general impression we have had from talking to people involved in the employment of disabled people in those countries which use such a system has been rather unfavourable. Several problems arise. One is that employers, in practice, seem to be able to evade such legislation very easily and the net result tends to be negative. Because of this kind of legislation, employer attitudes tend to become very negative and those trying to find jobs for disabled people find their work actually gets more difficult as a result. Because of this kind of feedback, we have so far not followed this particular course.

MR. POON CHI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, will the Government inform this Council of the success rate of finding jobs for the disabled people? Does the Civil Service give priority to disabled people in posts for which they are suitable?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the only figures we have on success rates are the Labour Department's Selective Placement Service figures of registrations, vacancies and placements. I, personally, do not regard this as a very reliable indication of success but, for what they are worth, the figures for 1987 were a total of 4 000 job vacancies registered with the Selective Placement Division, a total of 1 900 people registering, and a total of 1 030 placements. The reason why I am skeptical of these kind of figures as an indication of success is that the figures could actually get worse if you are successful, rather than better, in the sense that, if you are very successful, you will encourage more people to register with you and, therefore, your placement rate might seem to be lower. If you are obviously achieving nothing, less people will register. So I think using figures of this sort to form a judgement of success can be very misleading.

MR. CHAN KAM-CHUEN: *Sir, in the last recession, the hawkers policy was relaxed so that a lot of workers from factories became hawkers. Should we issue handicapped people with hawker licences in future, thus releasing a large number of able-bodied men for employment in the industrial sector?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, I shall be very happy to pass this suggestion on to the appropriate authorities.

MR. HUI: *Sir, could Government inform this Council what efforts are being made to provide vocational training and guidance for the disabled to be gainfully employed in light industries? And what are the difficulties, if any, encountered?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the Vocational Training Council provides training courses for disabled people. I do not have immediately available details of what the guidance arrangements are or the difficulties encountered. I will let Mr. HUI have that in writing. (See Annex III)

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *The Hong Kong Government is the biggest employer in Hong Kong. How many disabled people do we have in the Civil Service?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, if I might take the question. We do have figures available and I will let Mrs. Pauline NG have them. (See Annex IV)

DR. IP: *Sir, in view of the acute labour shortage, has Government considered running short courses to train the mildly or moderately mentally handicapped to be messengers, cleaners and workers in unskilled jobs?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, as far as I know, we have not so far considered this idea, but we will certainly be happy to look at it.

MRS. FAN: *Sir, it is perhaps to be expected that the disabled and his employer would face some adjustment problems when the disabled first enter into employment. Could the Secretary tell us whether there is any sort of follow-up service to assist employers and disabled employees in adjusting to the new environment?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, in the case of those placed by the Labour Department's Selective Placement Service, yes, indeed. They follow up very thoroughly and have repeated interviews with the employers and employees, to make sure that the settlement process will go as well as possible.

Written answers to questions

Dissemination of news by Information Services Department

9. DR. LAM asked: *Will Government inform this Council whether there are different arrangements by the Information Services Department for the dissemination of news to the press and the electronic media such as the radio and the television, and if so, what criteria are adopted in deciding on these arrangements?*

SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND INFORMATION: Sir, the basic policy of the Information Services Department (ISD) is to treat the press and the electronic media equally, having regard to their different operational characteristics and requirements.

Normally, information is disseminated via the teleprinter and facsimile network which links ISD with all print and electronic media organisations. Thus both the print and electronic media receive the same news items in both languages at the same time.

Press conferences hosted by government officials are open to all media organisations; although it is not uncommon, at the end of the conference for television and radio stations to tape a short separate interview with the host in order to bolster presentational impact of the news item.

It sometimes happens that where a particular item does not warrant a full scale press conference, and a press release is issued, a radio or television station may request an interview with the subject officer in order to provide sound and visual materials to accompany the presentation of the news. Depending on the circumstances of each case, such requests may be granted. But what an official says in front of the camera or on the tape recorder is based on the original text of the press statement which has already been issued to all the media.

Review on matters relating to Tso and Tong in the New Territories

10. MR. TAI asked: *Will Government inform this Council of the progress in the review of matters relating to Tso and Tong in the New Territories Ordinance?*

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, the working group on the New Territories Ordinance, which was set up by the Regional Secretary (New Territories) in October 1986 has recently completed its review of the Ordinance. The review covered a wide range of areas which included Tsos and Tongs in the New Territories. The working group has made a number of recommendations which are being considered by relevant government departments. When the Administration is able to take a view on these recommendations, consultation with bodies like the Heung Yee Kuk will be carried out before any major changes are to be proposed.

Government Business

Motion

PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION) ORDINANCE

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER moved the following motion: That the resolution made and passed by the Legislative Council on 3 December 1980 as amended be further amended by deleting '0.05 per cent' in paragraphs (a) and (c) and substituting in each place '0.02 per cent'.

He said: Sir, I move the resolution standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Pneumoconiosis is a very unpleasant and debilitating disease caused by inhaling silica or asbestos dust. It mainly affects construction and quarry workers and in 1979 there were over 1 600 workers suffering from the disease. We therefore enacted the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance to provide a compensation fund for the victims.

We have for many years now had regulations under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance obliging employers to provide adequate ventilation in working places and to take adequate measures to protect the employees from inhaling dust. In 1986, we introduced further regulations controlling the conditions under which asbestos is used and providing for the use of approved breathing apparatus. The result of all these measures has been a very encouraging reduction in the number of workers found to suffer from the disease and so qualifying for compensation. The number dropped from 472 in 1982 to 166 in 1987.

The Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund is financed by a levy on the value of quarry products and on construction works with a value of \$1 million or more. The levy was originally set at 0.2 per cent, but because of our success in reducing the incidence of the disease it has been possible to reduce it to 0.15 per cent in 1986 and 0.05 per cent in January 1987, when the fund stood at \$72 million.

Despite these sharp cuts in the rate of levy and despite our decision in October 1987 to extend the scope of the fund to include preventive works such as research, education and publicity, the accumulated surplus has continued to increase. By the end of February it had reached \$111 million. The fund board has therefore reviewed the situation yet again and has recommended that the current 0.05 per cent rate of levy should be reduced still further to 0.02 per cent.

This is expected to reduce the surplus to about \$77 million by 1993. This would still be about three times annual expenditure, but this will, of course, depend on the fortunes of the construction industry during this period. The trend of income and expenditure and the level of reserves will be kept under review and, if necessary, further adjustments will be recommended in consultation with the construction and quarry industries which are represented on the board. The fund board considers that the optimum level of reserves should be about 18 months expenditure and has set itself this target for the long term.

Section 36 of the pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance provides that the levy imposed under section 35 of the Ordinance may be altered by a resolution of the Legislative Council. Section 36(3) of the Ordinance provides that the revised rate of levy comes into effect 30 days after the publication of the resolution in the Gazette, which would be on 27 June 1988.

Sir, I beg to move.

Question proposed.

MR. HO SAI-CHU (in Cantonese): Sir, it is learnt from the Secretary for Education and Manpower when he moved the resolution on the reduction of the rate of levy that the number of claimants who asked for payments from the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund has dropped from 472 in 1982 to 166 in 1987. This indicates that the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance and

other legislations which aims to protect the health of workers have gone a long way in achieving the intended results.

Pneumoconiosis is a chronic and painful disease. As early as two years ago I had appealed to the Government that prevention is the most important means to cope with the disease. Compensation payments are merely financial recompense, which can never compensate for the physical and mental sufferings of the victims.

Although the rate of levy for the compensation fund has been reduced time and again, with the decreasing number of claims from the compensation fund, the size of the fund still increased from \$72 million in January 1987 to \$111 million in February this year. In view of the significant size of the fund, I support a further reduction of its rate of levy. Furthermore, I am of the view that good use of the fund should be made towards the prevention of the disease. Though the Government has decided in October 1987 to extend the use of the fund towards research, publicity and education programmes for the prevention of the disease, the annual allocation of \$1 million in this respect represents only a very small proportion of the present accumulated fund. I think this is far from adequate. The scope of the fund should be further extended to cover more effective measures such as stepping up inspection of the ventilation facilities in workplaces; subsidising the installation of inhalers and to monitor the use of such apparatus; providing free vocational training for those who have just contracted the disease and wish to change jobs and giving them an appropriate subsidy to make up for the loss in wages during the training period. In short, the objective is to minimise as far as possible the number of new victims and to prevent further deterioration of health of those who have already contracted the disease. To make full use of the fund, it is not enough just to offer compensation passively. We should also take positive steps to prevent the disease. With this positive approach in mind, it is anticipated that in a few years' time when the number of claim from the fund becomes insignificant the levy should no longer be necessary. The recurrent payments from the fund should be covered by earnings from prudent investment of the existing funds.

Sir, with these remarks, I support the motion.

MR. TAM (in Cantonese): Sir, in view of the growing surplus of the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund, the authorities concerned have proposed to further reduce the rate of levy for the fund from the current 0.05 per cent to 0.02 per cent. The continued growth of surplus is attributed to a steady income and the insignificant increase on the compensation payment, thus obliterating the need of too vast a reserve in the fund.

However, I do have doubts about a further reduction in the rate of levy. First, the fund is financed by a levy on the value of quarry products and on construction works. From the fund's statements of income and expenditure over the years, we can detect a direct relationship between the fall or rise of its

income and the booming or otherwise of the construction industry. Obviously, if the development of the construction industry is unsatisfactory, the level of the fund's income will neither be gratifying. On the other hand, pneumoconiosis is an occupational disease with an incubational period. Its symptoms may remain unnoticed or 10 or 20, or even 40 years. Thus, it may be too optimistic to set the trend of expenditure on the basis of the apparent number of cases and the trend of compensation payments. What I am worrying is that the emergence of the effects of the disease is a natural process, the timing of which cannot be adjusted to coincide with the year of a construction boom. Thus, a vast reserve in the fund should be the best hedge against rainy days in future. Perhaps, the Government would say that the rate of levy can be raised when necessary. Nevertheless, it is all too natural that a reduction in charges is easily acceptable while any increase is bound to be difficult to accept especially when it involves contributions from the employees. Care must therefore be taken in this aspect.

Secondly, the bulk of expenses of the fund goes to compensation payments. What puzzles me is that, according to the data provided in the annual report of the Labour Department, the cumulative figure of the incidence of pneumoconiosis caused by inhaling silica alone (excluding those related to asbestos dust) is 1 583 between the years 1981 and 1986. yet the number of cases in which victims are compensated stands at 1 513 only. If compensation had been paid for the rest of the cases, the total expenditure of the fund would have been risen.

Thirdly, the Secretary for Education and Manpower remarked in his speech that 'Despite these sharp cuts in the path of levy and despite our decision in October in 1987 to extend the scope of the fund to include preventive works such as research, education and publicity, the accumulated surplus has continued to increase'. Mr. HO Sai-chu has pointed out and I reiterate here that what he said is indeed misleading. As far as I know, a research committee was set up by the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board early this year. Although the committee has started to invite academic institutions to participate in their research, it is still in its preparatory stage and has not carried out any educational and publicity work at all. I believe when the research, publicity and educational work are in full swing, the expenditure of the fund will substantially augment.

To conclude from the above three points, I do not think it necessary to reduce the rate of levy with haste. In fact, as indicated in the 1986 report of the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board, any rate of levy lower than 0.05 per cent will create administrative difficulties in taxation. I would like to throw a question to the authorities as to whether the proposed reduction in the rate of levy would equally create administrative difficulties. On the other hand, the expenditure of the fund will go up if improvements are made in the following aspects, and the worry of excessive surplus will be removed.

First, I have been told by many fellow workers that the level of compensation provided by the fund can hardly make their ends meet. It is learnt that the

amount of compensation generally awarded is about \$50,000 to \$60,000. However, given the fact that people showing the syndrome of pneumoconiosis are, in most cases, incapacitated and aged workers, the amount of compensation can only meet their daily expenses for three to four years, not to mention their need to receive long-term medical treatments. In dealing with the huge surplus accumulated in the fund, I feel that, in addition to the provision of compensation, the board should consider making available long-term support to the pneumoconiotics so as to finance their livings and the medical expenses incurred.

Secondly, while further legislation was enacted by the Government in 1986 to control the use of asbestos and provide that employers are required to arrange regular medical examinations for their employees, it must be noted that the use of asbestos is not the only cause of pneumoconiosis. Prevention is better than cure. It would be more desirable if annual medical examinations could be provided for all workers who have a higher chance of contracting pneumoconiosis. Indeed, many fellow workers have expressed their worry over the possibility of contracting this disease. They would like to have prompt and timely knowledge of their health conditions. Hence, it appears that the accumulated surplus of the fund may well be utilised in the provision of this service.

Furthermore, as it is now within the authority of the fund board to organise or sponsor educational, publicity and research programmes on pneumoconiosis, I hope that, in addition to inviting academic organisations to participate in research work, the board will also assist in other related publicity, promotional and educational activities by way of offering support to voluntary bodies.

Apart from the above, some organisations have proposed the provision of a convalescent home for the pneumoconiotics so that they can be given professional care and treatment for a longer period of time. This will, on the other hand, help centralise the research work on new treatment and convalescent programmes.

All in all, I believe that a surplus in the Fund will contribute towards the general development of preventive and remedial measures. It should not constitute a problem, and should not lead to a reduction in the rate of levy.

Sir, with these remarks, I do not support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, I would like to thank Mr. HO and Mr. TAM for their comments.

I fully share their enthusiasm for prevention. It is obviously much better to prevent someone falling ill than to compensate him afterwards. I will therefore be very happy to consider their proposals for further measures.

I do not myself think it is likely that the incidence of the disease will increase in future. The preventive measures we have already taken have met with most

encouraging success and all the available evidence suggests that the incidence of the disease is likely to continue to fall.

Even with the reduction in levy we are likely to have ample funds for any worthwhile preventive measures we can devise. However, if our forecasts do turn out to be too optimistic, I do not myself see any problem in reviewing the levy and, if necessary, increasing it later. The fact that we have been able to show that levies can go down as well as up actually makes employers more willing to pay rather than less.

This is because employer resistance to levies is largely due to fears of the so called 'ratchet effect', the fear that levies can only go up, never down. By showing that the board and the Government are genuinely neutral and objective on this issue we have greatly reduced employer resistance to the scheme. Indeed the construction industry is now very supportive and has itself taken the initiative in recommending expenditure from the fund on preventive measures. This positive attitude on the part of the industry is very encouraging.

I therefore have no hesitation in recommending to Members the cut proposed in the present resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

First Reading of Bills

PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Bills read the First time and ordered to be set down for Second Reading pursuant to Standing Order 41(3).

PNEUMOCONIOSIS (COMPENSATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER moved the Second Reading of: 'A Bill to amend the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance'.

He said: Sir, I move that the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation)(Amendment) Bill 1988 be read a Second time.

A few minutes ago I moved a resolution to reduce the levy which finances the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund. I am glad now to introduce this Bill, which provides that the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board may make advance payments of up to \$20,000 to victims of pneumoconiosis or their dependants. The board's power to make such payments is at present not expressly stated, and section 17(4) of the Ordinance in any case limits any such

payments to only \$1,000, which is too small to be of much help to victims or their dependants. The power to make advance payments of up to \$20,000 will enable the board to provide assistance earlier than is possible at present. Any sums paid in advance may be deducted from the amount of compensation finally assessed.

The Bill has the support of the Labour Advisory Board.

Sir, I move that the debate on this motion be adjourned.

Question on adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT moved the Second Reading of 'A Bill to amend the Road Traffic Ordinance'.

He said: Sir, I move the Second Reading of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 1988.

The purpose of this Bill is to empower the Governor in Council to make regulations providing for the review by a Transport Tribunal of decisions made by the Commissioner for Transport to amend the terms or conditions of a passenger service licence.

A passenger service licence authorises the holder to operate a non-franchised public bus service, a private bus service or a public light bus service. Under the present Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulations, the commissioner must obtain the prior consent of the licensee before he can amend the terms or conditions of a passenger service licence. If the licensee withholds his consent, the commissioner cannot introduce any changes until the licence expires. This limits his ability to meet public transport needs promptly any may, in some cases, seriously affect the introduction of traffic management schemes.

To allow the commissioner greater flexibility in adjusting the services under this licence to meet changing needs, the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulations will be amended to empower him to alter the terms or conditions of the licence after consulting the licensee. But to protect his interests, the licensee will have the right to apply to the Transport Tribunal for a review of the commissioner's decision. The amendment now proposed in this Bill is to empower the Governor in Council to make regulations providing for such a review.

Sir, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988**Resumption of debate on Second Reading (11 May 1988)**

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988**Resumption of debate on Second Reading (11 May 1988)**

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988**Resumption of debate on Second Reading (11 May 1988)**

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988**Resumption of debate on Second Reading (11 May 1988)**

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Resumption of debate on Second Reading (11 May 1988)

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

Committee stage of Bills

Council went into Committee.

BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Clauses 1 to 9 were agreed to.

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

Clauses 1 to 4 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

Third Reading of Bills

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL reported that the

BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

ROAD TRAFFIC (DRIVING LICENCES REGULATIONS AND REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES REGULATIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988 and the

SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1988

had passed through Committee without amendment. He moved the Third Reading of the Bills.

Question on the Bills proposed, put and agreed to.

Bills read the Third time and passed.

Adjournment and next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 pm on Wednesday, 1 June 1988.

Adjourned accordingly at fourteen minutes past Four o'clock.

(*Note:* The short titles of the motion Bills listed in the Hansard have been translated into Chinese for information and guidance only; they do not have authoritative effect in Chinese.)

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Annex I

Written answer by the Chief Secretary to Mr. Martin LEE's supplementary question to Question 2

These figures are as follows:

	85-86	86-87	87-88
(a) Strength (MPS 48-51)	1 407	1 478	1 605
(b) No. of early retirement	18	23	21
percentage of (a) to (b)	1.28%	1.56%	1.31%

For your ease of comparison, the equivalent service-wide percentages for the last three years are 1.56 per cent, 1.43 per cent and 2.27 per cent respectively.

Annex II

Written answer by the Secretary for Education and Manpower to Mr. SZETO's supplementary question to Question 5

The Aided Schools General Circular No. 12/88 of 11 April 1988 states that heads and senior teachers concerned may, subject to the prior approval of the Director of Education, defray the course fee to the capitation/other charges grant subject to a maximum fee allowance per year of '\$5x maximum school enrolment'. Any excess should be borne by participants themselves. This is actually a reminder to the school management of a long established practice under the code of aid to limit any expenditure for staff training purposes to a formula based on the size of the school (that is the larger the school the more staff it has and hence the bigger sum available for staff training).

I am afraid that this limitation is necessary so as to ensure that the provision of other school activities for students will not be significantly affected.

Annex III

Written answer by the Secretary for Education and Manpower to Mr. HUI's supplementary question to Question 8

The Technical Education and Industrial Training Department operates two government skills centres and administers three subvented ones for disabled people. Currently these centres provide a total of 750 full-time training places and there are plans to increase this figure to over 1 400 places by 1994. In these centres the majority of courses provide operative and semi-skilled training, while 'bridging' courses prepare disabled trainees for entry into the technical

WRITTEN ANSWERS—*Continued*

institutes of the Vocational Training Council. In the technical institutes, some 100 disabled students are pursuing various study programmes at both craft and technician levels. Most of these training provisions aim at equipping disabled people with the required skills for gainful employment in light industries.

Vocational guidance is provided to disabled trainees in the form of individual vocational assessment and counselling, seminars, talks and organised visits to factories and other training institutions. A Trial Work Scheme is also operated in the two government skills centres, the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for trainees to gain experience in the actual work environment, thereby facilitating the transition from training to open employment.

As regards the difficulties encountered, these involve mainly the matching of skill standards which are attainable by the mentally disabled with standards which are required for open employment. To overcome these problems, efforts are continuously being made to develop new programmes to suit the aptitudes and potential of mentally disabled trainees, and to strengthen the independent living skills programmes.

Annex IV**Written answer by the Chief Secretary for Mrs. NG's supplementary question to Question 8**

I now list below a breakdown in 1987-88 as follows:

Blind and partial-sighted	1 146
Deaf and partial-hearing	223
Physically handicapped	1 219
Mentally handicapped	26
Ex-mental patients	189
	<hr/>
Total:	2 803
	(or 1.57 per cent of total civil service strength)

We are working hard trying to increase the number.