

1 HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL -- 8 April 1992

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OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 8 April 1992

The Council met at half-past Two o'clock

PRESENT

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

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

THE CHIEF SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID ROBERT FORD, K.B.E., L.V.O., J.P.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE NATHANIEL WILLIAM HAMISH MACLEOD, C.B.E., J.P.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE HONOURABLE JEREMY FELL MATHEWS, C.M.G., J.P.

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

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE HUI YIN-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, Q.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE NGAI SHIU-KIT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE PANG CHUN-HOI, M.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE SZETO WAH

THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WONG WANG-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD HO SING-TIN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE RONALD JOSEPH ARCULLI, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN GILBERT BARROW, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS PEGGY LAM, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WAH-SUM, O.B.E., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LEONG CHE-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE JAMES DAVID McGREGOR, O.B.E., I.S.O., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS ELSIE TU, C.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE PETER WONG HONG-YUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

PROF THE HONOURABLE EDWARD CHEN KWAN-YIU

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT CHENG HOI-CHUEN

THE HONOURABLE MOSES CHENG MO-CHI

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

REV THE HONOURABLE FUNG CHI-WOOD

THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY HA WING-HO, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL HO MUN-KA

DR THE HONOURABLE HUANG CHEN-YA

DR THE HONOURABLE LAM KUI-CHUN

DR THE HONOURABLE CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING

THE HONOURABLE LAU CHIN-SHEK

THE HONOURABLE MISS EMILY LAU WAI-HING

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

THE HONOURABLE GILBERT LEUNG KAM-HO

THE HONOURABLE ERIC LI KA-CHEUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING

PROF THE HONOURABLE FELICE LIEH MAK, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MAN SAI-CHEONG

THE HONOURABLE STEVEN POON KWOK-LIM

THE HONOURABLE TIK CHI -YUEN

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

DR THE HONOURABLE SAMUEL WONG PING-WAI, M.B.E., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PHILIP WONG YU-HONG

DR THE HONOURABLE YEUNG SUM

THE HONOURABLE HOWARD YOUNG

THE HONOURABLE ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE MARVIN CHEUNG KIN-TUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE

THE HONOURABLE SIMON IP SIK-ON, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE NG MING-YUM

THE HONOURABLE HENRY TANG YING-YEN, J.P.

IN ATTENDANCE

MR MICHAEL LEUNG MAN-KIN, C.B.E., J.P.  
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT

MR ALISTAIR PETER ASPREY, O.B.E., A.E., J.P.  
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

MRS ELIZABETH WONG CHIEN CHI-LIEN, I.S.O., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

MR MICHAEL SZE CHO-CHEUNG, I.S.O., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

MR ANTHONY GORDON EASON, J.P.

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS

MR BRIAN GEORGE JENNEY

SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY

MISS CHRISTINE CHOW KWAN-TAI, J.P.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

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

Subsidiary Legislation L.N. No.

Merchant Shipping (BCH Code) (Amendment) Regulation 1992.....	85/92
Merchant Shipping (IBC Code) (Amendment) Regulation 1992.....	86/92
Merchant Shipping (Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) (Amendment) Regulation 1992.....	87/92
Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 1992.....	88/92

Shipping and Port Control (Typhoon Shelters)  
Regulations (Amendment of Schedule)  
Order

1992..... 90/92

Specification of Public Office.....  
91/92

Professional Accountants (Amendment) Ordinance  
1992 (14 of 1992) (Commencement)  
Notice

1992..... 92/92

#### Sessional Papers 1991-92

No. 65 -- Director of Hospital Services  
1990-1991 Departmental Report

No. 66 -- Report on the Samaritan Fund and Income and  
Expenditure Account for the year ended  
31 March 1991 with Certificate of the Director of Audit

No. 67 -- Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation  
Annual Report 1990-91

No. 68 -- Estimates for the year ending 31 March 1993  
General Revenue Account  
Summaries Revenue by Heads and Subheads

No. 69 -- Report of changes to the approved Estimates of  
Expenditure approved during the  
second quarter of 1991-92  
Public Finance Ordinance : Section 8

#### Addresses by Members

## Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation Annual Report 1990-91

MR RONALD ARCULLI: Mr Deputy President, as a member of Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) it is both a privilege and pleasure for me to present the first report of the HKCAA to this Council.

### HKCAA Annual Report 1990-91

The Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation Ordinance 1990 was enacted on 8 June 1990, at which date the HKCAA became operational.

#### The HKCAA role

The main role of the HKCAA is to validate degree programmes and review the general academic standards of the six non-university tertiary institutions. In addition, the HKCAA is involved in monitoring the development of degree level education and academic standards, at home and abroad, for the benefit of Hong Kong. It also acts as an advisory body for the Government on all matters pertaining to academic accreditation.

It carries out accreditation at the City Polytechnic, the Baptist College, the Hong Kong Polytechnic, Lingnan College, the Academy for Performing Arts and the Open Learning Institute.

#### Programme and institution reviews

Before reviewing the HKCAA's activities for the year June 1990 to July 1991, I would like to point out that the original estimate of the number of review exercises for this period was one institutional and five programme reviews. However, owing to the tertiary expansion programme and the inclusion of the Open Learning Institute, the Academy for Performing Arts and Lingnan College within the HKCAA's remit, 29 programme reviews and three institutional reviews were carried out. This dramatic increase in the workload placed considerable pressure on the HKCAA staff. In order to meet this commitment without prejudicing standards, the complement of HKCAA staff was increased from 14 to 20 and the staff worked longer hours.

The 29 programme reviews carried out by the HKCAA varied in complexity and length. Before being presented to the HKCAA, programme proposals have normally undergone



rigorous internal review processes in the institutions. It is the HKCAA's policy to work in partnership with the institutions to ensure the quality of higher education in Hong Kong. In this spirit, review exercises are considered individually by the HKCAA, bearing in mind the aims, objectives, and particular circumstances of the programme and the institution.

#### The development of the institutions

A guiding principle of the HKCAA is to develop the non-university tertiary institutions to develop the capability and confidence to take full responsibility for their own academic standards.

During the year the HKCAA developed criteria and procedures to help the established non-university tertiary institutions make progress towards institutional accreditation.

#### International dimension

The outward looking nature of Hong Kong and its strong links with the rest of the world have led naturally to the involvement of an international dimension. To this end, the HKCAA maintains an international register of over 750 specialists, comprising academics and non-academics, from which suitable persons are selected to form review panels, with just under half of these from Hong Kong.

#### Seminars and conferences

During the year the HKCAA held seven seminars. Five on accreditation concepts and mechanisms, and two on credit transfer and credit unit degree programmes.

In July the HKCAA held an international conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. His Excellency the Governor opened the conference and the Secretary for Education and Manpower spoke at the conference dinner. Participation was by invitation only. Key people and organizations concerned with quality assurance in higher education throughout the world attended. In all, there were 103 participants from 23 countries. An aim of the conference was to pave the way for an international network of those concerned with quality assurance in higher education. The conference unanimously agreed that Hong Kong should administer the network initially.

## Advice

The HKCAA advice was sought throughout the year on many occasions regarding the standards of qualifications. In particular, the Civil Service Branch and the Education and Manpower Branch of the Government have made a considerable number of enquiries to which the HKCAA has been able to respond.

Owing to concern about the legislation for, and the need to inform the Hong Kong public about, overseas tertiary institutions operating in Hong Kong, the Education and Manpower Branch undertook a review of the Regulations for Overseas Tertiary Institutions operating in Hong Kong. Also, the Education Department established a Working Party on Overseas Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers. The HKCAA participated in both these initiatives.

## Publications

During the year the HKCAA also published three newsletters, a handbook and 26 guidance and information documents.

## Finance

Turning to the HKCAA's financial report for the year ended March 1991. The HKCAA is non-profit making and tax exempt. It is funded through charging fees approved by the Government, for accreditation and related services. Its main client is the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee.

The income and expenditure account for the year shows an excess of income over expenditure amounting to some \$7.19 million. The majority of this excess was not a surplus as a significant proportion of the expenditure of reviews occurs towards the completion of an exercise and mostly it constitutes "fees in advance" for the expenditure at the commencement of the next financial year.

The actual "surplus" is therefore \$1.18 million and it has been applied to costs of accreditation for the following year, thus reducing the average cost of accreditation exercises for 1992-93.

Lastly, Mr Deputy President, I would like to make use of this opportunity to express gratitude to all the staff and panel members of the HKCAA, including those

from overseas, who have contributed much to the work of the HKCAA.

Report of changes to the approved Estimates of Expenditure approved during the second quarter of 1991-92

Public Finance Ordinance : Section 8

SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY: Mr Deputy President, in accordance with section 8(8)(b) of the Public Finance Ordinance, I now table for Members' information a summary of all changes made to the approved estimates of expenditure for the second quarter of the financial year 1991-92.

Supplementary provision of \$811.9 million was approved. It was fully offset, either by savings under the same or other heads of expenditure, or by the deletion of funds under the Additional Commitments subheads. This included \$407.3 million for the Vocational Training Council to take over the responsibility for vocational training for the disabled and the statutory apprenticeship scheme.

During the period, non-recurrent commitments were increased by \$20.7 million, new non-recurrent commitments of \$110.9 million were approved, and approved non-recurrent commitments of \$32.9 million were revoked.

In the same period, a net increase of 229 posts was approved.

Items in the summary have been approved either by Finance Committee or under delegated authority. The latter have been reported to the Finance Committee in accordance with section 8(8)(b) of the Public Finance Ordinance.

MRS ELSIE TU: Mr Deputy President, may I have your consent to move that Standing Order 16(3) be suspended?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You have my consent.

MRS ELSIE TU: Mr Deputy President, I am grateful for your consent for me to move a motion for the suspension of Standing Order 16(3). The purpose of the motion is to

remove the restriction on the number of questions for which an oral reply may be required so that six questions on the Order Paper may receive an oral reply whilst limiting question time to approximately one hour, at your discretion, Mr Deputy President.

I believe that my colleagues and the Administration concur that the trial scheme of having six oral questions raised within one hour at the Legislative Council on 11 March 1992 was satisfactory. It was agreed at the Legislative Council In-House meeting held on 20 March 1992 that the same arrangement should be tried out for the second time at this Legislative Council sitting. I hope that the arrangement will be equally successful. After this trial, a review will be conducted to determine whether the arrangement should be made into a standing practice by amending the relevant Standing Orders of this Council.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I beg to move.

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Oral answers to questions

Contempt of court proceedings against two English newspapers

1. MISS EMILY LAU asked: Regarding the Crown's contempt of court cases against the South China Morning Post and the Asian Wall Street Journal heard in the High Court in December 1991, will the Administration inform this Council:

(a) why the Attorney General decided to drop the charges against the two newspapers;

(b) since the court action began over a year ago, why the Attorney General did not decide to drop the charges earlier so that the two newspapers need not have incurred the costs of hiring lawyers to represent them; and

(c) how much these legal proceedings have cost the taxpayers in terms of costs being awarded to the South China Morning Post by the court?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, in December 1990 contempt proceedings were brought against the South China Morning Post and the Asian Wall Street Journal arising out of articles that had been written in October and November 1990 in those newspapers referring to accused persons in pending criminal proceedings involving large-scale commercial fraud. I should add that these criminal proceedings have not yet come to trial and are still subject to the law of contempt and to the reporting restrictions as imposed by the court.

As required under the Supreme Court Rules, I applied for and obtained the consent of a High Court Judge for the contempt proceedings to be issued.

By late November 1991 the contempt proceedings had taken much longer to come to trial than originally had been anticipated. I was aware that in the intervening period both newspapers had exercised great care. I formed the view then that if both newspapers were to undertake to continue to exercise a high degree of care in complying with the law of contempt in respect of pending trials a settlement would satisfy the overriding public interest of ensuring that the very important criminal proceedings to which I have just referred should not be prejudiced. It was with these circumstances in the forefront of my mind that I proposed to both newspapers that if they were to agree to give the undertaking to which I have referred, I would seek the court's consent to withdraw the proceedings. The newspapers agreed to give acceptable undertakings and with the court's consent the proceedings were withdrawn.

The main factor which influenced my decision in December 1991 to withdraw the proceedings on the terms proposed was the great care exercised by both newspapers in the year between the publication of the articles and the case coming to trial. In view of that care, the public interest in my pursuing the case was diminished and in the circumstances, I could see no purpose in incurring the costs of a full trial with the sole purpose of determining whether or not I had been justified in my original decision to institute the proceedings.

The legal costs awarded to the South China Morning Post have yet to be agreed or assessed by the court.

MISS EMILY LAU: Mr Deputy President, will the Attorney General please inform this

Council what kind of undertaking has been extracted from the two newspapers and whether it is the first time that the Government has extracted undertakings from newspapers on the way they report? And also, does the Attorney General realize that the way he has handled this case could reasonably be construed as the Government using the very potent weapon of contempt of court to scare off the press from publishing stories which the Administration does not want to see appearing?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, the undertakings were broadly in the terms that I have already described them. I am unable to say whether or not there were precedents for undertakings being sought previously. I have certainly not done so. As to the third part of the supplementary question, the law of contempt attempts to strike a fair balance between a fair trial and a free press.

MR MARTIN LEE: Bearing in mind that the undertaking the Attorney General had wanted the South China Morning Post to give -- that is, to continue to exercise a high degree of care in reporting pending trials -- had already been offered by the newspaper right from the very beginning, and bearing in mind that an opinion from leading counsel from London for the newspaper had been supplied to the Attorney General's Chambers in which counsel expressed the view that the contempt proceedings were doomed to fail, will the Attorney General inform this Council why he had not accepted this offer at that early stage thereby saving taxpayers at least half a million dollars in court costs which the Attorney General would now be expected to pay?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, as I have said in my main answer, the main factor in December 1991 was the passage of one year in which both newspapers had been scrupulous and responsible in exercising great care. It was then, that is December 1991, that I formed the view that if both newspapers were to give the undertakings to which I have already referred, this would satisfy the overriding public interest of ensuring that the very important criminal proceedings should not be prejudiced.

MR RONALD ARCULLI: Mr Deputy President, would the Attorney General be able to give us some inkling as to what the legal costs might be that might have to be paid to the Morning Post?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, the position is that, as I have already indicated, the costs are to be taxed if not agreed; we are still in the process of trying to agree costs with the Morning Post and in those circumstances I think it would be inappropriate for me to go into the details of what the sum eventually might be.

MISS EMILY LAU: Mr Deputy President, given the general uncertainty surrounding the whole issue of contempt of court -- an issue which I raised during the motion debate on press freedom in February -- will the Attorney General explain to this Council the basis that he uses to initiate contempt of court proceedings against news organizations? And also, will he give this Council an undertaking to give us a written reply on the cases in which the Administration extracts undertakings from newspapers on the way they report?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, applications for contempt proceedings of course are founded on the common law of contempt; that is part of the law of Hong Kong and is a law which, I suggest, is well understood by the media. As to the second part of the question, I will ascertain whether the information sought can be readily made available. (Annex I)

MRS MIRIAM LAU: Mr Deputy President, can the Attorney General inform this Council why the question of legal costs was not included in the package to be agreed by the newspapers before the proceedings were withdrawn?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Mr Deputy President, the proceedings were instituted, as I have already said, with the consent of a High Court Judge. The proceedings were therefore properly instituted. In the circumstances, I concluded that the question as to whether or not the Crown should be obliged to pay was one that ought properly to be left to the court.

DR CONRAD LAM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, contempt proceedings were initiated by the Attorney General against the two newspapers and withdrawn subsequently; if in the future similar proceedings are initiated against Chinese

newspapers or other newspapers smaller in scale, will the Administration act likewise by withdrawing the proceedings in the end?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Each case must be considered on its own merits, Mr Deputy President.

#### Article 23 of the Basic Law

2. MR JAMES TO asked (in Cantonese): Article 23 of the Basic Law states that "the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies". Will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether the Government will introduce legislation to control the activities prohibited by Article 23 of the Basic Law before 1997 or leave the issue for action by the future Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;

(b) if it is the former case, when such laws will be drafted and introduced to this Council; whether this Council will be fully consulted before the Bills are finalized; and

(c) what kind of political organizations or bodies will thus be prohibited from establishing ties with foreign political organizations and bodies?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, treason and sedition are offences under the Crimes Ordinance. Theft of official secrets is an offence under the Official Secrets Acts which apply to Hong Kong. The Government has no plans to introduce legislation to cover the other matters mentioned.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the public is very concerned about recent press reports in the United Kingdom that some Hong Kong people have been blacklisted. In this connection, will the Administration enact before 1997 laws that



would have no retrospective effect, and allow them to be in force for some time before 1997, as in the case of the Bill of Rights Ordinance, so that Hong Kong people would have more confidence in the transition to 1997?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Have you understood the question, Secretary for Security?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, is the question asking whether we will introduce legislation on these matters before 1997?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would you clarify please, Mr TO?

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the main point of my question is that, if legislation introduced before 1997 should come into force for some time which allows for some experience gained and precedent cases set, it will help boost the confidence of the people of Hong Kong in the transition to 1997 because that would ensure that no sudden change would be brought to our legal system. Would the Administration share this view?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, as I said in my main answer, we do not at present have any plans to introduce legislation on these matters before 1997 but that is not excluded either.

MR HOWARD YOUNG: Mr Deputy President, with regard to his reference to the Official Secrets Acts in the main answer, can the Secretary confirm whether the act is in fact a United Kingdom act that applies to Hong Kong and therefore will lapse automatically in 1997, or whether it is a local law that will be able to continue on?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Yes, Mr Deputy President, there are in fact several United Kingdom Official Secrets Acts which apply to Hong Kong; they have been applied by Order in Council. They will lapse before 1997 if we do not take action before that time to localize them. We are considering the localization of this legislation

before 1997.

REV FUNG CHI-WOOD (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Secretary mentioned in his reply that the Administration did not have any plans to introduce legislation to cover the other matters. May we know the reason for it?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, we have a number of laws that we must localize before 1997, and we have a number of laws that we must adapt before 1997. There is a list of such laws but they are a low priority and we have not got round to considering their introduction yet.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I would like to follow up on what the Secretary has said in his reply. Would the Secretary think that sensitive charges like those relating to the offences of treason and sedition are given very little attention for political, technical or other reasons?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, as I said in my main answer, treason and sedition are already offences. We will need to consider whether the law on these offences requires adaptation before 1997. We have not done so yet.

Abuse of psychoactive drugs

3. DR LAM KUI-CHUN asked: Will the Administration inform this Council whether the Government has any plans to provide facilities for preventing or dealing with further abuse of psychoactive drugs in Hong Kong, particularly in view of recent evidence from the Central Registry of Drug Abuse suggesting that they may be used increasingly as gateway drugs to heroin and other narcotics?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, at present, there is no clear evidence in Hong Kong to suggest that psychoactive drugs are being used as gateway drugs to heroin and other narcotics.

However, there is an increasing, though still small, number of psychoactive drug abusers, aged under 21, who have come to the attention of the Central Registry of Drug Abuse since the mid-1980s. We are taking steps to address this problem.

One of the principal means of dealing with any drug abuse is preventive education. We give regular anti-drug talks to secondary school and technical institute students. These talks disseminate information about the harmful effects of drug abuse, and aim to assist youngsters to develop skills to resist peer pressure to experiment with drugs. We now include in these talks an explanation of the dangers of psychoactive drug abuse. We are planning to extend these school talks to Primary VI students in the next academic year. Our wider community publicity also now focuses on young psychoactive drug abusers.

We have also introduced legislative measures and taken law enforcement action to suppress the supply of psychoactive drugs for non-medical purposes. In 1990, we scheduled three of the psychoactive drugs in the Benzodiazepine group as dangerous drugs and earlier this year, we scheduled all of the remaining Benzodiazepines on the market and liable to abuse. This resulted in stricter controls over the supply and use of such drugs. We are also planning to introduce similar controls over cough medicines with more than 0.1% Codeine or Dextromethorphan, which are also increasingly being abused by youngsters.

For victims of addiction to psychoactive drugs, the Hong Kong Christian Service, with the support of the Government and the Action Committee Against Narcotics, set up the first counselling centre devoted to treating psychoactive drug abuse in March 1988. The centre provides counselling and educational programmes for psychoactive drug abusers, mostly young people, who seek advice and assistance. It also refers clients to private or government practitioners for medical and psychiatric treatment.

DR LAM KUI-CHUN: Mr Deputy President, the preventive education for students mentioned in the reply by the Secretary has been in operation for years; yet during this period the number of new abusers of psychoactive drugs as recorded in the CRDA has been increasing. If the same methods continue to be used in future, how different does the Administration expect the future results to be and why does it so expect?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, I believe that the present counselling

work in schools is effective. I do not think there is a very clear continuing trend of increasing numbers of new people using psychoactive drugs. The figures for the last three years show that:

in 1989 there were 929 such cases  
in 1990 there were 1 024, and  
in 1991 there were 1 025,

which does not indicate any significant increasing trend. Our anti-drug talks in schools do not simply consist of the specific anti-drug talks which I mentioned in my main answer. We also train teachers in drug education and the anti-drug message is included in many parts of the school curriculum, for example, under health education in primary schools and under such subjects as social studies, economic and public affairs, and biology in secondary schools.

MR HUI YIN-FAT: Mr Deputy President, in view of the increase in the abuse of psychoactive drugs in Hong Kong, particularly for the age group of 14-17 years old, could the Secretary inform this Council:

(a) how youths at risk are being identified and provided with preventive education and early treatment; and

(b) what the Government's views are on establishing a Chemical Dependency Treatment Centre, a Residential Treatment Centre for Psychoactive Drug Abusers as proposed by the Community Drug Advisory Council?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, the young persons who are abusing psychoactive drugs are identified mainly through social workers, in particular out-reaching social workers and those dealing with young people. They are also identified through Probation Officers and school social workers who provide advice and assistance to young persons. There are also many voluntary organizations active in this sphere, such as the Hong Kong Christian Service and the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers. As regards the second part of the question, as I said in my main answer, we have recently established a counselling service for psychoactive drug abuse. We have not at this stage considered the establishment of a residential treatment centre; that is a suggestion which I think will require

further consideration.

MR RONALD ARCULLI: Mr Deputy President, as regards his reference to there being no clear evidence in Hong Kong to suggest that psychoactive drugs are being used as a gateway to heroin or other narcotics, would the Secretary be good enough to inform this Council whether there is evidence elsewhere, and if so, whether there is a difference in pattern between Hong Kong psychoactive drug abusers and drug abusers of the same type elsewhere?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, I think there has been some evidence in other countries of a link between psychoactive drug abuse and narcotic drug abuse. But I would emphasize that I believe this is in some cases only; it is not a definite cause or link. In Hong Kong we certainly have had some claims referred to us that there are persons who have switched from psychoactive drugs to narcotic drugs, but we believe these are isolated occurrences which do not at this stage indicate a firm trend. This is an area where we are considering conducting further research but I would caution that to get any results from research is likely to take a considerable length of time.

DR CONRAD LAM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, will the Administration inform this Council of the channels through which psychoactive drugs have found their ways into the hands of young people, and of the steps the Administration has taken to plug the loopholes?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, these are, I think in most cases, prescription drugs which have found their way into the hands of people who are using them not for medical purposes. We have taken a number of measures to try to curb this. As I said in my main answer, we have scheduled many of these drugs as dangerous drugs and we are also considering further tightening up the controls over cough medicines which are abused. There certainly have been a number of cases in past years when it is clear that doctors were prescribing drugs for non-medical purposes. A number of such cases have been investigated and referred to the Medical Council.

Care and attention homes

4. MR WONG WAI-YIN asked (in Cantonese): In view of the shortage of infirmaries as well as care-and-attention homes, which has led to the growth of private homes for the elderly in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of places provided at present by infirmaries and care and attention homes; the number of applicants on the waiting list for these places; and the anticipated number of new institutions to be set up and the number of places to be provided in the next five years;

(b) of the number of places and standard of service provided by private homes for the elderly; and how the Government monitors their operations;

(c) of the number of institutions joining the Voluntary Registration Scheme; whether the Government is satisfied with the service provided by the registered institutions; and of the number of bought places;

(d) of the number of private homes for the elderly which have been closed down in the past five years and the reasons of their closure; whether there have been cases of inmates of these institutions seeking government assistance for rehousing; and what assistance has been provided to them; and

(e) lastly, what plans the Government has to help private homes for the elderly improve their standard of service?

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Mr Deputy President, I shall answer the five-part question seriatim:

(a) At present, there are 1 140 infirmary beds managed by the Hospital Authority and 3 749 places in care and attention homes. As at 31 March 1992, there were 3 107 applicants on the waiting list for infirmary beds and 8 928 applicants on the waiting list for care and attention home places. In the next five years, it is scheduled that there will be 876 additional infirmary beds and 48 new care and attention homes with some 5 772 additional places.

(b) According to the information available to the Social Welfare Department, there were 349 private homes for the elderly as at 31 March 1992, providing a total

of 13 025 places. The facilities and standard of service provided by private homes vary considerably. Some provide spacious living conditions with adequate staffing and fair range of facilities. Others are relatively crowded and provide only minimal care and facilities.

In order to monitor the operations of private homes for the elderly, the Social Welfare Department conducts visits on a quarterly basis to these homes. The Fire Services Department and the Buildings and Lands Department also visit private homes on a referral basis to inspect fire and building safety.

(c) As at 31 March 1992, 33 private homes were registered under the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Private Homes. On the whole, the Government is satisfied with the services provided by these registered private homes.

The Bought Place Scheme for private homes for the elderly was introduced as an experiment in October 1989 to provide financial incentives to registered private homes in order to raise their standard of service and to increase the overall supply of residential accommodation for the elderly. As at 31 March 1992, 477 places were bought from 29 registered private homes and a further 23 places will be bought in the near future.

(d) We do not have complete figures for the past five years. According to the information available to the Registration Office of Private Homes for the Elderly, 117 private homes have closed down since June 1988 for various reasons. Most of the homes ceased business because of operators' loss of interest in the business and increased operating costs.

Most of the elderly residents affected by these closures were transferred to other private homes by their families. Government assistance was sought in only a small number of cases. In these cases, the Social Welfare Department assisted in placing the residents in other private homes or in subvented homes. Financial assistance was also provided where necessary.

(e) The Government has long been involved in helping private homes to improve their standard of service. In October 1986, a voluntary Code of Practice for Private Homes for the Elderly was introduced as a guide to maintaining a satisfactory level of service. It sets out standards for space, staffing, safety and fire precautions.

In June 1988, the Registration Office of Private Homes for the Elderly was established for keeping records of private homes, conducting regular inspections and providing advice to home operators.

As mentioned earlier, the Voluntary Registration Scheme and the Bought Place Scheme were introduced in 1988 and 1989 respectively to help maintain service standard and to provide incentives for private homes operators to improve their services.

Since 1988, annual training courses for health workers in private homes have been organized jointly by the Social Welfare Department and the College of Nursing, Hong Kong. There are plans to expand such training courses.

Finally, I hope to introduce legislation to regulate all residential care homes for the elderly in the next legislative Session to ensure compliance with specified minimum standards.

MR WONG WAI-YIN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, will the Administration inform this Council of the number of complaints it received in respect of private homes for the elderly over the last five years and of the ways the Administration usually deals with these cases? Will the Administration advise the Consumer Council to disclose the names of those institutions that have been complained against time and again?

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Mr Deputy President, since the establishment of the Registration Office for Private Homes for the Elderly in 1988, a total of 106 complaints have been received. When complaint is received, the staff of the Social Welfare Department will visit the home, first of all to investigate the case and compile a report. Officers of the Social Welfare Department will take follow-up action and advise the operators on the best means of dealing with the problems that have been identified. Where appropriate, they will draw this to the attention of the relevant authorities.

MR LAU CHIN-SHEK (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, as regards the provision of infirmary places in the next five years, I understand that as at 31 March 1992, only one fourth of the demand for infirmary places is met; furthermore, the Administration can only satisfy the demand of 40% of those on the waiting list for



places in the care and attention homes. Will the Administration inform this Council of the estimated number of applicants for infirmary and care and attention home places in the next five years and of the present policy the Administration adopts to tackle the problem? And will the number of applicants on the waiting lists then be more than that of the present?

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Mr Deputy President, first of all may I explain the government policy for setting up care and attention homes on a subsidized basis. To qualify for a government subsidy and for admission to a government subsidized care and attention home the applicant should be elderly, over the age of 60, suffering from poor health, and with no family members to provide assistance. Priority is accorded to those with lower income. In the meantime we have, in the last couple of years, amended our planning ratio. The planning ratio used to be eight per 1 000 elderly people in Hong Kong; it has been improved to 11 places per 1 000 applicants in Hong Kong. So one finds that in Hong Kong's situation, as far as we can plan ahead, there will always be a shortage. May I refer to the often discussed theory -- what can be described by health economists as the theory or dilemma of perpetual motion, which means the better the service the more it is in need, and the more it is in need the more enhanced the shortage. To tackle the problem of perennial shortage, we feel that we must approach the problem from a multi-pronged angle. We attack the problem from five different angles. First of all, we accelerate our building programme, not only in terms of care and attention homes but also infirmary places. We introduce innovative measures, such as buying places in private homes. We also introduce infirmary units in care and attention centres. We have a system whereby we encourage non-profit-making private homes to operate in Hong Kong and a number of these organizations are already picking up. We have a system whereby we encourage private homes not only just to exist but also to improve their standards, and we introduce law accordingly. More importantly, we need to interface with the community so that we can introduce a whole series of community care. In brief, Mr Deputy President, there will be a shortage; there will continue to be a shortage as is mathematically calculated in my main answer. But we need to devise a system whereby we can catch up with the demand for care and attention places, which is always supply led.

MR TIK CHI -YUEN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Administration has said that it would introduce legislation to control private homes for the elderly. Has it estimated how many of them would fail to meet the criteria and thus have to close

down following the introduction of the legislation? And how will the Administration take care of the elderly so affected?

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Mr Deputy President, we have borne in mind the need to introduce legislation in such a way as to avoid the possibility of displacement of elderly people. Elderly persons should not be displaced through legislation; the idea therefore is to introduce legislation so that the implementation of standards would be phased in. I think it is very important to have in mind the question of meeting the standards and meeting the practical realities of the situation. It is towards this end that we have over the last two years been devising a number of innovative practices in order to make sure that the displacement question will not arise.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, has the Administration conducted any review on the bought place pilot scheme for private homes for the elderly which has been implemented for two years? If yes, will the Administration disclose the result of the review?

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: I presume the question refers to buying places in private homes. We have indeed introduced the buying places scheme from 1989 and the money came from the Lotteries Fund Grant. Initially we were purchasing some \$30.6 million worth of places -- some 500 places -- from registered homes. We have already spent \$37.7 million and we have got over 400 places bought. We intend to fulfil the 500-place scheme. An assessment will be conducted then to determine whether the scheme should be continued.

Noise generated by the Western Harbour Crossing project

5. DR YEUNG SUM asked (in Cantonese): On the decision to require the franchisee for the Western Harbour Crossing project to provide remedies to residents affected by noise generated by the project, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) what criteria will be used to determine whether a residential unit will be affected and which residential blocks are most likely to be affected;

(b) which office will be responsible for determining the units to be given remedies and what channels of appeal will be available; and

(c) whether machinery will be set up in the district to brief the residents regularly on progress of the project and to answer residents' queries?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, to decide whether a residential unit will be affected by noise generated by the Western Harbour Crossing project, it must first be established that the use of the unit is principally residential and that it will be affected by an increase in noise level largely attributable to the project. In the initial determination of which premises may be affected, the Environmental Protection Department has used the internationally recognized method which is set out in detail in section 4 on Noise in Chapter 9 on Environment in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. According to the initial assessment, the residential blocks most likely to be affected are along Connaught Road West and Des Voeux Road West adjacent to the project. They are numbers 60 to 188 Connaught Road West and 426 to 466 Des Voeux Road West.

Detailed arrangements and responsibilities for determining which units are to be provided with noise mitigation measures are being worked out. They will be settled soon and certainly well before the construction contract is let. A specialist consultant will be commissioned shortly to survey each of the units potentially affected, to confirm its use and to determine the extent and cost of mitigation work needed to meet predicted noise levels. The consultant's recommendations and calculations will be checked by the Government to ensure that they will meet the environmental requirements and give value for money. Thereafter offer letters will be sent to the affected premises indicating the amount offered and the work to be done. The amount will be the cost to the Government were the Government to do the work. A telephone contact number will be provided in the offer letter, to enable residents or owners to seek clarification or the resolution of any problems.

Residents in the area will be kept informed of progress on the project through the regular briefings of the Central and Western District Board. Leaflets containing briefing information will also be distributed in the area on a quarterly basis and will be available at the Central and Western District Office. The project office will also be able to deal with queries and complaints arising from the construction

works on the spot and ensure that remedial action is taken promptly.

DR YEUNG SUM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Administration suggests that the residents should use improved window frames and air-conditioners. But if the residents still feel that the noise level exceeds the standard set by the Environmental Protection Department even after all the windows have been closed, does the Administration have other remedial measures to minimize the effects on them?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, this will be a question of expertise in the assessment of what is required. As I said earlier, we will be employing an expert in the field of noise and noise mitigation, and we would expect the results of that work to produce adequate effects. I should however point out that the noise levels at the site at present are extremely high, and on that basis we would expect the work to be done to have an immediate impact of improving the situation.

DR HUANG CHEN-YA (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, one of the measures the Administration will consider is noise absorbent road surface. Will the Administration inform this Council whether sound proof walls or noise barriers can be used?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, in road schemes of this kind, the inclusion of noise mitigation measures as part of the project is standard. However the situation in this particular case is such that the premises likely to be affected are so close to the roadworks that the built-in mitigation measures will not be sufficient and cannot be augmented other than by the mitigation measures built into the premises affected, which we propose to do in this case.

DR SAMUEL WONG: Mr Deputy President, on the cost of the mitigation work needed to meet the predicted noise level, will the cash be given to the residents or to the owners? Must it be spent on the purchase of air-conditioning units and/or modification work to the windows or could it be simply pocketed by either the tenants or the owners?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, in this case we propose that the cash which will be provided for window improvements should be made available to the owners of the premises, and cash for the installation of air-conditioners to the occupants. And as to the second part of the question, before any cash is paid out it will be necessary to monitor installation and ensure that the works which are recommended by our experts are the works which are installed.

MR RONALD ARCULLI: Mr Deputy President, would the Secretary tell us whether the information he has been giving us this afternoon has been supplied to the Central and Western District Board, to the Central and Western District Office, and indeed to the residents that might be affected, and if so, when that was done? If not, when is this sort of information process going to start?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Central and Western District Board was briefed on the project on 5 December 1991, and the board itself was briefed on the proposed noise mitigation measures on 26 March 1992. The question of informing the individual occupants of the premises is related to our appointment of our Expert Surveyor. I believe general information has been made available to those in the area so far, but the details will need to be communicated to individual occupants once the Expert Surveyor has completed his work, and we will be aiming to do that between mid-1992 this year and mid-1993, well before the major construction works on the project begin.

MR HOWARD YOUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, as regards the provision of funds for the noise mitigation measures, has the Administration taken into account the fact that there may be disputes between owners and residents when one party favours the measures while the other does not? If that should happen, does the Administration have in mind any measures to tackle the problem?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, I think we can assume that most of those affected, and who will be offered mitigation measures, will welcome these measures and will wish to see them instituted as rapidly as possible. However, should there be disputes amongst parties involved, then I am certain that

the mechanism that we will be setting up, which will involve the Project Office, the District Office and other departments involved in this sort of situation, will be brought to bear on problems of dispute.

MR MAN SAI-CHEONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, could I ask whether the Administration has any contingency measures if the affected owners and the consultative bodies in the district which include the district board object to its proposals?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, I am not entirely clear on what basis objection is expected to arise but should there be objections from those affected, as I have said a moment ago, I am sure that the mechanism which will involve departments who normally have a part to play in these situations will be brought to bear to try and resolve those problems.

#### Electoral Provisions Ordinance

6. MR HOWARD YOUNG asked: Under section 19(1)(e) of the Electoral Provisions Ordinance, a person shall be disqualified for being elected or being nominated as a candidate or holding office as a member of the Hong Kong Legislature if he is a member of any parliament, assembly or council, of any place outside Hong Kong or a salaried functionary of a government of such place. Will the Government please inform this Council if it will consider removing such disqualification criteria before the 1995 elections?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, it is the intention of the Administration to review the specific provision in the Electoral Provisions Ordinance which Mr YOUNG refers to before the next round of elections.

MR HOWARD YOUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, does the timetable for the review, with the deadline set before the next round of elections, imply that the review may last from today onwards to 1995? Has consideration been given to the timing factor as many people who are interested in entering the elections often have their

minds made up a year or more before the elections?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, we shall certainly do our best to arrive at a view well before the 1995 elections.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, regarding the review on the Electoral Provisions Ordinance, can decisions be arrived at before the elections to the National People's Congress next year so that people concerned, including Members of this Council, could decide what to do?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, I have already said that we will do our utmost to arrive at a view as soon as possible but I cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet a timetable which is not particularly relevant to Hong Kong.

MISS EMILY LAU (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, while some members of the public dislike very much the fact that some Members enjoy "triple membership" by being a Member of the Legislative Council, the Executive Council and district board or the Urban Council at the same time, and have much reservation about how these Members can possibly handle such a heavy workload, the Administration is going to review whether Members should be allowed to serve on the National People's Congress as well. Will the Administration inform this Council whether public interest has been well taken care of if some are allowed to wear so many hats?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, we shall certainly take account of what Miss Emily LAU has said in the course of our review.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, as an answer to the whole question, the Secretary simply said that the matter would be taken account of in the review. Could Members be informed whether the disqualification criteria should be removed given that by now the Secretary, in conducting the review, should have examined some of the arguments for or against this removal?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, the timetable and programme of the current review is public and has been agreed and discussed with the Legislative Council Select Committee on electoral matters. It is clear that we have not yet gone into detail on this particular issue. It would therefore be imprudent of me to give details as requested.

MR SZETO WAH (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, given that the Chinese Government at present still refuses to recognize the Legislative Council, could the Administration inform this Council whether NPC deputies will be interested in being Members of this Council?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am not sure that you need answer, Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, because it is outside the ambit of the main question.

MR MARTIN LEE (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, could the Administration inform this Council whether, in negotiating with the Chinese authorities on this matter, the authorities will be asked to consider allowing NPC deputies representing Hong Kong to be returned by way of direct elections so that those Members considered to be unable to get on the "through train" will be able to participate in the NPC elections?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am afraid that is outside the ambit of the main question.

MR JIMMY MCGREGOR: Mr Deputy President, what is the background to the need by the Government to review this specific provision? Is the Government persuaded that a Hong Kong resident holding a political appointment in the Government of China should not be excluded from being a Legislative Council candidate in the 1995 elections? Or are we speaking about people holding political office in other governments?

SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President, we have committed ourselves to doing a root-and-branch review and I think it is right and proper for us to look into this particular provision.



Written answers to questions

Air-conditioned bus services

7. MISS EMILY LAU asked: In view of public criticism of the steep fares charged for air-conditioned public buses, will the Government inform this Council of its policy on air-conditioned bus services with regard to:

(a) how bus routes are chosen to offer air-conditioned service;

(b) whether there is a ratio for air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned bus services plying a particular route and how that is determined;

(c) how the fare structure for air-conditioned bus services is determined; and

(d) whether passengers are always given the choice between air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned bus service on any given route?

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Mr Deputy President,

(a) Air-conditioned buses are deployed on:

(i) selected new routes serving middle or higher income housing developments, as an alternative to taxis and private cars;

(ii) existing routes serving areas where alternative air-conditioned transport modes are not readily available, giving passengers a choice; and

(iii) special services targetted at commuters who may otherwise add to the peak hour congestion along the MTR Nathan Road corridor.

For services under (ii), they are mixed with non-air-conditioned buses on the same route.

District boards have been consulted on KMB and CMB's proposals for deploying air-conditioned buses in 1992 and 1993, as part of their annually rolled forward route development programmes.

(b) Where air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned buses operate on the same route, there is no pre-determined ratio limiting the number of air-conditioned buses that may be put on any one route. They are normally brought in incrementally, in response to actual demand and proposals endorsed by the relevant district boards.

(c) The fare structure for air-conditioned bus services is determined having regard to the policy of avoiding cross-subsidization from non-air-conditioned bus services. The maximum fares for air-conditioned services in a given route group are approved by the Governor in Council according to a distance-based fare scale. Like conventional bus services, fares below the maximum may be charged to allow flexible pricing if the Commissioner for Transport so approves.

The actual fares now charged are on average 35% below the maximum permitted fares. In determining the actual fare to be charged on individual routes, the Commissioner takes into account factors including the projected financial performance of the air-conditioned service in question, passenger affordability, market environment and fares charged on alternative transport modes.

The Transport Department has recently completed a review of the current fare scales, based on empirical data available since the introduction of air-conditioned double-deckers and medium coaches in 1991. The outcome of the review will be presented to the Transport Advisory Committee for consideration and advice.

(d) Air-conditioned buses now account for 12% and 6% respectively of KMB and CMB's fleets.

As explained in (a)(i) and (iii) above, certain routes use solely air-conditioned buses, as an alternative to other public transport modes.

For many existing services which operate with a mix of air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned buses, the proportion of air-conditioned buses does not exceed 30%.

To facilitate passengers' choice, arrangements are being made to provide better passenger information at bus stops, such as timetables showing the frequencies of air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned services.

## Protection of government reserves against inflation

8. MR DAVID LI asked: Will the Administration inform this Council of the steps it takes to protect the real value of the Government's reserves against the effects of inflation; the average annual income earned by the reserves, in percentage terms, over the last five years; and the capital growth of the reserves as a result of investment in each of the past five years?

SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY: Mr Deputy President, the bulk of the Government's reserves is deposited with the Exchange Fund to avoid foreign exchange risks and credit risks. The remaining balance, to cover operational cash requirements, is held in short-term deposits with local banks or in current accounts.

The total interest added to the reserves in the past five years, expressed in money terms and as a percentage of the average reserves in each year, was as follows:

	Total interest \$M	% of average reserves
1990-91	5,750	8.0
1989-90	5,300	8.2
1988-89	3,122	6.2
1987-88	1,537	4.0
1986-87	1,309	4.5

## Note-issuing bank

9. MR MARTIN LEE asked: Will the Government inform this Council:

(a) what criteria the Government will use in considering whether to allow any other bank in addition to the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and the Standard Chartered Bank to become a note-issuing bank before 1997;

(b) whether the Government has received any request from any bank in Hong Kong to be allowed to issue bank notes; and

(c) whether the Government intends to review the status of the HSBC as a note-issuing bank in the light of:

(i) the HSBC having become a subsidiary of the United Kingdom-registered HSBC Holdings plc in 1990; and

(ii) the recent announcement concerning the proposed takeover of Midland Bank Plc by HSBC Holdings Plc and the uncertainty over the location of the headquarters of the HSBC Holdings Plc after the takeover?

SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS: Mr Deputy President,

(a) A bank which issues notes should be one of undoubted reputation with sound and well established banking operations locally and an extensive branch network. It must command the confidence of members of the public and have a firm long-term commitment to Hong Kong. Additionally, there are a number of more technical requirements that a bank must address if it were to become a note-issuer. For example, a note-issuing bank is obliged to supply bank notes to its customers on demand without restriction against Hong Kong dollar balances and to other banks against US dollars. It must similarly stand ready to accept bank notes without restriction. A note-issuing bank must also ensure it has adequate US dollar funding to meet any sudden upsurge in demand for its notes. It is also required to have adequate and secure storage, transportation, distribution and note destruction facilities, which must be subject to tight audit control at all levels and stages. All costs relating to distribution, storage, sorting and destruction of bank notes have to be met by the note-issuing bank.

(b) It would not be appropriate to comment on whether or not the Government has received any such request. Discussion, if any, between the Government and any bank which might be interested in becoming a note-issuer must remain confidential. It should be noted, however, that before any additional note issuer could be appointed it would be necessary to seek Members' approval to amendments to the Bank Notes Issue Ordinance.

(c) It is not the intention of the Government to review the status of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation as a note-issuing bank in the light of the

development to which reference is made.

#### Promotion of environmental awareness

10. MR LAU CHIN-SHEK asked: Will the Government inform this Council of the details of the Environmental Protection Department's existing programme to promote environmental awareness in secondary schools, the number of staff specifically deployed to undertake this task and their work arrangement, and the difficulties that have been encountered in the implementation of the programme, if any?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is not actively engaged in promoting environmental awareness in secondary schools because this task is the responsibility of the Education Department (ED), although EPD indirectly assists it. Therefore, no EPD staff are specifically deployed to undertake this task and the department does not have any particular work arrangements relevant to it or experience of difficulties associated with it. While EPD's staff resources are largely devoted to dealing with Hong Kong's pollution problems, as noted above, it does assist ED in several ways in promoting environmental awareness in secondary schools.

First, in April 1990, with a \$5 million grant from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, EPD prepared material for use in environmental education in secondary schools; this included teaching kits, five short films, a teachers' manual and work cards.

Secondly, EPD has helped ED's Curriculum Development Committee develop a new "Environmental Education" module for the Liberal Studies syllabus which will be introduced to Secondary VI and VII later this year.

Thirdly, EPD provides liaison between ED and the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) which, under the chairmanship of the Honourable Mrs Peggy LAM, promotes environmental awareness throughout Hong Kong. In the past two years the ECC, with EPD assistance, has encouraged many students and schools to take part in activities it has organized. These have included Awards for Ten Outstanding Schools in Environmental Education, a "Cut-Waste" slogan competition, a seminar on Environmental Education for Secondary School Teachers, a Students' Painting Competition, a Bus and Tram Tour in support of World Environment Day and a Bus Painting

exercise.

Fourthly, EPD has recently created a post of Community Relations Officer; this officer will devote most of his time to environmental education generally.

I am advised by ED, who are responsible for promoting environmental education in schools, that the department advocates a cross-curricular approach to environmental education. It is not offered as a single subject, but elements of it permeate the formal curriculum at the secondary school level. In this way, each secondary school subject contributes towards the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes as regards environmental awareness. To cope with changing situations, the syllabuses for all secondary subjects are constantly reviewed to ensure that there is sufficient emphasis on current environmental issues.

In addition to the more formal instruction built into the curriculum as outlined above, students are also encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities, such as talks, debates and exhibitions, relating to the environment. Many of these activities are co-ordinated through programmes organized by the Community Youth Club Scheme run by ED.

To assist teachers in the implementation of environmental education programmes, ED organizes regular in-service training courses. Materials provided by the Advisory Inspectorate are supplemented by courses held at the Sai Kung Field Studies Centre. Guidelines and suggestions for pursuing environmental education in schools are also being developed and are expected to be distributed to schools in the middle of this year.

The number of staff deployed by ED is difficult to quantify because of the cross-curricular approach adopted. However, the work of all the teachers involved is drawn together by a Principal Inspector tasked with co-ordinating and implementing the various strands of the programme.

Among the difficulties encountered by ED are the problems of finding sufficient time to integrate environmental education programmes into the curriculum and the tight schedules and heavy workloads of teachers. Staff normally have to accept additional commitments to promote environmental awareness among pupils and it is largely through the dedication of these staff that environmental education is being successfully implemented in secondary schools in Hong Kong.

Marine industrial safety

11. MR LAU CHIN-SHEK asked: Will the Government inform this Council of the following:

(a) the number of cases involving occupational accidents at sea handled by the Marine Department in each of the past three years;

(b) the causes of these occupational accidents;

(c) the number of prosecutions carried out by the Marine Department against alleged offenders in these cases; the number of prosecutions successfully carried out and the amount of fines imposed; and

(d) the number of existing Marine Department staff responsible for enforcing occupational safety at sea; and details of their work?

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES: Mr Deputy President,

(a) The Marine Industrial Safety Section of the Marine Department investigated the following number of cases which took place in the waters of Hong Kong in the year stated:

Year	Injuries	Fatalities
1991	20	15
1990	17	8
1989	19	21

(b) The outcome of enquiries conducted by the department suggests that most of the cases were caused by the carelessness of the workers involved or failure by workers and their foremen to observe safe working practices;

(c) The number of prosecutions by the Marine Department against alleged offenders is as follows:

Year	Summonses applied for	Guilty verdict	Nature of offence	Fines(\$)
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1991	1	in progress Failure - to report
1990	2	2 an 1 000 accident
1989	3	2 4 000

(d) The Marine Industrial Safety Section of the Marine Department is responsible for the enforcement and promotion of occupational safety afloat. This section comprises:

one Senior Shipping Safety Officer;

three Shipping Safety Officers; and

eight Shipping Safety Assistants.

The staff of this section pay regular visits to Public Cargo Working Areas and private waterfronts, conduct safety inspections on the condition of cargo handling gear on board vessels in the harbour, and promote safe cargo handling practice. In addition, they conduct safety inspections of all vessels undergoing repair afloat.

In the event of serious accidents, casualty investigations are conducted to ascertain cause and to prevent recurrence. The section publishes safety guides, pamphlets and posters which are directly mailed to a large number of companies in the trade, and which are also freely available at Public Cargo Working Areas and District Marine Offices.

Unit cost per place in primary and secondary schools

12. MR TIMOTHY HA asked: Will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the current "unit cost" per student place for each level of education from Primary I to Secondary VII in a government as well as an aided school; and

(b) of the methodology for the computation of the "unit cost" and the cost components?



SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Mr Deputy President, the answers to Mr HA's questions are as follows:

(a) The estimated unit costs per place for the 1992-93 financial year are:

Primary (Note 1)	(At 1992-93 price level)
	\$
Government	12,145
Aided	8,788

Secondary

Government

S1 -- S3	21,483
S4 -- S5	19,678
S6 -- S7	34,996

(At 1992-93 price level)

\$

Aided

S1 -- S3	14,194
S4 -- S5	12,134
S6 -- S7	22,369

Note 1 Unit costs are the same for all levels in primary schools because of uniform teacher-class ratio and similar degree of involvement by senior and junior teachers throughout Primary I to Primary VI.

(b) Generally, unit costs are derived from dividing costs at the respective levels by the approved enrolment. The estimated unit costs for 1992-93 are based

on 1991-92 actual costs, adjusted to take into account additional costs arising from the introduction of new improvement measures and inflation, estimated at 10.5% for staff and 8.5% for other costs. The cost components cover mainly staff, administrative expenses and major repairs. The only differences between government and aided schools lie in the provision for staff on-costs for the former and provident fund contributions for the latter.

### Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

13. MR WONG WAI-YIN asked: With regard to the "Neighbourhood Watch Scheme" implemented by Police Community Relations Offices in residential buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of buildings joining and withdrawing from the scheme, on a yearly basis, since its inception;

(b) whether there has been a decline in the number of participating buildings; if so, what the reasons for the decline are;

(c) what difficulties have been encountered in the implementation of the scheme; and how the scheme can help improve the law and other situation;

(d) whether the Government will launch another drive to promote the scheme; if so, what measures will be taken; and

(e) how many buildings remaining in the scheme have indicated their intention to withdraw from it?

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY: Mr Deputy President, since the inception of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in November 1985, an average of 76 buildings have joined the scheme each year. No records regarding withdrawal have been kept but the withdrawal rate is believed to be very low. The residents of 601 buildings now participate in the scheme.

The scheme was intended as a crime prevention measure through co-operation among neighbours and to strengthen links with the local police. These objectives have been

achieved to a limited extent only. In some cases, it has been difficult to keep up interest and momentum among the participants of the scheme in a high rise environment where residents value their privacy.

The scheme was reviewed by the Fight Crime Committee last year. The Committee decided that the scheme should continue to be implemented in its present format. However, to ensure that the scheme will in future be implemented only where there is a demand for it, the police will target the scheme in buildings in response to requests for implementation. It is hoped that more new buildings will participate in the scheme. Meanwhile, the police will continue with the scheme in the existing 601 buildings. Residents in none of these buildings have expressed the intention of withdrawing from the scheme.

#### Usable floor area

14. MR JIMMY MCGREGOR asked: Will the Government inform this Council whether it will introduce legislation to standardize the method of describing usable floor area in flats for sale and to require that sellers publish this information in all sales literature of uncompleted buildings covering both consent and non-consent scheme developments?

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS: Mr Deputy President, the Building (Planning) Regulations under the Buildings Ordinance already contain a definition of "usable floor space" (please see Annex). However, this is used for the purpose of determining building standards for items such as sanitary fittings and means of escape and is different from the concept of "saleable floor area". There is no statutory definition of the latter, which is commonly taken to refer to the floor area exclusively allocated to a unit but excluding common areas such as stairs and lift shafts.

The Land Office Consent Scheme has adopted a standard form of Agreement for Sale and Purchase where the definition of "saleable area" set out at the Annex is used. This definition was introduced after consultation with the Consumer Council, the Real Estate Developers Association, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors. The Law Society has also adopted an identical definition for non-consent cases. Thus at the time of signing the formal Agreement

for Sale and Purchase, purchasers should be well aware of the precise saleable area of the unit and can also check the floor plan of the unit attached to the agreement.

The saleable area is one of a number of mandatory items to be disclosed in sales brochures and publicity materials for the sale of uncompleted units on new government land, that is, Consent Scheme cases. For Non-Consent Scheme developments, however, it is a matter for the developers to decide whether or not to include disclosure of saleable area in the sales brochures.

Part of the reasons behind the recent public concern at the disclosure of saleable area is that, unlike the case of the Consent Scheme, in Non-Consent Scheme cases the Provisional Agreement for Sale and Purchase is a binding agreement from the outset. The purchaser may have signed the provisional agreement on the strength of the information contained in the sales brochure and other publicity material, which may not specify the saleable area, and he will only be able to check the specific layout plan of the unit and the saleable area when he has to sign the formal Agreement for Sale and Purchase. It may then be difficult for him to withdraw from the purchase without losing the deposit paid. If the information provided by the vendor amounts to misrepresentation, the purchaser may sue for damages and recovery of his deposit. In practice, however, the cost of litigation and the need to obtain the necessary evidence to prove that misrepresentation existed might deter the purchaser from taking legal proceedings.

The Administration is considering whether the introduction of legislation to protect the interests of the consumer in this regard would be feasible. Before proposals are drawn up, interested parties such as the Consumer Council, the Law Society, and the Real Estate Developers Association will be consulted.

## Annex

### Usable Floor Space and Saleable Area

#### (a) "Usable Floor Space" under the Building (Planning) Regulations

"any floor space other than staircases, staircase halls, lift landings, the space used in providing water-closet fittings, urinals and lavatory basins and the space occupied by machinery for any lift, air-conditioning system or similar device"

(b) "Saleable Area" under the Land Office Consent Scheme

"the floor area of the unit (which shall include the floor area of any balconies and verandahs), the subject of this Sale and Purchase Agreement (hereinafter called 'the said unit'), measured from the exterior of the enclosing walls of the said unit except where such enclosing walls separate two adjoining units in which case the measurement shall be taken to the middle of those walls, and shall include the internal partitions and columns within the said unit; but shall exclude the common parts outside the enclosing walls of the said unit provided that if any of the enclosing walls abut onto a common area, then the whole thickness of the enclosing walls which so abut shall be included. The saleable area shall not include:

(a) any cocklofts,

(b) any bay windows which do not extend to the floor level of the said unit,

(c) any carparking spaces, car ports, yards, terraces, gardens and roofs of any description,

but the areas of such cocklofts (which shall be measured in accordance with this clause) and of such bay windows, carparking spaces, car ports, yards, terraces, gardens and roofs shall be specified and described as additional separate items in clause ( ) hereof."

Review of long service payment and severance payment schemes

15. MR TAM YIU-CHUNG asked: Will the Government inform this Council whether the existing provision relating to the maximum payments under the long service payment and severance payment schemes will be reviewed to provide greater protection for workers with long service?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Mr Deputy President, the Government intends to review the provisions on long service payment and severance payment towards the end of the year. If amendments to these provisions are considered necessary, proposals will be submitted to the Labour Advisory Board for advice.

Consortium schools

16. MR NG MING-YUM asked: Will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the effectiveness of the government co-ordinated pilot scheme on consortium schools; and whether the Government will promote this system in the coming school year; if so, what measures will be taken;

(b) how the Government will assist schools and their teaching staff to understand and adopt the new Advanced Supplementary Level (ASL) curriculum to be introduced in the coming school year and whether schools will be allowed to recruit additional teachers and to expand their school premises if classrooms are found to be insufficient; and

(c) how the Government will help this year's HKCEE candidates know more about the consortium schools system and the ASL curriculum that are to be introduced in the coming year to assist them to make an informed decision on which school to choose and what subject to take for their matriculation course?

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Mr Deputy President, as regards the first part of Mr NG's question, I should like first to explain what is meant by "consortium schools". In September 1992, new Advanced and Advanced Supplementary Level subjects will be introduced in schools, in line with the policy to broaden the sixth form curriculum. However, there are practical constraints on the range of subjects which individual schools can offer. To overcome these constraints, the Education Department has suggested that schools form themselves into groups, or "consortia" and pool their resources in order to offer a more comprehensive curriculum to their students. A pilot scheme was launched in September 1991, involving the Po Leung Kuk Centenary College and Po Leung Kuk Tang Yuk Tien College in Tuen Mun. Under this scheme, the two schools offer different subjects which are available to sixth form students of either school. As the pilot scheme has been implemented for less than a year, its effectiveness has yet to be properly evaluated.

As regards the second part of Mr NG's question, the Education Department has taken the following measures to assist schools and their teaching staff to understand and adopt the new Advanced Supplementary Level (ASL) curriculum:

(a) Syllabus outlines, with detailed curriculum guides on various ASL subjects and the teaching of the subjects have been prepared with the advice of the Curriculum Development Council for circulation to schools;

(b) Seminars and talks have been organized by the Advisory Inspectorate to enable school heads, panel chairmen and teachers to familiarize themselves with the implementation of the new sixth form curriculum. These seminars will be repeated from time to time;

(c) Two series of in-service training courses for prospective ASL teachers were commissioned by the Education Department and organized by the Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong in the academic year 1990-91. Similar training courses will be run by the Faculties of Education of both the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1991-92 and 1992-93;

(d) Officers of the Advisory Inspectorate have been attending meetings with school councils/associations to discuss the implementation of ASL subjects. Subject inspectors also give advice to schools and teachers on the introduction and implementation of the ASL curriculum during school visits and inspections;

(e) A Guide to the Sixth Form Curriculum is being prepared and will be issued to schools shortly.

Additional teachers for split-class teaching will be provided to schools with effect from 1 September 1992. Subject to the availability of funds, schools with insufficient classrooms may apply for the conversion of spare teaching spaces (for example, special rooms) or open/covered carpark to be used as classrooms.

As regards the last part of Mr NG's question, HKCEE candidates will be informed by their own schools about the ASL curriculum and of any consortium system in operation. In addition, a booklet giving information on the Secondary VI subjects offered in each school will be made available for the information of Secondary V school leavers at the District Education Offices and the Careers and Guidance Section of the Education Department.

First Reading of Bills

INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992

ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

HUMAN ORGAN TRANSPLANT BILL

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

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

Second Reading of Bills

INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Inland Revenue Ordinance."

He said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 1992 be read the Second time.

This is the first in a series of four Bills which I will be introducing this afternoon, in order to give effect to the revenue-related proposals in this year's Budget. Resolutions to amend the Rating Ordinance and the Betting Duty Ordinance will also be necessary. They will be moved in a few weeks' time, after adequate time for discussion, at the same time as debate on the Budget Bills is resumed.

The Bill now before Members seeks to give legislative effect to two major Budget proposals.



Clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill increase the rate of profits tax payable by corporations from 16.5% to 17.5%. This increase, applicable to assessments for 1992-93, would yield \$850 million in 1992-93, or \$1.6 billion in a full year.

Clause 4 of the Bill adds an additional scale of tax allowances to the Fourth Schedule of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, so that basic, married persons, dependent parent, child and single parent allowances would be increased. The total cost to revenue would be \$850 million in 1992-93, or \$1.2 billion in a full year. As I explained in my concluding speech on the Appropriation Bill in this Council on 1 April, these significant increases have the effect of maintaining the real value of personal tax allowances over time.

Mr Deputy President, I also said in my speech on 1 April that in the next Budget I intend to increase substantially salaries tax allowances and to improve tax bands. The combined effect of these improvements would be to reduce further the effective rates of tax paid by middle-income earners, which are already low by any international standards. But I must reiterate that such measures will only be possible if our financial position continues to be as forecast. And among other things this means the passing of all the revenue measures in the present Budget.

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

#### DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance."

He said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Dutiable Commodities (Amendment) Bill 1992 be read the Second time.

This Bill has four main purposes. First, it would result in the abolition of duty on soft drinks. This measure will cost the general revenue about \$230 million a year. The Beverage Manufacturers Association of Hong Kong have written to me since

the introduction of the Appropriation Bill, confirming their earlier undertaking to pass on the benefit of this concession to consumers.

Secondly, clause 6 of the Bill would increase the duty rates on liquor, tobacco and fuel. I should emphasize that these are nominal increases only, designed to maintain the value of the duty imposed in line with inflation. I have deliberately avoided any increases in real terms. For that reason, those duty rates which are set on an ad valorem basis have remained unchanged.

Thirdly, a number of the clauses of the Bill are designed to give legislative effect to the Budget proposal that duty be paid on light diesel oil used by pleasure craft, with effect from 1 June 1992. The present exemption from duty on fuel arises from provisions in the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance which date back to a time when pleasure vessels were relatively few in number. Although petrol used by pleasure craft is already subject to duty, most pleasure craft are now able to use duty-free diesel fuel. The ending of this inequitable distinction should increase general revenue by about \$80 million a year.

Finally, clauses 6(h) and 15(6) of the Bill would give effect to the Budget proposal to exempt franchised bus companies completely from the duty on diesel fuel. Under the Schemes of Control, this concession would automatically be reflected in future adjustments to bus fares. It would cost the general revenue about \$190 million a year.

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1992

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Stamp Duty Ordinance."

He said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Stamp Duty (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 1992 be read the Second time.

This Bill seeks to give legislative effect to two proposals in this year's Budget.

First, clause 2 of the Bill would bring most rights, options and interests in respect of stock within the definition of "stock" in the Stamp Duty Ordinance, so that a sale and purchase or transfer of such rights, options or interests would be chargeable with stamp duty. The principal effect of this amendment would be to extend the application of stamp duty to the sale and purchase or transfer of covered warrants. As I said in my speech moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill on 4 March, this is a logical extension of our existing tax system, since these warrants are a routinely traded form of security.

Secondly, clause 3 of the Bill would reduce from 0.5% to 0.4% the rate of stamp duty on contract notes. This represents a continuation of the gradual process of reduction in duty on stock transfers, designed to maintain the competitiveness of Hong Kong's securities market.

The extension of stamp duty to covered warrants will bring in an extra \$140 million revenue a year. The reduction in the rate of contract note duty will cost the revenue \$400 million a year. The Bill has no staffing implications.

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

#### ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Entertainments Tax Ordinance."

He said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Entertainments Tax (Amendment) Bill 1992 be read the Second time. The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Entertainments Tax Ordinance, to give effect to the proposal in the Budget to abolish entertainments tax on cinema tickets.

The cost of this measure to general revenue will be \$130 million a year. There are no staffing implications.

In moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill on 4 March, I noted that I had received assurances from Hong Kong's two largest cinema operators that the full

benefit of this concession would be passed on to cinema-goers, and that there would be no increase in the price of tickets in the coming year. I have no reason to doubt that the operators concerned will abide by this agreement. I have, however, noticed media reports to the effect that some film distributors may not intend to pass on the full value of the concession to the public. I am somewhat concerned about these reports and shall be looking into the situation closely. If circumstances warrant, concessions can of course be reversed in future Budgets.

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

#### HUMAN ORGAN TRANSPLANT BILL

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to prohibit commercial dealings in human organs intended for transplanting, to restrict the transplanting of human organs between persons who are not genetically related and for supplementary purposes connected with those matters."

She said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Human Organ Transplant Bill be read the Second time.

The Bill prohibits commercial trading in organs, whether obtained from living or deceased donors, and regulates the use of organs obtained from live donors. It does not in any way restrict voluntary donations. Indeed, these are to be praised and encouraged.

Unlike voluntary donation through caring for others and compassion, the practice of buying and selling human organs for purposes of transplant is both ethnically unacceptable and morally repugnant. There can be no justification for debasing the value of the individual by allowing the existence of a "market" in human organs.

Commercial organ trading and "donation" under duress is condemned worldwide. The Hong Kong Medical Association has adopted guidelines against commercial organ trading and also urged members of the profession not to be involved in such activities on grounds of professional ethics.

While no case of commercial organ transplant has been recorded in Hong Kong, such an act would not be illegal under the present law. A person may advertise an organ for sale or purchase provided that such advertisement is directed at the medical profession. Similarly, a medical practitioner may legally engage in commercial organ trading as a middleman or perform a transplant using an organ obtained by purchase.

There is need therefore for tighter legislative control. We should not rely only on professional ethics and regulation of doctors. We therefore propose new legislation and heavy sanctions: the Human Organ Transplant Bill 1992 will provide for this.

The Bill will ban advertising and solicitation related to commercial organ trading. The penalty for initiating or negotiating any arrangement involving payment for an organ will be a fine of \$10,000 for first conviction and \$25,000 plus imprisonment for one year upon subsequent conviction.

Transplant of organs from living donors will be prohibited unless the donor is genetically related or married to the prospective recipient, or unless approval is obtained from the Human Organ Transplant Board. Failure to comply with this stipulation will attract a \$10,000 fine for the first conviction and a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for one year for subsequent convictions.

This Bill supplements but does not supplant a medical practitioner's own code of ethics. In the case of a transplant involving a living donor, it is for the doctor to consider whether the operation is in the best interest of both parties. He will have to evaluate whether the harm to the donor will exceed the benefit to the recipient.

Mr Deputy President, in conjunction with our proposal to legislate against commercial organ trading, we will be launching a multi-media campaign in collaboration with professional and community groups to enhance public awareness and to motivate more generous organ donation. Spring is upon us. At this time of rejuvenation and rebirth, it is fitting to be thinking about the gift of life. So, support us in our cause and sign up as an organ donors!

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

## PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND JUVENILES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Protection of Women and Juveniles Ordinance."

She said: Mr Deputy President, I move that the Protection of Women and Juveniles (Amendment) Bill 1992 be read the Second time.

The object of this Bill is five-fold. First, it seeks to give better protection to children and juveniles by widening the circumstances in which a child may be considered to be in need of care or protection. The effects of psychological abuse and neglect will be included as grounds for considering a child to be in need of care or protection under the Ordinance. This approach is in line with the growing public awareness and understanding of the problem of child abuse.

Secondly, the Bill provides the Director of Social Welfare with more flexible powers of intervention and investigation without always having first to remove a child from home. The Director will be empowered to obtain a medical or psychological assessment of a child by issuing a Child Assessment Notice to the child's parent, requiring him or her to bring the child for an assessment by a doctor or clinical psychologist.

Thirdly, the Bill requires the Director to make application to a court within 48 hours, instead of eight days, of any removal or detention of a child or juvenile under the Ordinance.

Fourthly, the Bill provides for all remaining references to special protection for women to be removed, so that the Ordinance will apply equally to male as well as female children and juveniles. Accordingly, the Ordinance will be retitled as the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance.

Finally, the Bill seeks to revise the level of fines for offences under the Ordinance in line with present-day values.

Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

#### BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992

THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS moved the Second Reading of: "A Bill to amend the Buildings Ordinance."

He said: Mr Deputy President, I move the Second Reading of the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 1992.

The Buildings Ordinance and the Buildings (Administration) Regulations need amending to improve the definition of the powers of the Building Authority and to streamline existing procedures. Several proposals are involved.

First, registration of contractors. At present, a contractor is not required to pay an annual fee to retain his name on the register. So that an accurate record of registered contractors can be maintained, a system of registration similar to that for authorized persons and registered structural engineers is proposed. This would involve a contractor applying for his name to be included on the register, and paying an annual fee to retain his name on the register.

The second proposal relates to the Building Authority's power to deal with defective drainage. Legal advice is that there is a distinction between "drains" and "sewers" and that the Building Authority's authority under section 28(3) refers only to "drains". To enable the Building Authority to carry out his functions in respect of defective or insanitary drains and sewers, he should also have the express authority to deal with "sewers". Everything that the Building Authority has done or that has been done on his behalf in this connection prior to the enactment of this provision will also be validated. A default provision for the Authority to carry out and recover the cost of drainage works is also included and the opportunity is taken to clarify the definition of the word "owner" under section 28(3)(b).

The third proposal relates to building works under streets. Legal advice is that section 31(1) of the Ordinance does not specifically refer to construction under, as opposed to in, over, or upon streets. It is therefore necessary to amend section 31(1) so that the Building Authority may regulate construction under streets as well.

The fourth proposal involves amending section 31(2) of the Ordinance on the alteration or removal of projections over streets to empower the Building Authority to carry out the necessary works and recover their cost, should the owner fail to comply with an order to do so.

The fifth proposal seeks to empower the Building Authority to recover the cost of abortive visits. Various sections of the Ordinance provide that the Authority may issue orders requiring works to be carried out. An example is the demolition of unauthorized building works. If an order is not carried out, the Building Authority may carry out the works and recover the costs. In some cases, however, contractors of the Building Authority are denied access or are otherwise unable to carry out the works. The Building Authority has to pay contractors for abortive visits of this kind even though no actual works have been carried out. To remove any doubt, we propose that the Building Authority should be empowered to recover the cost of abortive visits irrespective of whether the works are carried out during subsequent visits.

The need for the sixth proposal arises from the introduction of a microfilm system for building plans and records in the Buildings Ordinance Office. There are no provisions in the Ordinance concerning microfilm at present. The proposed amendments would enable microfilm records which have been certified as true copies by the Building Authority to be treated as the original plans and documents, allow destruction of the originals after microfilming, and enable copies of microfilm records to be admissible as evidence in legal proceedings.

The seventh proposal would require the submission of plans to the Building Authority for approval in respect of ground investigation and underground drainage works within the Mass Transit Railway protection areas. This would help ensure the integrity and safety of the MTR's underground structures.

The last proposal relates to this Council's resolution on 13 November 1991 to include the Drainage Services Department in the Fourth Schedule of the Ordinance, thereby allowing the Building Authority to delegate his authority to officers in the department. Work carried out by these officers between 1 September 1989 when the department was set up and 21 November 1991 when the delegation instrument was effected needs to be validated.



Mr Deputy President, I move that the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

Member's motions

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: We have two motions listed in the Order Paper. In accordance with recent practice, Members have, I understand, agreed to place a voluntary restraint upon the time for speeches. In the case of each of the two motions, the agreed practice for this afternoon is that Members will limit their speeches to two hours for each motion, exclusive of the time required for replies by government officials and concluding speeches by movers of motions.

MOTION ON GREEN PAPER ON REHABILITATION POLICIES AND SERVICES

MR ERIC LI moved the following motion:

"That this Council recognizes the significant shortfalls in certain areas of rehabilitation services, and the insufficient progress made in the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons to fully participate in the community; and urges the Government to procure adequate financial resources and other forms of community support in order to expedite appropriate improvement measures after taking heed of public views expressed during the wide consultation on the recommendations made in the Green Paper by the Working Party on Rehabilitation Policies and Services."

MR ERIC LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President,

Declaration of interest

I move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Before going into today's motion I believe I should declare interest as some of the duties which I have assumed may lead to a possible conflict of interest. For example, I am a member of the Working Party on Rehabilitation Policies and Services responsible for the formulation of the Green Paper, and also a member of some of the non-government organizations mentioned in the Green Paper, such as Chairman of the

Hong Kong Physically Handicapped and Abled Bodies Association, Director of the Technical Aids and Resource Centre, Advisor or Honorary Auditor of the Hong Kong Special Schools Council and Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong, and also member of the Rehabilitation Development Co-ordinating Committee and the Subventions and Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee responsible for the allocation of funds.

## Introduction

Members can imagine what a special day today is to me. From the beginning as a volunteer I have been in the rehabilitation service for nearly 20 years. To me the Green Paper no longer represents some theories and figures; it has become a friend whose name and face are so real and familiar to me. Since the publication of the Green Paper mid last month, disabled people kept visiting the OMELCO Complaints Division to express their expectations of the rehabilitation policies. And I would like to thank the OMELCO for their special arrangement to enable nearly 100 disabled persons to come to the Legislative Council Chamber to give support and encouragement to the speakers.

## Functional constituency seats

The minority are the easily forgotten group in the present macro political climate. Today provides a valuable opportunity when we can, for a short period of time, concentrate our attention on the disabled persons. So I would like to take this opportunity to urge Members not to think that responsibility will have been discharged after today's discussion. Think of the tens of thousands of disabled people in the territory, and also their friends and relatives; some of them must be friends of yours. The disabled people are an inseparable part of our community; their well-being should always be of our concern.

During the policy debate I suggested that disabled persons should be given a functional constituency seat in the next Legislative Council. This suggestion has been illustrated clearly in paragraph 10.3 of the Green Paper. I understand that their representatives want very much to meet with our Select Committee on Legislative Council Elections and I do wish that honourable colleagues will give them substantial support and a chance when the time comes.

## The slow-coming Green Paper

Provision of rehabilitation services had all along been slow at the outset until the publication of the first White Paper by the Government in 1977 which roughly provided some concrete policies on which continuous rehabilitation development could be based. The White Paper on Social Welfare Into the 1990s and Beyond published last year has committed itself to fulfilling some rather forward looking objectives. After completing the tasks set out in the White Paper, the authority has already suffered a shortage both in manpower and financial resources; that is to say, the authority has already had a problem of shortage of social workers and funds. It so happens that the Government has embarked on an all-out austerity programme this year; that the Green Paper should come at such a time can be said to be most inopportune.

### Shortfall in service

If we care to turn to Appendix F or paragraph 2.26 of the Green Paper, we will certainly be surprised at the serious shortfall in some of our existing rehabilitation services, such as child care centres, day activity centres and hostel places. As one of the drafters of the Green Paper, I indeed feel shame for the people of Hong Kong. The extent of shortage is so obvious that, I believe, there should not have the need for further argument on this point. The pressing task at the moment is to identify as soon as possible solutions to the long-standing problem of insufficient service. I believe that the Government does share my views in this respect. In the Legislative Council sitting on 29 January this year I raised a supplementary question and obtained confirmation from the Government that the preparation of the policy document would not lead to any delay in implementing improvement measures such as residential services for the severely mentally handicapped persons.

Regarding rehabilitation services, some areas of shortfall have been given the most unclear identification in the Green Paper. Some organizations have pointed out that the inaccurate estimation of the number of disabled persons has led to the provision of rehabilitation services proposed in the Green Paper falling short of the actual demand. Take for example the autistic patients and the chronically ill persons mentioned respectively in paragraphs 5.24 and 5.27 of the Green Paper. These are the persons whose needs we have just had a better picture of. As to the way to provide adequate services to these people, we still have not reached a conclusion in our discussion, not to mention having a clear understanding of the shortfall in the services. Yet this definitely does not mean that we can drag our feet in providing these services because of an absence of policy objectives. I believe Dr LEONG Che-hung will discuss this in greater detail when it comes to his turn to speak.

## Equal opportunities and full participation

I have mentioned in the motion the unsatisfactory progress made in the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons to fully participate in the community. Paragraph 2.17 has a fair assessment on this. To put it in a few words, considerable progress and contribution have been made in the provision of rehabilitation services. For example, ideas like "equality between the abled and the disabled" and "opportunities rather than compassionate arrangements" have already been widely accepted by members of the public. The disabled persons are no longer an isolated group. They have been very active, participating particularly in recreational and cultural activities; they have learnt to show concern for and take part in community affairs. But in areas of one's immediate concern, such as housing, education, transport and employment, the competitive mentality of the people of Hong Kong has once again gone to extremes and the group whose voice is less likely to be heard in the community are once again cruelly pushed out of the way. It is pointed out clearly in paragraph 2.27 of the Green Paper that there still exist in our society a lot of areas where improvements are needed. Later I will make use of some of these facts to support my views.

## Making available sufficient financial resources

The White Paper on rehabilitation published in 1977 has only 23 pages. The imposing Green Paper before us runs to 160 pages. Yet neither the length nor the fine arguments set out in the document can be taken as a yardstick to measure the commitment the Government has towards these services.

In the 1980s rehabilitation services lacked a comprehensive and definite concept and mode of service; yet, for financial support, there had been on average almost a double-digit growth in real terms. But if we take a look at the part on financial implications in the Green Paper, that is, paragraphs 17, 17.5 and 17.6, there will only be an average growth of 3% in real terms, lower than the 4.5% growth mentioned in the White Paper on social welfare and the 5% GDP growth predicted in the Medium Range Forecast; so how can we expect the Green Paper to serve its function as a new policy draft to take the place of the 1977 White Paper which has prescribed a healthy growth in financial resources? Under these circumstances, no wonder that there is public discontent with the present Green Paper. Given the present substantial reserve it is unreasonable for the Government to drag its feet and not to raise the

annual real growth in rehabilitation services to not less than 4.5% so that the objectives can sooner be reached.

Needless to say, that the Government is urged in the motion to "procure" funds does not exclude the assumption of leadership by the Government to explore and encourage other sources of financial support in addition to direct allocation of public funds. For example, the trust fund to finance disabled persons for self-employment referred to in paragraph 7.32 is one of these sources. With other sources of financial support, service organizations can in shorter time achieve the objective of providing basic rehabilitation services or make use of the funds to improve the basic services. But regular fund raising activities incur great expenses in terms of manpower and other resources which can be an extremely great burden to those organizations of a small or moderate scale. For example, in the case of rehabilitation service for former mental patients, the organizations are obliged to keep confidential the identities of their clients and that makes donations all the more difficult. More to it, professional social workers have to spend a lot of time preparing and co-ordinating fund raising activities, which constitute a huge waste in valuable manpower resources in the form of professional expertise misused. So the Government should not, without first giving serious thought to the proposal, proceed to shift this financial obligation to other organizations in order to lessen its financial commitment.

#### Other forms of community support

In general any provision of service cannot go ahead without money. But in rehabilitation services, the attitude of the public is of utmost importance; it is not a case where the idea of money making the world go round can apply. Perhaps I should illustrate this with some recent cases:

1. Housing: The present law does not make it compulsory for private developers to incorporate in the design of some of their buildings barrier-free structures so that disabled persons can have a wider choice of living environment. In paragraph 8.5 of the Green Paper it is said that the Home Ownership Committee of the Housing Authority has recently turned down the proposal of priority in housing allocation for the disabled persons. The result is that home ownership remains a dream for the disabled.
2. Education: Special education is also part of the nine-year compulsory education.

But it is pointed out in paragraph 6.2 of the Green Paper that the Government considers special education as a welfare service and puts it under the responsibility of the Welfare Branch; this has dealt a severe blow to the morale of the special education workers.

3. Transport: In paragraph 11.19 it is pointed out that transport needs of the disabled persons virtually fail to be reflected in some of the public transport planning committees or the Transport Advisory Committee. This important task has been given to the Health and Welfare Branch whose decision has been carried out by the Transport Department through which some very inadequate so-called special transport services are arranged for the disabled persons. This way of just getting the job done completely neglects disabled persons' basic right to free movement.

Regarding the transport link to the new airport at Chek Lap Kok mentioned in paragraph 11.20 of the Green Paper, I discover that services for the disabled persons have not been taken care of in the design of the MTR link to the airport. The same subject was raised on 22 January this year in my written question to the Legislative Council. The Mass Transport Railway Corporation (MTRC) is a public corporation financed by public funds. It is indeed not too demanding to expect the MTRC to provide on the new lines minor facilities for the convenience of the disabled persons. The move by the MTRC to deny nearly 10% of our population access to the Corporation's facilities is indeed unacceptable. But as far as I know the MTRC has contacted some relevant parties and is actively pursuing a solution to this after I submitted the question to this Council.

4. Employment: It is indicated in paragraph 7.24 that the Government is the largest employer of disabled persons in Hong Kong and there is at present a well-conceived policy to safeguard the interests of the disabled employees. But I understand from the reply to my written Legislative Council question to the Administration on 25 March that, upon corporatization, privatization or contracting-out of public services, the Government will only encourage the take-over companies to adopt the same policy; the Government will not, in the capacity of the former employer of the disabled employees, require the take-over companies to continue carrying out the same commitment by way of contract or administrative order.

5. Lei King Wan Special School: The incident reflects the public's mentality that

these schools should be built but let them be far away from their homes.

Examples alike are numerous. I have only mentioned those which do not carry additional financial implications but only reflect the discrimination still existing in some of our policies and the community against disabled persons.

Rehabilitation policy is not the same as welfare policy; it takes care of those people in the community with special needs. Whether or not these people will be accepted by members of the public may determine the positiveness of their way of looking at life. Disabled persons should constitute a part of our social resources; but they may also fall into degradation to become a burden of the community. Which way they will take depends on whether they will be given the full opportunities to show their worth. Perhaps we should not look at the matter too much from an economic point of view. The more important point is whether the dignity and basic rights of the disabled persons should be respected.

#### Responsiveness to public views

The Green Paper is a consultative document and should logically be the basis for a forum to enable public views to be heard. More to it, the over 80 proposals contained in the Green Paper give no guarantee that they are indeed foolproof. There is also the question of difficult choice, and one of the most difficult decisions to make is perhaps the setting of priority to the implementation of various services as stated in paragraph 17.6.

In my view rehabilitation services should proceed from providing for the overall need of the disabled people. Just like the spinal cord of a human body in which every part of the whole is interlocked, the provision of rehabilitation services should be an all-essential, co-ordinated and united effort, not only because there are different types of disability but also because there may be different needs even for the same disabled person at different stages of his life. So I hope that members of the public will, in a concerted effort, work towards achieving all these objectives as soon as possible.

#### Conclusion

It is very difficult to comment on a wide-ranging Green Paper within a very short

period of time. I will therefore only focus on some of the points raised in the motion and briefly summarize my views. To give a full reflection of all the valuable views which I gathered these months will be even more impossible. I would therefore look forward to the co-operation within this Council so that after today's debate the OMELCO standing panels will undertake to carry out the work which lies within their areas of responsibility.

Sometimes I do feel that the Legislative Council looks somewhat like a court. On many occasions we pass verdict on government decisions; but today, while giving a verdict of our own, we are at the same time under the judgement of the public. Our words will reveal our conscience with regard to the care of the disabled persons and I do hope that we will be in the very front line in upholding this moral conscience.

Finally I would like to say a few words on Dr LEONG's amendment. I hope Members will understand that I have cared little about success since I first participated in public services. Disabled persons have been waiting for 15 years and it is but until today that they are given two-hour attention and care by the Legislative Council. I hope that today's debate will as much as possible be devoted to the welfare of the disabled persons. One minute spent on a meaningless war of words will mean one valuable minute taken away from the time allotted to this debate. I would only say that since February I have listened to views from most of the service organizations, met with countless numbers of complainants, attended numerous seminars, be they large or small, and even sat in on district board debates. The majority of the views which I gathered are that they are all for the swiftest implementation of the recommendations in the Green Paper. So the wording of the motion is arrived at after discussion, careful consideration and taking into full account the views of the public. I would say that Dr LEONG's amendment is unnecessary; I will address this point for Members' consideration later when I give the reply. But I sincerely hope that Members will, as much as possible, dwell more on the immediate subject of disabled persons than on the wording of the motion when they speak in this debate.

Mr Deputy President, I so made my submission.

Question on the motion proposed.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Dr LEONG Che-hung has given notice to move an amendment to the motion. His amendment has been printed in the Order Paper and circulated to Members. I



propose to call him to speak and to move his amendment now so that Members may debate the motion and the amendment together.

DR LEONG CHE-HUNG moved the following amendment to Mr Eric LI's motion:

To delete the words after "Government" and substitute the following:

"to :-

(a) take heed of the views of this Council and those of the public concerning the Green Paper by the Working Party on Rehabilitation Policies and Services, this being the only major review in 15 years and likely to have long-term ramifications in future development;

(b) identify inadequacies not covered by the Green Paper;

(c) formulate an overall policy relating to the future provision of rehabilitation services in Hong Kong; and

(d) provide adequate financial resources and other forms of community support in order to implement such policy without delay."

DR LEONG CHE-HUNG: Mr Deputy President, I rise to amend the motion moved by the Honourable Eric LI in the manner as outlined in the Order Paper. I concur with him that Members of this Council, when they focus on the debate today, should really be objectively looking at the disabled rather than the wording of the motion.

In moving my amendment, I have full regards for Mr LI and take this opportunity to pay my respects and that of the medical functional constituency for his dedication in the Working Party on Rehabilitation, leading to the publication of this Green Paper which in many aspects is a very comprehensive document indeed.

Mr Deputy President, perhaps it is for the same reasons that Mr LI's motion gives me, and some other Honourable Members of this Council, the impression that he is calling on this Council to accept the Green Paper as it is and to push the Administration to implement it or some of its recommendations.

Mr Deputy President, 16 years have lapsed and the Administration is only willing

to come out with this review on rehabilitation after repeated calls from those concerned with rehabilitation like Mr LI and others.

Similarly, it would not be too far from the truth to say that there would not be further new policy directives in the next decade. In other words, the decision from this Green Paper will be the guiding principle for at least the next 10 years.

In the light of this and the fact that we are now only at the beginning of the public consultation period for this Green Paper, it is my feeling that it would be wrong, and we are not doing our duty properly, if this Council were to accept this Green Paper without a proper debate and without taking into account public opinion.

Mr Deputy President, it is with this in mind that I venture, after taking the views of members of my constituency and friends from the social welfare sector, to amend the motion in four directions:

(1) to highlight the implications of this document which is a product after 16 years of lobbying,

(2) to identify shortfalls which are still not covered within this Green Paper but are vital for future development of rehabilitation service,

(3) to urge the Government to come out with a White Paper giving its policy direction after genuinely taking into account public views, and

(4) to ask the Administration to show its commitment to rehabilitation development by giving adequate financial support to the recommendations in the forthcoming White Paper.

Let me now move to clarify some of the points that I have made:

#### I. Overall comments on the Green Paper

To start with, I would like to make overall comments on the Green Paper. Mr Deputy President, many would say and I would be the first to agree that there are a lot of materials in this Green Paper. But unfortunately, there is no co-ordination of the different services and of the improvements the Green Paper seeks to reform, nor is there a direction from the Government.

I would like to give some examples on the inadequacy of this Green Paper.

## II. Inadequacies in the Green Paper

Mr Deputy President, time would not allow me to dwell on all the shortfalls. I will therefore be focusing on a few areas in relation to medical rehabilitation and I am sure my honourable colleagues of this Council and members of the public would have more to contribute.

(A) There is an absence of consideration of rehabilitation for the chronically ill and those with organ disabilities and when I am saying organs, I mean that type of organs being commercially traded that Mrs Elizabeth WONG mentioned just now.

Mr Deputy President, it is distressing to be sick, it is unbearable to be chronically ill especially when one's illness involves the failure or the loss of a particular organ of function. Examples abound of afflicted people who have lost their function to speak properly because of surgical removal of the voice box, many are not able to hold their natural excretion in the normal way and have to rely on using a bag stuck to their body. Many are unfortunately disfigured by the removal of the breasts, for example. All these people, Mr Deputy President, need no charity, but they do all need care and rehabilitation either of a physical, social or mental nature or all of them together.

But alas, such are not forthcoming in the Green Paper. This culminated in the protest made by a group of these sufferers who have organized themselves to fight for their cause the last few days and today they will also table a letter on a subject of the same nature.

In other parts of the world, Mr Deputy President, these unfortunate groups would be supported by their governments to form self-care groups or self-help groups, but unfortunately there is no such support or encouragement from our own Administration. Nor is there even the meagre facility for them to meet; though many of them may group themselves together. Certainly, Mr Deputy President, there is an absence of dental care for the handicapped.

(B) The Absence of dental care for the handicapped

Care of the teeth remains a very important aspect in the total care for the mentally handicapped and the aged. Not only is there a lack of facilities but consideration for training these personnel is not even forthcoming.

(C) There is a lack of community rehabilitation policy. Mr Deputy President, irrespective of whether any individual is physically or mentally handicapped, he/she would have passed through at certain stage, a period of hospital treatment for acute conditions. No doubt rehabilitation, especially along the line of mentally handicapped and geriatric service, is well developed, and such would have completed or would have started within the hospital. But what happens when these patients are being discharged? No directions are given for the development of community-based rehabilitation services.

One would have thought that with the world trend moving into keeping people out of hospitals and with the drive in Hong Kong to develop primary health care, community-based rehabilitation should be taken on board as an important ambit of the Department of Health.

But it is ironic, and I simply fail to see the logic of the singular absence of participation of the Department of Health in the Working Party on Rehabilitation and its subcommittees. Let me sound a word of warning, Mr Deputy President, that incomplete rehabilitation of the old and the mentally retarded in the community will only expedite the speed for these people to return to hospitals again.

(D) Mr Deputy President, there is a lack of proper rehabilitation for occupational injuries. Admittedly when one of our 2.7 million workforce is injured accidentally and unfortunately at work, he/she could be treated in public hospitals. Facilities are also provided for him/her to regain certain functions to ensure that he/she can take care of simple needs. But is this the limit that a developed and caring society like Hong Kong can and should offer? Should we not be looking at ways and means to rehabilitate those unfortunate to have been injured so that they can return to their original or similar jobs and can again contribute and participate fully in society?

III. What then is the way ahead?

Mr Deputy President, it is vital that the Administration treats this document as a genuine consultative document. In other words, it should take serious consideration of the views of this Council and the public before formulating the proposed White Paper.

Amongst other issues which I am sure honourable colleagues will contribute today, it is essential that the following should also be seriously included:

(1) Organ impairment and chronic illness must and should be included in the rehabilitation service.

(2) There should be a committee established to thoroughly review the relationship between the different types of illness and disabilities and their needs for rehabilitation.

(3) There should be a setting-up of Patient Resources Centres in hospitals and specialist clinics to provide sufferers with health education, home care skill and training and an opportunity to share their illness experience and obtain emotional support through self-help groups.

(4) There should be a setting-up of co-ordinating committees on rehabilitation in regional hospitals and rehabilitation committee for each speciality of the regional hospitals.

(5) Most importantly, establish policy directions for the way ahead.

Mr Deputy President, many have criticized that my amendment would in fact give a chance to the Administration to slacken the pace of rehabilitation reform. I refute such allegation. What I ask for, Mr Deputy President, is to have a wider look at the Green Paper. What I ask for is to identify areas which are missed one way or the other from the Green Paper. What I ask for is to have these shortfalls properly considered before the final White Paper and when policy directions are being written. It is much better to have all the problems contained in one basket, before one considers the priorities to the implementation.

The speed of reform depends on the commitment and the will of the Government, not on the extent of consultation!

To conclude, Mr Deputy President, I am in no way discrediting the Governor for requesting a Green Paper on Rehabilitation, nor am I refuting this Green Paper. I think they are both laudable moves. I hope the Governor may very soon make the same move for health policies.

Yet, as we embark on a new policy which has ramifications for at least the next decade, should we not, as responsible members of society, put our heads together and try to paint an even more comprehensive picture for all who need such a service in the years to come? The principle should be one for integration not segregation, compassion not pity.

Mr Deputy President, I do so move.

Question on Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment proposed.

MR HUI YIN-FAT: Mr Deputy President, Hong Kong has achieved spectacular economic growth in the past decade. Even when local economic growth slowed down, our Gross Domestic Product still reached \$633 billion in 1991. For 1992, it is predicted that our GDP will reach \$712.5 billion. We can proudly rank ourselves among the wealthier nations and areas in the world.

What does it tell you then about Hong Kong and its people and how do you feel about being part of a society where less than 1% of its GDP is spent on social welfare?

Equally telling is the fact that a measly \$2.2 billion, about 0.3% of GDP is spent in 1991 to provide the whole range of rehabilitation services, covering medical rehabilitation, special education, vocational training, social rehabilitation, residential care and transport for the disabled. It tells us that our Government cares very little about the well-being of the most needy group among us.

Now the Green Paper revealed to the world the plight of Hong Kong's disabled people. The huge shortfalls in service provisions meant that we cannot even begin to look at services improvement and development. The shortfalls in various services areas reflected the fact that our disabled people have been waiting in pain over long periods of time for some essential services.

It is estimated that a total amount of \$600 million would be required to implement "the more concrete and quantifiable recommendations" contained in the Green Paper. This amount is only 29.5% of the total recurrent expenditure on rehabilitation services for 1990-91. By simple arithmetic we can see that a mere 6% increase in annually recurrent spending would mean that the shortfalls could be provided for in

five years. Therefore, there is absolutely no justification to prolong the suffering of the disabled and their families by setting a target of meeting the demands in 10 years through budgeting an annual increase of just 1.7% in recurrent spending on rehabilitation services. It is a shame on the Hong Kong Government. And it will be a shame on all of us if we allow this to happen.

The disabled and their families are asking us not to allow the Government to take this ridiculous course of action. They have come in their wheelchairs and pushcarts to demonstrate and voice out their grievances. Now it is up to us to open our eyes and ears to see and listen to their sufferings and their needs, and then do what is within our power to help.

"Equal opportunities and full participation", which is the theme of the Green Paper, starts with our listening to what the disabled and their parents have to say, and what the service providers in the field have been telling us. The ideas and views that have not been covered by the Green Paper should be taken into consideration again and, if accepted, be included in the White Paper.

In order to attain the goals of the Green Paper, we have to demand a much greater commitment of resources from the Government. There is no point in putting forward the high-sounding policy objectives of equal opportunities and full participation if the Government is not going to back up its words by financial commitment. We cannot let the Government get away, yet again, with another token gesture of a 1.7% annual increase in recurrent expenditures for rehabilitation services.

But our duty goes further than just that. Apart from demanding a far more substantial financial and resource allocation from the Government, we must also commit ourselves to follow through with monitoring the whole process of service provision. Relevant OMELCO panels could work together to monitor the process of resource allocation, prioritizing needs and implementation of recommendations contained in the Green Paper and the future White Paper.

Mr Deputy President, in summary, let me reiterate on behalf of the disabled and their families their anguish and needs. Their sufferings over the years demand the Government's attention and action. To realize equal opportunities and full participation, we, as a society, must be ready to commit adequate resources to provide in full all the essential services for the disabled as soon as possible, and in any case, no later than five years. A co-ordinated strategy to match the increased service

provisions with manpower training and accommodation provision must be put in place.

We all know that the question is not whether Hong Kong can afford to provide and care for our disabled. The question is whether we care enough to do it.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Mr LI's motion.

MR DAVID LI: Mr Deputy President, at the outset, I must declare my interest as Chairman of both the St James' Settlement Executive Committee and the Salvation Army Advisory Board.

A modern society is often judged by the way it treats its most disadvantaged citizens. Based on the statistics in Appendix F to the Green Paper, Hong Kong has no cause for pride. Significant shortfalls exist in nearly every programme area. But then, the Green Paper only confirms what we already knew. The Paper's objective is not to condemn the territory for past negligence. Rather, its objective is to look to the future and to foster a new beginning.

The Green Paper does provide a good starting point from which to discuss how to improve Hong Kong's poor past record. It embraces many proposals which -- if fully implemented -- would see a marked improvement in the territory's care for the handicapped. But in confirming its support for the Green Paper, it is unclear whether the Government fully comprehends the scope, scale and expense of the challenges ahead.

Services for the mentally handicapped perhaps suffer from the greatest deficiencies. As of 1990-91, the territory was short of an estimated 17 sheltered workshops, 43 day activity centres, 30 residential centres for the severely mentally handicapped and 14 centres for the moderately mentally handicapped.

Such facilities are not cheap. To run a workshop for 140 people costs roughly HK\$3 million a year, at current prices. Recurrent costs for a 50-person day activity centre run at about HK\$2 million a year; and for a 50-person residential centre, about HK\$3 million. Hence, at 1992 prices, the annual cost of meeting the estimated 1990-91 shortfall in the services for the mentally handicapped alone would total HK\$270 million.

There are also likely to be significant capital expenses. The cost of building



a sheltered workshop or a hostel is roughly HK\$4 million; for a day activity centre, about HK\$1.7 million. Assuming that the Housing Authority were to provide all the premises needed to meet the 1990-91 shortfall, the capital cost to the Government would total some HK\$317 million, against 1992 prices.

The Government has stated its commitment to improving and expanding services for the handicapped. But the territory's handicapped and their families are still waiting for the Government to put its money where its mouth is.

The Green Paper estimates that there are about 269 000 handicapped persons living in Hong Kong. But using the prevalence rates adopted by the United Nations and other international bodies, a figure nearer half a million may be more realistic.

Assuming an average household size of 3.5 persons, the number of Hong Kong residents affected by the plight of the territory's handicapped approaches two million. Hence, when discussing the amount of money to be spent on programmes for the handicapped, you are talking about expenditure which will impact positively on close to one-third of all Hong Kong people.

But the drive to create a better tomorrow for Hong Kong's handicapped involves more than plans, programmes and money. At its root, it must involve a fundamental change in people's attitudes towards the handicapped. Sympathy is a start, but opportunity and equality are the ultimate aims.

At present, the McDonald's fast-food chain employs more than 80 handicapped persons. The Hong Kong Government employs about 30. The Hong Kong Telephone Company employs more than 100 blind persons. How many blind persons does the Government employ?

The Green Paper puts forward a good, solid plan for action. But until this plan is implemented -- until the necessary funds are allocated -- it is nothing more than words.

Most of our handicapped are eager to be trained for -- and to be given -- productive work. In them, we have a great, under-utilized human resources asset. We look to the Government to commit the money -- and the opportunities -- to enable our handicapped to make their rightful contribution to our society.

With these remarks, Mr Deputy President, I support the amended motion.

MR PANG CHUN-HOI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, all people, disabled or able-bodied, should have equal opportunities to enjoy their civil rights. The community should endeavour to ensure that the disabled will not be discouraged from full participation in the community because of their disability. Whereas the spirit and principle mentioned above are beyond dispute, the public at large and the Government should both take this as their responsibility and take pleasure in doing so.

The realization of this spirit, I believe, can only be achieved through legislation to ensure the disabled their entitled rights. And the Government must commit itself financially to implementing its rehabilitation policies.

As to legislation, I think that provisions should at least be made for the following areas. First, employment: Disabled persons should enjoy same opportunities of employment as those enjoyed by the able-bodied. Second, education: All disabled persons should receive proper education commensurate with their needs and free education should be provided at least up to Secondary III instead of up to the age of 16. Third, information: It should be made mandatory for all government departments, public utilities, places of public access and public amenities to set up the necessary installations and facilities to ensure that the disabled can enjoy the most fundamental right to information. Fourth, transport: All public transport services should be required to put in place facilities and instructions that will facilitate patronage by the disabled and fulfillment of this requirement should be made one of their franchise conditions. Furthermore, the Government should set up a department to act on complaints from those disabled persons who have met unfair and unreasonable treatment.

Shortfalls in major rehabilitation services are recorded in detail in the appendix to the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Services and Policies. Judging from the respective shortfalls, there are serious shortages in the number of places in sheltered workshops, day activity centres, residential care and hospital beds for the disabled. The Green Paper envisaged that the shortfalls can be made up for in the next decade. In other words, its target for the next decade is merely set at resolving the shortfalls for the year 1990-91 while failing to forecast and provide against the probable rise in shortfall during the coming decade. This is one deficiency of the Green Paper.

On the other hand, a decade-long waiting time is too much for the disabled, particularly those severely mentally handicapped. In fact, their physical and physiological functions will degenerate if they are to idle at home only after a year or two. I believe it will help solve the problem if the waiting time can be shortened to five years, that is, making up for the shortfalls in the next five years.

The Government should also co-ordinate the deployment of human resources. On top of the relevant professionals, the families of disabled persons and voluntary workers are a valuable source of manpower that can be trained to provide primary rehabilitation services for the disabled. Their assistance can help ease the burden on professionals and bring tangible results. The self-help organizations also deserve encouragement and government funding.

"Financial constraints" are cited here and there throughout the Green Paper when it comes to the discussions on medical rehabilitation and residential and institutional care for the disabled. While funding is a key consideration in rehabilitation, it is regrettable to see that the only \$600 million committed to rehabilitation services by the Government is subject to review. Were the Government unable to commit itself to the services laid down in the Green Paper, the spirit and the principle vowed for therein would then amount to nothing but a beautiful fairy tale. The public at large is of course also obliged to lend a helping hand to the disabled. Rehabilitation services are no charity work. It is a responsibility for all of us to share. I hope that the public will put forward their views enthusiastically during the consultation period of the Green Paper.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, "equal opportunities and full participation" is the slogan of the just published Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services. There is general support from among the community for this objective formulated by the Green Paper. However, it is doubtful as to whether the Government is sincere or determined in achieving this objective.

As we all know, the most pressing problem of the rehabilitation services in Hong Kong that needs to be addressed at present is the serious shortfall in the provision of services as a result of inadequate resources. According to the Green Paper, 20

out of the 25 rehabilitation services are experiencing shortfalls. And some of these shortfalls even exceed the number of places currently available in certain services. Naturally it needs financial commitment from the Government to solve this problem. The Green Paper pointed out that the "annually recurrent cost of the more concrete and quantifiable recommendations is estimated to be \$600 million". And the "Government has budgeted for the expansion of existing services over the next four years at an annual additional recurrent cost of \$140 million". This financial commitment recommended by the Green Paper is found by many as to be over cautious and inadequate. It is because our rehabilitation services, built on a weak foundation, are lagging far behind other advanced countries both in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, unless the Government allocates more funds to rehabilitation services, the lofty objective set down in the Green Paper will otherwise be hot air.

Moreover, as this year's Budget reveals that the proposed increase in expenditure on rehabilitation services is only 1% over that of last year, it makes one worry all the more as to the Government's determination in improving rehabilitation services, or that its wish and commitment to realize this objective are nothing more than hollow words.

Admittedly, we cannot rely solely on government efforts to achieve the objective of the Green Paper. We need support from every sector of the community as well. Occupational rehabilitation, for example, is an important means to help the disabled integrate themselves with society, building up new inter-personal relationships in the family and the community, and to inspire in them self-respect, confidence and independence. Nevertheless, it is unrealistic to expect that the 270 000 disabled people could all be provided with jobs or placement by the Government which, as a matter of course, should take the lead in this respect. But having said that, disabled persons do face tremendous difficulties in looking for employment. According to the findings of a survey conducted in 1986, the unemployment rate among the disabled was as high as 49%. It naturally reminds me of the importation of labour scheme. The Government introduced the scheme, despite this 100 000-strong idling manpower resource. And what impact does this importation of labour in turn bring upon the disabled workers?

Recently, some workers of workshops operated by certain voluntary agencies for the disabled have brought it to my attention that the Government has in the past few years made out some of the orders previously placed with their workshops to other

units or places, such as the Correctional Services Department or mainland China on grounds of lower costs. If the Government were to cite costs as the only factor for its consideration in resolving the problem of employment for the disabled, then occupational rehabilitation would not be anything but empty talk.

Mr Deputy President, an effective way of helping the disabled to find employment is to introduce a quota system, whereby companies which employ a specific number of workers are required to employ a certain percentage of disabled persons as their staff. Although the Green Paper basically opposes to this proposal, I think that we should not dismiss this rashly in the absence of a study into the feasibility of this system.

MRS PEGGY LAM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, "equal opportunities and full participation" is the underlying principle and policy objective of the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services. First of all, I should like to thank the Working Party and its Sub-committees which together spent 10 months to compile this substantial Green Paper which analysed in detail and subsequently put forth recommendations covering an extensive scope of subjects ranging from prevention, medical care, education, employment and transport for the disabled to participation by their families. It has mentioned, however, only briefly the situation of handicapped people of chronic illness.

On 6 April, several scores of chronically ill handicapped persons, representing 15 self-help groups of people suffering from chronic illness, presented to the OMELCO Complaints Office their case of long standing negligence by the Government and that of now being left in the cold as their interests were not taken into account when the rehabilitation policies were being formulated. Although the Green Paper sets out eight categories of disability in its paragraph 2.5, those handicapped people of chronic illness are not included. I am very disappointed with this and I should like to extend my deepest sympathy to this group of people.

According to the United Nations guidelines on the classification of disability, people suffering from organ disabilities as a result of chronic illness should be classified as disabled. This category of disability includes people having undergone stoma or kidney transplant or needing renal dialysis, patients of pneumoconiosis, people who have lost their vocal function as a result of carcinoma of the larynx, and patients suffering from thalassemia, Parkinson's disease, lupus erythematosus arthritis or spinal injuries. They should be provided with

comprehensive rehabilitation services.

Although paragraph 5.27 of the Green Paper mentioned briefly that certain groups of persons who are recovering from chronic illnesses need to be included in the ambit of rehabilitation services, there is no reference to any specific proposals. While the Green Paper is commendable as a whole, this deficiency is somewhat a fly in the ointment. There are at present tens of thousands of chronically ill handicapped persons in Hong Kong. I hope that the opinions of this particular group of people could gain the ears of the Government in its formulation of the White Paper on rehabilitation services. The Government should also set up a working group on rehabilitation for the chronically ill to review their needs and take into account their interests in the framing of rehabilitation policies so that they could also enjoy the services.

It is estimated in the Green Paper that there are now 269 000 disabled persons in Hong Kong. This is an underestimation of the number of people in want of the services and the scale of financial resources necessary for the resolution of the problem. According to United Nations calculations, at least one out of every 10 persons is handicapped physically, mentally or as a result of defects in sensual organs. In other words, among the 5.7 million population of Hong Kong, the number of handicapped persons can be as high as 570 000. And together with their families who are indirectly affected by the level of rehabilitation services, the total population in question is believed to be some two million people.

As we can see, the \$600 million annual recurrent expenditure budgeted by the Government for rehabilitation services for the next decade and the \$35 million yearly increase in recurrent expenditure for the same are nothing more than a cup of water to a cartload of firewood on fire. In view of the serious shortfall in services for the mentally handicapped, the funds recommended by the Green Paper for that purpose are far from enough. For example, for the year 1990-91, the shortfalls in the provision of the following services are: 2 170 (44 centres) activity centre places, 2 262 (46 units) residential care places for moderately and severely mentally handicapped adults and 810 hospital beds for the severely mentally handicapped.

The Green Paper recommended that priority should be given to meeting the shortfalls in the services mentioned above and the problem be resolved within 10 years. It should be noted however that the financial resources so committed is meant to make up for the 1990-91 shortfalls in the next decade only, without making allowances for

the 800-plus severely mentally handicapped persons who are going to graduate from special schools during the next 10 years. Hence the problem of service shortfalls definitely will still be haunting us by 2002.

Apart from the Government's financial commitment, the success of the policy objective set out in the Green Paper also hinges on whether or not the disabled are provided with sufficient employment opportunities and transport services.

It is obligatory for the Government to provide the disabled with sufficient training and retraining which must go hand in hand with better employment opportunities lest painstakingly acquired skills would soon rust or be forgotten and they will then have to start all over again when the need arises. As far as society is concerned, giving the disabled an opportunity to develop their potentials to the fullest is an important investment in manpower resources which will benefit the overall economy particularly when we have a tight labour market.

An increase of vocational training places for the disabled aside, the Government should also improve the quality of training and offer various elective courses. In fact, a number of new trades and services have emerged on the heels of our economic transformation, whereby the disabled should have the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned. We should not impose any arbitrary restrictions on the provision of training to the disabled, thus limiting their development to working, say, as telephone operators only.

As to those disabled persons who cannot compete in the open job market, the Government should make available to them sufficient sheltered employment. The fact that the sheltered workshops have a shortfall of 2 482 places for 1990-91, as pointed out in the Green Paper, is indeed something that deserves the Government's serious concern.

In the meantime, the Government should also offer substantive encouragement in the form of tax concessions to employers who hire a large number of disabled people and give them the opportunity to develop their potentials. On the other hand, those disabled persons with outstanding working performance should be accorded recognition by society to remove the misconceptions of the public and some employers of disabled persons. Besides, the Government should also encourage the disabled to embark on

self-employment by subsidizing them with the establishment of trust funds for them and set an example by becoming their client.

Inadequate transport service, as pointed out by the Green Paper, is a major stumbling block to the realization of equal opportunities and full participation. Regrettably, the several major public transport operators have failed to recognize and cater for the rights and needs of disabled travellers. This problem has been in existence for a long time. The Government must hold more serious discussions with the public transport companies. Should a solution fail to come into fruition as a result of these discussions, the Government should improve the situation through legislation or imposition of conditions on their franchise renewal. After all, public transport is also a kind of social service, not merely as a profitable business.

Moreover, despite serious insufficiency in the Rehabus service tailored for the disabled, it is intended to make those mentally handicapped persons who have no movement difficulties ineligible for the service with effect from August 1992. This is unfair to those mentally handicapped people who cannot look after themselves. Instead of undermining the right of these people to this particular service, the Government should finance an expansion of the Rehabus service.

Judging from the foregoing points, it calls for concerted efforts from all sectors of the community to materialize the objective of providing equal opportunities for the disabled to participate fully in social affairs. As such, the Government should formulate as soon as possible a comprehensive and long-term policy for rehabilitation and related services and back it up with sufficient resources.

Mr Deputy President, although I appreciate the Honourable Eric LI's moving of the motion debate on the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services and concur with the various points he has made, the amendment moved by Dr LEONG Che-hung excels on its more comprehensiveness and is a reflection of some issues which have not been thoroughly dealt with in the Green Paper but have lately aroused much public concern, particularly the plight of those chronically-ill handicapped. The majority of my colleagues in the Co-operative Resources Centre and I will therefore support the amendment moved by Dr LEONG. However, should the amendment motion moved by Dr LEONG be voted down, we would still support the Mr LI's original motion as both motions share the same spirit. What we think the most important is that assistance and support be given to the disabled with pressing needs, so that they can get sufficient rehabilitation services.



Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MRS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the clear objective of rehabilitation policies as spelt out in the Green Paper is "equal opportunities and full participation".

For the disabled, appropriate transport service is their basic need, be it something to do with education, employment or social functions.

It is well-known that Rehabus Service is inadequate, and the Dial-A-Ride Rehabus service is expensive. Such services have in fact not been made extensively available to the disabled. In my view, the need of the disabled in transport cannot be satisfied even if a mobility allowance is granted. Given the fact that their principal mode of transport is taxi, an allowance in the region of a hundred dollars or so is simply not enough.

To assist the disabled in attaining "equal opportunities and full participation", we must let them have full access to public transport facilities. This is indeed the effective solution to the problem.

Our major transport facilities, with the exception of Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) and the ferry companies, have all along failed to take into account the needs of the disabled in their designs, thus preventing the disabled from using most of the public transport facilities. There are 270 000 disabled persons in Hong Kong, or about 5% of our population. It goes without saying that public transport should serve the public and there is no justification for service providers to ignore such a significant number of disabled citizens. I hold that public transport providers should live up to the spirit of serving the public as a whole and provide special facilities for these people with special needs, so as to enable them to use the transport services like any other passengers.

Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) has always discouraged the disabled from using its services by claiming that it may be dangerous for them to do so. But on the other hand, the Disabled Travellers Scheme of KCRC has been quite successful and no accident whatsoever has occurred since its inception. I am not convinced that MTRC is more dangerous than KCRC. If KCRC can do it, so can MTRC. Of course, from a practical point of view, we cannot make it mandatory for MTRC to install in existing

stations ramps or lifts for this purpose. But I think MTRC should have these facilities for the disabled in place in its future extensions, while at the same time try to improve, as far as possible, its existing facilities and services to make them accessible to more disabled persons.

Regarding bus services, I am glad to learn from the press that Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) has expressed its willingness to consider expanding its fleet of adapted buses, and talked with the Government on proposals to help the disabled. This is the right attitude for a responsible public transport service provider. I hope the Government will sort out the details with KMB expeditiously. I also hope the other franchised bus companies will adopt the same attitude in doing their best to improve their facilities for the benefit of the disabled. I believe China Motor Bus (CMB) is also a responsible public transport provider and would be receptive to reasonable public opinion. However, should it turn out that CMB is bent on its own ways, the Government should consider adding suitable clauses to CMB's franchise agreement, when it is time for renewal, to the effect that CMB must procure a certain number of adapted buses to serve the disabled.

The attitude to the disabled once embraced by public transport providers is indicative of the degree of non-acceptance on the part of our community to the disabled. In fact many people have misconception about the disabled, and even discriminate against them. Their rejection is even greater when it comes to the mentally ill and would look at the physically handicapped in a strange light. To help the disabled integrate with the able-bodied, we must rid ourselves of such prejudice. In this regard, the Government must come up with effective public education measures as soon as possible and implement them with vigour to ensure that the public really understand the rights and needs of the disabled, and thus genuinely accept them as members of our community.

Mr Deputy President, I do not find much conflict in spirit between Mr Eric LI's original motion and Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment motion. Therefore, I support Mr Eric LI's original motion, but at the same time I am not opposed to Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment motion.

MR VINCENT CHENG: Mr Deputy President, my good friend and comrade-in-arms Mr Eric LI has given a very excellent elaboration on the shortcomings of the rehabilitation services in Hong Kong. I fully support his view. I will concentrate on three areas

relating to the Green Paper on Rehabilitation: public education on attitude towards the handicapped, transport and employment.

Having been a volunteer in this field for a number of years, I fully realize the huge gap between the aspirations of the disabled community together with their supporters and the reality. Our efforts in the field of rehabilitation have been constantly frustrated by two major obstacles: first, the financial and physical resources that may be available and, secondly, the attitude of the community towards the disabled. In my view the lack of sympathy of the community is the greatest obstacle particularly in the attitude towards the disabled children. The attitude of the public towards the handicapped people in Hong Kong is appallingly negative. Disabled persons are laughed at, sneered at and, more often than not, looked upon as intolerable burden. For example, some taxi drivers refuse to take wheelchair passengers. This lack of sympathy, we may be surprised to hear, can be found even with the teaching profession for whom we will be fighting today in our request for more resource allocation for education. Over the last week I have personally received complaints from parents of children with various types of disability. Yesterday a group of parents of children with hearing problems told me how their children were rejected by headmasters and teachers of normal schools hoping that these children would go away to another school. Should they fail to be removed, these children would be left unattended in class. I am appalled by such allegations that some teachers see deaf children as burden rather than human beings, that these unfortunate youngsters are bullied by their fellow students and that how little the schools teach students in accepting and understanding children with disability. While we are here today fighting for more resources for basic education I hope our teachers and headmasters will take note of what I have said and double their efforts in public education on attitudes towards the disabled community, particularly the disabled children. Please do not hurt their feelings.

The second area I want to discuss is transport for the handicapped. The only assistance the bus companies and the tram company give is a sticker in the bus or tram which reads: "Please give seat to the handicapped." Many of the handicapped people cannot even get on a bus or tram. So what is the purpose of that sticker? It is just a joke. It is quite clear that these monopolies do not even accept that they have the responsibility to provide service to the disabled. The only form of public transport for those who cannot get on buses, trams and the MTR is the Rehabus which operates on a shoestring, funded through charity and government subvention. I propose that the cost of maintaining Rehabus service be shared equally by the public

transport companies which enjoy franchise. It should be one condition for future franchise agreements. It is not expensive for the transport companies because the Rehabus executive committee members, of whom I am one, are all volunteers drawing no salary.

The third area of my main concern is employment for the disabled. There are no official statistics on the unemployment rate of disabled persons. According to an informal study carried out by the non-government sector in 1986, the unemployment rate of disabled persons was 49%. It is an appalling figure. Although the situation has improved over the last few years because of labour shortage, there is still much to be done. Without employment our efforts in rehabilitation would be completely wasted. It is disappointing that the Green Paper only touches on this subject very slightly. I hope we will see some good ideas in the White Paper. I have received some recommendations from social workers in this area and I will put them forward on their behalf. There is a lot to be done.

Mr Deputy President, we need to give more resources to help the disabled. It is a shame that a society as rich as Hong Kong cannot provide better service to those who have to suffer through no fault of their own.

With these remarks, I fully support Mr LI's motion.

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, there will always be misfortune in this world, and misfortune invariably brings misery. A civilized and affluent society will take upon itself the care for the less fortunate as an important responsibility. It will also seek to minimize their pain and suffering so that even the less fortunate can feel the warmth in their long journey through life.

Viewed in this light, Hong Kong is still backward and destitute, both spiritually and morally.

In the course of my work, I have encountered all sorts of petitions. Of all the petitioners the most miserable are the parents of the disabled. Carrying their mentally handicapped grown-up children in their arms, these parents are engaging in perpetual pleadings and endless petitions. Their eyes are always filled with tears of sorrow; and in the end they are always disappointed.

What they are asking for is a hostel place to accommodate their mentally handicapped children. But today, such a hostel place is definitely a wild dream for them. The Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services plainly admits that there are shortfalls as at 1990-91 of 2 170 places in day activity centres for the severely mentally handicapped; 810 hospital beds and 2 262 hostel places for moderately and severely mentally handicapped.

The shortfalls have translated into a long waiting list piling up for hostel places and hospital beds. For some, it means a long wait of 15 years, or even longer. Even when their turn finally comes up, they will still have to be interviewed so that one lucky person can be picked out of every three unfortunate applicants. Those who get through this are still put on a probation, which means expulsion at any time during that period if their performance is not considered to be up to par.

Mr Deputy President, if we are talking about university entrance examinations, no one should complain that only the best get selected. Now, in order to secure a hostel place, the mentally handicapped have to pass three hurdles, and yet only the best get selected leaving the most unfortunate in the cold. Such a phenomenon bears out only too clearly the fact that our society is still backward and destitute, both in spiritual and moral terms.

Mr Deputy President, I can never forget the sight of a severely mentally handicapped child who held in his hand a placard made by his parents saying "suffering is eternal to me". If we still have any moral sense and a conscience, we ought to help lessen their suffering and enable them to feel the warmth in their long journey through life.

Mr Deputy President, let us dismantle the barrier between men. Let us share other people's suffering and do our utmost to give them joy, peace and hope.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

REV FUNG CHI-WOOD (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the support and services our community extend to the disabled are grossly inadequate and fall short of the United Nations' objective as laid down in Article 3 of the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons adopted in 1975 which states that "any disabled person, irrespective of the causes, nature and seriousness of his handicap or disability,

should be entitled to the same basic rights as other citizens of the same age, notably among other things, the entitlement to a living that is appropriate, as normal as possible, and fulfilling." This objective indeed calls for much more commitments from the Government and the community at large than those as set out in the recently published Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services.

(1) Parents of the disabled: Like other places, one out of ten persons in Hong Kong is disabled. Because of their physical, mental or sensory deficiencies, these people cannot lead a normal life. And their families who have to take care of them are also under enormous pressure. Chapter 10 of the Green Paper, which is on the participation of disabled persons and parental involvement, recommends that more systematic training courses should be organized for parents. This is a good recommendation. I hope that the Government will give full effect to it, because the more knowledgeable about disabilities parents are, the better they can take care of their disabled children. But that alone is still not enough. What the parents care most about their children are the progress of treatment and how long they have to wait until they can receive the services. However, questions raised by parents in this respect are often unanswered and they cannot get any support or consolation from the authorities concerned. Besides, at present the Government does not provide enquiry and counselling services to the parents, so the Green Paper suggests that studies be carried out to ascertain the need to establish resource centres to help the parents and to provide them access to information. In fact, it is essential to have resource centres for the disabled established. Similar services have already been run by voluntary agencies. It is incumbent upon the Government to set up centres for the disabled and their parents to provide a meeting venue where training and counselling courses can also be held. A lot of parents have to take care of their disabled children 24 hours a day. They are under tremendous mental stress. The Government should consider extending temporary residential service, currently benefiting only those over 16, to those under 16. At the moment, because of the shortage of rehabilitation services many disabled persons in need of help are forced to stay at home, placing a heavy burden on their parents. The shortfall of 1 538 hostel places for the severely mentally handicapped adults, which amounts to three quarters of the demand, is a particularly serious case in point.

Mr Deputy President, parents have to give an enormous amount of love, patience, efforts and time in attending their handicapped children and to put up with unsympathetic people's taunting remarks. It is time for the Government to support them with resources and services.

(2) Employment of the disabled: Employers are usually reluctant to employ disabled persons. In this regard, the Government should consider giving legislative protection to the disabled. A way of doing this is to model on the "Affirmative Action" in other countries to enact legal provisions making it mandatory for employers to employ disabled persons according to a certain ratio. It is estimated that disabled persons with ability to work account for 2.5% of the population.

The United Democrats of Hong Kong consider that public sector institutions and aided and subsidized agencies should take the lead in employing disabled persons on the basis of this ratio. The practice should then be promoted among private sector. If no headway is made this way, consideration should be given to mandatory employment of disabled persons through legislation.

The Government is a large machinery, but out of its 180 000 workforce, only 3 000 are disabled persons. If the Government is to take the lead in adhering to the ratio, then it ought to employ some 1 500 more disabled persons.

(3) Special vocational training: It is the Government's policy to encourage disabled children to receive education in ordinary schools. But headmasters and teachers are not knowledgeable enough about disabled persons, nor special facilities adequately provided in these schools to cater for their needs. That is why more should be done in teachers' training courses to give our prospective teachers a better idea about disabled persons. Schools should also be encouraged to take on more disabled students.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support the amendment motion.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I understand that we have a very large number of disabled people in the dining room listening to this debate. For their convenience I propose to go forward without a break until we finish. But I would remind Members that we have about 45 minutes out of the voluntary two-hour restraint for another 14 speeches.

MR TIMOTHY HA (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Green paper indicates that

"special education is an integral part of the education system and should therefore be the responsibility of the Education and Manpower Branch, while the rehabilitation services required to support special education should continue to remain under the Health and Welfare Branch". In my view, such a division of labour, though reasonable, may leave some agencies and services in an awkward situation and undermine the effectiveness of rehabilitation owing to the possible lack of mutual understanding among government departments.

Education for the visually impaired is a case in point. The Hong Kong Association of the Blind petitioned OMELCO at the end of February to seek government funding for their education resource centre for the visually impaired. They revealed that neither the Education Department nor the Social Welfare Department offers them assistance since the former does not regard the centre as an educational institute while the latter deems it educational in nature.

I have no idea how many agencies in Hong Kong are in a similar situation as the one mentioned above. But in order to provide rehabilitation services for where genuine needs lie, I believe that the Government should set up an inter-departmental co-ordination mechanism to facilitate a better co-ordination among government departments and between government departments and rehabilitation agencies. This will serve to avoid any misuse of existing social resources.

The Green Paper points out that "since the 1970's, the main trend of special education has been one of helping disabled children integrate into the mainstream as far as possible so as to achieve participation in the ordinary schools."

I am in favour of this line of development as spelt out in the Green Paper. At present, 176 children with visual or hearing problems are enrolled in ordinary schools. While such a practice should be given wider application, some technical problems involved must be dealt with carefully. For instance, we generally have big classes in our schools. How can a child who gets used to receiving special attention adapt to the life of a class of 40?

Two points should be noted in the process of integration: first, we should not carry it out precipitately. Second, some children with serious behavioural problems may find more comfortable in special schools. In other words, not all children are suitable for mainstream education. It will only do more harm to disabled children if we try to integrate them into the mainstream in a hurry and without careful



consideration. Furthermore, to our great disappointment, the Green Paper fails to offer comprehensive suggestions on related support services and back-up measures.

The Green Paper sketches a framework for an ideal rehabilitation policy. Yet the Government's affordability of the financial commitment and its sincerity must be a matter for concern. I hope that the Green Paper will not turn out to be merely a dud cheque.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Mr Eric LI's original motion.

MR MICHAEL HO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I will in the next four minutes speak on the concept of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation policy for former mental patients. Rehabilitation service is in fact wide-ranging in scope, of which medical services, though often accorded tremendous importance, form just a part. Today rehabilitation no longer means long-term hospitalization of mental patients nor institutionalizing mentally handicapped persons as if it is the only treatment. What we need now is communal care, and the best care and the best place for rehabilitation are to be found in the community or the family. That is to say, the rehabilitation bodies are aiming at providing supporting services to former patients through their family on a communal basis.

Let me inform this Council that many patients now in Castle Peak Hospital and Kwai Chung Hospital are no longer in need of hospitalization. The reason that they cannot be discharged is the shortage of rehabilitation services, namely among others, half-way houses, sheltered workshops and long-stay care homes. Such inadequacy should of course be attributed to the present policy which gives undue emphasis on hospital service, while relegating rehabilitation services to a subordinate level. Other reasons include, for example, some philanthropists who are willing to subsidize other services may not be happy to see their names associated with a psychiatric hospital.

The rehabilitation policy should lay more stress on the role of nurses in different kinds of institutions, such that more patients or those who need more nursing care can be discharged from hospitals without any delay. Nurses can accompany former patients discharged from hospital to these institutions which may serve former patients who need more complicated services.

I now wish to say a few words about the community psychiatric nursing service. Currently, among all the rehabilitation visits including those by social workers and occupational therapists, only the ones under the community psychiatric nursing service require a fee. This policy renders many former patients unwilling to use this service because they are charged for each visit. Given this policy, even if the community nurses find that their clients require more frequent visits, they will be unable to do so because the clients are unwilling to pay. I hope that the Government will closely examine this policy in the current review.

In the consultation exercise on this Green Paper, we have not heard much from former mental patients, and on arriving here just now, you might have found many disabled persons demonstrating, but no former mental patient. The reason is simple; it is because even the parents of these unfortunate people are not willing to speak up for them, and they themselves have no reason to take to the streets and tell everybody before the cameras that they are former psychiatric patients. I hope that the Government, in formulating the rehabilitation policy, can take care of the needs of these people who are unable to fight for their own well-being.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support the amended motion.

DR HUANG CHEN-YA (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the 30-hour Famine of the World Vision of Hong Kong is aimed at arousing our sympathy for the starved people by providing us with an opportunity to go through the experience of starvation ourselves. Perhaps, we should likewise have a day for "rehabilitation" where we can try to imagine how disabled persons manage to live, for example, by wearing a blindfold, covering our ears, tying up our hands and legs, or even carrying on our bodies a urine bag or a fecal bag. By so doing, we will become more sympathetic with the plight of the disabled and have a better understanding of their needs. Perhaps, the Administration can consider designating a "Rehabilitation Day" to remind us of the sufferings of the disabled every year. The scope of rehabilitation work embraces a number of target fields, namely physical disability, sensory impairment, mental illness, mental handicap and organ impairment. From the rehabilitation point of view, the circumstances surrounding defective physical development are different from disease-induced disabilities in adulthood and the situations which children, adults or aged people are in call for different considerations. It is therefore impossible and inappropriate to handle them in a uniform way. As far as administration is concerned, the Commissioner for Rehabilitation should establish several working

groups with particular responsibilities to monitor, plan and co-ordinate different rehabilitation services.

Today, I only wish to concentrate my speech on the problems concerning the rehabilitation of adult patients, while some of my colleagues will on my behalf express our care for the other disabled persons. The Government estimated in 1991 that there were 270 000 disabled persons, of whom some 60 000 were physically disabled. In fact, apoplexy alone claims more than 10 000 victims every year in Hong Kong. Among them, 3 000 die subsequently and many of those who survive need rehabilitation services. Given the number of patients suffering from other diseases, it clearly indicates that the Green Paper very much underestimates the demand for rehabilitation services. As a matter of fact, among the patients receiving treatment in hospitals, some of them can of course make speedy recovery and resume normal life, but there are still many who will unfortunately become disabled, in need of rehabilitation services. We are severely short of bedspaces for rehabilitation purposes, with only 358 in total throughout the territory, or only one for every 70 casualty patients. As a result, the waiting time for such bedspaces is long. And many patients will be turned away before fully rehabilitated, or be arranged to stay in casualty ward. They cannot receive necessary rehabilitation treatment. As to the hospitals, they are in fact wasting resources as they fail to put to effective use of the casualty facilities. Therefore, the number of rehabilitation beds must be increased and created on a demographic and geographical basis, such that patients in every district will have equal opportunity to enjoy rehabilitation services. However, it is still of no use to have the beds made available without the service of professional staff.

The concept and training of rehabilitation are different in terms of orientation from those of casualty treatment. There is no rehabilitation department in our two universities for relevant training. Neither is there any hospital which has any rehabilitation specialist. Rehabilitation work is usually assigned to quasi-specialists or even the youngest and most inexperienced doctors. Most rehabilitation wards in existence do not have a co-ordination team and the work is done in a piecemeal manner. These so-called "rehabilitation beds" are so ineffective that they cannot provide the necessary services to patients, thus prolonging the rehabilitation period.

District-based rehabilitation service is another kind of service which discharged patients and those of relatively mild disability find necessary.

Patients requiring rehabilitation services often encounter difficulties in transport and hence this necessitates home-visit services. This labour-intensive service, in fact, incurs very high cost. To tackle this problem, the Administration should set up a rehabilitation centre in every district, and pool together the human and other resources in rehabilitation, such as expertise in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychology and social welfare, thereby bringing the services to the patients and strengthening the counselling service provided to the patients and their families.

As regards casualty treatment, no one would like to see patients die for want of medicine and surgery. Likewise, we must also realize that things like artificial joints, electronic vocal cords, stoma bags and crutches are indispensable where rehabilitation service is concerned. The Administration should provide resources to ensure that no patients would be denied rehabilitation for financial difficulties. Meanwhile, nothing has virtually been done on the provision of clinical psychological counselling, vocational training and job placement services, as far as rehabilitation services for adult patients are concerned. Adult patients who suffer from disease-induced disability or lose their working ability are prone to feel depressed under various mental pressures. Their families will also be worried about their condition and find themselves at their wits' end. For example, patients suffering from hemiplegia or aphasia, women with their breasts excised, patients with burns, stomal people and patients who have had their vocal cords excised, and these patients' families will need counselling and support in respect of their mental well-being and sexual life. In view of the fact that regaining working ability is very important both to the adult patients themselves and their families, I hope that the Government can take swift action and provide sufficient support in terms of occupational counselling and vocational re-training for adult patients and mental handicaps.

Given the aforesaid insufficiency in resources and manpower and the lack of district-based services bodies, I am firmly of the opinion that the Government must formulate as soon as possible an overall plan for launching these meaningful rehabilitation services. I support the motion.

DR CONRAD LAM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, when attending a seminar on the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services at the Caritas Centre in Ngau Tau Kok on 28 March, I witnessed a scene that I had never seen before in a seminar. I found tears streaming down some speakers' faces. These women were not complaining

about their lot, but sadly relating to the others their plights and worries. They all have mentally handicapped children. Among them, at least two are over 60 years old, and one of them in tears said that for decades she had been doing everything she could to take care of her son. In the last few years, however, she became sickly and got weaker and weaker. She was not worrying about her health but who was going to take care of her mentally handicapped son in case that she was hospitalized or died. This lady's brief and undramatic account belies the long and winding road a tender and loving mother has traversed. This is a real-life tragedy featuring an old woman and her middle-aged mentally handicapped son. As assigned today by the United Democrats of Hong Kong to speak on the rehabilitation services for aged persons and patients with chronic diseases, I can only present my views on the kind of problems faced by people like this old and loving mother.

In 1991, the number of disabled persons was estimated at around 270 000 while people aged over 60 amounted to 772 000, or about three times as many as the number of disabled persons. By 2001, the population of persons aged over 65 will increase to 956 000. Illness naturally ensues old age and our bodies will become weaker and weaker as time takes its toll. Moreover, it is not uncommon for disabled elderly persons to suffer from more than one type of handicap. They react slowly to treatments and make slow recovery. Although only 9% of our total population are elderly people aged over 65, they account for 21.5% of the total number of patients making use of the general out-patient service. Their occupation of hospital beds under the Hospital Authority makes up 40% of the total occupation rate. Resources spent on health care and medical services for the elderly are estimated to be three times as much as those for other age groups. As such, rehabilitation services for geriatrics and patients with chronic disease are very important judging from the viewpoint of resources allocation or social services. But the whole Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services has only made brief reference to these two subjects in three paragraphs, from 5.25 to 5.27. Although the spirit and orientation laid down in these three paragraphs are correct, what lacking is detailed planning: no practical proposals as to how to improve the rehabilitation services for elderly persons and chronically ill patients; no progress schedule; no financial commitment nor human resources earmarked to this end. Given the present pace of progress and the resources allocated, it will be difficult for the recommendations outlined in paragraphs 5.26 and 5.27 of the Green Paper to be successfully implemented in 10 or even 20 years. Let us look back on the past. The recommendations made in a white paper 15 years ago to offer assistance to disabled persons have not been implemented up to now. If this is anything to go by, Chapter 17 of the Green Paper, that is,

"Summary of Recommendations" which contains 87 recommendations, should be retitled as "Chapter 17: Our Expectations" or "Our Imaginations".

I urge the Financial Secretary not to be too zealous about the Airport Core Programme and blind to the extreme insufficiencies of various social welfare services. If the Administration cannot recover from the illness of "Airport Core Programme autism" and effect a fairer allocation of resources, then the title of the Green Paper, "Equal Opportunities and Full Participation: A Better Tomorrow for All" should be changed to "Full Participation by the Old and Disabled: A Speedier passage to Heaven for All".

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Dr LEONG Che-hung's motion.

MR LAU CHIN-SHEK (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I wish to take Taiwan as an example, which is one of the four little dragons in Asia and a Chinese community like Hong Kong, to highlight the problems of Hong Kong in its policy towards disabled persons. I will also put forward proposals on four areas, namely, the enactment of legislation for the full protection of the disabled, broadening the definitions of disability, prevention of industrial accidents and legislation on employment.

I will first speak on full protective legislation. Taiwan enacted a Disabled Persons Welfare Act as early as 1980 in order to protect the livelihood and legal rights of disabled persons. After nearly 10 years of enforcement and in response to global trends, social changes and criticisms of the loopholes identified in the provisions of the Act, the Taiwanese authorities subsequently made comprehensive amendments to the Welfare for Disabled Persons Act in 1990, as a result of attentive considerations given to the public views and the recommendations outlined in the "Guiding Principles of the 10 years' World Movement for Disabled Persons" of the United Nations. In stark contrast, Hong Kong to date does not have a single piece of comprehensive legislation for the protection of the disabled. Today, at a time when comprehensive amendments have, after lengthy deliberations, already been made to the the Disabled Persons Welfare Act in Taiwan, our Government has not even had the slightest intention of enacting any legislation to give the disabled in Hong Kong some protection. I wonder whether our Administration, while boasting our strong economic growth, has ever been ashamed of our behind-the-times social policies.

The second area I wish to touch on is the definitions of disability. The

demonstration the other day staged by a group of patients with chronic disease has sounded a warning that the scope of definitions of disability in the Green Paper is far from satisfactory. If we compare the definitions in the Green Paper with those in Taiwan's Disabled Persons Welfare Act, it will be found that at least four categories of disability are not covered in our definitions, namely, people with vocal and linguistic handicaps or suffering from functional failure of major organs, disfigured persons, "vegetables" and senile dementia patients. Therefore, a broadening of the definition and a systematic and regular survey of the number of the various kinds of disabled persons for determining service needs are something that calls for our immediate actions.

I now come to the third area which is the prevention of industrial accidents. The Green Paper has not provided any practical recommendations as to the prevention of accidents. Relevant figures show that nearly 100 000 industrial accidents take place each year, causing about 100 000 injuries and some 240 deaths. Such figures are indicative of how critical the problem of industrial accidents is, not to mention other kinds of accidents. Preventive measures must therefore be stepped up, for no matter how good our rehabilitation services are, if the number of disabled persons keeps on increasing, the problem can never be solved.

I now turn to the last point: employment security. Our trade unions have been urging the Administration for years to model on Western countries and stipulate that both public and private bodies are required to employ a certain percentage of disabled persons as their staff, who also could work under legislative protection of "equal job and equal pay". As a unionist, I know that without effective legislation, promise like "equal participation" is nothing but empty words. In Taiwan, the Disabled Persons Welfare Act enacted in 1980 was generally criticized as being "disabled" itself, for the provisions therein relating to employment security were only referential guidelines without any binding effect. The amended Act of 1990 has therefore provided that at least 2% and 1% of the staff in public organizations with more than 50 employees and private organizations with more than 100 employees respectively should be disabled persons.

Mr Deputy President, providing disabled persons with comprehensive legislation, welfare services and employment protection should not be regarded as a mercy on them or a humanistic commitment. Instead, the security for them should be upheld as the affirmation of the premise that the disabled have the right to demand the basic rights enjoyed by normal persons.

I strongly urge the Administration to take prompt action and make more positive commitment to handicapped and disabled persons. Thank you.

MISS EMILY LAU (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment motion moved by Dr LEONG Che-hung because the Green Paper has failed to touch upon some issues. But because of the time constraint, I shall briefly raise one or two points for the Secretary for Health and Welfare's consideration and hope that she would do something about it.

The present rehabilitation policy is formulated on the basis of the White Paper on rehabilitation in 1977. Nevertheless, the Green Paper still finds that many rehabilitation services are inadequate and in particular, there is a shortfall of several thousand places in, among others, sheltered workshops and day activity centres. Does it mean that serious mistakes were already made 15 years ago? I really hope that similar mistakes will not be repeated as Dr LEONG has just said that the strategy in question is unlikely to be reviewed in the next 10 years. Besides, Mr Deputy President, some of the figures concerning the places in the Green Paper are rather confusing. Let me quote a few examples. The Green Paper states that there is a shortfall of 170 places in special schools for mildly mentally handicapped persons. However, it was disclosed by the Public Works Panel under the Finance Committee when it applied for funds for the construction of schools that the number should be 24. As regards the shortfall of places in schools for the moderately mentally handicapped persons, the Green Paper gives a figure of 162 whereas the number provided by the Public Works Panel is 40. Could the Secretary inform this Council which is the correct figure? Or could it be that all the figures are, as some Members have said, incorrect and no one knows who is right?

In addition, the Secretary in the Foreword of the Green Paper urges the public to put forward proposals regarding the priorities of the number of programmes to be implemented. This is of course one way of doing it. But is it a responsible move or does the Government act appropriately? We should think about it. Frankly speaking, I am sure whoever decides the priorities will be lashed at because no programme is less important than the others. But the Government should at least make its stance clear even though the Green Paper is meant to be a consultative paper. We all know that there are insufficient resources for the dozens of programmes. But the Government should at least state clearly which are the more important ones before



seeking the views of the public. Unfortunately, the Government had not even done this. It acted like pouring sands out from a plate and said "Give me some suggestions". Given the limited resources available, the annual recurrent cost the Government has proposed is \$600 million and an annual additional recurrent cost of only \$140 million is earmarked for the expansion of the services over the next four years. What could be achieved out of such a small sum of money?

Lastly, Mr Deputy President, a few days ago, dozens of mildly mentally handicapped young people came to me and expressed their hope that due recognition be given to their needs in education, employment and recreational and cultural facilities. They are now in this building listening to our debate and pin high hopes on the Government. They said that they did not understand the contents of the Green Paper because it is too difficult for them. They hope that the Government will inform them the contents of the Green Paper by making available to them papers written in simple and plain language or even video tapes or cassettes.

Mr Deputy President, a civilized society should also be a caring society. I believe we all know that we have very limited resources. But if the Secretary comes here with the intention to ask for more funds to take care of the less fortunate, I am sure many colleagues will render her support.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

MR GILBERT LEUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, according to the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services, the total number of disabled persons is estimated to be 269 000, accounting for 4.5% of the total population of Hong Kong. Like other people, disabled persons have the right of living. The Bill of Rights which was passed in this Council last year has given due recognition to one basic principle of government administration, that is, to ensure that everyone is equal. That being so, I pin high hope on the recently released Green Paper on Rehabilitation, as it is entitled "Equal Opportunities and Full Participation: A Better Tomorrow For All".

As the representative of the Regional Council, I really appreciate that it has shown its care about the needs of disabled persons in the past year. Most of the Regional Council buildings have installed special facilities for the disabled as practically as possible. It organizes and sponsors recreational and cultural

activities for disabled persons every year. Of course, there is still much room for improvement. The Regional Council will keep up its work and provide more and better recreational and cultural activities and facilities for disabled persons.

I must point out that the acute shortage of rehabilitation services in Hong Kong has contrasted oddly with our booming economic activities. In the last section of the Green Paper, it is stated that the Government has budgeted for the expansion of existing services over the next four years at an annual additional recurrent cost of \$140 million and expects to be able to maintain this pace of expansion thereafter. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that it will still take 10 years to meet the demand at today's level according to the Government.

We should also note that the aforementioned is merely referring to the existing services and those much needed services and facilities which have never been provided in the past are in fact not included in the Green Paper. For example, many recommendations made in the Green Paper are beyond the limited scope of services currently provided by the Government. Should these much needed new services be offered, I am afraid the gap between supply and demand would become larger. This clearly demonstrates that the Government has to make greater financial commitments than those mentioned at the end of the Green Paper.

The ultimate goal of rehabilitation policy is to create conditions which will enable disabled persons to lead an independent life, so that they can fully be integrated into the community and enjoy the same civic rights and privileges like other people. However, the Government has done little in the provision of education and vocational training for them.

According to the Green Paper, there is a total shortfall of 1 575 places in various education and training centres for disabled persons. This being the case, many disabled children are denied the opportunity to receive proper education and fritter away their time in their long wait for an allocated place. In fact, a better education method is to allow, as early as possible, disabled children to attend classes with other children and through integrated education, both the disabled and able-bodied children could have more opportunities to learn how to get along with each other, thus eliminating the formation of any misunderstanding.

As regards vocational training, the situation is the same. In recent years, Hong Kong has been suffering from a shortage of labour. However, the Government has failed to adopt a positive attitude to deal with the problem and to provide job opportunities

for disabled persons. Neither has it modified the vocational training courses for disabled persons to meet the needs of our transforming economic structure. Even in traditional sheltered workshops, the places available are 40% short of the actual demand.

We all know that good education and proper vocational training are the most basic investments in developing and cultivating people's potentials. This is applicable to both able-bodied persons and the disabled alike. If education and vocational training for disabled persons are not well taken care of, their potentials will be left undeveloped and they will be unable to learn to live independently. Their civic rights and privileges will, to a certain extent, be deprived. On the other hand, to the whole community, if the potentials of the 4.5% of the total population are not tapped, it will indeed be a waste of social resources. I would therefore urge the Government not to ignore such a reservoir of human resources and should face squarely the problem of providing education and vocational training for disabled persons. The Government should duly recognize that disabled persons can also make contributions to society. As regards education and vocational training, I hope that more forward-looking strategies and approaches will be adopted.

Lastly, Mr Deputy President, no one will disagree that Hong Kong has achieved enviable economic success over the past 20 years. Against this economic backdrop, we are set to achieve greater success in the 21st Century by putting our efforts in the construction of the airport and port facilities. And we should not ignore the basic rights and privileges of disabled persons who account for 4.5% of our population. We should not deprive them of the opportunities to have full participation in social life. Now we can find no excuse to deny their basic rights and privileges. I would therefore urge the Government to make concrete and greater commitments in the provision of services for them, which should not just remain at the existing limited level only on a larger scale. The Government should make greater commitments and efforts to create better conditions so that disabled persons can participate in society and enjoy the civil rights and privileges they have been denied in the past.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the slogan of the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services is a beautiful title, namely, "Equal Opportunities and Full Participation: A Better Tomorrow for All". But it will be a

beautiful misunderstanding if one believes that the Green Paper will rectify the long-standing problem of inadequate services. We are always proud of our prosperity and thriving economy. In terms of GDP, Hong Kong is on a par with other wealthy developed countries. But how much has our Government done to the most unfortunate group of people in our community -- the disabled persons? The Government has pledged time and again that it will knit a safety net to provide reasonable services to those who cannot help themselves. Disabled persons are those being least able to take care of themselves. Are they adequately taken care of? Let me relate the plight of the mentally handicapped persons to serve as a case study. In paragraph 6.12 on page 43 in the Green Paper, it is stated that " it is clear that pre-school services ( for new born babies to those six years of age) have a vital role to play in rehabilitation". But what has the inadequacy of pre-school services indicated? There is a shortfall of 207 places in pre-school education and training centres and 708 places in integrated child care centres, a shortage of more than 100% as much as the existing 622 places available. There is also a shortfall of 101 places in special child care centres. In paragraph 6.13, the Government points out that these shortfalls will be met within the next decade. But in paragraph 6.19, it is revealed that the Government intends to increase 30 places in integrated centres annually. Ten years means an increase of 300 places. How could the 708 places be filled within the next decade? Besides, could we put up with the situation for a decade? How could disabled people talk about equality, not to mention participation, when they have already faced the problem of inadequate rehabilitation services, ever since they came to this world? Some disabled persons may fortunately receive rehabilitation services until they turn 16. But the problems thereafter could be more serious. Many mildly and severely disabled persons, I mean those over 16 years of age, have to stay at home and receive no training. The problem of inadequate services for the disabled persons over the age of 16 is very serious. I do not intend to repeat it here as many colleagues have pointed it out.

When their parents grow old, severely disabled persons will have to rely on the Government for residential service. The \$1,000-plus double disability allowance in fact does not help much. Although residential services are expensive, it is the only way out for those adults of multiple disabilities or severe disability.

Because of time constraint, I shall briefly put forward my suggestions as follows:

First, the Government should provide more resources to establish disabled children's parents associations in various districts, strengthen parental

participation and provide assistance for them to build up mutual support;

Second, given that rehabilitation strategy encompasses a number of policy branches and departments, I am of the view that disabled persons or their parents should be invited to join the Transport Advisory Committee, Housing Authority, Social Welfare Advisory Committee and the Hospital Authority;

Third, further to the second point, the Commissioner for Rehabilitation should be directly responsible to the Chief Secretary, not to the Secretary for Health and Welfare because his scope of work straddles several policy branches. The power and status of the Commissioner should be strengthened so that he can co-ordinate the work pertaining to rehabilitation services in various departments;

Fourth, I would like to say something for the mental patients because they are those being least capable of taking care of themselves. And they have been ignored and discriminated against by society. The Government should allocate more reasonable resources to provide services for them.

In conclusion, the Green Paper has put forward as many as 84 recommendations and of which, about 43 involve the increase of resources. If the present financial commitments are adhered to, the problem will, I am sure, still be with us even 10 years later. I am not sure whether the Government would change its policy and make substantial financial commitments to rehabilitation services. But I have a beautiful dream and hope that the Government will correct its past mistakes in this respect.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MR MAN SAI-CHEONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the title of the Green Paper -- Equal Opportunities and Full Participation: A Better Tomorrow for All -- was beautifully put. But to disabled and mentally handicapped persons, equal opportunities and full participation are the long-awaited goals which have not been realized. What our society or Government has been offering them is alms rather than the opportunities to fully participate in the community so that they can become a member of it. Let me first talk about "participation". We should not think that it would be very easy for disabled persons to participate in the community. Most of the transport services have in fact not been upgraded to allow disabled persons to use

them. Obvious examples are bus and Mass Transit Railway services. Some people think that disabled persons are beneficiaries and therefore their need for transport services has to be met by the Social Welfare Department. This being the case, the Secretary for Transport a year or so ago passed the responsibility of arranging transport services for disabled persons on to the Health and Welfare Branch. In fact, the public transport companies' apathy to the needs of disabled persons has generated a social welfare-based "special need for transport services". Had the needs of disabled persons been taken care of by the public transport companies, they would not have to rely on "welfare". It is proposed in the Green Paper that handicapped and disabled persons should be given opportunities for full participation. However, the existing transport services obviously make it inconvenient for disabled persons to use them and the transport companies have not well taken care of the needs of disabled persons. It has been shown in many cases that many disabled persons have lost the opportunity of participating in community activities because of inconvenient transport services. They feel frustrated and their health deteriorates. In fact, will the Government make it a requirement that all public modes of transport provide facilities convenient to disabled persons when it grants franchises to the public transport companies? This would appear feasible. It is because public vehicles rendered readily accessible to disabled persons will also make other passengers find it convenient: better hand-rails will help passengers board vehicles in safety and level ground and less steep steps will enable people carrying luggage or pushing perambulators board and get off public vehicles more conveniently and easily. Without the co-operation of the public transport companies, all the recommendations set out in Chapter 11 on transport services in the Green Paper will be just empty talk and gibberish. A public transport system convenient to passengers will, on the whole, save more money because this will reduce the high costs of providing special public vehicles and escorting disabled persons. It is in fact also the responsibility of the Transport Branch, not only that of the welfare department. In Europe and North America, the transport needs of disabled persons and the elderly people are met by their transport departments. The Department of Transport in the United Kingdom has set up a special section for disabled persons so as to promote and implement transport strategies related to disabled persons and also to work together with disabled persons, transport organizations and manufacturers to examine ways of improving transport services. Therefore, Hong Kong should also consider this idea. Besides, the fixed or telephone appointment service of Rehabus should be extended and it should also take care of the interests of different kinds of handicapped persons and should not only care for those of the physically disabled persons.

Let me now turn to "equal opportunities". Rehabilitation service is not a special welfare service. Disabled and handicapped persons are members of our society and should not be discriminated against or exploited because of disability. They should enjoy the same rights enjoyed by others. Like normal people, they also need recognition and the concern of the community. Handicapped persons should have the right to know and obtain adequate information and the Government should, through the electronic media, activity programmes and so on promote public education and encourage the general public to accept handicapped persons. Government publications, notices, policy documents should also be published in the braille version so that the blind people will also benefit. Government television programmes, news reports and ordinary television programmes should contain either subtitles or sign language.

Letting disabled and handicapped persons participate in community activities, such as recreational, cultural and community activities, is meant not only to give disabled persons some pastimes or entertainment but also to enable them to rediscover the meaning of life and develop their potentials of creativity. They will, through participation in these activities, be reassured of their own importance and live a new life in a more appreciative, active and creative style.

For all their limitations, disabled persons have been proved to be able to communicate and develop their potentials through adaptation and through the medium of art. If the Government does not want to increase resources, the existing shortfall will only be met in 10 years' time and the provision of recreational, cultural and community activities for handicapped persons will have to follow, in terms of priority, some other services which are already acutely short. This being the case, the human resources of tens of thousands of disabled persons will be untapped and therefore they will be unable to join the community. This is really a waste. How could "equal opportunities" be created?

Lastly, I would like to say a few words on the problem of pre-school education for handicapped children and the difficult situation facing parents of these children. We all know that the parents are facing additional pressure in taking care of these children and what handicapped children under six years of age need most is proper treatment and training. If not, the children will suffer all their life. We know that the Green Paper has only emphasized parental participation but failed to mention concrete support and services. For example, the parents should have the right to know and be informed of the assessment of their children, the kinds of

services available, how their applications are being processed and how long they will have to wait. There are only two parents' resources centres in the territory and training for the parents and consultation services are lacking. I do hope that the two goals of the Green Paper -- equal opportunities and full participation -- will be realized and that they are not just slogans and empty words. As regards resources, we hope the Government will make commitments and speed up the process of implementing the recommendations so that handicapped persons and their families can be given "equal opportunities" for "full participation" to create a new and better tomorrow as indicated in the title of the Green Paper.

MR JAMES TO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I would first of all like to cite a real case. There was a mentally handicapped person who was 27 years old but with a mental age of just between six and seven. He was seen urinating in public and reported to the Police for indecent exposure by a female passer-by. When a statement was being taken in the police station, he was asked to first write down, "I am willing to give a statement". After the statement was written, he was then asked to write down, "I agree to the above facts". This mentally handicapped person in fact did not even know how to write these words; nevertheless, the police finally decided to charge him with indecent exposure. And, the medical report stated that he was fit to stand trial. Since he was 27, the case was dealt with in an ordinary court. His father brought the case to the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) and pointed out that it was unreasonable to take a statement from him in such a way. CAPO replied that he could not complain on his son's behalf since any complaint should be lodged by the person concerned, and in this case the mentally handicapped person with a mental age of only six. How would he know the way to lodge a complaint? As the complaint was rejected, the case was heard in the Magistrates' Court. The father applied to the Duty Lawyer Scheme administered by the Law Society for free legal representation but was also rejected. The reasons were: first, it was not a Juvenile Court case; second, the offence of indecent exposure did not fall within the scheme's scope of assistance by that time. In the end, of course, the mentally handicapped person was found guilty during the trial and the conviction was recorded.

This real case shows that the law of Hong Kong has no specific provision made to protect the interests of the mentally handicapped and they would have to go through the same trial procedures as the ordinary people on the basis of their biological age with no due consideration given to their mental age.



Under present legislation, the interests of the mentally handicapped could not be fully protected. Here are some obvious points:

First, guardianship. When a mentally handicapped person reaches the age of 18, he will no longer be under his parents' natural guardianship. I wonder how mentally handicapped people over 18 years of age, especially those who are severely mentally handicapped, can decide on things independently in relation to their own health, living and so on. Guardianship is thus very important to them. According to the present Mental Health Ordinance, the mentally handicapped fall under the category of people "in a state of mental disorder" and shall have a guardian. However, the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill are two types of people with different needs. How could they be treated as the same? What the mentally handicapped need are counselling, care and opportunities to learn through social life. As for the mentally disordered people who are suffering from mental illness, some of them can fully recover one day with suitable drug treatment. If we describe both the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill to be "in a state of mental disorder", not only will the public be misled to think that the mentally handicapped are no difference from those mentally ill, but this will also be very unfair to the mentally handicapped. Furthermore, experience from actual cases show that the guardianship system under the Mental Health Ordinance cannot meet the needs of the mentally handicapped.

Second, criminal offences and judicial procedures. As in the case I have cited earlier on, the law fails to take into account the mental age of a mentally handicapped offender. At the same time, because of this criterion, the mentally handicapped have to go through the same procedures as the ordinary people, from taking statement in police station to appearing in court to be tried. This is very unfair to the mentally handicapped.

I think that the Government should introduce legislation to safeguard the interests of the mentally handicapped, improve the present criminal procedures and consider setting up a special court to hear criminal cases with mentally handicapped people as the offenders.

Third, introducing legislation for the supervision of privately-run homes for the mentally handicapped. These privately-run homes for the mentally handicapped emerge as a result of the shortfall in government residential services for the mentally handicapped and the increasing outflow of families emigrating from Hong Kong. Nevertheless, as there is no legislation governing the equipment, staff deployment

and facilities of these homes, not only do some mentally handicapped people staying in such homes receive inadequate attention, care and training, but their living conditions and rehabilitation progress even get deteriorated. Such being the case, I hope that the Government would look at the supervision of such privately-run homes squarely when framing its long-term rehabilitation policies.

In conclusion, the three points I cited just now are only the tip of the iceberg. There is also the question of human rights. The Government is required under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to submit regular reports to the relevant body under the United Nations. Nevertheless, these reports have never made any reference to the mentally handicapped or the disabled. They do not state clearly, for example, if the Employment Ordinance applies to sheltered workshops or to disabled persons working under supported employment. In addition, since legal matters concerning marriage, adoption, medical care, health, sterilization, will, contract and finance are not what the mentally handicapped can cope with, I would like to call upon the Government to introduce legislation to safeguard the interests of the disabled.

With these remarks, I support Dr LEONG's amendment.

DR YEUNG SUM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, regarding the Green Paper I will dwell mainly on the United Democrats' views on the following areas: (1) basic principles and policy objectives, including the principle of equity, allocation of resources and guidelines to priorities; (2) prevention, identification and assessment; (3) participation of disabled persons and parental involvement; (4) manpower planning and training; (5) mode of service. As colleagues from the United Democrats of Hong Kong (UDHK) have already expressed their views on the Green Paper, I will confine my speech to these areas.

First, the UDHK attach great importance to the principle of equity. Disabled persons do not only have equal rights to participation, they should also have equal opportunities to participation. In order to enable disabled persons to fully utilize these opportunities the community should provide more resources for them. Through positive discrimination, disabled persons will not be denied of equal opportunities to full participation because of their disabilities and the uneven distribution of social resources. To put it in another way, in order that disabled persons can be offered equal opportunities to full participation more resources should be allocated

to them to cater for their needs; otherwise, full participation will still be beyond their reach despite equal opportunities available in society.

With regard to resources, the UDHK urge the Government to meet as soon as possible the shortfalls in various rehabilitation services set out in Appendix F to the Green Paper as disabled persons and their parents cannot wait any longer. It has been pointed out in the Green Paper that funds allocated to rehabilitation services will, in the next 10 years, increase gradually by \$35 million each year to meet the shortfalls in rehabilitation services as projected in 1990-91. This annual rate of increase, in terms of compound rate, will be less than 1.7%. The rate of increase recommended in the Green Paper is too low; the United Democrats therefore would urge that any growth in rehabilitation services in the future should at least be in line with the growth in the economy. If the economy grows at a rate of 5%, the annual rate of growth in rehabilitation services will at least be 5%. The United Democrats are of the view that the 10-year target to meet the shortfalls should be shortened to five years, and that an additional sum of \$120 million should be allocated each year to rehabilitation services, of which \$70 million will be used to meet the shortfalls and \$50 million will be used to finance new services.

As to guidelines to priorities, the UDHK would suggest the following criteria:

(1) Ratio of shortfalls: priorities be given to services where shortfalls are, relatively speaking, most serious so as to shorten the waiting time for the services;

(2) Hardship: for example, in the case of severely and moderately handicapped persons, their and their parents' need for rehabilitation services is greater and more urgent than that of the mildly handicapped persons and their parents;

(3) Seriousness of the problem: services which affect the greatest number of persons be given priority in resource allocation;

(4) Development of bridge-over services: Given the lack of continuity in the provision of some of the existing services, disabled persons cannot receive immediately suitable bridge-over services when they enter from one age group to another, making futile the efforts and progress made earlier through other rehabilitation services. This is most obvious in the case of severely handicapped persons who have received education up to the age of 16. Mr SZETO Wah and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong who spoke before me have given a detailed account on this.

The UDHK are of the view that disabled persons and their parents should have the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of various policies on rehabilitation services. Self-help groups comprising both the disabled persons and chronic patients should be given recognition and funding to enhance their channel of communication and the effectiveness of rehabilitation services.

Regarding manpower planning and training, at present relevant professional expertise is in severe shortage. Better offers should therefore be given to posts like Physiotherapist, Psychiatric Nurse, Speech Therapist and Psychologist and more tertiary places should be devoted to the training of these professionals to meet future demands. Finally, the standard of service should be raised in that a "case manager" should be assigned to a disabled person upon early assessment of disability with the aim of helping the person to obtain different modes of service. Greater support services should also be given to families with disabled members so as to alleviate the pressure on other family members, particularly in providing more temporary and day care places in day activity centres and hostels.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment motion.

MR WONG WAI-YIN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, first of all I should like to relate the stories of some friends from New Territories West here to Members of this Council.

The first one is Mrs CHAN. She has a corpulent son named Hung Tsai. But very unfortunately, Hung Tsai is a mentally handicapped child who demands painstaking attention. Mrs CHAN has had the opportunity of bearing a second child, but only tragically miscarried when she slipped on one occasion while taking care of Hung Tsai. From then on, she dares not get pregnant again.

My second friend is Mrs LEE who also has a mentally handicapped son called Po Tsai. Every morning she is always busy taking Po Tsai to school. She has to go through a lot of troubles to coax and push Po Tsai onto the Light Rail Transit car to attend classes in Tuen Mun. On many an occasion, Po Tsai would be reluctant to get off the car on arrival at Tuen Mun and Mrs LEE, anxious and exasperated, very often must resort to pulling and beating before managing to drag him off the car. These always reduce the sad and sorry Mrs LEE to tears.

The third one is Mrs CHEUNG who is also unfortunate to have a mentally handicapped son named Wah Tsai. For years, Mrs CHEUNG has been suffering from some chronic illnesses. Her doctor advises her that she must undergo an operation to get rid of the illnesses for good. However, considering that Wah Tsai may be left unattended if she is hospitalized for the operation and that it will take several years before her boy may be allocated a temporary accommodation place, she finally decides against having the operation.

If I should continue telling stories of this kind (I think I could go on for days), there would be Mrs WONG, Mrs HO, Mrs AU, Mrs CHAU, Mrs WU, Mrs MA and so on, who face similar plights. During the last few months, concerned organizations and parents of mentally handicapped children have reflected to the public and Members of this Council at different forums, on different occasions and through different channels, the predicaments these children and their parents are in when our rehabilitation services are so acutely inadequate. I have also discussed this problem with concerned bodies in New Territories West on a number of occasions.

My speech today will not be very long. There will be no high-sounding theories, nor sensational remarks. It is because an anxious group is now waiting both outside and inside this Chamber or elsewhere in the territory, for a reply by the Government. I have at hand quite a thick pile of papers which are submissions written to me through various organizations (some of them from concerned parents and mentally handicapped children) over the last two months or so. I believe their opinions are representative enough of the wish of the majority among them. I therefore need not go into details here and in fact a number of our colleagues have already reflected many problems quite clearly.

I would just like to touch upon the questions of government planning and the staffing and training of workers for the rehabilitation services. We witnessed during the last few years a very rapid development in our new towns. With the continuous flow of urban population to new towns as a result of the government planning, many newly moved-in families, already under tremendous pressure of life such as transport, education and worsening law and order, find themselves farther away from their friends and relatives and thus in want of material and spiritual support. And the burden of life will be all the more heavier to families so unfortunate to have a mentally handicapped child. But they cannot seek the support and assistance of friends and relatives nearby as they used to. The current serious shortfalls in rehabilitation services in the new towns are believed to have been a result of

misjudged service planning and uneven distribution of public resources. I therefore suggest that the Government alter its current practice of territory-wide planning to regional planning, that is, to take into account the actual serious service shortfalls in the new towns, thus relieving the disabled persons from making long trips to the urban area for service. Such a change will alleviate the burden on the families of mentally disabled persons on the one hand, while reducing the pressure on transport in the new towns on the other. Although I have written an article on the education, transport needs, employment, legislation and temporary accommodation and care for the disabled, I do not intend to repeat it here again as I believe the Government is well aware of these points.

Now I would again relate to this Council a laughable but tragic story. There is a special school in Yuen Long housed temporarily in public housing units built no less than 20 years ago. The limited compound of the school and a lack of space for activity are detrimental to the students' learning and physical growth. But who would have dreamt that this temporary school premises has been in use for 15 years. I do not think this is a sheer coincidence. It has come to our knowledge that the protracted construction of many special schools of this kind has put many children and their parents under prolonged hardship.

I will next comment briefly on the training of rehabilitation workers. The training these workers now receive is inadequate. Workers in the integrated child care centres, for example, are responsible for providing services to six mentally handicapped children. But because of their lack of knowledge and training in question, the handicapped children are usually left frittering away their time in the centres, without learning anything there. This is unfair to both the workers and the children. I therefore suggest that the Government strengthen the in-service training for these workers in order that the children's time would be well spent while they are in the integrated child care centres.

Finally, in today's debate, we are in fact aiming at the same target whether we are for Mr Eric LI's original motion or Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment motion. Our common aim is to urge the Government to provide more comprehensive and sufficient services to this less fortunate group of people and their families in our community, so that the former can grow up happier and in dignity. The most important point therefore is not which motion is to be passed, but how we are going to supervise and monitor the Government in its distribution of resources and development of the respective services in the future. Hence, the three members from Meeting Point,

namely Mr TIK Chi-yuen, Mr Fred LI and I, will support both motions.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

MR ERIC LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, thank you first of all for allowing me extra time. As a forum for discussion and debate, the Legislative Council is duty-bound to make known its stance particularly as regards such an important consultative document. The motion we now consider demands that appropriate actions be taken after an extensive consultation. To begin with, here I wish to say that I also find the financial commitments of the Green Paper unacceptable, because its delayed publication has left no time for me to have a thorough scrutiny of the schedule of its budget. Furthermore, neither do I wish to see a debate at the early stage of the consultation. In fact, I have discussed the wording of this motion with many representatives of organizations offering rehabilitation services and I am definitely not siding with the Green Paper, not in spirit nor the wording of the motion. I will be very disappointed if my sincerity concerning the consultation with the working party on the Green Paper is doubted. During the consultation of any Green Paper, there will certainly be proposals of new ideas, amendments and choices to be made, and then a brief outlining of a working programme will be worked out before a White Paper can subsequently be compiled.

The emphasis of my original motion is the implementation of some uncontroversial services as soon as possible. We must understand that the Administration will definitely not make any financial commitments as long as it remains still at a green paper stage. If we think we can take our time in studying the Green Paper before publishing a White Paper, that will be tantamount to a delaying tactics, but it will not be the Administration that occasions the delay.

The first interview with the public two month ago after the publication of the Green Paper left a deep impression on me. On that day, a lot of people focused the discussion on the prospects of the disabled children when they left school. I did want to explain to them that we were talking about the Green Paper and rehabilitation policies, and there would be a motion debate in two months' time. I remember that one of the representatives told me sharply, "While you are still taking your time talking about policies, many of us have died or become permanently disabled, and you are still taking your time!" I felt very much wronged on hearing this. I had done so much, but it seemed that all my efforts had been made in vain. Thanks to Dr YEUNG

Sum and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, I was helped out of the predicament. Mr CHEUNG was kind enough to say to me, "Do not be depressed." But I found, on reflection, that the representatives' remarks were totally correct. How I wish Dr LEONG Che-hung were also present that day.

A vast majority of the disabled persons are supportive of the spirit of the Green Paper but they do not want to see any more procrastination. Some of them have waited for 15 years or even longer. Now we are telling them that the policy has to be re-formulated, some unidentified target groups have to be located, we only have \$600 million at our disposal and we will take our time in amending the Green Paper, because no policy will be implemented before a White Paper is published. Will they accept such explanations? I appreciate the points put forward by Dr LEONG and other Members, but I think that the amended motion, besides highlighting the needs of some unidentified target groups, is not contributive to the areas in the Green Paper that require amendments and revisions and where choices are to be made, so the result of such a consultation will be one-sided. By the way, I also know that the Administration is examining the needs of chronic patients. As to other principles, the motion and the amended motion have no disagreement. It all boils down to the timing of the White Paper, that is, the White Paper will be published later.

Consultation is the responsibility of the Working Party and not the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council is responsible for reflecting and presenting views and not for conducting consultation on its own. Given that the Administration is willing to put the policies into practice and in the last two months the public has strongly demanded, through newspapers, protests and complaints to the Legislative Council, an early implementation of rehabilitation policies and the acceleration of the provision of the lacking services, we have no reason to support such an ambivalent and hesitant motion, unless we, just like what Mr HUI Yin-fat said, want to adopt the attitude of "hearing without listening and looking without seeing" in the face of the recent outcries. Today, in the witness of so many disabled persons, I hope that Members would make a wise choice between "walking ahead of social conscience" and "walking way behind social conscience".

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: At this point I should be calling the Secretary for Health and Welfare. I understand that other Members may wish to speak despite the fact that we have exceeded the two hours' voluntary restraint by over 25 minutes. If Members do wish to speak before the question is put, I am obliged under Standing Orders to call them.



MR MARTIN BARROW: Mr Deputy President, thank you for allowing me to speak.

I wish to refer briefly to the objective outlined in Chapter 7 relating to the need to ensure that disabled persons have an equal chance to participate in productive and gainful employment. This is of course a key objective and the Green Paper confirms that the Government is working towards such an environment. It is encouraging that the Civil Service employs 4 000 disabled people but disappointing that 50% of the disabled remain unemployed. Like other Members I have attended some of the recent meetings held with concern groups at the OMELCO Complaints Office and have been saddened to learn from them of the discrimination that they or their family suffer. There is, I believe, more that can be done and I intend to discuss with business community colleagues on how employment in the private sector can be increased. The business community does however give considerable support through the Community Chest which has done a splendid job and gone from strength to strength in recent years in providing finance to more than 100 welfare organizations, many of which help the disabled. Indeed the Green Paper refers to the Employaid Scheme funded by the Community Chest. But, Mr Deputy President, money alone is not enough and it is essential that the business community takes the trouble to increase employment opportunities. Thank you.

MR HOWARD YOUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I did not plan to participate in the debate, but now I have changed my mind. I feel that caring for the disabled is not merely the responsibility of the Government or indeed the Legislative Council Members, but rather a matter of concern for the community as a whole.

I agree very much with the point just now made by Mr Martin BARROW that the whole community, and the business and industrial sectors in particular, should take the responsibility in terms of employing disabled persons. It should not be thought that social responsibility ends with donating to the Community Chest. In this connection, I propose that the Government should respond by considering enactment of positive legislation, such as providing tax incentives for firms and institutions to employ more disabled people.

On the other hand, I think the community has a role to play as well. I recall that objection is often raised by local residents each time the Government finds it

necessary to build a special school or a school for mental patients in a certain housing estate. I believe that public education should be stepped up among the residents concerned on the theme of caring for the disabled and helping them with social integration so that future objection will not be raised as a result of misunderstanding.

Mr Eric LI made the point just now that we should not spend too much time on debating the wording of the motion. It seemed that Members have all played by the rule. As the last speaker, however, I would like to bend the rule a little. I am not in favour of amending a motion trivially, when no major difference of principle is at stake. I am not in favour of amendment just for the sake of amendment. I would only support amendment where gross inappropriate wording exists in the original motion. For otherwise we will run the risk of ending up digressing from and neglecting the purpose of the debate.

Members have indicated in their speeches today that they are united in urging the Government to devote more resources and energies to the disabled. In this connection, I will vote against the amendment which I think is not substantially different from the original motion. However, if the amendment is carried, I will go along with whatever form in which the motion is eventually adopted.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Mr Deputy President, I have listened very carefully to Honourable Members' valuable comments in this rich debate on the Green Paper on Rehabilitation, initiated by the Government and written by a group of dedicated men and women. Today's sitting is a special one. Easter will soon be upon us. Easter signifies rebirth. With Honourable Members' individual and collective support, I am sure the Green Paper itself will also bring about a chance of rebirth and the joy of hope to all, particularly disabled people in our community.

Never before have proceedings of this Council been watched by so many people with different disabilities. Special arrangements have been made to facilitate attendance by disabled persons in wheelchairs; speeches are translated into sign language simultaneously and some into braille as well. This in itself, if anything, symbolizes the need for equalization of opportunities.

I am gratified by Honourable Members' support for the overall policy objective of rehabilitation as detailed in Chapter 3 of the Green Paper. This will point the

way to future improvements and further development of rehabilitation services in Hong Kong so as to achieve the twin goals of equal opportunities and full participation.

As illustrated in many of Honourable Members' speeches, rehabilitation services cover a wide spectrum, ranging from social to medical rehabilitation for the physically and/or mentally handicapped persons. These services are provided by a host of government departments and non-governmental organizations. Rehabilitation services mean so much to so many. But rehabilitation does go beyond the mere provision of services. It calls for a smooth interface between disabled persons and the broader environment. For instance, on the question of employment, the Government itself employs 3 769 disabled persons -- some 2% of all civil servants including 1 589 visually impaired persons. I dare say the Government is the biggest employer of disabled persons. But this is not good enough. We need to do more and maintain a sustained momentum and commitment in employment. We should also motivate other organizations to do the same. Rehabilitation would not be a success, as pointed out by many Honourable Members, without the community as a whole working together, particularly if some of the statistics which have been bandied about in this debate were correct, that is, one out of every three persons in Hong Kong has some form of handicap or disability which needs to be rehabilitated. So I think the whole subject of the debate is to point out the need for much more energetic work in this field.

Since the publication of the Green Paper, we have already received valuable and diverse comments, ranging from more residential services for severely mentally handicapped persons to enhanced rehabilitation for those suffering from diabetes and asthma. Many have cast doubt on the need to prioritize. Now, I would like to perhaps respond to some of the questions on the need to prioritize. We are determined to ensure that, given the right priority, the recommendations should be implemented as soon as we can and as resources permit. Here, I would like specifically to thank Dr YEUNG Sum who has given us good guidelines on how to determine priorities. I would also like to urge again the public to guide us on where the priority should lie. Prioritization is not alien to management. It has been the most effective management tool to achieve objectives. We cannot forever tolerate shortfall. We must do something. We must do something sensible. We must provide rehabilitation to the best of our ability to the most urgent areas of needs, and to the extent that this community can afford. We will have to make a choice and decide, no matter how difficult the decision might be, on important items which must be, relatively speaking,

implemented first. For as long as we refuse to face the facts and take the rough with the smooth, I think we will not progress. We must be able to take hard decisions. For as long as we do not have ideals to work to, we will forever be stuck in the morass of despair.

Just as the outstanding advocate of civil rights Dr Martin Luther KING once declared in his famous speech: "I have a dream", so many of us, too, dream of the day when all disabled persons achieve equal opportunities in their daily activities and are fully integrated in our community. In exercise of our community conscience, let us, the Government, you and me, the community as a whole, individuals and groups, turn this dream into a reality. All things are possible. For instance, Members will recall just a few months ago on 29 November this Council called for the introduction of concessionary fares by major transport operators for our elderly citizens. Today, like the Honourable Mrs Miriam LAU, I was delighted to read in the papers this morning that both the MTRC and KCRC are to provide such concession to our senior citizens. Similarly, I am certain that the goals inspired by this debate through the Green Paper, which is carefully written, are achievable and will be achieved. The community will provide the driving force for us to work towards these goals.

As regards the question of statistics, some Members have doubts over the apparent disparity of figures of handicapped persons quoted in the Green Paper and some of the subsequent Finance Committee papers. I think we are comparing two things: one is a global figure and the other is a specific group of figures for specific request. But whatever the figures, so long as we know the basis of the calculation, we know how to proceed. So long as we do not hide the figures, so long as we understand how the figures are arrived at, we know how to cope. We should not be, certainly I am not, afraid of mentioning deficiencies of whatever size or form. We will make good the deficiencies in time.

I am grateful to the many who have spoken and to the many who have given me personal advice including those who are themselves disabled and who have placed a lot of hope in all of us. We will together build a better tomorrow for all. Our challenges are great. Our determination is greater.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

Question on Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment put.

Voice votes taken.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think we shall need to proceed to a division. The division bell will ring for three minutes and the division will be held immediately afterwards.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would Members now please proceed to vote? I would just remind you: if you are in favour of Dr LEONG's amendment, vote "Yes"; if you are not in favour of Dr LEONG's amendment, vote "No". I will of course check with you before the results are displayed.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before the results are displayed, do Members have any queries? If not, the results will be displayed.

Mr Allen LEE, Mr Martin LEE, Mr NGAI Shiu-kit, Mr PANG Chun-hoi, Mr SZETO Wah, Mr LAU Wong-fat, Mr Ronald ARCULLI, Mr Martin BARROW, Mrs Peggy LAM, Mr LAU Wah-sum, Dr LEONG Che-hung, Mr Jimmy MCGREGOR, Mr Albert CHAN, Prof Edward CHEN, Mr Moses CHENG, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Rev FUNG Chi-wood, Mr Michael HO, Dr HUANG Chen-ya, Dr LAM Kui-chun, Dr Conrad LAM, Mr LAU Chin-shek, Miss Emily LAU, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr Gilbert LEUNG, Mr Fred LI, Mr MAN Sai-cheong, Mr Steven POON, Mr TIK Chi-yuen, Mr James TO, Dr Samuel WONG, Dr YEUNG Sum and Mr WONG Wai-yin voted for the amendment.

Mr Stephen CHEONG, Mrs Rita FAN, Mr HUI Yin-fat, Mr Andrew WONG, Mr Vincent CHENG, Mr Timothy HA, Mr Eric LI and Mr Howard YOUNG voted against the amendment.

The Chief Secretary, the Attorney General, the Financial Secretary, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mrs Miriam LAU and Mrs Elsie TU abstained.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT announced that there were 33 votes for the amendment and eight votes against it. He declared that Dr LEONG's amendment was approved.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr Eric LI, do you wish to speak to the amended motion to conclude the debate?

MR ERIC LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Green Paper is still at a public consultation stage. The Chairperson of the Working Group on the Green paper, Secretary for Health and Welfare, has just now given a brilliant reply. There is not much I wish to add here, except to take this opportunity to thank Members for their valuable views and speeches. I am very glad that Members have a thorough understanding of rehabilitation services.

I moved the motion today to make known the grievances of the disabled people. The most important thing is that real action must be taken both inside and outside this Council to assist them. We should not belittle "hope" which is vitally important to the disabled and has kept them going for a long time, against all odds.

I have a friend who applied for a driving licence twenty years ago but was turned down in consideration of his own safety, according to the official explanation. Thanks to his persistence, he has been able to obtain his driving licence. And nowadays many disabled people become qualified drivers.

Mr MAN Sai-cheong said that, in terms of receiving information, the deaf are still disadvantaged for lack of subtitling and sign language interpretation. But today, the RTHK current affairs programme, "Today in Legco", will give all of us a pleasant surprise.

We have to embark on the realization of our grand vision. One may doubt if we may be able to see our vision become reality in our generation. But if we get cold feet, then we cannot even count on the vision to be materialized in our next generation.

As I was saying just now, the motion today is basically to enable the disabled people to hear our encouraging voices. I hope Members will support the amended motion because, whatever its final form, it is in line with the principle laid down in the original motion.

Question on Mr Eric LI's motion as amended by Dr LEONG Che-hung's amendment proposed, put and agreed to.

6.45 pm

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: We shall take a break and resume in 20 minutes.

7.07 pm

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Council will resume.

EDUCATION

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG moved the following motion:

"Since education is of vital importance to the development of our economy and the advancement of the community, this Council urges the Government to conduct a comprehensive review on the balance between tertiary and basic education as well as their respective development and while expanding tertiary education, to improve the quality of basic education through the provision of additional resources. In this connection, the Government should call off its current measure to increase the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils, so as not to undermine the interests of students and parents, deal a blow to the morale of educational workers and affect the quality of basic education."

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the motion which I am moving today has the support of the overwhelming majority of our educational workers and organizations. It may in that sense be taken as a motion sponsored by the entire education sector because it reflects the common wish of all educational workers. Indeed, hundreds of educational workers are at this point gathering outside the Legislative Council Building and they came braving the heavy rain with flickering candles to show their support for this motion.

Mr Deputy President, Hong Kong is a territory short of natural resources. One very important factor conducive to our economic success and continued social progress in the past is that Hong Kong has people of outstanding talent and industry. In the nineties, in the face of the challenges from South East Asia and the world as a whole,

education has the particularly vital mission of producing talent to provide us with the impetus to further our economic development. An even more important task of education in the context of Hong Kong as a modern city is that it will enhance social progress such that our next generation will build on historic wisdom and be able to contribute to human civilization as a whole.

It is on this ground, Mr Deputy President, that I wholeheartedly support the Government's policy of tertiary education development. However, tertiary education is not an isolated process. It is intimately linked with basic education. I recall an old Chinese saying that even the tallest tower is built from the ground; without a firm foundation, there is no question of erecting a tall building. Likewise, without the support of a healthy basic education, there is no question of quality tertiary education.

The Government has apparently forgotten this simple truth. It has sought in its own fashion to develop tertiary education as an isolated process, without giving enough thought to the support of, and its balance with, basic education. In 1987, the percentage of secondary school leavers attending the first year of a degree course was only 5.5%; it is expected to escalate to 18% on a scale of geometrical progression in 1995. This, together with 7% who will be taking non-degree tertiary courses, will effectively mean that in 1995 one quarter of our secondary school leavers will be receiving tertiary education. The dramatic expansion scheme has been hastily implemented without any preparation or public consultation; it is indeed a Great Leap Forward, Hong Kong style.

Mr Deputy President, history teaches us a hard lesson that we have to pay a hefty price for every radical move we take, albeit with the best of intentions. Here I wish to make it clear that I am not questioning the development of tertiary education per se, but rather whether or not additional resources have been devoted to the improvement of the quality of basic education, in correspondence with the development of tertiary education, whether in fact matriculation courses have offered more places in a well-planned manner such that the whole basic education system may be able to sustain the knock-on impact.

First of all, we do not have enough eligible matriculants to proceed to degree courses. Last year, some tertiary institutions, and certain degree courses in particular, have not been able to enrol enough students and actually suffer a decline in standards. In order to forestall a repeat of the problem of surfeit of degree places, the Education Department's urgent task, I think, is to increase the enrollment



of matriculation courses by all means. But unlike a balloon which may be inflated at will, a school may have problem finding the classrooms for the matriculation courses. It is against this background that the measure has been devised to expand the size of each class by two students such that the number of classes will be cut in some schools to make room for matriculation courses with the eventual target of filling the number of tertiary places. It is obvious that basic education has been sacrificed in favour of the rapid expansion of tertiary education.

What is more, the tertiary institutions are increasingly playing the role of a higher secondary school. This year, the Legislative Council has approved funding of \$105 million to the seven tertiary institutions to improve language proficiency of their students. This is done because a lot of the freshmen have actually failed, or barely managed to pass, the Chinese and English language subjects in the public examinations. The result is that enormous amounts have to be spent on the improvement of language proficiency rather than principally on tertiary professional training itself. This situation ironically reflects the importance of basic education. If basic education is not properly run, then the students it produces will not be well-equipped for tertiary education and this will only lead to waste of taxpayers' money.

Mr Deputy President, in these circumstances, I request that the Government review the balance between and the development of tertiary education and basic education towards the end of 1992, after the student intake by tertiary institutions this year as it were; there is no need to wait until 1994. A balanced allocation of resources to tertiary, matriculation, secondary and primary education must be planned on the basis of hard facts and data collated objectively to make sure that public money is judiciously spent. It is up to the Government to decide whether to call a halt or to charge on regardless at this critical point.

Mr Deputy President, even if adjustment is made as a result to the development pace of tertiary education, I would still call for an immediate upgrading of the quality of basic education. Nowadays, the morale of our teachers is low and the teaching profession is suffering from a brain drain problem, but why? Teachers are full of enthusiasm and expectation when they graduate from the Colleges of Education or when they join the teaching ranks. It is the aspiration of every educational worker that he or she will be able to spread his or her good influence to students near and far.

But their aspiration will be dampened very soon. And their enthusiasm and expectation evaporate with time as they are confronted with a crushing workload, students with sharply different abilities, office politics, children from problematic families, and heavy social pressure. Mr Deputy President, an unfair education system will make one insensitive and makes one forget one's youthful, educational ideals. The horror of this unfair system is its corruption of one's mind imperceptibly, making one easy to lose sight of the cause one is fighting for.

Today, in the concerted effort to oppose Government's retrenchment of basic educational expenditure, educational workers have once again come to realize that the system should not go on forever, and that it can be changed. First, we demand that the Government scrap the measure to expand class size and reduce classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels. Admittedly, the Government has already shelved the plan to extend this measure to Secondary IV level and committed itself to the abolition of the whole scheme in five years. But we as educational workers are most reluctant to see the retrogressive measure being applied to Primary I and Secondary I classes, because whatever the level, the children affected are our students. This is a policy which, whatever its grand objectives, will affect the quality of education and students are made to suffer in these five years. Our children have only one childhood and we have the responsibility to make that a rich and fulfilled one.

Some people take the view that if the education sector accepts the proposal of expanding class size at Primary I and Secondary I level then the Government will be able to use the money saved to implement the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 4 (the ECR4). Mr Deputy President, most of the recommendations in that Report were endorsed by the Executive Council and adopted as policy. In this regard, it is for the Government to provide the extra funding for the implementation of these recommendations. The truth of the matter is that even though we have a big surplus, the Government is hesitant about spending any part of it on education, and has actually seen it fit to resort to cutting back on the already meagre allocation for basic education and to squeeze a saving of \$400 million through eliminating 463 classes now operating in the secondary schools. Then it cunningly channels \$300 million earmarked for tertiary education into basic education as "new funding", for the implementation of the recommendations as laid down in the ECR4. Even then, as one compares the sums, \$100 million has been cut from the funding for basic education and the reality still remains that classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels have to be reduced and class size increased.

Mr Deputy President, I do not see anything to celebrate about this practice of robbing Peter to pay Paul. In terms of basic education, the disadvantages are certainly more evident than the advantages. I think that any legislator who genuinely cares about our students and education should see it as his or her duty to urge the Government to provide, while maintaining the provision of necessary educational services, additional funds for the implementation of the proposed improvement measures as spelt out in ECR4. Mr Deputy President, from the educational point of view, students of Primary I, Secondary I or IV are equally important, and so are the existing educational services and the recommendations contained in ECR4. It is absolutely not a question about a choice between a fish and a bear's paw, as the Chinese saying goes, that one cannot have both. It is more like the case of food and fresh air, both of which every human is entitled to have. It is extremely unwise to arbitrarily set one against the other, thus creating conflict, and initiating competition for resources.

Members are aware that my motion has been amended by Mrs Rita FAN, but the main motive of the amendment is indeed to divide the common aspiration of the education sector and made it obligatory for us to choose between two seemingly incompatible options. Mr Deputy President, if we are convinced that we are in fact fighting for basic education and the interest of students, why cannot we fight together on the same side? Can Members now put aside their differences and vote freely according to his or her conscience? Mrs FAN's amendment will effectively remove the core part of this motion, which is to abolish the measure to add two more students to each class at Primary I and Secondary I levels, and which has the support of the education sector as a whole, reducing this motion to a toothless one. The Government will have no problem agreeing with it because it does not entail any follow-up action. A motion so amended will effectively give a boost to the wrong Government policy and abort a motion echoing the solidarity of the education sector. It is for this reason that educational workers are deeply disappointed in Mrs FAN's amendment.

But having said that, what we are witnessing today is an awakening of an education movement and we will not give up so easily, for all our disappointment. Educational workers will start the fight by opposing the addition of two places in each class at Primary I and Secondary I levels; the fight will extend to include basic education as a whole. The pressing problems we are faced with include: the provision of direct subsidy to kindergarten teachers and kindergarten education; the fight for gradual implementation of whole day schooling for primary students and alleviation of overcrowdedness of school environment; the abolition of floating class in secondary

schools and resolution of student behavioural and suicidal problems; and increased funding for the Colleges of Education and upgrading of teaching quality. All of these require additional resources from the Government before any improvement can be expected. We will strive for these basic objectives and will not flinch from disappointment.

Mr Deputy President, we firmly believe that education is the motivating force behind economic development and social progress and our insistence on all of these reforms is for the benefit of the students and education as a whole. More importantly, it is for us, through education, to recover a long forgotten world, one in which we can still find warmth, care and concern. It is for us to enable knowledge, wisdom and thought embodied in education to continue to enrich each succeeding generation. A career in education should not be the cause, as it is now, of despair, complaint and hurt; it should bring promise, joy and respect.

Mr Deputy President, Members, tonight, are you ready to explore our forgotten, beautiful world together with me and the numerous educational workers who are holding the candle-light vigil, despite the rain, outside the Legislative Council Building? Tonight, Mr Deputy President, I recall a prose which I had read when I was young. It was called, "Learning About Fatherhood". The author in closing writes, "I would bear the burden of the old ways and stand with my back to the gate of darkness, so that my child can take the main road to the land of light, so he can live happily and rationally thereafter." The meaning of this passage is that we should put the darkness behind us and save light for our children, for our future. This is the responsibility of every educational worker, every grown-up individual. Tonight, I sincerely invite you to cast a vote of conscience, for our children, for their future.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I move my motion.

Question on the motion proposed.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mrs Rita FAN has given notice to move an amendment to the motion. Her amendment has been printed in the Order Paper and circulated to Members. I propose to call her to speak and to move her amendment now so that Members may debate the motion and the amendment together.

MRS RITA FAN moved the following amendment to Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion:

To delete all the words after "their respective development" and to substitute for the words deleted the following:

". While expanding tertiary education, the Government should ensure its quality is maintained; and the Government should at the same time allocate more resources to improve the quality of pre-primary, primary and secondary education in order that convergence of different levels of education can be ensured."

MRS RITA FAN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the Government has two public objectives in the improvement of education. They are the expansion of tertiary education and the improvement of the quality of school education. These are complementary objectives in that we need to have balanced development of both tertiary education and school education; the training of talent is out of the question without the convergence of these two objectives. We will not be able to achieve the purpose of further development of Hong Kong if we are unable to have sufficient talent in both qualitative and quantitative terms, if tertiary education is not well-supported by basic education, if quality is sacrificed for the sake of quantity. I believe that the Education and Manpower Branch is genuinely concerned with achieving these two objectives. In this regard, the Government has the responsibility of ensuring that our resources are allocated in a well-balanced manner, that we have good co-ordination between teaching method, curriculum, enrolment and all other aspects of education. In order that these two objectives are achieved, both educational institutions and education workers should respond by making full use of the resources and endeavouring to make improvement within the school itself. Educational development keeps pace with social development; education is not a static concept. In this connection, the Government should keep under regular review the balanced development of tertiary education and school education. Meanwhile, a priority list should also be drawn up in respect of the limited resources we have. It is for this reason that I support the part of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion which reads, and I quote, "since education is of vital importance to the development of our economy and the advancement of the community, this Council urges the Government to conduct a comprehensive review on the balance between tertiary and basic education as well as their respective development." However, it is my view that the term basic education may be misinterpreted as education at Secondary III and below. I think what the motion refers to is school education, which includes education from pre-school, primary, junior secondary, senior secondary to matriculation. I have no wish to make

amendments to individual terms as such. I have only stated my understanding of those terms to avoid confusion.

That in the rapid increase of tertiary places, attention should be paid to quality was in fact a point which I was making in the debate of the Policy Address in 1989. It is not my intention to repeat this point now. I wish to delete in Mr CHEUNG's motion all the words after "their respective development" and to substitute the following: "...While expanding tertiary education, the Government should ensure its quality is maintained.." The maintenance of the quality of tertiary education is not only a shared public wish; it is also the responsibility of both the Government and the tertiary institutions, indeed the basis on which our economic and social development rests.

Mr CHEUNG's motion calls for the abolition of the measure to increase the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils. I cannot agree with this request. I understand the thinking of Mr CHEUNG and his supporters, and I sympathize with their request. So when the Government proposed to abolish the two places reserved for repeaters at Primary I, Secondary I and Secondary IV level, some Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils and I went to great lengths to present the pros and cons to the authority concerned. The Government has made a point of heeding public opinion for the retention of repeater allowance at Secondary IV to allay the dreaded prospect of changing school for some students. Meanwhile, the Director of Education has also made the commitment that the measure will be abolished in five years.

The Education and Manpower Branch has diverted \$300 million from tertiary education to serve as additional funding for school education for a period of three years. This has made it possible for the implementation within this year of some of the recommendations of Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) in respect of addressing the needs of primary and secondary education, and quality improvement generally, which are long-awaited by every one of us. Counselling will be conducted by the whole school approach, starting from primary schools. Teachers who will be providing the counselling service will be Assistant Masters. Compared to the present practice of Certificated Masters acting as Student Counselling Officer, this is going to be a definite improvement. What is more, since the counsellors are directly responsible to the school or the organization funding the school, communication links will be strengthened to the improvement of the counselling service. This will be beneficial also in terms of finding a solution to the behavioural as well as learning

problems of students. The problems raised by Mr CHEUNG just now of suicidal and behavioural problems of students are already taken note of by the ECR4 which has also made recommendations in that regard. It is in the light of this arrangement that the impact of cutting two repeater places at Primary I will be minimal and any impact at all will be alleviated with the counselling service in place.

Remedial teaching in secondary schools will take the whole school approach with the recruitment of more teaching staff. Schools have the discretion of making flexible use of staff resources to meet the student needs according to their own circumstances. Meanwhile, more practical schools will be built to enrol students who are not academically inclined; a suitable curriculum and teaching method will be designed to teach these students. Additionally, skills opportunity schools will be built to cater to the needs of students with low learning ability and to provide them with a viable alternative. Early implementation of these measures will enable problematic students attending regular schools to sooner obtain the special attention they need and take the pressure off teachers. I believe it makes no big difference whether the class size is adjusted by two more or two less students if the teacher is essentially dealing with a class of approximately 40 students with similar learning ability, with the students who have behavioural problems already put out of the way. Alternatively, if there are a few students who have special problems and who need special care in the class, then the teacher will have a difficult time providing the special care and the learning progress and atmosphere of the class as a whole will be affected.

If Mr CHEUNG's motion is endorsed, then from a financial point of view, the Education Department will have \$284 million less to spend. To compensate for this, the new \$300 million will have to be used. It is very likely in these circumstances that the qualitative improvement measures to secondary and primary education will have to be postponed. Although the class size will still be kept between 30 and 40 students for teachers, they will still be subject to the same kind of pressure and their problems will not go away. It is just like "marking time". The educational workers themselves have to weigh carefully the pros and cons involved between the option of insisting on retaining two repeater places at Primary I and Secondary I, and the option of expeditiously implementing the measures which are geared towards solving the problems of the day. This is not a political issue at all. It has nothing to do with piloting and political wrangling. I hope Members will evaluate the facts for what they are and consider the issue without any preconceived idea.

I do not anticipate that there will be any extra funding for education in this financial year. If I have to choose between the retention of two repeater places and the implementation of most of the recommendations of the ECR4, I would certainly opt for the latter. For implementation will necessitate continued commitment by the Government. The annual educational spending will inevitably be increased. The territory-wide implementation of Attainment Target and Target-related Assessment, the reform of medium of instruction, the development of curriculum in the direction of teaching according to ability, and the improvements I have been talking about, all of these are fundamental reforms and improvement measures to improve the quality of primary and secondary education which will have far-reaching implication. I doubt if it is wise and far-sighted to insist on resisting a temporary measure and thereby sabotaging a whole package of principled and fundamental reforms.

It is for reasons which I have given above that I wish to make amendments to Mr CHEUNG's motion. I move to add to sentence two of the original motion: "...and the Government should at the same time allocate more resources to improve the quality of pre-primary, primary and secondary education in order that convergence of different levels of education can be ensured." I insist on additional resources not only to improve the quality of primary and secondary education but also to improve the quality of pre-primary education. Even though increased spending may not be a possibility in the 1992-93 financial year, I would still fight for additional resources next year, and the year after. Recommendations of Report Nos. 3 and 4 which have become the Government's policy should be fully implemented. And indeed the forthcoming Report No. 5's recommendations pertaining to teacher training, boosting teachers' morale and retaining teaching talent will require the support of Members and the co-operation of educational workers, if they are to materialize.

Mr CHEUNG's motion and my amendment to it, in fact, have the same spirit. The amended motion is more comprehensive in scope. In addition to fighting for more long-term commitment of resources for school education, it also stresses quality for tertiary education and ensures the convergence of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. I appeal to Members to take a long-term view and give support to my amendment so that the Government may have a clear direction to go in terms of developing education. I sincerely hope that Mr CHEUNG will, in keeping with the principle of enhancing the quality of education in Hong Kong, co-operate with me in endorsing the amendment.

Question on Mrs Rita FAN's amendment proposed.



MRS SELINA CHOW (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I feel obligated, in today's debate on the quality and convergence of tertiary education and school education, to brief Members on a consensus reached by the OMELCO Education Panel which has also studied the same issue. In as early as May last year, the Panel had urged the Government to step up the improvement of the quality of primary and secondary education while expanding tertiary education. In November last year, the Panel expressed concern about whether there was adequate supply of eligible students to proceed to Secondary VI, to tie in with the expansion of tertiary places. At a regular meeting of the Panel held in January this year, the Government officially informed us that, as part of the cutback on funding, the repeater allowance for Primary I and Secondary I would be withdrawn. Members of the Panel felt that this measure was not in line with the overall objective of improving school education and asked the Government to explore alternative means of savings. At the regular meeting of the Panel held in February, the Government stuck to its original decision, but it accepted the Panel's request not to implement the measure until after the presentation of the Budget. The panel held an urgent meeting on 17 March, following the presentation of the Budget, in a last-ditch effort to negotiate with the Government. The Government promised at that time that the measure was to be temporary and it would be abolished in three years. The Panel was quite disappointed with such a decision and expressed discontent and concern over the possible inconvenience resulting from the increase of the class size.

Apart from the OMELCO Education Panel, many organizations have put forward their views over the past several months on the issue of educational funding. Through the arrangement of the OMELCO Complaints Division, I have met with a number of educational organizations. They not only resented the withdrawal of the repeater allowance, but also made a number of points regarding the quality of school education, with particular reference to the recommendations contained in the Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4). Teacher training was also considered to be a priority. The views of the Board of Education, of course, should not be ignored in the discussion of school education. I understand that the proposed withdrawal of the repeater allowance has in fact been discussed twice by the Board of Education. The measure was agreed upon in December last year and the decision was re-confirmed at a meeting held in February this year. It is unfortunate that Mr HA, Chairman of the Board of Education, is not with us today. Perhaps our colleagues, who are also members of the Board, may be able to explain to us on what grounds the decision was reached in

the first place.

I am, unfortunately, a member of the Education Commission. Unfortunately, because I have the same deep sense of frustration shared by my colleagues on the Commission over the last two years. They are all very dedicated and have worked very hard on various measures for improving school education, with reference to the Education Commission Report. The recommendations made are comprehensive and well-thought-out and most of them have the support of all sectors, our educational workers in particular. But we have not been able to secure the right to decide on funding matters, even up to this year. Little surprise then even ardent member Mr SZETO Wah decided to resign from the Commission. In this regard, when the Secretary for Education and Manpower revealed at the regular OMELCO Panel meeting held on 25 March that revision would be made to the repeater allowance to alleviate the inconvenience and worries of parents and students, and that new funding allocation would be worked out to strike a balance between resources going to primary, secondary and tertiary education, Panel members were pleased with the positive response by the Government which had apparently acted on the feedback it received from the various parties. Indeed, the action was an improvement on the part of the Government. Although the problem of withdrawing the repeater allowance has not been entirely resolved, the Government's offer is worthy of support to the extent that, if money can be secured for the funding of all of the recommendations of ECR4, the quality of both primary and secondary education will certainly be improved. It has turned out that the reasonable demand has been successfully achieved. On 1 April, this Council was informed in the Budget Debate that adjustment would be made such that an additional \$300 million would be provided for school education.

I am very pleased to support the amended motion of Mrs Rita FAN because it is comprehensive and positive and it enables us to make a wise choice. I firmly believe that the early implementation of the various recommendations of the ECR4 is the most effective way to improve the quality of primary and secondary education. Indeed, while I agree entirely with the first part of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion, I cannot agree with its second half which is flawed. I worry that if we devote our limited resources to only one of the many problems, to the neglect of the others, then there is no question of meeting at the same time the many urgent needs of school education. But I would like to make it clear that I am not in favour of increasing the class size in primary and secondary schools. As a parent myself, I understand the feelings of the teachers. For the sake of tens of thousands of schoolchildren and the overall improvement of the quality of our education I think that, in the long term, the

reduction of the class size is definitely a good thing. But the measure in question, undesirable as it must be, is not totally unacceptable, given its temporary nature, and also given the fact that only two more students are added to a class of 38. Finally, I wish to urge the Financial Secretary to lay the groundwork for the recommendations in the forthcoming Education Commission Report No. 5 so that improvement to teacher training and professionalism, the most important part in school education, can be implemented. I also wish that we would be in a good financial position to bring about an early restoration of the repeater allowance for Primary I and Secondary I.

MR HUI YIN-FAT (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I recall the Governor indicated in his Policy Address in 1989 that the Government was keenly concerned with the development of tertiary education in Hong Kong and that it was working towards the objective of more than doubling the intake of first-year, first-degree students over five years starting from the following year. While I was glad at that time that tertiary education had at long last received Government attention, I also had some reservations regarding the impact likely to be brought about by the rapid expansion, in terms of quality of students, allocation of resources and employment opportunities.

Since the start of the academic term in the tertiary institutions in the autumn of last year, I have done a rough study of the above problems. The impression which I obtained from collating opinions of various sources is that, due to the short notice, the institutions have not been able to prepare properly for the enlarged enrolment and some faculties have even lowered entry requirements to admit the less than eligible applicants, in order to meet enrolment targets, for the sake of self-protection. Under these circumstances, the quality of students is bound to decline. It is particularly worrying that, even if we are able to maintain an annual economic growth of 5%, our business and industry sector will not have enough job openings for such a large output of degree holders. This will then lead to a waste of not only our valuable education resources but also of talent.

While no one, least of all myself, will query the need for expanding tertiary education, the Government has so far failed to give us a satisfactory reply as to whether the objective has been set too high and whether the pace of development has been too fast. According to the Government's principle of cutting up the large pie, resources will not be allocated to individual educational items; rather, an upper limit will be set for overall educational spending such that the authorities concerned

will have to allocate the resources at their disposal to individual educational items which have to be implemented. Put in another way, the funds for expanding tertiary education are obtained from squeezing the funding for other educational purposes. A stark example is that, due to the longstanding neglect of pre-primary education, 60% of kindergarten teachers are not able to achieve the pay level prescribed by the Government and indeed, in this year's Budget, public spending on kindergarten education actually records a negative growth of 0.9%.

The Secretary for Education and Manpower, acting on the basis of the census data, cut by 500 last week the provision of first-year, first-degree places for 1994. Of the money saved, \$120 million will be used to offset the cost of maintaining the repeater allowance at Secondary IV, and another \$180 million will be used to implement the recommendations on improving basic education according to Education Commission Report Nos. 3 and 4. This clever move by the Government is commendable but it does not change the fact that the Government is still not taking basic education seriously enough. It can be figured that without this saving of \$300 million the Government would not have given any thought to abandoning the plan to combine classes at Secondary IV in the first place. More importantly, since the publication of the two Reports, the Government has so far failed to provide the funding required for the implementation of the recommended improvement measures. That is clear evidence of the Government not attaching importance to basic education. In this connection, it is not surprising that opinions have been expressed in some quarters that, with a large reservoir of foreign labour, the Government can well afford to give a low priority to the qualitative improvement of our pre-tertiary education.

In this connection, I think the Government has to realistically review the development of tertiary education in future and set a rational pace and direction of development in order to meet the real needs of society. For example, the numbers of returned emigrants and overseas graduates have been more than anticipated and this will have a bearing on our future manpower needs. Moreover, it is also up to the Government to allocate enough resources according to the needs of basic education. It should not consider improving the quality of basic education solely on the condition that savings can be made on tertiary education and basic education should not be allowed to degenerate into inferior education.

Mr Deputy President, a Chinese saying goes that it takes ten years to grow a tree and a hundred years to educate a person. It is universal truth that education has always been the foundation for national prosperity and basic education in particular

forms the cornerstone of the whole educational enterprise. Where can we find university students who can meet the expectations of society if we do not have quality primary and secondary students in the first place?

With these remarks, I support the amendments proposed by Mrs Rita FAN.

MR MARTIN LEE (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, "Money First" is the prevailing ideology of Hong Kong. Whatever we do, money always receives the most serious consideration. Followers of this mercenary creed are everywhere. The money-minded profess to be the pragmatists but they do not know what ideals are. They will not bother to fight for precious things like democracy, freedom and human rights. They will even laugh at people who have made a stand and are fighting for these ideals. They ridicule them for being unrealistic and criticize them for upsetting social stability and prosperity.

How are we going to educate our next generation, in the context of such a social climate? What stand are we going to take in this Council? What example are we going to set for our next generation in order that they will not, whatever they do, ask, first of all, "what benefit will I get from this?"

Mr Deputy President, our young people should be full of idealism. But nowadays they are too realistic to care about any ideal at all. It is up to us to create a social environment to enable our young people to accomplish their ideals.

There is a view that, since the Government is cutting back on its expenditure, it is very difficult to oppose successfully the measure of combining classes. Mrs Rita FAN displays in her Co-operative Resources Centre (CRC) Office a motto which reads, "No bitterness is too bitter for one who is not afraid to taste it; no difficulty is too great for one who can figure out where the difficulty lies." While it appears that Mrs FAN is aware of the difficulty, one would wonder whether she prefers to leave our next generation to bear the bitter consequences.

I am very saddened and disappointed that Mrs FAN should propose her amendment. Why does she not make a stand in her capacity as Chairman of the Education Commission and Member of the Executive Council, and with her experience over the years in the field of education and actually fight at this crucial time for the rights which our education sector so very well deserve? If the amendment is passed, the Government will of course preserve its authority, but our next generation will have to live with

the far-reaching consequences. Policy making bureaucrats and Executive Councillors always speak of their wish to see improvement to the quality of education for our next generation. Why are they still insisting on the policy of combining classes and increasing class size, even in the face of strong objection from the educational organizations?

Mr Deputy President, while committing huge funds to the building of a prosperous metropolis complete with the most fantastic infrastructure, we should at the same time make equal commitment to our next generation who will be the future leaders of our metropolitan city. Talent is the most valuable asset of Hong Kong, a place without any natural resources. If stiff cutbacks are made such that the development of tertiary education is emphasized to the exclusion of the basic education which supports it, then there is no way we can produce in the long run a next generation with vision and ability.

Mr Deputy President, I have been a father for ten and a half years. As a father, I, of course wish my child could have a good basic education in his childhood and early teens so that he will be capable of serving the community. It is the common wish of all parents that their children will succeed in life. I hope my child will grow up into a man of ideal and integrity. That calls for proper intellectual and mental development. We have a Chinese proverb which says that it takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred years to educate a person. It is for us to start tilling the land for the cultivation of our children or else they will have to fend for themselves against all sorts of perils of an adverse environment.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion and oppose Mrs Rita FAN's amended motion.

MR SZETO WAH (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, what is the difference between Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion and Mrs Rita FAN's amended motion? Do the objectives of both motions actually coincide, as Mrs Rita FAN said they did?

If we look at the original motion, the clause, "so as not to undermine the interests of students and parents, deal a blow to the morale of educational workers," and the good wish that goes with it, has been removed. Moreover, the clause, "the Government should call off its current measure to increase the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils." and the request which it makes, has also been removed.

From the amended motion, I can see that Mrs FAN does not have the interests of students and parents and the morale of educators at heart. She supports the Government's measure to increase the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils; she is escorting the retrogressive policy of the Government through this Council. The stance she has taken is in opposition to students, parents, and the vast majority of educational workers.

Although her amended motion also says "the Government should at the same time allocate resources to improve the quality of pre-primary, primary and secondary education", it is more for the purpose of hiding her real intention. Increasing the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels means cutting the funding for basic education; if one supports this, how can one also advocate the allocation of more resources? Increasing the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils is a measure which will seriously affect the quality of basic education. If one supports this, how can one also speak of "improving the quality of pre-primary, primary and secondary education"?

It goes without saying that Mrs Rita FAN, who is also a Member of the Executive Council, has to support and pilot the Government's policy. However, as Chairman of the Education Commission, is she obligated to listen to the views of the the vast majority of educational workers and take into account the future of the educational enterprise in Hong Kong as well?

An official from the Education and Manpower Branch reportedly said in today's morning papers that, even if Mr CHEUNG's motion goes through this Council, the Government is not necessarily bound by it, in which case the Government only runs the risk of giving the public the impression that it disregards the consensus reached by the vast majority of legislators. If that is the case, then we also wish to reveal the truth that the Government does disregard the consensus reached by the vast majority of this Council, to let members of the public beware.

The Government official also said that the Government was no toothpaste; it could not perform magic upon being squeezed. But let me ask this question, are students, parents and educational workers not being treated like toothpaste by the Government? The squeeze has been put on them with the forced increase in size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels by two pupils. It is true after all that the Government is no toothpaste; it is more like an overflowing reservoir with a windfall

surplus of \$14.1 billion from last year. I am wondering which side is taking the other for a tube of toothpaste; who is squeezing whom after all?

Nineteen years ago, on the pretext of developing nine-year free education, the salary of Certificated Masters was slashed arbitrarily. Educational workers all over Hong Kong joined in the fight at that time to preserve their dignity and protect their rights. The success of their action has provided impetus to our educational development and social progress. Solidarity of the teaching profession has never been stronger than it is now. Whatever the voting result of today's debate, we will carry on our fight. I invite Members to see the advertisements put by principals and teachers from over 470 primary and secondary schools in the newspapers in the past few days and to see also the candle-light vigil now being held outside this building, despite the rain. We will carry on the fight.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support the original motion moved by Mr CHEUNG and oppose Mrs FAN's amended motion.

MRS PEGGY LAM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, talent is the most valuable asset of Hong Kong. The training of the young is an important social investment. Although it is gratifying and worth supporting that the Government has recently been actively expanding the provision of places in tertiary education, it is worrying that it has seemingly overlooked the importance of achieving a balance between basic education and tertiary education, and the convergence of different levels of education. In the Budget for 1992-93, the overall educational spending is estimated to be in the region of \$19 billion, from which \$5.2 billion will go to the university and polytechnic grants, which will enjoy an increase of 18.5%. In comparison, non-tertiary education, including pre-primary and primary education, has only been given minimal funding and there are even cases of negative growth. Mr Deputy President, a Chinese saying goes that it takes ten years to grow a tree, but a hundred years to educate a person. The training of talent is a long and continuous process; it takes a long time and has to cater to individual needs. Sufficient resources have to be made available for providing our next generation with a sound education; we cannot achieve this goal at one go. It is rash and short-sighted to devote all of our resources to tertiary education without the support of basic education. This will only end up with a unbalanced education policy, which will not be advantageous to Hong Kong people.



In fact, everybody can see that standards are slipping in our schools. This is the result of a lack of convergence of the different levels of education.

First of all, the Government has to conduct a comprehensive review of its policy of nine-year free education and its method of implementation. For example, due to the constraint of resources, in the implementation of nine-year free education, a student is only allowed to repeat once in his or her six years of primary education or three years of junior secondary education. Promotion is mandatory even for students with low learning ability, if they have already repeated once. This automatic promotion system has resulted in many secondary students who have attained primary standard only. At a primary school, of which I am the supervisor, we have a number of such cases. These students, having repeated once, cannot repeat again, and in a class of 40 they have to be promoted even though they cannot catch up with the other students. The remedial class cannot solve his problem entirely either. These students have given up on studying and this mentality will not only affect their own studies but also other students as well.

8.00 pm

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is now eight o'clock and under Standing Order 8(2) the Council should now adjourn.

CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr Deputy President, the understanding with this Council that the time for debate should be limited seems to have broken down. I move that Standing Order 8(2) should be suspended so as to allow the Council's business this afternoon to be concluded.

Question on the motion proposed, put and agreed to.

MRS PEGGY LAM (in Cantonese): If the present situation persists, I am sure that his progression to secondary education will, territorywise, mean one more student going to band five.

This practice is not only unfair to the students with low learning ability, but will also cause inconvenience to students with a better learning ability, and the

future development of a new school will also be hindered. New secondary schools may only accept band five students who may have the standard of Primary IV or V, or indeed Primary III in extreme cases. Indeed, 10% of their Secondary I students are not even able to distinguish the alphabet. Given their low standard, they are unable to catch up with their studies and they will give up gradually. As the supervisor of two schools, I am well aware of the situation and it saddens me a lot.

In this regard, the Government has to increase funding for pre-primary education and to open more and different kinds of primary and secondary schools to accommodate students with different learning abilities. This will enable them to acquire knowledge which they need in a suitable environment. Thus, the quality of pre-primary, primary and secondary school education will be improved and a good foundation will be laid for every student. On that basis, students will also be able to develop according to their own inclination and ability, with those intending to further studies being equipped to do just that, and those wishing to work being equipped with a given educational standard to enable them to start.

The non-convergence of the different levels of education is the result of severely inadequate resources for remedial teaching. The Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) makes the point that, all students, irrespective of their learning ability, will at one time or another encounter all kinds of learning, emotional and behavioural problems. They need proper guidance and counselling in order to help them to improve their learning ability and solve their emotional and behavioural problems.

However, there is a serious lack of discipline masters at primary school level and counsellors at secondary school level at present. It is an unacceptable situation now that, even in the face of the increasing student need for counselling services, no improvement has been made to the ratio of counsellor/school social worker to students; indeed, this outdated system has also resulted in a continued increase in the wastage of counsellors. The recent cases of student suicide is a reflection of the seriousness of the problem. In this connection, the Government should implement as soon as possible the whole school approach as recommended by ECR4, and at the same time it should also step up the support for and training of student counsellors.

The most ideal education system is one in which schools are run on a whole day basis, with a class size of around 25. But given the fact that we cannot have more resources, we will have to prioritize. I have sought the views of a number of primary

and secondary schools regarding the issue of increasing the size of the classes at Primary I and Secondary I levels. They seem to agree that, insofar as a class of secondary students is concerned, if standards do not vary greatly, then it does not matter very much whether it is a class of 38, 40 or 42. The key problem is that, for lack of adequate remedial classes and teachers, schools are not able to cater properly to the needs of students with particularly low learning ability who should be put in a remedial class. The result is that these schools are unable to improve the quality of their education. In this regard, it is up to the Government to increase funding so that a school can flexibly operate more remedial classes to cater to students' needs. At the same time, the Government should also set up different kinds of secondary and primary schools, such as practical schools, skills opportunity schools, in order to provide opportunities for students who are not suitable for grammar school education to develop their potential. Admittedly, the Government should also educate parents to make them understand that grammar school education might not be the best for their children who have no inclination for it, and that if this is the case, it will not only fail to broaden their knowledge, but also make them lose their learning interest. It is for this reason that the recommendations of ECR4 on special education should be implemented as soon as possible.

Mr Deputy President, it is for the above reasons that I wish to support Mrs Rita FAN's amended motion so that, despite the constraint of resources, we can see an early implementation of the recommendations of ECR4.

MR LAU WAH-SUM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I very much hope that the Government will, in reviewing the balanced development of the various levels of education, also take into account the trend of our economic development. It is because Hong Kong will very likely become part of the economic zone of the Pearl River Delta in the foreseeable future. In this connection, there is a need for our tertiary sector to produce a large quantity of manpower specialized in the areas of research and development of high technology, market development, finance and financial services, and business and industrial management. According to statistics, there is one tertiary student doing a first-year first-degree course in every ten students in Hong Kong. This ratio is far lower than that in the other three "Little Dragons" in Asia. It is dismal compared to that of the developed countries in Europe and America. Why? Is it that our young people have a lower intelligent quotient than their counterparts in other countries? Is it that our tertiary institutions have extremely high entry requirements? Is it that our basic education is fraught with

problems? Is it more a problem with our education system? Our young people, of course, are not any less intelligent than their counterparts in other countries. Regarding the entry requirements of our tertiary institutions, speaking from my experience with the two universities, they are not particularly high bearing in mind that they have only three years to train a student. I believe that the existing entry requirements are necessary. Regarding the issue of possible imperfections with our basic education, one should actually look at whether our primary and secondary teachers have tried their best to educate their students. If, after they have tried their best, they are still unable to educate their students up to a suitable standard for university, then the problem could only lie with our education system.

A couple of years ago, we were still debating whether the university curriculum should be three years or four years, and the Government eventually settled for a three-year curriculum. One reason why we decided for three years was the inadequacy of degree places. However, recent press reports have actually suggested that the rapid expansion of the tertiary sector in recent years has resulted in an inadequate supply of eligible secondary students going for tertiary education. Although the reports are not entirely borne out by Government figures, they seem to be quite close to reality, if we examine the supply and demand figures in 1994-95. In this regard, I believe that while we are conducting a comprehensive review of the balanced development of tertiary and basic education, we should also study whether the existing primary and secondary education system is perfect or not; I agree very much with the present imperfections identified by Mrs Peggy LAM just now. I doubt whether the curriculums of our primary, secondary and tertiary education should be 6:6:4 in terms of years, rather than the existing 6:7:3. It would appear that I am bringing up an old issue, but I think it should also come under review. If we are only concerned with increasing educational spending and extra funding with no regard to cost-effectiveness, then we may only come up with a superficial solution which will waste public funds, and we may never be able to tackle the problems at source.

With these remarks, I support Mrs Rita FAN's amended motion.

DR LEONG CHE-HUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I do not think there is any need for us to go on debating the development of tertiary education because the answer is clear -- the Government has erred.

The problem is not with increasing the size of the class or combining classes.

It has to do with unfair treatment. While tertiary education is being expanded, nothing has been done to improve primary, secondary and matriculation education. The Government, on the contrary, cut the spending on primary and secondary education, adding insult to injury as it were. No wonder that this has caused so much public indignation.

The most important thing now is to conduct a comprehensive review on the development of basic education and tertiary education and consider ways of co-ordinating and achieving a balance between the two.

Hong Kong has been going through a period of great transformation since the end of the 1970s. In the run up to 1997, political pressure and high inflation have brought about great changes to society and the family structure. Despite the fact that our students go through very different intellectual and mental development and have different needs from that of the old days, our teachers are teaching in the same way as they were 10 years ago. One teacher has to teach a class of up to 38 students at a primary/secondary school; the teacher student ratio in the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan and other advanced countries is 1:24 in primary schools and 1:18 in secondary schools. We can see from this comparison that our teachers have a very heavy workload indeed. If the Government does nothing to change this ratio, I cannot see how real improvement can be made to basic education.

It is for this reason that I totally disagree with Mrs Rita FAN's point that a difference of two students is not an issue at all. For the present teacher to student ratio is already very unreasonable and I wish to warn here that unless improvement is made to this basic problem, the implementation of the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) regarding language teaching and other reforms will, I fear, only add to the already heavy burden of the teachers. It may turn out that form will substitute for content and we may actually end up wasting resources. I disagree entirely that we should blame the present controversy on the Government's expansion of tertiary education. As at this year, only 8% of our secondary students who are of the right age to enter university are able to do so; the comparable percentage in Singapore is 18%.

There is a lot of catching up for us to do, and we had better do it fast. The Singaporean government has plans to increase its university intake by two more percentage points over the next eight years and well into early next century. Are we going too fast and too rashly when we are talking about increasing university intake

by ten percentage points over the next five years?

I have to declare my interest at this point. I am a member of the Council of the Hong Kong Polytechnic. While the Hong Kong Polytechnic has to increase its degree courses by 40% over the next five years, the Government has only approved 90% of the its grant application this year. The Government asks the tertiary institutions to increase their degree places, but it has refused to give them additional funding specifically. What then can the tertiary institutions do?

Also, I have noticed a more worrying trend. While the polytechnics are increasing degree courses, which makes them more and more like universities, the universities are running more and more courses with a practical orientation, in trade and industry. For example, the Chinese University is setting up a Mechanical Engineering Department and is about to upgrade its Accountancy Department to Faculty status. I would like to raise only one question here. Is there really a need for our tertiary institutions to each offer courses which are similar to what the others are already offering, in the context of our large population, small area, high living density and convenient transport. I suggest that we can consider the practice of the Hospital Authority in terms of setting up a Centre of Excellence such that each tertiary institution will be able to develop its strength. This will enable them to develop into educational centres each with their own uniqueness and avoid functional duplication and waste of resources.

The Government projection of the manpower supply and demand suggests that Hong Kong may not have enough Form VI students by the year 1996. I suggest therefore that the expansion of degree places can be slowed down because in the short run we can rely on overseas graduates and returned emigrants to relieve the manpower shortage. In the long run, it is for us to improve basic and matriculation education; matriculation students should be increased before tertiary education can be further expanded.

Meanwhile, in the transitional period, instead of lowering the entry requirements, it may be better to diversify enrolment targets and to offer part-time degree courses for working adults in the age group of 30 to 50. These people were born in the baby boom of the '50s and '60s. The competition for university places was very keen in their time and their results might actually be better than many of our present matriculants.

On the issue of teacher training, I think that emphasis should be placed on the re-training of non-degree teachers. The most practical way is for the colleges of education and the two universities to share their resources in terms of providing both degree and non-degree teacher training, to meet demand. And this is in fact a test of the Government's sincerity to achieve its professed objective of improving basic education.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I support Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion.

PROF EDWARD CHEN: Mr Deputy President, education is the most important form of investment in human capital. Recent studies in economic development suggest that human capital, more than technological change and physical capital, is a crucial factor. Investment in physical capital is productive only if human resources are available. The sum total of the social rate of return, that is benefits to society at large, and the private rate of return on education is usually far greater than the full resource cost of education. The social rate of return on education is significant because education results in a more literate population, a more informed public and therefore a more trainable and productive labour force, and also a more stable society. Unfortunately, Hong Kong's spending on both research and development activities in human capital is far from sufficient, lagging even behind some developing countries in the region.

At the early stage of economic development, the rate of return to primary and secondary education is high, usually higher than that for tertiary education. However at a later stage of economic development like that Hong Kong is now undergoing, the social rate of return to tertiary education should also be high. There should then be a balanced development of tertiary education and basic education. During a structural transformation to a complex economy comprising a multidimensional service sector and a sophisticated manufacturing sector, there is a great demand for managerial and professional skills with tertiary education qualifications.

Although university places are going to expand at an unprecedented rate, it does not mean that we are overspending on tertiary education. The projected expansion is just barely sufficient to make up for how much we have lagged behind. For example, the tertiary education enrolment rate in the United States is 35%; it is 28% in Singapore, 25% in Taiwan and 33% in South Korea. At present, degree places in Hong Kong can only satisfy 8.5% of the relevant age group. Even if we increase the

first-year first-degree places to 15 000 by 1995 as planned, we shall only be achieving an enrolment rate of 18%. If we consider also the significant increase in demand for degree holders in the labour market associated with the upgrading of our economy in the coming years, any suggestion of the possibility of overexpansion in tertiary education in Hong Kong is clearly unacceptable. According to a recent report on the manpower outlook in the 1990s, with the existing pace of tertiary education expansion there will still be a projected shortfall of about 23 000 persons at the first degree level in 1996.

In the expansion of tertiary education, it is of course important to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and research. While it is important to ensure that only well-prepared students are admitted to tertiary institutions, it is even more crucial that the high quality of university teachers is upheld. It is projected that between 1990 and 1996, there should be a 50% increase in the number of tertiary education teachers. To keep and attract quality university teachers, it is much more important to offer them ample research funds and facilities rather than high salaries and easy promotions. The UPGC research grant approved by the Finance Committee for the year 1991-92 was only HK\$100 million which accounted for 2.2% of total recurrent fund. In the United States the total federal spending on university research accounted for 18% of total state funds for higher education operating expenses. In fact the research fund allocated for all the tertiary institutions in Hong Kong is only equal to the research fund for a single university in the United States, namely, the University of Rochester which ranks only 38 in terms of research fund received. In terms of research fund per teacher in 1990-91, it is US\$2,500 in Hong Kong but US\$24,000 in the United States. This means that on an average our university teachers get only 1/10 of what their counterparts in the United States receive for research from government sources, not to mention their securing much more research funds from private foundations. It is almost impossible under these circumstances for us to recruit quality university teachers.

While expanding tertiary education, the Government should, of course, also improve the quality of basic education so that students are better equipped and prepared for tertiary education and also for generating greater social benefits to society at large. There are some obvious ways to improve the quality of primary and secondary education, such as improving the quality of the teachers by offering them more and better professional training, improving school equipment and facilities, and reducing the size of classes. The quickest and simplest way to improve the quality of primary and secondary education is, in fact, a reduction in the size of



classes. Regrettably, the Government is proposing to do just the opposite. I do understand the resource constraints facing the Administration. But in view of the tremendous importance of education in generating social benefits, the Government must try to apply the across-the-board cut in public expenditure with greater flexibility in the area of education. After all an additional allocation of HK\$284 million is not a matter of life and death for the central government.

Speaking of the quality of basic education, it is often overlooked that the most basic education is pre-school education during which a child is being moulded from putty and not clay. There are two important reasons for the Government to review its no-assistance policy towards pre-school education. First, the quality of pre-school education affects the resources that the Government has to devote to education at higher levels. Well begun is half done. For example, proficiency in languages depends crucially on how well the language is taught at the very beginning. In my view a deterioration in the language ability of Hong Kong students is to some extent related to the poor quality of pre-school education. As a matter of fact, many of my students in the university cannot pronounce one to ten reasonably accurately simply because they are taught to pronounce these words incorrectly in their pre-primary schools. A significant amount of resources has to be devoted to language remedial programmes later on; this amount could be less if pre-school education in Hong Kong was of better quality. The second reason for devoting more resources and attention to pre-school education is related to the issues of income distribution and social mobility. Since pre-school education is not subvented, only the more well-to-do parents can afford to send their children to the good pre-primary schools which are invariably very expensive. Those who go to good pre-primary schools have far better chances of going to better primary and secondary schools and, in due course, pursuing a more successful career. There is therefore a virtuous circle for the rich and a vicious circle for the poor in social mobility, to some extent because of the pre-school education system in Hong Kong. Equality means equal opportunities. The children of the rich and the poor should be given the same opportunities of going to good pre-primary schools.

Mr Deputy President, I am in support of both the original motion and the amended one. I like the original motion because of its reference to the importance of class size. The amended motion is more comprehensive, emphasizing rightly the importance of the quality of tertiary education and pre-primary education. I would like to listen to my colleagues and the Administration before I decide on how to vote.

MR VINCENT CHENG: Mr Deputy President, I am not an educationalist; indeed, when I discussed with some of my Legislative Council colleagues this afternoon the ideas which I will be putting forward very shortly, their instant reaction was that my ideas are naive and show that I do not know anything about education. Be that as it may, I will still speak out about my own uneducated feelings, as one of the many parents who have children studying in local schools.

I am appalled by the problems we see in our basic education system: kids committing suicide, pressure of homework, insufficient attention at school because of large class size, triad society infiltration of schools, and so on. I could go on for another 10 minutes along the same lines. Obviously there are many reasons for these problems; I will leave them to the experts to analyse, but underprovisioning is surely one of the reasons. Being an advanced economy, boasting an income level of US\$16,000 per person, Hong Kong should be able to afford more on basic education.

I am appalled by the large number of students cramped in one classroom. How on earth can students get sufficient attention from teachers who have to teach 40 students in one class? To me, it is a miracle that the teacher can even remember the students' names.

The physical environment of most schools is dreadful! Whereas our friends in the Education Department sit in their beautiful air-conditioned offices, school teachers and students have to suffer the intolerable summer heat. Now is this right?

Today's motion is actually a mild one. Indeed, if I were to move a motion or amendment today, I would ask the Government to reduce the class size from 38 or 40 to below 30 within five years. I know that is unrealistic but nevertheless I would ask. Where could we get the resources? First, I think we should cut the size of the non-teaching staff of the Education Department and shift the resources to schools. I have grave doubts about the relevance of the work of some of the non-teaching staff in the Education Department. What do they do? What is their value? What savings has the Education Department made within itself before asking schools to eliminate the two places for repeaters? Where will the repeaters go?

Secondly, we should reduce the growth of tertiary education and increase the resources of primary and secondary schools. The standard of education of our secondary schools is such that our university students need remedial courses before

they can receive tertiary education. In other words, our universities have to teach secondary school courses; now is this the right allocation of resources?

Mr Deputy President, in my 180 days in this Council, I have never been so blunt in my speeches. I always feel that we should discuss issues analytically and rationally, taking into consideration the constraints faced by the Government. But I can hardly contain my emotion on this issue. I was educated locally and I think I have succeeded under the old education system. I, perhaps, should be grateful and support the current system. I am not and I cannot, because I do not want to see our youngsters have to struggle in the way we had to. We are an advanced society today. It is time to implement fully the recommendations on the education system. One very famous Chinese scholar LU Xun once said "Save the children" -- that is what we must do, and to do that we must improve the quality of education.

I do not quite follow the arguments that have been put forward by some of my learned friends in this Council today. In my confused mind, both the original motion and the amendment do not really contradict each other and I therefore will support the final motion amended or not. To me, it is not important which motion goes through today because our message to the Government is clear: redeploy or increase resources to primary, pre-school and secondary school education and get our friends in the Education Department to really tackle the problems we have in our education system. Thank you.

MR LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, on the issue of basic education, today I will not speak rhetorically, with ample learned quotes as it were, to prove that there is a need for the Government to devote more resources to basic education. I only wish to share my experience as an ex-secondary school teacher for 11 years with Members and reflect the views of frontline educational workers generally.

With the implementation of nine year free education for all since 1979, elitism is beginning to give way to general education. While I am all for general education, one result it produces is that students who would have been eliminated in the previous elitist school education would be able to proceed to secondary school and their academic performance is understandably poor. I had the experience of teaching the poorest class of Secondary I students from band five for a number of years. Given that educational workers/teacher should go about his or her job without discrimination, I have always been keen to accept these challenges.

But there are hard facts which cannot be changed by wishful thinking. These students have poor academic results and need special attention and care. There are teachers who think that they have the intelligence of Primary IV or V student only. A lot of them did not recognize the alphabets and could not do simple addition and subtraction. It is of course true that education should enable students to develop morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically. But the irreparable wounds which the students received time and again as a result of their intellectual inability has become a hindrance to their other developments.

In its implementation of the nine year free education for all, the Government has failed to take account of the need of this group of students in the new educational environment for intensive education and counselling on an individual basis. The practice of getting one teacher to teach a group of forty students along the traditional elitist line has been kept on but it is not effective when you are talking about Secondary I students with only Primary IV or V standard. In many countries which are as developed as Hong Kong, the class size in both primary and secondary schools is only 20. English speaking schools in Hong Kong which are subsidized by the Government have a class size of about 20. Why is it that these schools can have a class size of 20 whereas schools for Chinese children have to have a class size of 42? Are Chinese students not students? Why should we allow racial discrimination in our education system?

I went on to read a Diploma in Education after I graduated from university in 1981. My university lecturer taught us to use a student-oriented approach and to teach according to individual ability. We were told that more should be tried on top of the conservative approach of talk and chalk. The Education Department also supports the student-oriented approach and encourages flexibility in the teaching practice. But Members should think about the plight of the teacher; what else can he or she do other than going the talk and chalk way when he or she has to deal with 40 students of poor standards. You may not be able to picture the difficulties involved, not being professional teachers yourselves. But for Members who are also parents, you will be able to appreciate the difficulties of supervising your children's homework after you return home from work. The teacher's workload is ten times that of the parent supervisor. While the Education Department and the Government generally agree with the idealism of the student-oriented approach, nothing has been done over the last ten years to improve the poor condition under which the teacher works, nothing at all to change the class size of 40 which is against

all the principles of sound education practice. Under these circumstances, is it not empty talk that the Government keeps telling us that it has the interest of our next generation in mind?

Will our students who are puzzled and upset by a whole new set of problems presented by Hong Kong's uncertain future, political and social change and associated family problems, actually seek help from their teachers? Members must be aware that many band five Secondary I students are not only under-achievers academically but they also come from poor families generally with behavioural problems. Under the present 1:40 arrangement, teacher and students have obviously become alienated in terms of communication and contact. Without a good teacher-student relationship, how can one speak of counselling or comforting students and preventing students from doing foolish thing like committing suicide?

The Education Department has claimed that reduction of classes will put an end to the floating classes in certain schools. If the Education Department is indeed sincere about this, it should see to it that the disruptive floating classes are abolished in all schools. Reduction of classes should not be implemented on the pretext of abolishing the floating classes.

The most unforgettable experience I recall in the eleven years of my teaching career is instructing my Secondary I students how to use the Bunsen burner. They were in ten groups of four and I had to go around to teach them how to check the burner and the gas pipings, shut off the gas holes, light a match and then release the gas and light the fire. You have the greatest reward when you see for yourself the joy in the eyes of the twelve year old Secondary I students upon discovering how to light the Bunsen Burner.

Mr Deputy President, funding for our basic education has been grossly inadequate. A further cutback on spending would only worsen the situation. I cannot bear to see my students receiving a raw deal one more time. With these remarks, I support Mr CHEUNG Man-kowng's motion.

MR ERIC LI (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I have to declare first of all that I am a Member of the Board of Education, Bursar of the Open Learning Institute, and a member of the management committees of a kindergarten, a primary school and a secondary school.

Every young person is the apple of their parents' eye; he or she is like a piece of uncut jade from the perspective of society. Indeed, not all youngsters will be able to make valuable social contribution for even as uncut jades, they have to be carefully carved and polished before they will take on value. In Hong Kong, for a period of time following the end of the War, in the area of educational development, people were debating the merits of an elitist approach to education as opposed to general education for all. Most people are only concerned about the academic results achieved through education; it has never occurred to them that education should be oriented towards young people. Education, actually, is only a process. It is neither entirely for enabling young people to pass examinations with flying colours nor is it entirely for providing our society with trained manpower resources. I believe that the educational ideal should be such that young people may develop their own potential to the full. I was very pleased with Education Commission Report No. 4 because it marked a departure from the discussion of quantity to that of looking at the quality of education squarely. However, there are many real problems which lie in the long way ahead and there are many inevitable compromises which we have to make given the limited resources available. Confucius long ago talked about the highest educational ideal of the educator as teaching students without discrimination, and each according to their ability. That ideal was the glory of Chinese history of education, though education in China failed to flourish after all. Illiteracy is still a widespread problem even now, but that is attributable to the sinister motive of the then state policy makers who used the limited resources exclusively for the expansion of higher education to make for easier governance. In Hong Kong whose culture owes much to Chinese influence, the Confucian educational ideal has also been dormant like a dream for a thousand years.

The expansion of higher education which we are now talking about and the discussion of educational quality in Education Commission Report No. 4 are both encouraging developments to me. But no sooner had they appeared on our agenda than we re-started the never-ending argument about increasing class size and improvement of quality. From a different perspective, it would seem that both issues are related to funding, but funds are not in unlimited supply and we have to decide where to spend our money. In other words, we have to choose between the fish and the bear's paw, as it were, because we cannot afford to have both. I completely agree with Mrs Peggy LAM's point about education being the largest investment Hong Kong makes in its youth. Lack of investment will result in an uncut jade of less than fine quality not being properly polished to remain no more than a hard stone. It is indeed heart rending

for both parents and educational workers that if after nine, ten years or an even longer process of education we cannot achieve a better result than that. I honestly believe that Mrs Rita FAN's option is more appealing in that it is closer to the educational ideal of teaching without discrimination and according to ability. For special education is particularly geared to the needs of young people and it will alleviate the shortfall of school social workers and lead to an improvement of teaching quality. We can also apparently do more to help young people with special needs. But this Council will have to pay a heavy price if it opts to take this decision in future. I do not think this Council is a policy-making body, and I have this feeling that we have now been forced to make this administrative decision. If I have to vote against Mr CHEUNG's motion, I would seem to have stifled the idealism of our educational workers; if I have to vote against Mrs Rita FAN's motion, I would seem not to be supportive of the education sector's fight for more resources.

Dr LEONG Che-hung and I have brought up two options both of which seem to have Members' support. Now I am disinclined to support either option because the message which I received is that a compromise should be struck. What I learnt from the last debate is that when in doubt I have to think, and think again. First of all, the two motions before us are not different from each other in their first part. If we examine the second part, we do not see any request for more funding nor is there any mention of our young people. Both motions seem to aim at meeting the needs of our young people though one young person's gain would be another young person's loss. Mrs Selina CHOW talked about the decision of the Board of Education and I wish to explain here my personal view, for I cannot speak for the Board of Education. The Board of Education is only concerned with the quality of education; it has nothing to do with the choice of resources. We were then left with no other alternative but to slash expenditure on education. We understood that it was only for the short-term saving and what we chose under the circumstances was the option which would have the minimal impact on the quality of education. That was the basis on which we made our choice and indeed we opted for the way in which the burden of the reduced resources could equitably be shared by our young people because it was the only way which would meet the objective. But now the choice is really which is the better way. I feel that if I made a choice now, then one of two most undesirable scenarios would result. Either this "nobody's fault" would be blamed on this Council, or that the fight led by Members representing the education sector would go on and on in this Council, with no end in sight to the nightmare. I was all for increasing expenditure on education in the debates following the Policy Address and the Budget Speech. I feel hard put to have to make a decision in two days between these two motions. Members of this

Council were given 10 days to make a decision on my motion on the Green Paper on Rehabilitation Policies and Services and in the end it was amended. Now I would like to consider first whether the administrative decision in respect of the amendment motion is the responsibility of the Legislative Council.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MR STEVEN POON (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I have to declare that I am a Council Member of the University of Science and Technology.

In the early 1960s, the school fee of the secondary school I attended was \$36. It was a heavy burden to my family. Only the rich could afford to send their children to study at the university at the time. But nowadays, secondary school education is essentially free and university education is available to anyone who can meet its entry requirements. It is in this context that, despite its many shortcomings, the Government's efforts in the area of education are not without tangible results. Today, 80% of our tertiary students come from the lower middle classes, many of whom are living in public housing estates, under quite trying conditions. That they have finally made it to college is testimony to the intelligence and diligence and the fighting spirit of our lower middle class youngsters.

Mr Deputy President, I also happen to come from the lower class. When my beloved mother allowed me to study at university, she did so with the clear understanding that, quite apart from having to pay for my education, she also had to do without the financial contribution which I would otherwise have made to the family. Given the circumstances of my family at the time, it was clear that she was very determined to give me the best education she could barely afford and it is thanks to her that I am able now, thirty years on, to address this Council in my present capacity. I will be forever grateful to my mother for what she did to me and her iron determination.

Many parents in Hong Kong, particularly parents of the lower classes, are just like my mother thirty years ago. They would go to great lengths, saving on their daily necessities, to put their academically promising children through college. They are hoping, and indeed it is their only wish, that their children would have a successful education and be able to make something out of life when they graduate from college. Looking back on my past fifty years, I had my happiest time while at university. It was a time when I could best learn about life, morality, human respect,



integrity and responsibility and think about the issues of existence, nationalism, personal position and ambition. Its impact on me is more than I can describe in words.

Mr Deputy President, in the face of the 1997 jitters, people are emigrating in the tens of thousands every year. Many Hong Kong people have the refugee mentality and young people are feeling very confused and do not know what to do under these circumstances. It is up to us to provide them with hope and opportunities for further studies. I think some of us in this Council today will go our separate ways in 1997. But I believe most of our young people will be staying in Hong Kong. They will be the future hope of Hong Kong for they will be the future masters; one day, some of them may even become members of the top leadership of China. Let us not forget that the debate today is on tertiary education. But I am rather disappointed in the motion because the education of our next generation is a lofty ideal which should not be treated as an instrument of short-term political bickering. I hope that Members will respect the long-term objectives of education and refrain from politicizing education. What is more, I will request that the Government step up tertiary education and maintain its quality so that there will be more tertiary places to meet the needs of eligible young people for tertiary education and we need not be bound by the limited provision of tertiary places. This will give more hope to parents of the lower classes and provide their children with a more equitable opportunity.

I so make my submission.

MR TIK CHI-YUEN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the motion debate today is on the issue of tertiary education but most of the speeches given by Members have concentrated on the issue of public expenditure on basic education. That is rather unfortunate because there are problems with tertiary education which this Council should be concerned about and deliberate on.

Meeting Point supports the expansion of tertiary education and the training of more talent. But large public expenditure is required for the expansion of tertiary education and prudence and control must be exercised. Towards the end of last year, the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC) requested a vote of \$18 billion from this Council to meet the cost of tertiary education over the next several years. However, we were unable to see in their documentation any mention of a control mechanism by the Government and the UPGC to monitor the use of funds by the various tertiary institutions. Meeting Point Members request that the UPGC and the

Government should together work out a control mechanism to make sure that the funds are used properly, and not wasted, for their earmarked purposes.

Also, Meeting Point takes the view that tertiary education should not be developed as a separate entity and that it should be co-ordinated with secondary, primary, and pre-primary education to make sure that the different levels of education have a balanced development. We can see from the spending projection of the Budget for 1992-93 that too much weight is given to tertiary education at the expense of basic education. There is a lack of balanced growth with spending on tertiary education set to increase by 18% and spending on basic education set to increase by only 1.5% this year. This is likely to result in non-convergence between the two. Meeting Point is all for the need for the Government to increase spending on basic education. Statistics indicate that the Government's unit cost subsidy of secondary and primary education is set on a downward trend in the next several years. We have reason to believe that the downward trend will be the result of adding two more students to the class size at Primary I and Secondary I levels. It is for this reason that Meeting Point cannot support the measures to increase class size and combine classes, in the context of inadequate provision for basic education in the first place. The three Meeting Point Members of this Council, that is, Mr Fred LI, Mr WONG Wai-yin and myself, in response to the appeal of the education organizations, have put our names down for supporting the move to oppose cutting public expenditure on basic education, and we also request that the measure to increase the class size by two students at Primary I and Secondary I levels be abolished. Indeed, our signed declaration has already appeared in one of the local papers. We have been consistent supporters of the reasonable requests of our education sector.

Mr Deputy President, from the wording of the amendment motion of Mrs Rita FAN and her speech presentation just now, we understand that she is essentially for increasing spending on basic education and in that regard her position is close to the requests of Meeting Point and other educational bodies in spirit. Indeed, there is no incompatibility between Mr CHEUNG's motion and Mrs FAN's amendment motion. But under the voting procedure, if Meeting Point Members do not voice their objection to Mrs FAN's amendment motion, the reality is that the motion of the education sector will not be passed. That is a scenario which Meeting Point will not like to see. It is for this reason that Meeting Point will vote against the amendment motion and support the original motion.

Mr Deputy president, with these remarks, I support the motion of the education

sector.

DR SAMUEL WONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I would like to declare that I am a Member of the Board of Baptist College and Chairman of the Board of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club Ti-I College.

The slipping standards of education at both tertiary and basic levels in recent years have reached a point where the problem can no longer be ignored. There has been less talk in recent years too of the ideals, significance and principles of education. In contrast, all the methods which have been proposed for tackling the educational problems and raising educational quality come in invariably with price tags on them. I agree that money is one of the important elements involved and it is for this reason that I agree with the first part of Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion which states to the effect that while the quality of basic education is certainly important the quality of higher education is also something which cannot be ignored. Mr Henry TANG made a point of asking me to reflect his views in my speech today, before he left Hong Kong on his overseas business trip. Both he and I believe that we should not equate successful tertiary education with enlarged enrolment because what is more important is the quality of students who have been trained. It is for this reason that while expanding the enrolment of tertiary institutions it is also important to review methods to improve the quality of tertiary students whose development should not be thwarted under any circumstances. For example, research funds for the tertiary institutions are still extremely inadequate. We should not in this context stop our funding support for the universities and polytechnics or seek to withdraw part of the funding going to them. Both Mr TANG and I believe that all savings made on educational items should be used on education-related projects rather than redirected to other government departments.

Recent years have also seen the emigration of many experienced teachers and a gradual decline in the entry requirement of the colleges of education which are even more primitive than the regular secondary school in terms of equipment. I hope the forthcoming Education Commission Report No. 5 will put forward recommendations for an overall improvement of teacher training. In this connection, I must stress that it is extremely important that the Government gives its real support, failing which it does not matter very much how many reports the Education Commission publishes, or indeed how many improvement measures have been proposed in them.

Now I would like to talk about the second part of the text of the original motion which is, I believe, where it differs from the amendment motion, in matters of wording. I have paid particular attention in the past couple of days to the advertisement carried in the papers and the question on my mind was why the addition of two students to Primary I and Secondary I classes had drawn such a huge reaction. I have given thought to the views of both the opponents and the conditional supporters of the measure. I identify with the Government's desire to achieve a balance between the expansion of public sector spending and economic growth. If the original motion for the abolition of the two additional places per class at Primary I and Secondary I levels were carried but the Government stood firm on its refusal to provide additional resources and met the additional cost involved instead with the \$300 million earmarked for the implementation of Education Commission Report No. 4, and this in turn resulted eventually in the delay of its proposed improvement of the quality of education, then I regret that I cannot lend my support to it.

Last night, I sought the opinion of a secondary school principal. I came to know that the original government proposal was for two places to be added to each class at all levels. It was such a difficult proposal that after some hard bargaining it was modified to increasing two places per class at Primary I and Secondary I only. The school principal felt that there was not much problem with the new deal which was to be a temporary measure after all and would cease automatically in three years' time. He said that it was their duty to educate and the addition of one or two students after all would make little difference. Education for our next generation is a very serious and sacred task and it has an important mission to perform. I have a great deal of respect for educational workers. It is after very careful consideration therefore that I feel more inclined to support Mrs FAN's amendment motion.

DR YEUNG SUM (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I shall focus my speech today mainly on the issue of the development of tertiary education.

The United Democrats support the expansion of tertiary educational opportunities because the elitist approach to education in the past has meant that very few students were able to have the benefit of tertiary education. We are in favour of increasing tertiary places to enable more students of the appropriate age group to study at the universities, but we also stress that increasing student numbers must not result in a decline in quality.

With more students being able to study at the tertiary level, it is quite inevitable that standards may tend to vary more sharply among students than was the case before but it does not follow that we should not increase tertiary enrolment. The problem with which tertiary education is faced now is one which will inevitably arise in the initial stages of the implementation of general education for all. There is greater discrepancy between students in terms of standard; lecturers have to deal with rather more students than before and they need time to adapt their teaching style to meet the new circumstances. It is in this context that the immediate priority is for the Government to provide more resources to enable the tertiary institutions to teach according to different abilities. For example, more resources should be made available for student counselling, for language training, for the provision of more auxiliary teaching staff (such as tutors) in order to offer more intensive teaching, for research support so that lecturers may maintain academic quality, and for postgraduate programmes so that more tertiary teaching staff and professionals may be produced to meet future needs. I hope that the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee will take the above facts into account in considering funding for the various tertiary institutions.

Although the United Democrats are for increasing tertiary places and resources, we also have to stress that the development of tertiary education should be in step with the other levels of school education. The expansion of tertiary education has first of all brought with it a problem for the matriculation curriculum. In its development of tertiary education the Government has made it its target to enable 24% of the appropriate age group to receive tertiary places. This, coupled with the joint admission scheme of tertiary institutions, has resulted in most of the sixth-formers being informed that they have been assured of a university place at a very early stage. The result of this is that many of them have lost interest in their studies. It is in this context that students' time and taxpayer's money have been wasted. And there is an urgent need for the matriculation curriculum to be reformed.

Even if we implement reforms which will produce a more practical and diversified matriculation curriculum, it will not solve the problem because practically speaking every sixth-former has the opportunity of attending a tertiary institution and very few of them will actually stop pursuing further studies and end up working in society. In this connection, a more diversified curriculum will only make it difficult to attract students and also it will not meet the real needs of matriculation students. I believe that the Government should review once again the value of the matriculation

curriculum as well as the overall secondary school curriculum.

The United Democrats take the view that the Government should, as a matter of great urgency, review whether the expansion of tertiary education is going too fast. As Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was saying just now that review should be conducted this year, following the admission exercises of the tertiary institutions, instead of being postponed to 1994. For the rapid expansion of tertiary education may in the meantime cause great damage to basic education and the whole school curriculum, indeed even to tertiary education itself. Although the Government has repeatedly stressed that even in 1994 and 1995 we are still going to have enough students to take up the tertiary places on offer, the fact is that the quality of newly recruited tertiary students this year has already declined sharply. The media reported recently that 12.7% of the students enrolled by a certain tertiary institution actually failed Use of English at the Advanced Level Examination. We believe that students should have a firm grounding in basic education before they proceed to tertiary education. We do not wish to see less than qualified tertiary graduates. After all, what we treasure is the quality of education instead of the sheer number of graduates. If we do not invest more to improve the existing quality of secondary and primary education, it is very likely that our future tertiary graduates would be degree holders without either substance or knowledge. They will bring no benefit to the development of Hong Kong society.

Lastly, I would like to speak on Mrs Rita FAN's amendment motion. Absent from it is the specific request for the abolition of the measure to increase class size and in its present form it is nothing but an empty statement of principle and suggestion. I think that it is contradictory in itself. On the one hand, it talks about increasing resources for basic education and improving the quality of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education; on the other hand, it opposes the abolition of a measure which is geared entirely towards the target of saving costs at the sacrifice of the quality of basic education.

Today, many educational workers are sitting outside the Legislative Council Building to request the abolition of that measure. It is up to Members of this Council to respond to the voice they have made. If at the end of the day the emptily worded amendment motion was carried by this Council, it would effectively mean that Members have chosen to turn a deaf ear to the whole education sector. I also wish to point out that the measure to increase class size in fact runs counter to the target-oriented policy direction of Education Commission Report No. 4. How can one talk about raising

quality while at the same time acting effectively to jeopardize quality? I hope Mrs FAN will in her capacity as Chairperson of the Education Commission also think about this issue, if she is at all concerned with the quality of education.

The United Democrats stress that the measure to increase class size will lead to the falling standards of our basic education. The United Democrats oppose the amendment motion and support Mr CHEUNG's motion.

MR HOWARD YOUNG: Mr Deputy President, I have decided at the last minute to make my address in English rather than in Cantonese. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, it is my strong belief that one of the symptoms of our educational standards in secondary and even primary schools having gone down somewhat is manifested in the quality of English. Secondly, I already made two points on education in the Budget debate not too long ago and there is no point in repeating the same points in the same language.

Mr Deputy President, a few weeks ago on a Saturday morning, Mrs Selina CHOW and I met with a group of people, led by Mr HA Man-ho, who were very concerned with the standards of education in Hong Kong. We listened to their views carefully, and I identified two points. One was the point on the quality of education and its implications for tertiary education -- a point which in fact has been made by Mr CHEUNG when moving the motion -- in that if we are going to use tremendous resources to try and beef up the standard of English in tertiary education, we might as well start early and do it before students enter the universities.

The second point that I identified was the distress caused to parents in having to see their children interrupted during the course of their education and moved to another school because of the plan to combine classes in order to save two places. I did promise that I would raise this during the Budget debate -- which I did -- and I pointed out the fact that the standard of English was causing people in various industries, including the tourism industry, to lower their standards of recruitment in finding school leavers to work for them. I also mentioned that in tourism one of the most frightful things that faces the consumer is when he is joining a tour and suddenly finds that he has been "combined" -- or in Cantonese . However, on the morning before the Budget debate, I learnt that the Government had made concessions and I decided that the combination of classes, and therefore the disruption that it would cause, would no longer apply. Therefore I had to quickly

amend my prepared speech at the time and say I welcomed the measures taken to alleviate this problem.

Mr Deputy President, I am somewhat distressed that tonight's debate, which was supposed to start off as being on tertiary education only, has gone off the tracks a bit and become a bit of a political slinging match. I am disappointed that there have been personal attacks on people in the debate, which in certain instances have come very close to the borderline, particularly when ulterior motives are being attributed to people who put forward amendments. I am not sure if this is against Standing Orders. I believe that we should not take this as a test case to demonstrate masculinity by the male members of this Council to attack the fair sex. I could certainly not get away with this at home, let alone in this Chamber.

In the previous debate today, I did say that I saw no point in making amendments for the sake of making amendments. I feel that amendments have to be either different on a point of substance or differ on a matter of principle. In the previous debate I found no difference between the amended motion and the original motion. However, during this debate, not just the speakers, but also the mover of the motion and the mover of the amendment, have openly admitted that there is a rather substantial difference between the original motion and the amendment though the first part of the original motion has been left untouched.

As I have said, the point that has been left out in the original motion is the point on combining classes. My original reservation on this mainly related to fourth-form students in that it would cause disruption in having to change schools halfway. Since this no longer exists, I would much rather take a broader approach and support the amendment which asks for a broader review and a broader look at education as a whole.

The mover of the motion originally asked all of us here to set aside political differences or political affiliations and vote with our conscience. If we look carefully at the voting results of the first motion debate this afternoon, we will find that voting was not by political cliques or parties or entities, but there were Members who voted quite differently according to their interpretation of the motion and amendment before them and according to their conscience. I do intend to vote the way they did and in this instance vote for the amendment. Thank you.

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, there is equality of sexes



in the family. Likewise, in a school or under an education system, equal importance should be attached to students of Primary I, Secondary I and Secondary IV. It is for this reason that in fighting for the interest of Secondary IV students we should not lose sight of the interest of both Secondary I and Primary I students.

I wish to respond very briefly here to the views expressed by Mrs Rita FAN and some other colleagues. There is a view that if no addition is made to the class size at Primary I and Secondary I levels then the proposed improvement measures to basic education contained in Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) will not be able to be implemented. But this view does not apparently tally with the reality. The Government has so far had no plan whatsoever for implementation of all of the recommendations of ECR4; I repeat, none for implementing all of the recommendations. Not only that, there was even a plan to claw back \$400 million from the education expenditure and turn it over to the Central Government. It was not until strong objection was made known by the education sector that an alternative plan was devised to divert \$300 million originally earmarked for tertiary education to primary and secondary education, and it was at this point that the Government started talking about implementing the recommendations in ECR4. The sequence of events is important in that it demonstrates the absence of sincerity, plan or preparation on the part of the Government for implementing the ECR4's recommendations while it had made up its mind very early on to cut spending on basic education. In this regard, the illusion has now been created, and indeed Members of this Council have now been forced to accept this "real" dilemma that unless we agree to the proposed expansion of class size at Primary I and Secondary I levels the recommendations of ECR4 will not be worth the paper on which they are written. This is a divisive tactic aimed at creating the illusion of mutual exclusion of two scenarios; it seeks to destroy our solidarity as Members of the Legislative Council on the one hand and limits our vision as legislators on the other. There is a lot more we can do for basic education but the Government would only play the role as a bystander and reap gains from it. But as I was saying just now, there is no need for us to fall into this specious trap, laid by the Government, of mutual exclusion, for what we are fighting for is education which is a basic necessity and it is just as vital as food and fresh air.

Honourable colleagues, this debate on education should not be political in nature at all. I am all for Members, irrespective of personal and political background, voting for the motion moved by the education sector, for the sake of the interest of students and educational principle.

Mr Deputy President, let me reiterate here that neither people from the education sector nor the teachers themselves have an axe to grind on this issue. They are only thinking about the future of our students and that is their ultimate objective. Somebody was saying that my motion was devoid of idealism. That is ridiculous. In the past, we have requested that, in order to take better care of our students, the class size should be reduced from 40 to 35, or 30 if the school accepts students from lower bands. Contrary to our expectations, the Government has now seen fit to increase the class size to 42. Let colleagues note that it is not a difference of two places; it is a difference of seven and 12 places in comparison with our requests. Even if our requests were met, the class size is still much larger than that of English speaking schools, as Mr LEE Wing-tat has just said. The Government's move will be a big disappointment to the educational workers who have cherished hope up to this point.

Mr Deputy President, education is a human enterprise and teachers are humans as well. If the motion we end up passing today should discourage teachers' enthusiasm and cause disillusionment among them, how can we reasonably expect our teachers to instil in our next generation any form of conscience and idealism? In fact, my motion includes all of the contents of Mrs FAN's motion. My motion will not be carried at the expense of any of the good causes Mrs FAN wishes to fight for in the name of education. The only difference is that I hope that the Government will not reduce the existing necessary services in favour of new services. Why cannot Members think in terms of giving more to our students, seeing more of their smiling faces, enabling our teachers to be guided by their idealism, and making sure that basic education has a bright future, by opposing Mrs FAN's amendment motion, and voting in support of my motion.

Mr Deputy President, I wish to use this last opportunity to appeal to Members of this Council before they vote. I urge them to vote according to their conscience, and I know that this request of mine also represents the wishes of the tens of thousands of parents and their lovely children, and speaks for the wishes of the principals and teachers who are gathering outside the Legislative Council Building, or who are tuning in to this debate.

Mr Deputy President, in order to fight for the passage of my motion and to have the hopes of the education sector realized, I can only beseech Members to vote against Mrs FAN's amendment motion. Only then could my motion be put to vote and receive your support.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Mr Deputy President, I would like to thank all Members who have spoken in this debate which clearly reflects the community's concern on education. While I cannot respond in detail to all the points made this afternoon, I would like to concentrate on four main issues, namely, the balance between tertiary and schools education; the need for a comprehensive review; the maintenance of standards and the question of the repeater allowance.

#### Balance between tertiary and schools education

Our strategy in the 1990s is to increase the number of degree places in the tertiary sector and, at the same time, to improve the quality of education in schools.

The rationale for adopting this two-pronged approach is to achieve a balanced growth within our education system. After two decades of rapid expansion in our primary and secondary schools, we have reached, in large measure, the quantitative targets we have set for ourselves. Nine years of free and compulsory education is available to all. Thereafter, heavily subsidized places in senior secondary schools and technical institutes are available to almost 95% of the relevant age group. About one-third of those who complete secondary schooling will be able to proceed to subsidized sixth forms. The community's current concern is not about the lack of places but the quality of the education that is provided.

For the tertiary sector, despite steady expansion in years past, degree places continue to be in great demand. This is evident in the large number of students leaving for overseas study every year. At the same time, against the background of loss of qualified manpower through emigration, structural changes in our economy have resulted in increasing demand for a better educated workforce. This is why the Government has embarked on the ambitious programme to accelerate the rate of expansion at the tertiary sector, with the target to provide a first-year, first-degree place for 18% of the 17-20 age group by 1994-95.

But despite our ambitious expansion programme, our local tertiary institutions will only be able to provide 41% of the new graduates entering the workforce during the period 1991-96. Consequently we will still have to rely on overseas graduates,

immigrants and returned emigrants for the supply of graduate manpower as well as contribution from continuing education institutions like the Open Learning Institute.

Much has been said about the perceived imbalance in resource allocation between the tertiary and the school sectors. There is no doubt that tertiary expansion is expensive. However the UPGC has a number of budgetary and monitoring mechanisms which, without eroding the principle of academic freedom for the institutions, ensure that these resources are deployed in the most cost-effective way. I am grateful for Members' support on the tertiary expansion programme and confident that our investment will pay dividend in time to come. While priority is given to the development of tertiary education, there is no evidence to suggest that the programme is being achieved at the expense of qualitative improvements in schools. Contrary to the advertisements placed by various educational bodies in local newspapers, there has been no cutback in the funding of school education. Even with the withdrawal of the repeater allowance, there will still be a real increase of 1.5% in school expenditure. This figure does not take into account the likely salary increase in the course of the year for which additional provision will be made. Several factors account for the relatively slower rate of increase in expenditure for the school sector. Unlike the tertiary sector, which is undergoing a phase of quantitative expansion, the school sector is entering a period of consolidation where the emphasis is on quality rather than number. The decline in enrolment in schools due to demographic changes together with the more cost-effective measures that we have introduced have resulted in considerable savings which have been ploughed back to the school sector for various improvements. Measures costing \$465 million on full implementation have been introduced since 1990. Following an assessment of the impact of the new population projection from the 1991 census on the tertiary expansion programme, we have decided to revise the number of first-year, first-degree places and redeployed \$300 million to the school sector. This is on top of the 1.5% real increase I mentioned earlier and will enable further improvement measures to proceed in the 1992 school year. Consequently all approved policies arising from Education Commission Report No. 4 (ECR4) as well as other improvements such as enhancement to the kindergarten fee remission scheme will be funded.

Members are also aware of the Education Commission's current studies into improving the teaching profession. Its recommendations will have a major impact upon the quality of education. These recommendations will also have significant financial implications. Additional funding will have to be earmarked for these

improvements when they are accepted as government policy.

#### Need for a comprehensive review

Given the size and complexities of the education programme area, it is of course necessary to keep policies, plans and programmes under constant review. Within the tertiary sector, the UPGC has begun its scheduled review on the implementation of the expansion programme. This review will take into account all relevant factors relating to the size and quality of the student intake and how the tertiary institutions have coped with the challenge of educating a larger and more diverse group of students.

Within the schools sector, the Education Commission has been undertaking systematic reviews of different aspects of our education system as well as monitoring progress on the implementation of policies arising from the recommendations in its various reports.

The Government is of the view that there is sufficient monitoring for individual components of the education system. It does not rule out the need for a more thorough review. The Education Commission which consists, among others, representatives from the UPGC, the Vocational Training Council and the Board of Education is well placed to conduct such a review.

#### Maintenance of standards

While the tertiary expansion programme is often referred to in quantitative terms, the maintenance of good quality has always been an implicit objective from the outset. The tertiary institutions are dedicated to the maintenance of high academic standard. The universities have their own system of peer group review and external examiners. Apart from their internal mechanism for quality control, the polytechnics and the colleges are also required to undergo accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation. Our aim is to ensure that internationally recognized standards established in the past should be maintained. The UPGC, the institutions and the Government are firmly committed to this important objective.

#### On the repeater allowance

I now turn to the call for the Government to retain the repeater allowance at

Primary I and Secondary I. I have already explained in detail in my speech on 1 April why, in compliance with the overall budgetary guideline, it is necessary to withdraw the repeater allowance for four years. I have already outlined the various measures we have taken to minimize any impact of this measure upon pupils most in need of attention and to remove the uncertainties for pupils entering Secondary IV. I shall not repeat them here.

Some Members have argued strongly that, when the Director of Education assigns 40 pupils (instead of 38) to each class, the quality of education will go down and the interest of parents, pupils and teachers will suffer. Such arguments overlook the fact that 40% of Primary I classes and 20% of Secondary I classes have 38 pupils or less and are therefore in a position to accommodate the two extra pupils and still keep within the normal class size. Nor can the argument on erosion of quality be reconciled with the fact that, at present, many schools of their own volition have gone beyond 40 per class.

Our assessment is that only some classes will have to exceed 40 per class as a result of the withdrawal of the repeater allowance. Bearing in mind that the average size of classes now stands at 34.7 for primary schools and 36.7 for secondary schools, the effect of this measure on class size will be marginal and likely to dissipate over time due to normal wastage.

The withdrawal of the repeater allowance for Primary I and Secondary I will produce savings of \$284 million which we will have to make up from elsewhere in the education budget should we decide not to proceed. This would mean possibly dipping into the \$300 million new allocation which has been earmarked to fund qualitative improvements and which will contribute significantly to better teaching and support services within classrooms. In other words, some of the much awaited reforms arising from the ECR4 and other improvements will not be able to proceed this year. Such a stand will not be consistent with the community's wish to see improvements introduced as soon as possible.

While the Administration fully endorses the need to improve the quality of school education, we are unable to lend support to Mr CHEUNG's original motion which calls for the repeater allowance to be retained for Primary I and Secondary I. However, I would like to reassure Members that the repeater allowance for the levels in question will be restored in full by the fifth year, when the anticipated decline in student enrolment will make smaller class size possible. I hope this temporary measure could

be seen in the wider context of other positive initiatives to improve the quality of school education. The Administration supports Mrs FAN's amended motion.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

Question on Mrs Rita FAN's amendment put.

Voice votes taken.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Council will proceed to a division. The division bell will ring for three minutes.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would Members now please proceed to register their votes? If you are in favour of Mrs Rita FAN's amendment, vote "Yes"; if you are against it, vote "No".

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Do Members have any queries before the result is displayed? If not, the result will be displayed.

The Chief Secretary, the Attorney General, the Financial Secretary, Mr Allen LEE, Mr Stephen CHEONG, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mrs Rita FAN, Mr NGAI Shiu-kit, Mr Andrew WONG, Mr LAU Wong-fat, Mr Edward HO, Mr Ronald ARCULLI, Mr Martin BARROW, Mrs Peggy LAM, Mrs Miriam LAU, Mr LAU Wah-sum, Mr Peter WONG, Mr Moses CHENG, Mr CHIM Pui-chung, Dr LAM Kui-chun, Mr Gilbert LEUNG, Mr Steven POON, Dr Samuel WONG, Dr Philip WONG and Mr Howard YOUNG voted for the amendment.

Mr Martin LEE, Mr David LI, Mr PANG Chun-hoi, Mr SZETO Wah, Dr LEONG Che-hung, Mr Jimmy MCGREGOR, Mrs Elsie TU, Mr Albert CHAN, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Rev FUNG Chi-wood, Mr Michael HO, Dr HUANG Chen-ya, Dr Conrad LAM, Mr LAU Chin-shek, Miss Emily LAU, Mr LEE Wing-tat, Mr Fred LI, Mr MAN Sai-cheong, Mr TIK Chi-yuen, Mr James TO, Dr YEUNG Sum and Mr WONG Wai-yin voted against the amendment.

Prof Edward CHEN, Mr Timothy HA and Mr Eric LI abstained.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT announced that there were 25 votes for the amendment and 22 votes against it. He declared that Mrs Rita FAN's amendment was approved.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, do you wish to speak to the amended motion?

MR CHEUNG MAN-KWONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I would first of all like to thank all of my colleagues. Although I may not be able to completely agree with the views which they expressed, they certainly will provide useful reference to me in my future work. As expected, my motion has not been able to receive the support of the majority in this Council. But to someone like me who is used to defeats in the Council debates, defeat will only encourage me to continue my fight through other channels. For I will not fight alone, I do have company. There are many school principals and teachers fighting with us outside the Council Building and together we form a force of conscience and idealism. Its impact will not only be felt today; it will be felt in the future. My colleague who sits next to me in this Chamber, Mr CHIM Pui-chung, likes saying, and I quote, that a snipe attack will not produce long lasting victory. I would like to modify it to read, Council majority will not produce long lasting victory. I am in a minority in this Council today, but I am in the clear majority, in terms of the community as a whole. We have not failed; I have through this debate raised society's concern for the problem of basic education, the resourcing and quality of basic education. This will bring pressure to bear on the Government to increase its spending on basic education to improve its quality. More importantly, this debate has drawn the full participation and support of educational workers. We have acted to defend the interest of students. This is a reflection on the professionalism and conscience of educational workers. We can say that our own education has not been in vain; we can say that we have not let our students down. The end of the debate is but the beginning of a more profound social movement. We shall return. I appeal to all educational workers not to give up; I appeal to them to stay firm, to continue to march forward. We shall unite with parents and the community as a whole to defend the interest of students and the educational principles. We shall make that our fighting goal.

Mr Deputy President, since my motion has been voted down, I, and my United Democrats colleagues, will abstain from voting on the motion as amended by Mrs FAN's



motion. We take the view that her motion will not have any implication whatsoever to the Government, whether it is passed or not. It is for this reason that we could only abstain from voting altogether.

Mr Deputy President, I so make my submission.

Question on Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's motion as amended by Mrs Rita FAN's amendment proposed, put and agreed to.

Adjournment

CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr Deputy President, I move that this Council do now adjourn.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr LEE Wing-tat has given notice to raise a matter for reply by the Government. Could I remind Members that in an adjournment debate Members have 45 minutes in which to speak. At that point or after all the Members wishing to speak have spoken, whichever is the earlier, I will call upon the Secretary for Transport to reply.

Internal and external transport services of new towns

9.40 pm

MR LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I will speak on the problem of external transport of southwest New Territories. From now until the year 2000, most of Hong Kong's infrastructure projects will be in southwest New Territories. Of these, Route 3 Project is attracting the most discussion among the residents of southwest New Territories. According to the Government's plan, the urban section of Route 3 is programmed for completion when the new airport comes into operation in 1997. This route runs from the western part of the urban area, via Kwai Chung, to northern Tsing Yi, then via the Tsing Yi Bridge and ends at northern Lantau and the new airport. Route 3, undoubtedly, will provide an expressway linking the airport to the urban area. But then the problem also lies with the route itself. The entire route comprises of an urban section and a country park section. What is more, the latter will include a Ting Kau Bridge spanning the Rambler Channel to enable

traffic to reach Yuen Long via a tunnel through Tai Mo Shan. The Government's decision now is only to complete the urban section of Route 3 by 1997, leaving the Ting Kau Bridge and the country park section to a later date. Such a plan to complete the highway by stages will result in serious traffic congestion in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi. The completion of Route 3 section by section will worsen the present congestion in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung, as lorries from mainland China, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, on their way to discharge their cargoes at the airport or in the urban areas, will be confined to using Tuen Mun Road, Tsuen Wan Road and Tsing Yi North Bridge, congested as they already are. So I am asking the Government to give consideration anew to the completion of the urban section, the Ting Kau Bridge as well as the country park section of Route 3 to tie in with the operation of the new airport, so as to solve the problem of traffic congestion in southwest New Territories.

Tuen Mun and Yuen Long are being linked up by the Light Rail Transit (LRT). Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung are accessible by MTR. The population of these four districts is estimated at 1.3 million. From the angles of traffic and transport, the promotion of local development, and the improvement to the traffic system of the New Territories, the Government should expeditiously study the feasibility of a railway link between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan and make a decision. Such a railway will provide the residents of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long with a mass transit system for access to the urban areas. It will also alleviate the traffic congestion that is already evidenced on Tuen Mun Road. In addition, it will bring development opportunities to the old areas along Castle Peak Road. Thus, three birds will be killed with one stone.

The above two proposals are made at the request of the residents and the organizations of Kwai Chung, Tsing Yi and Tsuen Wan. It is hoped that the Government will give them consideration.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

MR ANDREW WONG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, when a person moves to a new town, he will have mixed feelings. On one hand, he is glad because the living environment is better. In some cases, he can have more living space, fresher air and so forth. On the other hand, he is unhappy because he has to spend over two hours a day to and from work in the urban areas or in another new town. In fact, when considering how to make use of our limited land resources to enable the people to live comfortably,

we must also pay attention to the planning of matching facilities. One of the most important facilities is transport.

Firstly, let me talk about the problem of external transport in the new towns. The population of Tseung Kwan O is already 110 990 and is on the increase. I think that, where the construction of Mass Transit Railway (MTR) extension is concerned, the extension of MTR service to the new town of Tseung Kwan O should be given top priority. Apart from satisfying the transport needs of the residents, it will also benefit the development of the area.

At present, the transport network providing linkage between the new towns and the urban areas and within the new towns is relatively disorganized. I think in the long term, it is desirable to consider adopting a more organized plan. The following was included in my platform during the recent election campaign. I suggested a circular railway network that would serve the New Territories and link the New Territories to the urban areas. There are two possible routes: (1) A major circular railway which runs from Sheung Shui Station of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) trunkline to Yuen Long, then south to Tai Tong, via a tunnel to Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung, then via another tunnel back to Tai Wai Station of the KCR trunkline. (2) A minor circular railway which runs from Tai Po Station of the KCR trunkline to Yuen Long and Tai Tong, via a tunnel to Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung and then back to Tai Wai Station. The main thing is to connect Tai Po Station and Yuen Long. The above railway network will make the residents of remote areas feel that they are not isolated. At the same time the railway network will serve to link up traffic routes in the whole of Kowloon Peninsula. Then, as people move to new towns, their psychological inhibition caused by traffic problems will dissolve.

The railway network has yet another advantage. In the days to come, when the volume of passenger and cargo traffic between China and Hong Kong increases sharply, it will be possible to extend the network westward to connect to another express railway to China. This express railway will begin at a convenient point in Shenzhen, such as the Port of Huang Gang, via Lok Ma Chau, to the circular road at Yuen Long and go all the way to Kwai Chung, from which a short branch will lead to the container terminal. Such a network will be of help to the diversification of passenger and cargo traffic. In the long run, the authorities should give the plan careful consideration.

Also, the railway network will be of help to the decentralization of urban

population. This will enable those districts with high population density or with a lot of old buildings to undergo redevelopment. In other words, construction of the railway network will not only help to solve the transport problem of the new towns but will also be very significant to the overall town planning and development of Hong Kong.

Mr Deputy President, the new towns also have internal transport problems. When trying to find the solution, we must be flexible in our approach.

Bus service is a means of mass transit more flexible than the Light Rail Transit (LRT). Bus service, therefore, should not be replaced completely. Bus service within a new town must aim at keeping smooth flow of traffic and enable the residents to develop a sense of belonging to their own community. Depending on different needs of each area, different types of buses such as double-deckers, single-deck buses or smaller buses could be used. I think that residents in sparsely-populated and remote areas should not be deprived of their right to public transport service.

In reality, the LRT system may have its advantages. We already have such a system in Tuen Mun. However, when considering the LRT for other new towns in future, we must pay attention to two things: (1) In order to reduce the number of traffic accidents and make it easier for people to cross the roads, the railway in future LRT projects should be kept away from the road surface used by vehicles and pedestrians. This is particularly important at road bends and junctions. (2) Keeping the railway separate from the road will probably raise the cost of construction; this is also a point to note. For those areas where the population density is quite high, there is probably already sufficient statistical data and justification for providing railway service (as opposed to the LRT).

If the Government wishes to consider railway service for other new towns, I suggest that Shatin should be given top priority. Whether the LRT or regular railway is the mode under consideration, the important thing is to connect the eastern and western parts of Shatin. The railway should link Ma On Shan at the extreme east of Shatin with Tai Wai and Tin Sum Valley in the west, and then, at some suitable point (such as Siu Lek Yuen), to Diamond Hill in Kowloon.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MR LAU WONG-FAT (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, it may be recalled that, when the Government first implemented new town plans, the idea was merely to develop a number of new, self-contained towns in the New Territories. At that time, therefore, the large-scale construction of a supporting network of roads, to be completed ahead of, or at the same time as the new towns, was not considered to be a pressing need. However, as more and more people moved from the urban areas to the new towns, problems of different kinds have arisen one after the other, bearing full testimony to the fact that the development of so-called self-contained towns was but wishful thinking.

The real situation is that most of the residents of the new towns have to go to the urban areas or to other districts to work. In addition, schooling and business activities have led to an increasing demand for external transport than have been expected. This led to an over-saturation of the original road system. As a result, transport service has become the biggest problem to the residents of the new towns. The failure to meet traffic demands of the new towns has over the past years produced inestimable results in terms of time wasted and economic losses sustained.

The experience of the new town of Shatin provides a typical example. This new town is generally regarded as the most successful development; the authorities takes great pride in showing it to foreign visitors. Yet, until the Shing Mun Tunnel and the Tate's Cairn Tunnel were completed and opened to traffic last year, it suffered greatly from traffic congestion. With the operation of these two major highway facilities, traffic conditions in Shatin, Tai Po, Fanling and Sheung Shui have improved considerably. It is therefore clear that, the early construction of massive-scale road systems is the only possible solution to the transport problems of the new towns.

Traffic conditions have now improved significantly for the new towns in eastern and northeastern New Territories. However, the situation in the new towns in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun in northwest New Territories has become much worse. Particularly ironical is the fact that, whereas the Shing Mun Tunnel and the Tate's Cairn Tunnel have already been operational for some time as major facilities for easing the traffic flow between eastern New Territories and the urban areas, the projects for solving the transport problems between northwest New Territories and the urban areas are still under planning and discussion. This means that, over the next few years, the residents of Yuen Long and Tuen Mun will have to face the prospect of ever-worsening

traffic problems.

In fact, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun have grown rapidly over the past two years. The population in these two districts now reach 700 000 and expected to exceed one million in a few years. In addition, there is industrial development in Tuen Mun; and the volume of freight traffic between China and Hong Kong is increasing at a very fast pace. This has resulted in a remarkable increase in the volume of traffic bound for the container port in Kwai Chung. Tuen Mun Highway is being filled almost to capacity. I believe that, as people begin moving into the private and public housing units at Tin Shui Wai within the year, and as the Container Terminal in Area 38 in Tuen Mun is completed, Tuen Mun Highway will soon become over-saturated. Tuen Mun Highway now provides the main traffic link between northwest New Territories and other areas. Any serious accident on the road will paralyse traffic along its entire length. This has happened many times before, causing much inconvenience to the residents. Hence, no matter what one's angle may be, it is a matter of great urgency to construct the country park section of Route No. 3 and the railway connecting Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan.

Mr Deputy President, as the new airport project will tie up huge resources, there may be problems in raising funds for the transport projects mentioned above. However, provided that the authorities are determined to act, the problems will be solved. For instance, the Government can consider inviting corporations from the private sector to participate in these projects. While the new airport is important, delays in infrastructure projects for improving the new towns' traffic conditions will undoubtedly worsen the traffic problems of northwest New Territories. This will affect the quality of life of the residents and slow down the development of the new towns. Hong Kong as a whole will have to pay a price.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MRS MIRIAM LAU (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the development of new towns has become an important part of the development of Hong Kong over the past 10-odd years.

At the end of 1991, the population of the new towns was about 2.3 million, accounting for about 40% of the total population of Hong Kong.

The Government declares that it strives for perfection in the development of new

towns. However, the truth is that many problems have arisen in the new towns, of which the most conspicuous is the traffic problem. Take northwest New Territories for instance. During the development of that district, the Government introduced an important transport system -- the Light Rail Transit (LRT), and designated northwest New Territories as Transit Service Area (TSA). As the population of the new towns of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long increased, it became harder and harder for the LRT to satisfy the transport needs of the district. However, the residents have no other choice as to public transport. In addition, external transport services are also inadequate. Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road, the major thoroughfares leading to and from northwest New Territories, are often congested. The ferry services between Central and Tuen Mun are inadequate at normal times and even more so during rush hours.

The transport problems of northwest New Territories bear testimony particularly to the fact that the relevant government departments lacked detailed planning in the development of the new towns. There was also the problem of lack of co-ordination among the departments concerned. In many cases, after a housing project was completed, the external and internal road networks could not be completed in parallel. Also, it often happened that, as the new towns did not have a large number of residents at the initial period, adequate transport arrangements were not made. Take Tin Shui Wai for instance. People will begin moving into this area in May this year, but the LRT services will not be extended to Tin Shui Wai until early 1993. The major highway projects meant to alleviate traffic congestion in northwest New Territories are still under construction. The Tuen Mun/Yuen Long Eastern Corridor will not be completed until late 1993 and the Yuen Long Southern Bypass will not be completed until mid-1994. Even the improvement work for Castle Peak Road, which will have little effect on alleviating traffic congestion, will not be completed until late 1992. It is estimated that about 38 000 people will move into Tin Shui Wai this year and that the number will increase to 96 000 next year and keep rising after that. The development of Tin Shui Wai is not matched by road networks outside the district. It is certain that the transport problems of northwest New Territories, bad as they already are, will further deteriorate.

I think that the crux of the problem is the lack of adequate co-ordination among the relevant government departments during the planning stage of the new towns. As far as I know, the Territory Development Department is responsible for the making and the implementation of new town development plans, but the actual construction projects are the business of several departments. The Secretary for Planning,

Environment and Lands is responsible for selling land to private developers. The Housing Department is responsible for the construction of public housing estates. The Secretary for Works is responsible for road projects in the new towns. The Secretary for Transport, through the Transport Department and the Highways Department under his control, is responsible for the road projects outside the new towns. The Secretary for Treasury controls the financial resources needed for the development of the new towns. These departments emphasize different points and observe different orders of priority in the implementation of their plans. For instance, the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands may wish to sell land as soon as possible so as to earn income for the Treasury. Private developers will try to finish the housing projects speedily so as to recover their investments as early as possible. However, the road networks inside and outside the new towns cannot be completed at the same speed. Therefore, as I have just said, it often happens that completed housing development do not have access roads. This situation directly affects the availability of public transport services in, and the speed of the development of the new towns. In fact, many people do not want to move into new towns during the initial phase of development. They are afraid of the traffic problems due to inadequate public transport services and the incomplete state of road networks.

In view of the above problems, I feel that the Government, when planning new town development in the future, should give priority to transport infrastructure projects. There must be adequate arrangement for transport services to tie in with the housing projects in the district. In addition, I think that while the various departments should continue to handle their specific shares of work in the development of the new towns, one department should be charged with the overall co-ordination of the whole project. This will ensure proper co-ordination among the departments concerned.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the population of the new towns has now exceeded two million, distributed in different parts of the New Territories. Compared with those who live in the urban areas, the residents of the new towns have over the years been forced, by the lack of alternatives, to put up with problems and annoyances due to poor transport services. From the day-to-day media reporting, we can sense the difficulties being faced by the residents of such districts as Tuen Mun, Tsing Yi and Tseung Kwan O.



The everyday life of the residents of the new towns has over the years been affected by the changing policies and theories behind the Government's transport planning. The residents are like guinea pigs in the laboratory. Whenever a test fails, they are made to bear the pains of the failure.

Looking back at the past 20 to 30 years, we can see the changes in mass transit planning and the errors made by the Government. At present, over 600 000 residents of Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung are enjoying MTR service. In contrast, the 800 000 residents of northern and eastern New Territories have to use the KCR as connection to the MTR, while over 700 000 residents of north-western New Territories have to rely on bus service as a means of external transport. Such fragmented and incomplete mass transit planning must indeed be improved.

The biggest problems faced by the residents of the new towns over the years are problems with the lack of co-ordination between population movements and provision of services. In many cases, it is only after moving to a new town that people find the usual bus and light bus services are lacking in the area. Occasional bus service cannot satisfy the needs of the residents. Their work, school and social activities are seriously affected. The worsening family and youth problems in the new towns are not unrelated to the poor transport service.

Poor transport service is also directly related to the unsatisfactory state of road systems. In many cases, because of planning errors or problems in financial arrangements, after residents have moved into a housing estate in a new town, they find that the construction of many of the roads in the vicinity has not even started. The Government takes in a considerable sum of revenue from the completion of new housing units. But it often balks at allocating the funds for the early completion of major road projects. Such an attitude -- collecting money but ignoring the needs of the public -- should be strongly condemned.

Mr Deputy President, many residents of new towns are still suffering from the adverse consequences of planning errors made by the Government. I believe that the Secretary for Transport has in fact already heard an earful of the problems that I have described. However, as the saying goes, "it is easier to know than to act." If the transport and traffic situations of the new towns are really to be improved, the Government must not only show sincerity but also allocate resources. Otherwise, all promises will just be nice-sounding lies.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

REV FUNG CHI-WOOD (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, the rapid rise in the population of the new towns in recent years has led to an increasing demand for transport services. I will be speaking on the traffic conditions in Shatin, Tai Po, Fanling and Sheung Shui.

At present, Tai Po and North District are relying too much on the heavy rail as their means of external transport. Passenger trips per day are 133 000 for the heavy rail and 86 000 for bus in Tai Po, with passengers taking the train accounting for 61% of the total volume of passenger traffic in the district. In North District, the figures are 151 000 for the heavy rail and 41 000 for bus while 1 000 passengers choose to take the public light bus; that is to say, railway passengers account for 78% of the total volume of passenger traffic. In contrast only 43% of the commuters in Shatin prefer the heavy rail, a percentage much lower than that of Tai Po and North District. Though the train is a faster and more cost-effective mode of transport, it has already been filled to capacity by residents of Tai Po and North District during rush hours. Given that large housing estates will continue to be built in these two districts, the demand for transport services is bound to increase. The Government should therefore consider introducing more bus routes to reach Kowloon and Hong Kong via the Tate's Cairn Tunnel and the Eastern Harbour Crossing. This will save time in travelling and avoid overcrowding; it will also relieve the strain on the rail's passenger-carrying capacity. More to it, it will provide the residents of the districts with a variety of alternatives.

Moreover, bus routes serving housing estates are worthy of vigorous promotion. Their operation during rush hours will put to full use the existing resources. Regrettably, there is only one estate bus route in the whole area of northern New Territories. Public light bus should also be awarded greater importance as a means of transport. This is particularly so having regard to their flexibility in operation where, for example, services will be provided late at night when passengers are few.

Given the sharp rise in commuters on the rail, the projected increase in population of the new towns, the rising volume of visitors leaving for the Mainland and the increasing demand for cargo traffic on the rail, the Government should, as soon as possible, make plans and preparations for the construction of a third railway.

Transport services are the lifeline of the community. We should not allow traffic congestion like that at the Lion Rock Tunnel to occur in other places because of inadequacy in planning.

Development of industrial estates in the new towns is not satisfactory. The Government should actively promote greater job opportunities in the new towns, so that travelling time and expenses can be saved and the demand for transport services will be less. But intra-district transport services should not be neglected though the demand may be less vis-a-vis inter-district services. In North District and Tai Po, passengers using intra-district services amount to 169 000 per day. In Shatin, the number is 186 000. The service is by far mainly provided by the bus company; a small portion of it is provided by the public light bus. The main problem of intra-district transport is the unsatisfactory linking service between large housing estates or population centres and bus terminals; examples of which are low frequency in bus service, insufficient routes and excessive fare. Another problem is the insufficient intra-district bus service, which makes it difficult for residents to take a direct or express bus from one point to another in the district. Very often residents have to change buses; this wastes time and causes delay. The Government should therefore conduct regular reviews on intra-district bus routes and consider introducing more public light bus routes which operate more flexibly than the public bus.

Mr Deputy President, about 550 000 people in North District, Tai Po and Shatin have to travel a long way from their districts to other places to work or attend school. Most of them have to take the train and then the bus or another means of transport to reach their destinations. Their travel expenses are therefore higher than that of residents in other districts. Yesterday, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC), despite having huge profits, announced that fares would be raised by nearly 10%. Travelling expenses of the residents in the new towns will rise again. Given the so-called "inter-modal co-ordination policy", the Government is not likely to approve operation of any outbound bus route that will take passengers away from the rail. As a result residents will have no alternative but to take the train if they want to travel out of their districts. The Government, however, shows no concern for these residents and fails to strive for them a minimum level of fare. Yesterday the Executive Council approved KCRC's request for the nearly 10% rise in fare, though the Corporation's financial condition will still be sound without such a fare hike.

Mr Deputy President, with these remarks, I hope that the Government and KCRC will

care more about the people living in the new towns.

MR MICHAEL HO (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I will devote my speech today to commenting on the Light Rail Transit (LRT) services in western New Territories.

I would like to thank Mr NG Ming-yum, who is sick and confined to bed, for giving me many ideas and allowing me to use the materials from his Ward Office. His running mate, Mr WONG Wai-yin, will also speak on the problem of external transport in western New Territories.

Years back, when the Government began developing new towns, the goal was to achieve balanced development and self-sufficiency. Without doubt, an important criterion of self-sufficiency is the presence of a transport system that is adequate, convenient and efficient. However, the present transport services in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long are not adequate to satisfy the demands of the residents. With regard to the complaints made to Mr NG Ming-yum by residents of the district, the LRT was the subject of most complaints insofar as transport services are concerned. While the LRT is the major mode of public transport in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, the designation of a Transit Service Area (TSA) has all along been criticized by the residents. Although the LRT provides inadequate service, the residents are given no alternative within the TSA. Let us look at the LRT's schedules and routes. During rush hours, it is simply impossible for people to board a train at some stations. This problem is most serious at stations in Tin King, Leung King and Tai Hing areas. Passengers often have to wait for more than one train before they can board a train. Probably because of the insufficient number of carriages, the problem of infrequent service is worsened by the opening of new routes. Insufficient train frequencies directly worsen the problem of inadequate facilities. The platforms, small as they are, are crowded with passengers during rush hours. Due to insufficient train frequencies, passengers have to wait longer for trains and the platforms become even more crowded as the number of waiting passengers increases. Elderly and infirm passengers are in danger of falling over the tracks. Over-crowding also leads to pick-pocketing, indecent assault and poor ventilation. As a result, the services provided by the LRT now are neither comfortable nor convenient.

In addition, some old people living in the district are illiterate. They do not know how to use the LRT's complicated open fare system. With the LRT's monopoly of public transport services within the TSA, these elderly people have no choice but

to take the more expensive taxi.

Concerning safety, an evaluation report on the safety of the LRT disclosed that it would be hazardous if the frequency of LRT trains is less than two minutes. At present, during rush hours, the frequency of LRT trains is already close to one train in every two minutes at some pivotal locations, such as along Yuen Long Main Road and at Siu Hong area. The population of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long continues to increase rapidly. In the next few years, hundreds and thousands of people will move to western New Territories. Inevitably, the frequency of LRT trains will have to increase and various kinds of potential safety problems will surface.

There are many interchanges along the LRT routes and accidents tend to happen more frequently there. In the face of the above problems, the LRT management can no longer put forward the widening of platforms and reducing the number of interchanges as solutions. It is therefore a matter of burning urgency to open up the TSA and allow the operation of other modes of transport, such as bus and light bus so as to ease the transport problems of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. The majority of the people living in the district are in favour of abolishing the TSA, so that they will no longer be deprived of the opportunities to choose other modes of public transport. After the abolition of the TSA, under fair competition, the quality of transport service provided in the area will be enhanced.

During the last adjournment debate, the LRT management indicated that they were considering the suggestion of abolishing the TSA. Once again I would like to urge the Government to face up to the transport problems in western New Territories and accept the suggestion of abolishing the TSA.

Mr Deputy President, these are my remarks.

MISS EMILY LAU (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, during my election campaign, I already noticed that transport service was one of the problems causing the greatest concern to the residents of eastern New Territories. So, recently, I held two consultative meetings with the residents in the district (one was at Lek Yuen Estate in Shatin and the other at Tsui Lam Estate in Tseung Kwan O) and representatives of Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB). Many residents turned up and the response was encouraging. I would like to take this opportunity to convey their views to the Secretary for Transport. Accordingly, I will focus my comments on the problems of KMB. But I would

like to mention one other point, which is that the residents of Tseung Kwan O feel betrayed because Mass Transit Railway (MTR) service will not be extended to that district. What at first attracted them to live there are words to the effect that there would be MTR service. Now, even if the residents are willing to wait for a few more decades, they will probably be waiting in vain. They are therefore very disappointed. Also, they feel that the Government should be held responsible. Apart from the fact that there will be no MTR service, many residents of Tseung Kwan O think that bus service is inadequate. At the consultative meetings, they fully reflected the situation to the managers of KMB. They feel that there are many problems, which, as mentioned by many Members, include insufficient bus routes, inability of many residents to board the bus, particularly at the intermediary stops during rush hours, the criteria for setting bus fare and so forth. I hope that the Secretary for Transport will pay attention to them.

Mr Deputy President, another matter of common concern to many residents is air-conditioned bus service. This afternoon, the Secretary for Transport has responded to a question raised in this Council. Now I would like to follow up on several points in his reply. The Secretary for Transport has made the point that the air-conditioned bus serves housing estates which are inhabited by middle and high income groups. I would like to invite the Secretary for Transport to go to eastern New Territories to have a visit. In some housing estates, many residents are very averse to the air-conditioned bus, not because it is not comfortable but because, in their feeling, it is too expensive. Sometimes, after a long wait, they are glad to see a bus coming. But then it is an air-conditioned bus. They do not have the money, so they cannot take it. They keep on waiting. Another bus comes, again it is an air-conditioned bus. The information provided by the Secretary for Transport here is that 12% of KMB's buses are air-conditioned, compared with 6% for the buses of China Motor Bus (CMB), and that air-conditioned buses account for 30% of the buses in routes served with such buses. I wish to tell the Secretary for Transport that many residents do not share such a perception. I have talked to the top management of KMB. What they would like the KMB to do most is to arrange the air-conditional bus and the ordinary bus to run alternatively, thus taking care of the needs of the middle and lower income groups.

The Secretary for Transport also mentioned the fare charged by the air-conditioned bus. He said that it was 35% lower than the maximum that could be charged. However, it is our observation that air-conditioned buses charge a fare that is at least 50% higher than that charged by ordinary buses. Many residents feel that it

is very expensive. They think that the important thing is to let them have enough choices. I hope that the Secretary for Transport will closely monitor the situation.

Finally, Mr Deputy President, I wish to explain to the Secretary for Transport that the residents feel that KMB is providing service that is good in some respects but inadequate in others, particularly with regard to the service for housing estates. They hope that transport services will be opened to competition so that other transport service providers can participate. They fear that, if they must depend on KMB to make improvements and increase routes at a snail's pace, then they may have to wait for many years and still be unable to find a bus that they can take.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

MR GILBERT LEUNG (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, just as the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands said in his written reply to me last week, the Government aims at, in principle, "in situ employment" in the provision of employment for the working population in the new towns, but this objective has proved difficult to achieve in practice. In his estimates, half of the residents of the new towns have to go somewhere else to work. As we all know, the Government's estimates usually tend to be conservative. So it is quite possible that in fact more than half of the residents have to go to work somewhere outside their own areas. The Government has resettled these former residents of the urban areas to remote parts of the New Territories. Yet it fails to arrange local jobs or school places for them. Thus the Government has the responsibility to make sure that there are adequate transport facilities to take these people to their work places or schools. In this way, the residents will be able to settle down happily in the new town.

The present population of Tseung Kwan O is close to 120 000. Many of them have to go to work or study in another area. Some time ago, the Secretary for Education and Manpower admitted in this Council that there were not enough secondary school places in Tseung Kwan O, so 4 500 secondary school students had to go to school somewhere else. As for those who have to go to work in another area, the number is even greater. According to the Government's land sale policy, some commercial and residential buildings will be completed within the next few years in Tseung Kwan O. This will provide some local job opportunities. However, it was also the estimate of the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands last week that there will still be at least 40 000 residents of Tseung Kwan O who have to go to work in another area

by 1996 and the number is expected to rise to 80 000 by 2001.

The residents of Tseung Kwan O have repeatedly complained about the night-time closure of the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel, which causes much inconvenience. They request that the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel be open round the clock like all the other vehicular tunnels in Hong Kong. Colleagues in this Council, as well as the Sai Kung District Board, have more than once urged the Government to take the feelings of the public into consideration and make things easier for them. Yet the Government has failed to respond so far, with the result that a major transport facility built with public money is left unused one-third of the time. The Government is now planning to let a private company operate the tunnel. I think that the Government should stipulate as a condition in the contract that the tunnel must be open 24 hours a day. This will bring some substantive improvement to the life of the residents of Tseung Kwan O.

Bus is the mode of public transport on which the residents of Tseung Kwan O depend most. This is particularly so because not even a remote date has been set for the extension of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) to Tseung Kwan O. Bus services must be expanded with population growth. This is the only way to make sure that residents can arrive at work places or schools punctually. The Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands disclosed last week that Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) had plans to increase by 55% the number of buses serving Tseung Kwan O over the next five years. However, I must remind the Government that, according to an estimate published some time ago by the Planning Department, the population of Tseung Kwan O will increase by 24 000 each year from now until 1998, that is it say, by 110 000 in five years. In other words, the population of Tseung Kwan O will be doubled in five years. In contrast, the number of buses will increase by 50% only.

Also, I hope that the Government will take actual steps to construct the Tseung Kwan O extension. In the New Territories, the new towns of Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung are accessible by MTR; Shatin, Tai Po and North District are accessible by the KCR; and there is the Light Rail Transit in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. But Tseung Kwan O has nothing.

Years back, when the Government began developing the new town of Tseung Kwan O, it had been much emphasized that an MTR extension was to be built at Tseung Kwan O. But then, after all the talks, nothing came. Now, 120 000 people have already moved to Tseung Kwan O. Yet the Tseung Kwan O extension has become a "preliminary



plan" pending decision. Discussion in the Executive Council about the feasibility of the Tseung Kwan O extension has not yet begun. We have no idea when construction work will begin. Those who have already moved to Tseung Kwan O on the Government's words feel that they were cheated. They cannot understand why the Government is still studying and considering something which has already been widely publicized several years ago. Here, I must remind the Government that the population of Tseung Kwan O will exceed 200 000 in five years. Bus services, no matter how expanded it may be, will hardly be able to satisfy the needs of a mature new town. A railway cannot be built in six months or a year. The Government should take early action to plan for and build the MTR extension to Tseung Kwan O. It should stop conducting study after study and stop thinking things over and over in a manner that prevents the Tseung Kwan O extension from becoming a reality.

Mr Deputy President, on behalf of the residents of Tseung Kwan O, I hereby sincerely ask the Government to extend MTR service to Tseung Kwan O as soon as possible.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The 45 minutes will expire at 10.27 pm.

MR TIK CHI-YUEN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, I would like to express here some views on transport services on behalf of the residents in Tai Po and North District.

As far as external transport is concerned, Tai Po and North District are a new town and most of the residents have moved in from elsewhere. As local job opportunities are insufficient, 70% of the residents have to work outside the area. However, for both the internal and external transport, Tai Po and North District are reliant mainly on train service. But the residents find that reliance on train service has some disadvantages. Firstly, they are left with no alternative service, and a train accident could paralyse external transport. This has happened before. Secondly, train fare is expensive. The Legislative Council is informed today that the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) is to raise the train fare. An inhabitant of Sheung Shui, for instance, will have to pay \$7 for a one-way ticket to Kowloon. Taking into account the cost of the return ticket and that of connecting transport, he will have to spend more than \$20 a day as travel expense. This amounts to almost \$500 to \$600 a month. It will be a heavy burden to the lower income groups.

Thirdly, train service during the rush hours has already reached saturation point. Therefore, I suggest that, in addition to train service, the Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) and the Government introduce new bus routes, plying between the area and Kowloon Central, East and West, and an express bus service to and from Hong Kong Island.

Regarding internal transport, Tai Po and North District cover a large area but with a small population. Public housing estates and community facilities in the area are situated in different locations. This is why residents find it necessary to have some form of transport service to link up the housing estates and the community facilities. But, the current transport services within Tai Po and North District leave much to be desired. Residents often have to change from one carrier to another in order to reach their destination. In the remote areas, the quality of transport service is very backward and there is much room for improvement. I suggest that the Government make a study of introducing an internal circular bus route for Tai Po and North District, which will connect all the community facilities and densely populated places, and improve the quality and frequency of bus service for the remote areas.

These are my remarks. Thank you.

MR WONG WAI-YIN (in Cantonese): Mr Deputy President, as Mr Michael HO has talked about New Territories West's internal transport services just now, I will focus on the external side of the transport services. First of all, I will look at the bus service. Under the restrictions of the 1986 transport co-ordination strategy, new bus routes in New Territories West may not extend beyond Sham Shui Po. Residents of New Territories West who want to travel to an urban area have to change to the Mass Transit Railway (MTR). But the MTR is now unable to cope with the growth in passenger volume. To get around this problem, the transport co-ordination strategy should be scrapped, and more express bus routes should be allowed to go all the way into the urban areas to make up for service shortfalls. Where air-conditioned buses are concerned, KMB is keenly interested in stepping up the expansion of air-conditioned bus service. The provision of a more comfortable mode of public transport as an alternative, generally speaking, is a step forward. Regrettably, this is not the case. The residents have complained time and again that there are more air-conditioned buses than regular buses operating on the same route, with the result that members of the public are forced to take the more expensive bus. Under the circumstances, the Government should conduct a comprehensive review of the policy regarding air-conditioned bus service. Non-franchised buses serving the housing estate residents

can also be a supplement to the inadequate franchised buses. The Government may well consider allowing more residents' groups of housing estates to apply for running these non-franchised bus services.

Now let us turn to ferry service. As Tuen Mun Road is now often congested, the demand for the ferry service between Tuen Mun and Central is becoming greater and greater. This service is particularly under strain during the rush hours. Although the ferry company has already made some improvements, the efforts seem to have failed to meet the demand. Therefore, Meeting Point would like to suggest an increase in frequencies coupled with an addition of twin-hull boats or larger boats to the service, to alleviate the pressure during the rush hours. We also suggest that new routes, such as a service to Wan Chai, should be introduced.

The road network connecting New Territories West and the urban areas is obviously inadequate. Heretofore, it solely relied on Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road. However, with a growing population and a rapid expansion of cargo trans-shipment business, traffic along these two major thoroughfares has kept on increasing and now the saturation point has been reached. During the rush hours, congestion is not uncommon on the roads. The residents of New Territories West have to spend more and more time on the road. Here is my own experience. I live in Yuen Long. To attend a Legislative Council meeting scheduled at 8.30 a.m., I have to get up at six and then rush to line up for the bus. Therefore, construction of a new trunk-line is a matter of burning urgency. Meeting Point suggests that actions be taken expeditiously to build the country park section of Route 3 and to make an in-depth study to decide on a mass transit system for New Territories West so as to provide sufficient capacity to meet traffic demand in the area.

Transport has become the most serious problem plaguing the new towns. In many a family, the husband has to get up to go to work before it is light and does not return until eight or nine in the evening, making it difficult to establish a proper communication with his wife who often complains that he does not do house chores nor do his part in the upbringing of the children. This by and by leads to family frictions and gives rise to more social problems. Therefore, transport services in the new towns and the subsequent problems of family discord must be addressed immediately.

Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

10.30 pm

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Mr Deputy President, I am most grateful to Members for their constructive comments and their succinct and precise criticisms on the development of transport services in the new towns. I have taken full note of the concerns expressed. These will be considered very carefully in the context of our forward planning and resource allocation.

### Planning objectives

It remains our major planning objective to provide for the balanced development of new towns, with the provision of adequate infrastructure, including efficient road networks and good public transport services. Through the use of outline zoning plans and package development, we aim to ensure that the pace of new town development is matched by a corresponding provision of transport infrastructure and services.

Public transport services will continue to be expanded and improved in response to changes in population distribution and land use, and to meet rising public expectations. A public transport planning mechanism is well established. Each year, we review the need for improved services with major transport operators and present these proposals to the district boards for discussion before these are introduced.

While Hong Kong's internal transport needs have been identified in previous studies and generally implemented according to our original plan, one factor which has added to the congestion of the new towns' external road networks has been the unforeseen growth in cross-border traffic. The extent and speed of the build up in cross-border traffic could not have been anticipated. For example, in 1986, an average of 6 200 goods vehicles crossed the border each day. By 1991, the number had risen to 15 900, an increase of 156%. We shall obviously have to address this factor in our future planning. Studies are about to finish by the middle of this year on updating our traffic forecasts under the Second Comprehensive Transport Study. We shall then have a better base to make future projections.

I will now elaborate on what has been achieved and what is planned in each of the new towns and to address Members' concern.

### North and eastern New Territories

Sheung Shui, Fanling, Tai Po and Shatin are linked by the Tolo Highway and the Kowloon-Canton Railway. These provide efficient and fast connections between the new towns themselves and with the urban area. The opening of the Kwun Tong Bypass and the Tate's Cairn Tunnel and Expressway last year provided another link to the eastern New Territories and much needed relief for Lion Rock Tunnel.

KCR provides a high speed, high capacity commuter service between Kowloon and the new towns in eastern New Territories. Its daily patronage has grown from 313 000 in 1986 to 526 000 at present, an increase of 68%. Capacity is being further increased. Delivery of 96 carriages has just been completed, bringing the total fleet to 351 carriages. A refurbishment programme is now in hand to increase the carrying capacity of the older rolling stock by 18%. Improvements are being made to signalling equipment to improve train frequencies. Station facilities are being upgraded. Some 50 bus and green minibus routes provide a comprehensive network of feeder services to KCR stations.

Apart from the KCR, KMB is the major operator providing another basic link to the urban area. The present external link comprises about 40 routes.

By way of digression, I would like to respond to Miss Emily LAU and Mr Zachary WONG's points on air-conditioned buses. I would like to assure Members that the whole issue of air-conditioning service is under review and results would be put to the Transport Advisory Committee and the OMELCO Transport Panel very soon.

The bus network is supplemented by about 20 residential coach routes in the eastern part of the New Territories. Over the next five years, another 125 KMB buses will be added to the fleet serving the eastern New Territories. Five new routes will run from Ma On Shan to Kowloon.

There are 30 green minibus routes serving eastern New Territories. Twenty-six of these operate within the new towns. About 12 red minibus routes also operate there, with 10 providing external services.

#### Northwest New Territories

This has been an issue of concern to many Members. Road links within the northwest New Territories will be improved with the completion of the final section

of the New Territories Circular Road, from Fan Kam Road to Au Tau this October. It will connect with the Tuen Mun/Yuen Long Eastern Corridor in July 1993 and the Yuen Long Southern Bypass in July 1994. On completion, this new road network will provide a fast and efficient expressway linking Tolo Highway in the east and Tuen Mun Highway in the west. Work will also start in August on the Tin Shui Wai West Access Road.

Despite these improvements, I fully accept that traffic pressure on the Tuen Mun Highway is increasing daily and there is a need to advance the building of the Route 3 Country Park Sector, from Au Tau to Tsing Yi including Ting Kau Bridge. A preliminary design is in hand, followed by a financial consultancy in June to assess the suitability of the project for privatization. Our aim is to complete the project by 1998.

Equally, as expressed by Members, the need for rail links is fully recognized. We are already undertaking a territory-wide Railway Development Study and its findings should be available by the end of this year. One of the many projects to be evaluated will be a rail link from northwest New Territories to the urban centre. I will pass on Mr Andrew WONG's very helpful suggestion to the consultants for study.

Within the northwest New Territories, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) provides the backbone of the system. It now carries an average of 260 000 passengers a day. Its fleet of 70 light rail vehicles provides a service frequency of between five and eight minutes during peak hours, and seven and 14 minutes off peak. Communities located away from the LRT line are served by feeder bus services.

LRT capacity is being expanded to meet demand. Thirty new vehicles will be delivered starting October this year. These will add over 40% to the present capacity.

Three Tuen Mun LRT regional links have been opened since February. The Tin Shui Wai link will be operating by early 1993 to match the population intake of Tin Shui Wai. In the longer term, a link to Long Ping is being planned to relieve congestion at Yuen Long Main Road.

As expressed in the last debate on LRT, there have been calls to open up the Transit Service Area (TSA) to other transport operators to offer more choices. This point

is fully taken. The KCRC is now studying the review of the arrangement, and we hope to give findings to this Council in the very near future.

Some 420 buses now provide the main external link. There are plans to increase this to 560 buses by 1996. Other improvements include increased bus capacity on existing trunk routes to Kowloon, and new routes to Tin Shui Wai. Two new KMB routes from Tin Shui Wai start operation today.

In parallel, traffic management measures are being taken. More bus services from Yuen Long are being routed eastwards via the New Territories Circular Road to avoid congestion at the Tuen Mun Highway and Castle Peak Road. Additional bus priority measures are being introduced to maintain acceptable bus journey times along the Tuen Mun-Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung corridor. There are also plans to introduce more express bus services direct to the urban centres during peak hours, a point made by many Members.

With more housing development, residential coach services carrying people direct from their homes to the urban areas will continue to be encouraged. Three such routes will be introduced later this year to tie in with the Tin Shui Wai development.

As in other new towns, public light buses also play a supplementary role. There are four public light bus routes providing services from Yuen Long to Tsuen Wan, Sham Shui Po, Jordan and Tsim Sha Tsui East. A total of 23 green minibus routes serve Yuen Long and Tuen Mun.

The important role of ferries is not neglected. A second air-conditioned double-deck vessel will be added to the Tuen Mun-Central ferry service before September. The Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company is also considering diverting some morning sailings of the same service to Wan Chai.

Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing

Major road improvements being planned include the duplication of the Tsing Yi South Bridge. Other important projects recently completed include the flyovers in Kwai Chung Road and Texaco Road. Improvements to Container Port Road and South Kwai Chung Road are underway. Work on further improvements to Texaco Road and Hing Fong Road will start shortly.

The completion of the southern section of Route 3 and the Airport Railway in 1997 will offer greatly improved links to west Kowloon and Hong Kong Island.

Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing are served by a wide range of public transport modes. There are 14 feeder bus routes to MTR stations, 35 trunk routes, and 18 residential coach services. A high-speed hoverferry service links Tsuen Wan with Central, via Tsing Yi. Conventional ferries are also deployed during peak hours. There are also 59 public light bus routes serving Kwai Tsing.

Over the next five years, KMB plans to increase the number of buses from 630 to 720. Proposed service improvements include enhanced frequencies, a wider use of higher-capacity three-axle double-deck buses, and the introduction of four new routes. The ferry service to Central will also be improved. Three additional green minibus routes are being planned in Kwai Tsing later this year and next.

#### Tseung Kwan O

Tseung Kwan O is served by Po Lam Road and the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel. Present staff constraints do not allow us to extend opening hours. But when its operation is contracted out next year, it should be operating 24 hours.

It is not correct to say that the Government is committed to a MTR extension to Tseung Kwan O. The project has not been shelved and is still under planning. It is to be considered as part of the Rail Development Study which I mentioned earlier.

At present, 12 KMB routes provide the main external link, supported by six green minibus routes. Over the next five years, there are plans to increase the number of KMB buses from 110 to 175. Four new trunk routes will be added. Two new green minibus routes running between Hang Hau and North Point/Causeway Bay will be introduced later this year.

#### Conclusion

We remain committed to forward planning as the means of anticipating and meeting the demands of our new towns. This does require close co-ordination between the town planners and the transport engineers, a point stressed by Mrs Miriam LAU. I would like to assure this Council that resource allocation is closely monitored and co-ordinated at the highest level of government to ensure that a balanced decision



is taken on competing priorities and that the population is well served by the necessary infrastructure and services, including transport.

Thank you.

Question on the adjournment proposed, put and agreed to.

Next sitting

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 pm on Wednesday 29 April 1992.

Adjourned accordingly at nineteen minutes to Eleven o'clock.

Note: The short titles of the Bills/motions listed in the Hansard, with the exception of the Human Organ Transplant Bill, have been translated into Chinese for information and guidance only; they do not have authoritative effect in Chinese.