

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 568/99-00
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP/1

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 20 September 1999 at 8:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Wing-chan
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon SZETO Wah
- Members attending** : Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
- Members absent** : Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Michael HO Mun-ka
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Public Officers : Item II
attending

Mr Philip K F CHOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mr Ivan LEE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Mr Matthew K C CHEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Labour

Dr F K W MAK
Deputy Executive Director (Training & Development)
Vocational Training Council

Mr Lawrence WONG
Centre Manager
Hotel Industry Training Centre
Vocational Training Council

Item III

Mr Philip K F CHOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower

Miss Erica NG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Mr Matthew K C CHEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Labour

Mr CHOW Tung-shan
Assistant Commissioner for Labour
(Employment Services)

Item IV

Mr Philip K F CHOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower

Miss Erica NG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Mr Matthew K C CHEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Labour

Mr TSANG Kin-woo, JP
Assistant Commissioner for Labour
(Labour Relations)

Mrs Jenny CHAN
Chief Labour Officer

Clerk in attendance : Mrs Sharon TONG
Chief Assistant Secretary (2)1

Staff in attendance : Mr Raymond LAM
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 5

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 24 June 1999 and matters arising
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 2819/98-99 and CB(2) 2828/98-99(01))

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 1999 were confirmed.

2. Members noted the list of follow-up actions required of the Administration.

II. Chinese Cuisine Training Institute
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 2828/98-99(02))

3. Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (DSEM) said that the establishment of Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (CCTI) was aimed at developing Hong Kong into a regional centre of excellence in Chinese cuisine training. Consultation on the proposal had been made with the relevant industries, which were generally in support of CCTI.

4. Members noted that the CCTI project would be co-ordinated by the Education and Manpower Bureau. CCTI would be established and operated by Vocational Training Council (VTC). It would be monitored by the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training Board (HCTTB) of VTC.

Action

Scope of training and types of courses to be offered by CCTI

5. Mr CHAN Wing-chan expressed support for the establishment of CCTI. He said that there had been no formal and systematic training in the preparation of Chinese cuisine in the past. The introduction of trade tests would in the longer term improve the quality of Chinese cuisine.

6. As regards the training courses of CCTI, Mr CHAN Wing-chan asked whether part-time training courses and practical attachment training would be provided to the trainees. Deputy Executive Director (Training & Development) of Vocational Training Council (DED/VTC) responded that CCTI would provide full-time and part-time training courses ranging from elementary, intermediate, advanced to master chef levels. Centre Manager, Hotel Industry Training Centre of VTC (CM/VTC) added that under VTC's preliminary plan, part-time courses would mostly be offered in the afternoons between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

7. On the scope of training to be provided by CCTI, Mr CHAN Wing-chan asked whether training in the preparation of "Dim Sum" and barbecued meats would be provided. CM/VTC responded that besides training in the preparation of Chinese cuisine, training in kitchen management and the preparation of "Dim Sum" would also be provided. Mr CHAN Wing-chan requested the Administration to provide the list of companies/organizations which had indicated interest in participating in the training programme. In this connection, Mr HO Sai-chu cautioned that it might not be appropriate to disclose the full list of participating companies.

Adm

8. Mr SZETO Wah questioned whether CCTI should only provide training in Chinese cuisine, as cuisine of other places, such as those of Thailand, Indonesia and Japan, were also very popular in Hong Kong. In response, DSEM said that the objective of CCTI was to develop Hong Kong into a regional centre of excellence in Chinese cuisine training, not training in the cuisine of other places. Mr SZETO Wah opined that CCTI courses should be carefully designed to match the demand of the relevant industries.

9. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that while she had no objection to the establishment of CCTI, she was concerned that the demand for the training courses would be weak. She enquired about the existing number of local chefs specializing in Chinese cuisine, and the projected demand for such in the next ten years.

10. In response, DSEM said that besides training in the practical skills of preparation of Chinese cuisine, training in areas such as food hygiene and safety, food cost and quality control would also be provided. HCTTB, which comprised prominent people from the local hotel, catering and tourism industries, considered that there was demand for the proposed training courses. CM/VTC added that according to a survey conducted by VTC in 1998, there were 27 713 local chefs in Chinese cuisine, with a turnover of about 4 500 chefs per year. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern that the provision of a few hundred training places

Action

per year might not be adequate in meeting the needs of more than 20 000 local chefs.

Recurrent expenditures of CCTI

11. Mr James TIEN and Mr HO Sai-chu expressed support for the proposal. Mr TIEN asked about the estimated recurrent expenditures of CCTI, and how they were to be met. In response, Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (PAS(EM)) said that the recurrent expenditures of CCTI would be in the region of \$4 million in 1999/2000, and \$12 million in 2000/2001. Income would be derived from the sale of products such as Chinese cuisine CD-ROMs, and the fees for trade tests and training courses.

12. Mr SZETO Wah enquired about the estimated numbers of persons who would take CCTI courses and trade tests. He also asked whether CCTI would accept overseas students, and the fees to be charged to such students. DED/VTC responded that there would be 1 200 trade testing places in a year. CM/VTC added that around 385 training places would be provided in a year. Mr SZETO Wah said that an accurate estimate of the respective numbers of persons taking training courses and trade tests would facilitate proper allocation of resources between the two areas. He anticipated that most people in the industry would only take the trade tests but not the training courses.

Credit unit system for CCTI programmes

13. Mr SZETO Wah suggested that a credit unit system should be adopted for CCTI courses, as this would increase the flexibility of the scheme. DED/VTC agreed to consider the suggestion.

Adm

Salary increases for graduates of CCTI

14. Responding to Mr James TIEN's question of whether discussions had been held with the industry on the possibility of awarding salary increases to persons who had passed the trade tests, DED/VTC said that discussion had not been held with the catering industry on the issue. However, increasing recognition of graduates in the industry was a major objective of the establishment of trade tests.

15. Mr SZETO Wah commented that CCTI courses would be more popular if students completing the courses or tests were awarded salary increases. In response, CM/VTC said that it was more appropriate for salaries to be determined by the market. Employees with better skills would usually receive a higher salary.

Fusion cuisine

16. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that Hong Kong was developing in the direction of

Action

fusion cuisine. He enquired whether research on such cuisine would be conducted. In response, CM/VTC said that VTC had and would continue to conduct research on fusion cuisine. In comparison with other places, Hong Kong was weak in the area of food science research.

Choice of venue for CCTI

Adm

17. In response to Mr SIN Chung-kai, DSEM explained that the CCTI project would involve the construction of an additional floor on the VTC Building in Pokfulam. Mr SIN requested the Administration to examine whether it would be more economical for CCTI to be constructed in an existing industrial building.

III. Follow-up on youth employment and employment of new arrivals from the Mainland

Youth employment

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 2828/98-99(06))

18. At the invitation of the Chairman, DSEM briefed members on the progress of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (the Programme). He highlighted the following points -

- (a) over 50 training bodies, non-government organizations (NGOs), departments of continuing education of local universities, labour associations and government departments would provide some 25 000 training places and counselling service;
- (b) about 420 organizations had offered to provide some 10 000 workplace attachment training places;
- (c) funding support of \$40 million and \$9.8 million had been secured from the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Government respectively; and
- (d) upon completion of the Programme in March 2000, the Administration would conduct a review to see how best to equip school leavers in the 15 to 19 age group with pre-employment training before they enter the labour market.

19. Responding to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's comment that the Programme would result in a drop in the unemployment rate, DSEM stressed that the reduction of unemployment rate was not an objective of the Programme.

20. In response to Mr SIN Chung-kai, C for L said that the following courses were offered under the four modules stated in Annex A of the Administration's

Action

paper -

	<u>Module</u>	<u>Type of training courses</u>	<u>Number of training places provided</u>
(a)	Module A	Leadership, self-discipline and team building	4 830
(b)	Module B	Job search skills and interpersonal skills	7 355
(c)	Module C	Computer application	6 190
(d)	Module D	Job specific skills	6 403

Insurance for the Programme

21. In response to Dr LAW Chi-kwong, PAS(EM) said that the group insurance to indemnify trainees of the Programme against public liability and personal accidents would commence on 20 September 1999, the day when courses commenced.

Workplace attachment training

22. Dr LAW Chi-kwong said that workplace attachment training would provide an opportunity for trainees to acquire working experience and enhance their employability. He considered it desirable that the distribution of attachment offers should match with the type of jobs that the youth would enter. He asked whether the Administration had any information in this regard. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan commented that there tended to be more NGOs and government departments providing attachment training places. In response, DSEM said that a full list of the organizations and employers which would provide workplace attachment training was set out in Annex C to the Administration's paper. The Administration would try to collect information on distribution of the type of jobs entered by the youth. He stressed that workplace attachment training would assist the trainees in finding their first job even if the distribution as mentioned by Dr LAW did not match. Commissioner for Labour (C for L) said that 40% to 45% of the participating organizations were business firms, 15% to 18% were government departments, and 30% to 40% were NGOs or tertiary education institutes. He added that in respect of trainees, about 18 000 applications had been received. Among the 9 000 applications processed, 51% were male while 49% were female. Most of them were interested in training courses in computer skills and job specific skills. LD hoped to provide more training in interpersonal skills and industrial safety in the future. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan hoped that more business firms would participate in workplace attachment training, as their reference letters would be given greater weight by the business sector. Mr HO Sai-chu added that priority should be given to the

Adm

Action

allocation of trainees to business firms over government departments. He expressed support for the Programme, especially at a time when the unemployment rate for the youth was at a high level.

Long-term plans on pre-employment training

23. While expressing support for the Programme, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether the Administration would consider operating the Programme on a long-term basis and operating some of the courses through VTC. In response, DSEM said that a comprehensive review on the Programme would be conducted after its completion before deciding on the way forward. As stated by the Secretary for Education and Manpower at the Panel meeting on 24 June 1999, it might be appropriate to have some elements of the courses integrated into the curriculum of secondary schools. To his knowledge, C for L was drawing up preliminary plans in respect of pre-employment training for the following year.

24. While expressing support for the Programme, Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired whether the Administration had any long-term plans about youth pre-employment training. She hoped that the Programme would be useful to the trainees. DSEM said that in the longer term, the Administration might integrate some of the courses into the curriculum of secondary schools in the light of experience gained. C for L added that the Labour Department (LD) had tried its best to ensure that the Programme would be useful to the trainees. The training places offered by LD had been increased from 200 to 330. The number of talks on the Programme had been increased from six to 17. LD had also strengthened its manpower support for the Programme.

25. Mr CHAN Wing-chan said that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions supported measures that would facilitate employment. He enquired whether the Administration would provide sufficient training to organizations providing attachment training. In response, C for L said that some companies would assign trainees to work under the guidance of experienced employees, while some other companies, such as those in the retail industries, would arrange orientation sessions for trainees prior to attachment. He added that guidelines would be issued by the Administration to the training bodies.

26. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that the training courses should have commenced earlier at the beginning of the summer vacation. He added that some of the courses could be incorporated in the extra-curricular activities of Form Four students. C for L responded that the Administration was also looking into such a possibility. He added that LD was considering holding talks on interviewing skills in schools after the public examinations were completed.

Training in information technology

27. Mr SIN Chung-kai asked whether all trainees would have the opportunity of taking courses in information technology (IT). He considered that there was a high demand in the business sector for persons with IT training. C for L said that

Action

about 6 000 training places would be offered under Module C, which comprised training courses in computer applications. Some of the job specific skills courses were also related to IT. Each trainee could enrol in at least one module. He added that a few thousand applicants had enrolled through the Internet. This indicated that they possessed knowledge in the operation of computers and therefore should be able to learn quickly in computer operation. The Administration would therefore put more emphasis in this area. Mr SIN said that tens of thousands of training places in IT would be needed to meet the demand of various sectors. He added that more job specific skills training should be provided to the trainees. In response, C for L said that the Administration would review the demand after all the applications were processed. Where necessary, effort would be made to increase the number of training places in IT-related courses.

Employment of new arrivals from the Mainland
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 2828/98-99(03))

28. At the invitation of the Chairman, DSEM presented the Administration's paper which contained updated information on -

- (a) socio-economic characteristics of one-way permit holders for the period January to June 1999; and
- (b) findings on the profile, including educational attainment and preferred occupation, of new arrivals obtaining employment assistance from LD for the period January to July 1999.

DSEM said that the Home Affairs Department and Census and Statistics Department were conducting surveys on new arrivals from the Mainland. The survey results were expected to be available in December 1999. C for L added that employment services for new arrivals were provided through the Local Employment Service Centres in Shaukiwan and Mongkok. Where necessary, referral would be made to the Employees Retraining Board for follow-up.

29. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that survey findings for the third quarter of 1998 indicated that the monthly family income of about 30% of new arrivals was less than \$5,000. Their median monthly family income of \$6,900 was also considerably lower than that of the whole working population in Hong Kong. He added that there were complaints about discrimination against new arrivals in salary levels. He was disappointed that the Administration would not introduce a minimum wage system in Hong Kong or address the discrimination issue.

IV. Follow-up on regulation of work arrangements in times of the black rainstorm warning and typhoon
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 2828/98-99(04) and CB(2) 2837/98-99(07))

30. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Andrew CHENG presented the

Action

proposal in his paper. He said that with the inclusion of the exemption provisions, the statutory regulation of work arrangements in times of the black rainstorm warning and typhoon should be enforceable. He informed members of a recent case where a nurse of the Prince of Wales Hospital was seriously injured due to a lack of transportation for travelling from her home to her workplace when Typhoon Signal Number Ten was hoisted. He added that besides protecting persons not required to work in times of the black rainstorm warning or typhoon, his proposal also sought to protect persons required to work during such times. The "prior agreement on work arrangements" as stated in paragraph 8 and Annex 3 of the Administration's paper was not specific enough. The small number of dispute cases as stated in paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper reflected employees' fear for dismissal under the current economic climate.

31. In response, C for L said that while Mr CHENG's proposal was well-intentioned, it was not enforceable. He said that the issue had been thoroughly discussed at many previous meetings of the Panel. Given the diversity in nature and requirements of different jobs in various trades and industries, and the need for some essential services to maintain normal operation under inclement weather conditions, the Administration considered it not practicable to introduce legislation governing work arrangements for employees during typhoons and rainstorms. Without an appeal mechanism, the proposal would be even more difficult to implement. It was difficult to establish objective standards for determining the types of employees to be exempted from the statutory requirements. Even if an exemption list could be drawn up, it would be an extremely long list. To address the issue, the Administration had stepped up its publicity to promote the importance of making prior work arrangements in times of typhoon and rainstorm warnings. A television announcement of public interest had been broadcast for 918 times between April and 17 September 1999, and 159 times between 16 August and 17 September 1999. A "Code of Practice in Times of Typhoons and Rainstorms" (Code of Practice) had been distributed to Legislative Council Members, employers associations, trade unions, resource centres for small and medium sized enterprises, and establishments having five or more employees. Companies facing problems in drawing up work arrangements during typhoons and rainstorms could seek assistance from LD. He stressed that the Administration would continue with its promotional efforts.

32. Mr Andrew CHENG said that an appeal mechanism could be established, if necessary. An exemption list could be drawn up, even if it was a very long one. He considered that the Code of Practice should be made in the form of legislation. Clear rules should be laid down in respect of safety measures, calculation of allowances, and whether failure to report for duty would be regarded as absence without permission.

33. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that publicity would not be adequate for tackling work arrangement problems. The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) had received a number of complaints about deduction of wages for failure to report for duty, and the lack of travelling allowance for those who reported for duty. HKCTU considered that a "natural calamity holiday" should

Action

be established. Employees required to work on such a holiday should be entitled to travelling allowance and double payment. In response, C for L said that flexibility should be adopted in the drawing up of working arrangements. Some trades, such as the bar benders and fixers, already had their own established methods of wages calculation under different circumstances. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Labour Relations) said that there had been 14 enquiries about work arrangements during the recent hoisting of Typhoon Signal Number 10, but no complaint had been received by LD. The enquiries were mostly related to the Code of Practice and the work arrangements. C for L said that the statistics reflected that the problem was not serious.

34. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that there were many grey areas in the work arrangements of many industries in times of typhoons and rainstorms. To her knowledge, employees of restaurants, public hospitals and caretakers of the Hong Kong Housing Society were required to work during the recent hoisting of Typhoon Signal Number Ten without receiving any typhoon allowance. She noted that reporters of television companies were not provided with safety helmets when performing outdoor reporting duties. A caretaker had died on his journey to work. She considered that life was important and the Administration should be more proactive in addressing the issue. Instead of leaving the work arrangements during typhoons and rainstorms to be sorted out by individual employers and employees, the Administration should assist in working out the arrangements for different industries. She added that many employers were not aware of their responsibility within four hours before or after an employee's working hours. Mr CHAN Wing-chan shared the same view. He considered that legislation should be enacted to regulate work arrangements for employees during typhoons and rainstorms.

35. In response, C for L said that the Administration was equally concerned about the safety of reporters in discharging their duties in times of typhoon. In this connection, the Administration would launch a series of promotional activities on the use of personal protective equipment. It would also contact the television broadcasting companies regarding the lack of safety helmets for reporters. LD was also following up the case of the caretaker who died on his way to his workplace. It would also follow up the case of the nurse who was injured on her way to work. As it would not be practicable to introduce legislation governing work arrangements for employees during typhoons and rainstorms, the Administration would strengthen publicity and education to encourage employers and employees to make prior work arrangements. As the arrangements during Typhoon Signal Number Eight and Black Rainstorm Warning were different, the Administration would update its Code of Practice to improve the clarity in this respect. The Administration would seek to promote employers' awareness that they were liable to pay compensation to an employee who sustained an injury or fatality while travelling between his residence and workplace within four hours before or after his working hours when Typhoon Signal Number Eight or above or a Black Rainstorm Warning was issued. Press releases and reminders on the responsibilities of employers were also issued each month. He added that the Administration would consider establishing tripartite committees in printing, retail

Action

and property management trades. Mr CHAN Wing-chan considered that work arrangements during typhoon and rainstorm should be put on the agendas of tripartite committee meetings.

36. Mr James TIEN expressed support for the Administration's position. He considered that the problem was not so serious as to necessitate the introduction of legislation. He shared the view that life was important and believed that most employers would not require their employees to work when Typhoon Signal Number Eight or above or Black Rainstorm Warning was hoisted. He added that if the Prince of Wales Hospital was to provide transportation to its staff for their journey to the hospital, it would still be difficult and dangerous for the driver to go to the place where the vehicle was parked. Mr HO Sai-chu added that employees also had a responsibility to ensure his own safety at work and wear suitable personal protection equipment in times of typhoon and rainstorm.

V. New proposals and measures to improve industrial safety
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 2828/98-99(05))

37. Owing to time constraint, members agreed that discussion of the item be deferred to a meeting in the new legislative session.

VI. Any other business

38. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern that VTC had redeployed the inspectors of its Apprenticeship Unit for other duties without consulting the Panel. She considered that such redeployment of inspectors would affect the training of apprentices and requested that the issue be discussed as soon as possible by the Panel. In response, DSEM said that, to his knowledge, VTC had conducted a review on its manpower and found that there was an oversupply of inspectors in the Apprenticeship Unit. He undertook to provide a paper for discussion at a future meeting.

Adm

39. As this was the last meeting of the Panel in the session, the Chairman thanked members and the Administration for their contribution to the Panel during the session.

40. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:55 am.