

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0001

Question Serial No.

0021

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) : Subhead 700

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under Subhead 700, the revised estimated expenditure for the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme is \$6 million. Please give a breakdown of it. There is an approved commitment balance of \$3.8 million. Please give a detailed account of the estimated expenditure for the forthcoming financial year.

Asked by : The Hon. Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : The Government has provided in 1999-2000 a funding of \$9.8 million for implementing the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme.

Out of the \$9.8 million of Government funding, in terms of cash flow requirement, \$6 million is estimated to be paid out within the financial year of 1999-2000, while the remaining \$3.8 million to be paid out during 2000-01.

Out of the \$6 million of cash flow requirement in 1999-2000, \$3,760,000 is for reimbursing training bodies for providing part of the modular training places [3,079 places], \$1,610,000 is the estimated cost incurred by the Labour Department for administering the Programme including the expenses for developing and maintaining a computer system for handling applications [\$810,000], purchase of equipment, stationery and postage etc. [\$357,000], hire of contract staff at the Programme Coordination Office for data input and liaison with trainees as well as training bodies [\$263,000], printing of 92,500 course brochures and 92,500 application forms [\$132,000] and hire of venues for seminars, workshops and briefing sessions [\$48,000]. \$630,000 is for publicity and other miscellaneous expenses, including expenses for launching ceremony [\$300,000], placing of advertisements on newspapers and magazines [\$90,000], printing of 7,800 promotional posters and 145,000 leaflets [\$56,000] and production of Announcement of Public Interest (API) [\$26,000] etc.

Out of the \$3.8 million of cash flow requirement in 2000-2001, \$2,020,000 is the estimated cost for reimbursing training bodies for providing part of the modular training places [1,654 places], \$1,230,000 for reimbursing social welfare and other organisations for providing counselling support service to over 10,000 trainees, \$250,000 is the estimated cost incurred by the Labour Department for administering the Programme, including the expenses of hire of contract staff at the Programme Coordination Office for data input and liaison with trainees as well as training bodies [\$140,000], purchase of equipment and stationery as well as postage [\$70,000] and enhancing and maintaining the above mentioned computer system [\$40,000]. \$300,000 is for publicity and other miscellaneous expenses, which include provisions for other promotional events.

In addition to the \$9.8 million funding from the Government, the programme is also funded by a \$40 million contribution from the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

Out of the total \$49.8 million earmarked for the programme, it is estimated that about 85% will be used for reimbursing training bodies for providing modular training and for paying trainees as nominal allowance during their workplace attachment. The rest is for reimbursing social welfare and other organisations for providing counselling support service, administration costs, publicity and miscellaneous expenses, as well as for contingency.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0002

Question Serial No.

0022

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : It is stated in the 2000-01 draft estimate that the Education and Manpower Bureau will “draw up measures to help people who have great difficulty in finding employment”. What will be the expenditure involved?

The Education and Manpower Bureau also indicates that it will “continue to draw up appropriate measures to identify training and job opportunities”. What will be the expenditure for carrying out these measures?

Asked by : The Hon. Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : In tackling unemployment, our policy objective is to help the unemployed re-enter the workforce as soon as possible and to equip them with the necessary skills to stay competitive. These will be achieved through providing policy guidance to the Labour Department and relevant training agencies, and co-ordinating their provision of various services, including employment and job-matching, training and retraining etc..

The resources which will be dedicated to these services in 2000-01 are spread over different heads of expenditure, including the Employment programme under Education and Manpower Bureau (Head 146) and the Employment Services programme under the Labour Department (Head 90). The Employees Retraining Board (ERB), to which capital grants totalling \$1.6 billion have been provided at different times, also plays an important role by providing retraining courses for the unemployed.

In addition, the Government has proposed to earmark \$300 million of recurrent expenditure for promoting employment, providing training and retraining as well as encouraging continuing education.

We propose to use the \$300 million to introduce the following seven initiatives –

- (1) Continue the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme so as to provide pre-employment training and workplace attachment for over 10,000 young school leavers between the age of 15-19;
- (2) Provide additional on-the-job training for about 4 000 trainees of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme;
- (3) Increase 1 500 vocational training places for secondary 3 and 5 school leavers, so as to provide them with training in vocational and generic skills;
- (4) Increase 1 000 information technology assistant training places for people of secondary school education level, so as to meet the needs of job-seekers and the industry;
- (5) Launch the “Project Springboard” to provide bridging programmes for 5 500 secondary school leavers and adult learners to pursue continuing education so that they would gain a solid foundation for employment and further education;
- (6) Extend the scope of the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme to include professional education courses provided locally by non-local universities and professional bodies, registered schools and recognised training institutions so that aspiring individual will not be deprived of continuing education opportunities for lack of financial means; and
- (7) Set up a website on continuing education courses available in Hong Kong to provide a convenient information channel for those who aspire to pursue further education.

We will seek the Finance Committee’s approval for funding these initiatives as appropriate.

Signature :

Name in block letters :

Joseph W P WONG

Post Title :

Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date:

17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0003

Question Serial No.

0023

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please elaborate on Government's measures to monitor the effectiveness of the guidelines on handling wage reduction and retrenchment? What's the expenditure involved?

Asked by : The Hon. Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : The Labour Department issued a booklet on "The Guidelines On What To Do If Wage Reductions And Retrenchments Are Unavoidable" in October 1998 to advise employers and employees on how to handle wage reductions and retrenchments. Employers and employees are strongly encouraged to have frank and sincere discussions when faced with the prospect of wage reductions and retrenchments with a view to arriving at a mutually agreeable solution and to avoid unnecessary dispute or conflict.

Since the publication of the Guidelines, we have monitored its effectiveness through feedback from employers, employees, human resources practitioners, academics, employers' associations and trade unions. Generally the response to the Guidelines has been positive as they set out clearly the matters employers and employees should pay attention to under such circumstances. It helps to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding and dispute.

Since the Guidelines were published, the number of enquiries received by the Labour Department on retrenchments and wage reductions and the actual number of retrenchments and wage reductions complaint cases known to the Labour Department have both decreased. Relevant statistics are set out below : -

	January – June 1999	July – December 1999
Number of enquiries on retrenchments and wage reductions	1 289	776
Number of known cases of retrenchments and wage reductions	80	63

No additional expenditure is required for monitoring the effectiveness of the Guidelines as the related promotional activities and the collation of relevant statistics are carried out by the existing staff of the Labour Department.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0004

Question Serial No.

0024

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What is the estimated saving on manpower and resources through integrating the Vocational Training Council (VTC)'s management, academic and training structure? How will this affect the cost-effectiveness and curriculum planning of VTC?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council (VTC)'s restructuring exercise seeks to rationalise its management systems and its education and training provision. The aim is to improve the efficiency, quality, cost-effectiveness and delivery of VTC's services. In overall terms, the re-organisation and restructuring exercise will be a cost-neutral one. Savings generated through rationalising and repositioning will be re-invested in initiatives and activities such as staff development, quality management as well as increased training provision in areas of great demand. For instance, the design of common modules of the vocational education courses has made academic management and course assessment more cost-effective. As a result, \$32 million will be redeployed from the central administration to different campuses in order to enhance quality and cost effectiveness of teaching and staff development. Through streamlining the management of the Industrial Training Division and reduction of training places in sectors with a reduced demand, \$53 million will be redeployed to

provide additional training places for Secondary 3 school leavers in other training areas and to enhance training in the information technology and financial services sectors.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0005

Question Serial No.

0025

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What is the expenditure involved for Employees Retraining Board (ERB) to re-structure its course? What are the implications of this exercise on the cost-effectiveness and course arrangement of the ERB?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

The course restructuring exercise of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) seeks to modularise and standardise the course contents and structure, and to develop a common assessment system for the major ERB courses. The aim is to enhance the quality of training courses. The exercise will be undertaken in-house by ERB's staff and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

ERB plans to have the various standardised course packages ready from April 2000 onwards. Unlike the previous arrangements under which course proposals from different training bodies on similar subjects do not have to follow standard content, structure, duration or costing, training bodies will have to follow the standard course packages under the new arrangement. Thus, the ERB will be able to streamline the course vetting process. The staff resources thus released will enable the ERB to conduct some 50 additional management audit visits to its training bodies each year. Hence, with the course restructuring there will be productivity gain and enhancement in the quality of training courses.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	15 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0006

Question Serial No.

0026

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head: 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau
Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme: (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please provide a breakdown of the \$6.328 million estimated expenditure on improved occupational safety and health standards under Subhead 299. Several pieces of legislation on occupational safety and health will be enacted in the coming year. So why is the Government's estimated expenditure on this item less than that of 1999-2000?

Asked by : The Hon. CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : Subhead 299 was created in the 1998-99 financial year after the enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (OSHO) in 1997. The provision under the subhead is mainly used to assist Government departments to defray the costs of compliance with obligations arising from the OSHO. The provision covers the cost for staff training and purchase of equipment relating to occupational safety and health for government departments and subvented organisations. As provision is allocated in the form of a lump sum, there is no detailed breakdown.

Throughout the past two years, a significant amount of equipment relating to occupational safety and health and necessary training for relevant staff have already been provided to government departments and subvented organisations under this subhead. Having examined the past spending pattern, we have come to the view that through more vigilant vetting and prioritisation of applications for funding, we will be able to reduce the amount of provision required under the subhead without affecting the requests for essential items.

For 2000-01, one set of regulations i.e. the Occupational Safety and Health (Display Screen Equipment) Regulation will likely be enacted. In anticipation of this, we have already accorded high priority to allocating funds for the purpose of improving the ergonomics of computer workstations in the current financial year. This has advanced the meeting of the demand for funds. In this connection, we believe the estimated expenditure under Subhead 299 is adequate.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0007

Question Serial No.

0027

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head : 146 Government Secretariat:
Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead : 111 Hire of services and
professional fees

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What is the cost for the commissioning of consultancy studies, professional services and publicity on employment issues under Subhead 111? Please provide a breakdown of the expenditure.

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : The provision for employment related items under Subhead 111 amounts to \$923,000, of which \$500,000 is for carrying out a consultancy on training needs for older workers; \$96,000 for conducting wage surveys relating to the Supplementary Labour Scheme; \$250,000 to support the functions of the Hong Kong APEC Study Centre; and \$77,000 for the distribution of the monthly Employment and Training Guide.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Joseph W P WONG

Post Title _____

Secretary for Education and Manpower

Date _____

15 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0011

Question Serial No.

0124

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Education Subhead (No. & title) :
and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In the present recession, it would be more difficult for unemployed middle-aged people with low academic qualifications and skills than others to be re-employed thus making them vulnerable to fall into the vicious cycle of poverty. In view of this, will the Administration consider allocating more resources and devising appropriate measures to help these people re-enter the workforce? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : The Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply : To help the middle aged workers rejoin the workforce and adjust to changes in the labour market, the Administration has established since 1992 an Employee Retraining Scheme which mainly targets at employees aged 30 and above and with lower academic qualifications. Continuous efforts have been made over past years to expand the training capacity of this Scheme. So far 170 000 people have benefited from the Scheme. Following an injection of \$500 million into the Scheme in January 1999, we have increased its annual training capacity to 95 000 places. In the first 10 months of the current financial year, 55.7% of ERB's retrainees were aged 40 or above and the placement rate for all full-time trainees has been maintained at 70%. The Labour Department also provides free local employment services to assist job seekers. In 1999, the Department successfully helped more than 10 000 workers aged 40 or above to find jobs through direct placement. In addition, under the aegis of the Task Force on Employment, many measures have been devised to help unemployed middle aged people with low academic qualifications and skills to re-enter the workforce. Examples include the advancement of public works and maintenance projects. The Administration will continue to devise appropriate measures and make available resources as necessary for this purpose. Furthermore, with a view to strengthening the employability of older workers, the Administration has recently commissioned the Hong Kong Institute of Economic and Business Strategy, the University of Hong Kong to carry out a special study. The main purpose is to gather information

on the training and retraining needs of these workers from the employers' perspectives. The survey which has just commenced is expected to be completed by August 2000, and its results will be used as the basis for formulating appropriate training and re-training measures for these older workers.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong

Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower

Date 21 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0012

Question Serial No.

0177

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : According to the General Household Survey for the fourth quarter of 1999, the unemployment rate for young people aged 15-19 is 28.2%. In view of this, it is important that job-search assistance and career counselling services be made available to these young people to facilitate their employment. Has the Government considered allocating additional resources to existing youth agencies for the provision of this kind of service? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : The Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply : In the face of high unemployment among young people aged between 15 – 19, the Administration has launched \$50 million Youth Pre-employment Training (YPT) Programme (government funding accounted for \$9.8 million of total funding) in 1999-2000.

The YPT Programme provides young school leavers with practical employment-related training so as to enhance their self-confidence and job skills, thereby improving their employability and competitiveness. In particular, under the Programme, training courses on job-search and interpersonal skills have been offered, with a view to equipping the trainees with the necessary tools to search for a job. It is estimated that some \$5 million will be spent on such training, which is provided by youth agencies and other training bodies.

In addition, the Administration has also arranged and provided funds for counselling and guidance service for each of the trainees under the YPT Programme during their training period. All major youth agencies, social welfare agencies and some other organisations are involved in the provision of such service. The purpose is to help the trainees gain a better understanding of their needs and plan their career, and to motivate them to participate actively in various training courses and attachment training.

Since the Programme was launched in September 1999, over 4 500 trainees have received training on job-search and interpersonal skills, while counselling service was provided to over 10 000 young people who have participated in the Programme.

The Administration proposes to continue and further expand the YPT Programme in 2000-2001. Over \$100 million has been earmarked in the coming financial year's budget for the purpose. Under the YPT Programme for the 2000-01 financial year, as with the Programme for 1999-2000, training on job-search skills and counselling service will continue to be provided. We will seek the Finance Committee's approval for funding this initiative as appropriate.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0013

Question Serial No.

0221

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question :
- (a) As a result of the completion of most courses under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and several manpower related studies, the estimated expenditure on employment is reduced by 19.3% compared to that of 1999-2000. Will the Administration re-direct the savings to the task of the establishment of a database on employment or a monitoring system so as to grasp the full picture of the trend of manpower demand in Hong Kong for the formulation of forward looking manpower policy?
 - (b) What measures will the Administration devise in 2000-01 to identify training and job opportunities with a view to helping the unemployed re-enter the workforce as soon as possible? How much additional resources has been earmarked for this purpose?
 - (c) Will the Administration reserve resources to, upon completion of the review of the Youth pre-employment Training Programme, launch an improved Programme or extend its scope? If so, what are the details? Also, will the Administration reserve resources to implement follow up measures on the first batch of trainees who have completed the Programme and help them seek employment?

Asked by : The Hon. Yeung Yiu-chung

Reply :

- (a) The decrease in the estimated expenditure on employment under Head 146 for 2000-01 is mainly due to the completion of several projects and studies in 1999-2000, and a reduced cash flow requirement for some projects in 2000-01. The provision earmarked under Head 146 (EMB), however, only accounts for a small portion of Government's total provision for employment. Under Head 90 Labour Department (Employment Services) and Head 177 Subhead 520 VTC (employment) as well as through the Employees Retraining Board, substantial resources have been earmarked for promoting employment and providing training and retraining services. Moreover, the Government

has earmarked an additional recurrent funding of \$300 million for the introduction of seven new measures to promote employment and encourage continuing education. These include the continuation and expansion of the YPT Programme in 2000-01. In overall terms, total expenditure on employment will in fact increase substantially in 2000-01.

As regards manpower-related studies, we have already earmarked resources for and embarked on several new consultancy studies/surveys on manpower and training needs. The purpose is to assess the impact of economic restructuring and of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation on the local labour market, with a view to identifying the training and retraining needs of the local workforce and formulating a suitable long term strategy. We hope to complete these studies in the third quarter of this year.

(b) The additional recurrent funding of \$300 million for the implementation of seven new measures on promoting employment, providing training and retraining, and encouraging continuing education include the following –

- (1) Continue the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme so as to provide pre-employment training and workplace attachment for over 10,000 young school leavers between the age of 15-19;
- (2) Provide additional on-the-job training for about 4 000 trainees of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme;
- (3) Increase 1 500 vocational training places for secondary 3 and 5 school leavers, so as to provide them with training in vocational and generic skills;
- (4) Increase 1 000 information technology assistant training places for people of secondary school education level, so as to meet the needs of job-seekers and the industry;
- (5) Launch the "Project Springboard" to provide bridging programmes for 5 500 secondary school leavers and adult learners to pursue continuing education so that they gain a solid foundation for employment and further education;
- (6) Extend the scope of the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme to include professional education courses provided locally by non-local universities and professional bodies, registered schools and recognised training institutions so that aspiring individual will not be deprived of continuing education opportunities for lack of financial means; and
- (7) Set up a website on continuing education courses available in Hong Kong to provide a convenient information channel for those who aspire to pursue further education.

We will seek the Finance Committee's approval for funding these initiatives as appropriate.

- (c) As mentioned, we have earmarked funds for the continuation and expansion of the Youth Pre-employment Training (YPT) Programme. We will conduct a comprehensive review of last year's Programme with a view to strengthening the training and improving the workplace attachment arrangements for this year. This year's Programme is scheduled to commence around October 2000 and \$80 million has been earmarked for its implementation.

To further enhance the employment opportunities of YPT trainees, we propose to introduce a new On-the-Job Training component to the Programme. Under this Scheme, the Government will provide incentives, which include a training subsidy of \$2,000 per trainee per month and a "train-the-trainer" package, for employers who are willing to provide on-the-job training to trainees of the YPT Programme for a period of three months, with a view to continued employment thereafter. This arrangement is on top of the one-month workplace attachment training being offered to all trainees under the YPT Programme. All YPT Programme trainees who have completed workplace attachment training are eligible to join the "On-the-Job Training Scheme". \$26 million has been earmarked for the provision of on-the-job training in 2000-01, which will benefit about 4,000 trainees.

We are consulting employers and relevant organisations on the specific arrangements regarding the new "On-the-Job Training" arrangement, with a view to starting the arrangement around May/June for trainees who have completed workplace attachment under the Programme commenced last year.

As regards employment assistance for trainees, apart from the additional "On-the-Job Training" being planned, the Labour Department has been making continuous efforts in helping the trainees in career counselling as well as job-search assistance. For example, special counters to provide

employment assistance for trainees of the programme have been set up at the Department's Local Employment Service offices. In fact, as at end February, about 2 700 YPT trainees have successfully secured a job as known to the Labour Department.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0014

Question Serial No.

0222

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : How much resources has the Administration earmarked to promote tripartite communication between employers, employees and the government? Is there a comprehensive promotion programme? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by : The Hon. Yeung Yiu-chung

Reply : The promotion of industry-based tripartite dialogue among workers' unions, employers and their organisations and the Government is part of the activities of the Labour Department's Workplace Consultation Promotion Unit (WCPU). In 2000-01 the WCPU has an establishment of 11, with a financial provision of \$6.6 million. As the promotion of industry-based tripartite committees is only one of the functions of the WCPU, it is not possible to provide a separate breakdown of the financial provision for this type of work alone.

Up to January 2000, tripartite committees have been set up for six industries. They are the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse and cargo transport, property management and printing industries. More such committees will be formed in the future. On present plan, we will set up two new committees in the hotel and tourism and retail trades in 2000-01.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0015

Question Serial No.

0223

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : 14601 Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In light of the changing labour market and rapid development in information technology, there is an increasing demand on IT manpower. Will the Administration earmark resources to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing courses of the Vocational Training Council to ensure that its service is flexible enough to keep up with the latest social development?

Asked by : The Hon. YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

As a result of the strategic and organisational review of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in 1996, the VTC has reviewed and revamped its system of training boards and general committees, and established a Training Committee to oversee training policies and to co-ordinate the work of the training boards and general committees. More representatives from the industry have been appointed to the VTC to enhance participation by the industry.

2. The VTC pays close attention to the needs of the industry and the community when designing its courses. The VTC maintains close liaison with the industry to gauge the needs of the employment market through its network of Training Boards, Discipline Boards, Course Boards, Advisory Groups which comprise professional experts of different disciplines. The VTC also reviews its course provision by analysing the placement statistics of its recent graduates. In

addition, it conducts manpower surveys to determine the manpower needs of major industries. Courses are constantly monitored and reviewed, and rigorous quality assurance procedures have been undertaken to ensure that they meet the changing socio-economic requirements.

3. In the light of the changing labour market and the rapid development of information technology (IT), the VTC has developed 11 new Diploma and 12 new Higher Diploma courses which are IT-related in the current academic year. In addition, two new courses which place special emphasis on IT skills have been introduced for Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 school leavers. With close participation by the industry, the VTC's Information Technology Training and Development Centre has recently introduced a new IT Assistant Course to provide IT training at the junior assistant level to meet market demand.

4. As noted in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, the VTC has put in place vigorous mechanisms to keep up with and respond to changes in the labour market and socio-economic trends. It has no plans to conduct a further comprehensive review of its existing course provision.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0016

Question Serial No.

0224

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head: 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau
Subhead (No. & title) : 299

Programme: (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under Subhead 299, only an estimated expenditure of \$6,328,000 is allocated in 2000-01 for improving occupational safety and health standards in the public and subvented sectors, an amount lower than that of \$6,352,000 in 1999-2000. What are the reasons? Does it reflect that the authority has changed its stand on attaching importance to employees' occupational safety and health?

Asked by : The Hon. YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply : Subhead 299 was created in the 1998-99 financial year after the enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance in 1997. The provision under the subhead is mainly used to assist Government departments to defray the costs of compliance with obligations arising from the newly enacted legislation. The provision covers the cost for staff training and purchase of equipment relating to occupational safety and health for government departments and subvented organisations.

Throughout the past two years, a significant amount of equipment relating to occupational safety and health and necessary training for relevant staff have already been provided to government departments and subvented organisations under this subhead. Having examined the past spending pattern, we have come to the view that through more vigilant vetting and prioritisation of applications for funding, we will be able to reduce the amount of provision required under the subhead without affecting the requests for essential items.

For 2000-01, one set of regulations i.e. the Occupational Safety and Health (Display Screen Equipment) Regulation will likely be enacted. In anticipation of this, we have already accorded high priority to allocating funds for the purpose of improving the ergonomics of computer workstations in the current financial year. This has advanced the meeting of the demand for funds. In this connection, we believe the estimated expenditure under Subhead 299 is adequate.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0017

Question Serial No.

0250

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The Education and Manpower Bureau will draw up measures to help people who have great difficulty in finding employment. In this connection, will the Administration inform this Council:

- (i) the details of these measures;
- (ii) whether the Bureau will consider the provision of financial assistance;
- (iii) whether the Bureau will work with the Health and Welfare Bureau in drawing up the measures;
- (iv) whether the government will join efforts with training bodies in providing training opportunities for the unemployed to upgrade their job-specific skills;
- (v) the resources involved in implementing these measures?

Asked by : The Hon. Chan Kwok-keung

Reply : (i) In tackling unemployment, our policy objective is to help the unemployed re-enter the workforce as soon as possible and to equip them with the necessary skills to stay competitive. On an on-going basis, the Employment Services programme of the Labour Department and the Employees Retraining Board provide assistance to job seekers. In addition the Task Force on Employment devise measures regularly that provide job and training opportunities. For 2000-01 the Administration has proposed the following new measures :

- (1) Continue the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme so as to provide pre-employment training and workplace attachment for over 10,000 young school leavers between the age of 15-19;
- (2) Provide additional on-the-job training for about 4 000 trainees of the

Youth Pre-employment Training Programme;

- (3) Increase 1 500 vocational training places for secondary 3 and 5 school leavers, so as to provide them with training in vocational and generic skills;
- (4) Increase 1 000 information technology assistant training places for people of secondary school education level, so as to meet the needs of job-seekers and the industry;
- (5) Launch the “Project Springboard” to provide bridging programmes for 5 500 secondary school leavers and adult learners to pursue continuing education so that they gain a solid foundation for employment and further education;
- (6) Extend the scope of the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme to include professional education courses provided locally by non-local universities and professional bodies, registered schools and recognised training institutions so that aspiring individual will not be deprived of continuing education opportunities for lack of financial means; and
- (7) Set up a website on continuing education courses available in Hong Kong to provide a convenient information channel for those who aspire to pursue further education.

Separately, the Administration has set up an inter-departmental Steering Committee in early February 2000 to carry out a study on the impact of economic restructuring and of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation on the local labour market. The Administration has also earmarked resources for conducting a study in 2000 to identify the training needs of middle-aged workers with low education and skill levels, with a view to formulating a suitable long term strategy.

- (ii) Various forms of financial assistance will be provided under the new Programmes. For instance, under the “Project Springboard”, a subsidy will be provided to students in the form of a 30% reimbursement of tuition fee. The proposed further extension of the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme will also provide financial assistance to more people who want to pursue continuing education. 500 000 more people will be eligible for the loan as a result of the proposed extension.
- (iii) The Health and Welfare Bureau, the Labour Department and the Education and Manpower Bureau are working together to implement a pilot project to help unemployed CSSA recipients to rejoin the workforce. Under the pilot project, unemployed CSSA recipients would be referred to Labour Department for matching with job vacancies which remain unfilled for a long time. The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) will provide the necessary training to these recipients before they take up the jobs. On-the-job training allowance, where appropriate, will be provided to

participants. It is expected that 200 long-term unemployed CSSA recipients will benefit from this pilot project in 2000-01.

- (iv) The ERB provides a wide range of retraining courses which target at the unemployed. The Administration will work closely with the ERB and the VTC in providing training opportunities for the unemployed to upgrade their skills. Recent examples include the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the information technology assistant course.

- (v) In addition to the resources the Education and Manpower Bureau (Head 146), the Labour Department (Head 90) and the Employees Retraining Board put in to provide job-related training and retraining as well as promoting employment, the Government has earmarked \$300 million recurrent additional expenditure for implementing the seven new initiatives mentioned in (i). We will seek the Finance Committee's approval for funding these new initiatives as appropriate.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0023

Question Serial No.

0700

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme: (1) Employment

Controlling Officer: Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary: Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question: What legislative measures has the Administration planned on improving the employees' rights and benefits as well as to enhance the safety and health standard of the employees at work? what are the legislative proposals for 2000-01? In what way will resources be allocated to tie in with the plan?

Asked by: The Hon. Lee Cheuk-yan

Reply: The Administration has planned to implement various legislative measures to improve employees' rights and benefits, as well as to enhance the safety and health standards for employees at work in 2000-01. These measures and the respective legislative proposals are:

Employee's rights and benefits

- (a) recognising Chinese medicine in labour legislation. Subject to consultation with relevant parties, we plan to introduce the necessary amendments into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session;
- (b) reviewing the Employees' Compensation Assistance Scheme. A consultancy study on reviewing the Scheme has been completed. We are consulting various parties on the proposals put forward. We plan to introduce a bill into the Legislative Council in 2001 to amend the Employees Compensation Assistance Ordinance ;
- (c) amending the Employment Ordinance (EO) to clarify that an employer shall not terminate a continuous contract of employment of a pregnant employee or an employee receiving sickness allowance, otherwise than in accordance with the provision for summary

dismissal stipulated in the EO. We plan to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session; and

- (d) extending the EO to cover river trade seafarers. We are in the process of consulting the concerned parties. Barring unforeseen circumstances, we plan to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session.

Safety and health standards of employees at work

- (a) amending the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Officers and Safety Supervisors) Regulation to extend the requirement for the employment of registered safety officers to the container handling industry. We plan to introduce it into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session.
- (b) making a new regulation under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance to require the provision of personal protective equipment to employees. This new regulation is being drafted and we plan to introduce it into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session; and
- (c) making a new regulation under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance to require gas welding workers to undergo mandatory safety training. We plan to introduce this regulation into the Legislative Council in the 2000-01 legislative session.

Labour Department, responsible for the promotion of the newly enacted labour legislation, will use its existing resources to carry out necessary publicity programmes in due course.

Signature :

Name in block letters :

Joseph W P WONG

Post Title :

Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date:

18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0024

Question Serial No.

0701

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Will the Administration conduct a comprehensive study to assess the manpower needs for the next ten years? If yes, what is the progress? When will the Administration expect to release the report of the study?

Asked by : The Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply : The Administration has no immediate plan to conduct a comprehensive study to assess the manpower needs for the next 10 years. However, the Administration will shortly conduct an assessment of the impact of Hong Kong's economic restructuring and China's accession to the World Trade Organisation on the local manpower requirement by broad economic sectors over the next five years. The study is expected to be completed by August 2000 and its outcome will be analysed for the purpose of working out a long term strategy for helping the local workers to adapt to the market's changing needs. Meanwhile we have also engaged a consultant to undertake a study on the best overseas practices in manpower forecasting. Upon completion of the consultancy study, we will examine its findings and recommendations with a view to considering how best to conduct our future manpower forecasting.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Joseph W P Wong

Secretary for Education and Manpower

21 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0026

Question Serial No.

0704

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : It is noted that the HKSAR Government will, in the new financial year provide additional on-the-job training for trainees who have completed workplace attachment training under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme. How will the EMB promote this arrangement to the business sector? Will the Government approach major business associations to solicit support? How much resources will be spent on the promotion of this to the business sector and the public?

Asked by : The Hon. Kenneth TING Woo-shou

Reply : We plan to mount a massive publicity campaign in order to solicit support for the new component - “On-The-Job Training Scheme”.

The Labour Department is in the process of visiting all major employers' associations, chambers of commerce, as well as professional organisations of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to introduce the new “On-the-Job Training Scheme” and solicit their support in providing on-the-job training opportunities. Letters providing details about the arrangement and appealing for support will be issued to these organisations, as well as companies which have participated in the current Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and prominent individual employers. Briefing sessions will be organised for personnel managers so as to familiarize human resource practitioners with this arrangement.

Information on the Scheme will also be disseminated through the government web sites, including the Interactive Employment Service web site of the Labour Department. We will also disseminate relevant information, including government assistance available and the application procedure etc. to the public through regular press releases and APIs.

\$3 million has been earmarked for promoting the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, including the On-the-Job Training Scheme to the public.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0027

Question Serial No.

0705

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What is the amount of resources spent by the Administration on "tailor-made" in-house training last year? How effective are such plans?

In the new financial year, what amount of resources will be allocated to promote such work? What is the projected number of business organizations and trainees participating in such form of training?

Asked by : The Hon. Kenneth TING Woo-shou

Reply :

The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) provides, among other retraining programmes, tailor-made retraining programmes for employers/employer associations with special manpower training needs and which offers at least 15 or more job vacancies. In 1999-2000, the ERB has spent \$11.1 million organising 59 tailor-made retraining courses for 55 employers/employer associations benefitting 1 900 retrainees. These tailor-made retraining programmes are considered effective in assisting the unemployed to rejoin the work force as the average placement rate is 89%.

The ERB plans to reserve \$11.9 million for running tailor-made

programmes in 2000-01. The ERB estimates that over 50 employers/employer associations and some 2 000 retrainees will be able to benefit from the programmes. The ERB will closely monitor the employers' demand for tailor-made retraining programmes and flexibly adjust the number of retraining places accordingly.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0030

Question Serial No.

0769

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Subhead (No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Will the Administration inform this Council, apart from promoting equal opportunities on sex, marital status, sexual inclination and race, has the Government earmarked provision to promote equal opportunities for all ages? If yes, please give details of the expenditure involved.

Asked by : The Hon. Cyd Ho Sau-lan

Reply : In 2000-01, the Administration has reserved \$1 million for the production of television APIs and for organising relevant exhibitions and seminars to promote equal opportunities for all ages in employment. The overall objective of these efforts is to enhance the public understanding of the problem and to encourage employers and employees to take positive measures together to eliminate possible age discrimination in their workplace.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Joseph W P. Wong

Secretary for Education and Manpower

21 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0043

Question Serial No.

0108

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177 Subventions : Non-departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subvention : Vocational Training Council

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The VTC has commissioned a consultancy study on the apprenticeship placement service. According to the consultant's recommendations, the number of designated trades for the apprenticeship scheme should be increased. Has the VTC made any arrangement for the provision of additional resources for new apprenticeship schemes?

Asked by : The Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) is in the process of consulting all its training boards on the feasibility of designating new trades under the Apprenticeship Ordinance. It will also consult the employers' associations and trade unions in the relevant trades. Upon completion of the consultation, the VTC will assess the staffing and financial requirements and adjust resources internally where necessary.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 15 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0044

Question Serial No.

0109

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subventions : Vocational Training Council

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The Vocational Training Council plans to downsize the apprentice inspectorate in 2000-01. What is the saving by implementing such measure? What will be the specific uses for the resources thus saved?

Asked by : The Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council plans to downsize the apprenticeship inspectorate by about half or 33 staff in 2000/2001. This will result in an annual saving of about \$17 million. The staff resources thus saved will be deployed for running the Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) course which is a two-year full-time course for Secondary 3 school leavers. The CVS course is a new course which teaches basic knowledge and practical skills in services and engineering as well as vocational generic skills such as IT applications.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0031

Question Serial No.

1227

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head: 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau
Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme: (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In the Estimates for 1999-2000, the revised estimate for “expenses for improved occupational safety and health standards” (subhead 299 under the Recurrent Account) for 1998-99 was \$6,797,000. Yet, the corresponding actual expenditure for that year was \$3,454,000 – as indicated in the Estimates for 2000-01. Please explain the difference between the revised estimate and the actual expenditure. Please provide breakdown of the major items under this category in 1998-99, 1999-2000, and the corresponding estimate for 2000-01.

Asked by : Dr. the Hon. LEONG Che-hung

Reply : The main reason for the difference between the revised estimate and the actual expenditure for 1998-99 was that government departments and subvented organisations could not fully utilize the funds allocated to them before the end of the financial year.

In the 1998-99 financial year, \$658,000 was used to defray the cost of staff training while the remaining \$2,796,000 was spent on purchasing equipment relating to occupational safety and health. Such equipment is of varied nature and a meaningful breakdown of expenditure cannot be provided.

For 1999-2000, we have committed \$3,795,000 on staff training and \$3,240,000 on purchase of relevant equipment. The provision for the subhead is allocated in the form of a lump sum, we do not yet know the breakdown on major expenditure in the estimates for 2000-01.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0033

Question Serial No.

1285

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Education and Manpower Bureau Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Has the Education and Manpower Bureau reserved resources to monitor the implementation of the Admission of Talents Scheme?

Asked by : The Hon. Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply : As a member of the Selection Committee set up to advise the Director of Immigration on the merits of applications, the Education and Manpower Bureau monitors the implementation of the Admission of Talents Scheme. There is no need to reserve resources for the purpose.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Joseph W P Wong

Secretary for Education and Manpower

20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0034

Question Serial No.

1286

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 146 Government Secretariat : Subhead(No. & title) :
Education and Manpower Bureau

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) What is the expenditure involved in implementing a qualifications framework for VTC's programme and ERB's retraining programme?
- (b) What are the details of adjusting flexibly the number and types of training/retraining places? What programmes does it target at? What are the resources and manpower implications?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

(a) The necessary development work for linking up Vocational Training Council (VTC)'s and Employees Retraining Board (ERB)'s training programmes has been carried out through internal redeployment of resources by the VTC and the ERB. No additional funding is required.

(b) Our aim is to ensure that adequate training and retraining places are provided to meet the changing market needs. The training and retraining bodies will adjust flexibly the number and types of training and retraining places in response to market changes. For example, commencing 2000/01, the VTC will provide additional 300 training places for the basic pre-employment training for the food, catering and hospitality industries and additional 338 training places at

the craft level in the electrical and mechanical, building services and lift maintenance fields. Additional recurrent expenditure incurred will be absorbed by the VTC through redeployment of internal resources.

In response to the increasing demand for post-Secondary 3 and post-Secondary 5 vocational education places, the Administration has earmarked an additional \$55 million in a full year for the VTC to increase the number of training places from 800 to 1 300 in the Certificate in Vocational Studies course for Secondary 3 school leavers, and to increase from 2 000 to 3 000 the number of training places for the Foundation Diploma course for Secondary 5 school leavers. The Administration also recognises the importance of IT training at the junior level to the local workforce. It has thus earmarked \$18 million for the VTC and the ERB to provide 1 000 places in the new IT Assistant Course to meet the needs of job seekers and the industry.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0039

Question Serial No.

1318

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 176-Subventions : Miscellaneous Subhead(No. & title) :

Programme : Subvention : Grant to Employees Retraining Board

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What is the balance of the grants provided for Employees Retraining Board as at 31 March 2001?

Asked by : The Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The Government has injected capital grants amounting to \$1.6 billion to the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) since its establishment in 1992. The ERB also receives recurrent income from the employees retraining levy from employers of imported workers, and fee income from its part-time courses. The ERB estimates that as at 31 March 2001, its total reserve will have a balance of about \$166 million.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Joseph W P Wong

Secretary for Education and Manpower

20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0035

Question Serial No.

1324

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Will the Government consider providing on-the-job training to all Youth Pre-employment Training Programme trainees? If so, what will be the financial commitment?

Asked by : The Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply : As a major initiative to tackle unemployment, we have earmarked an additional \$106 million of recurrent expenditure for the continuation and expansion of the Youth Pre-employment Training (YPT) Programme.

Out of this amount, \$26 million is for implementing a new “On-the-Job Training Scheme”. Under this Scheme, the Government will provide incentives, which include a training subsidy of \$2,000 per trainee per month and a “train-the-trainer” package, for employers who are willing to provide on-the-job training to trainees of the YPT Programme for a period of three months, with a view to continued employment thereafter. This arrangement is on top of the one-month workplace attachment training being offered to all trainees under the YPT Programme. All YPT Programme trainees who have completed workplace attachment training are eligible to join the “On-the-Job Training Scheme”. We assume, for the purpose of budgeting, that 4 000 YPT Programme trainees would undergo the three-month on-the-job training. As a certain percentage of the YPT Programme trainees would have found a job after the workplace attachment training and given the fact that this is a new Scheme, we consider it realistic to aim for arranging on-the-job training for 4 000 trainees as a start.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Date: 21 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0043

Question Serial No.

0108

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 177 Subventions : Non-departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subvention : Vocational Training Council

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The VTC has commissioned a consultancy study on the apprenticeship placement service. According to the consultant's recommendations, the number of designated trades for the apprenticeship scheme should be increased. Has the VTC made any arrangement for the provision of additional resources for new apprenticeship schemes?

Asked by : The Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) is in the process of consulting all its training boards on the feasibility of designating new trades under the Apprenticeship Ordinance. It will also consult the employers' associations and trade unions in the relevant trades. Upon completion of the consultation, the VTC will assess the staffing and financial requirements and adjust resources internally where necessary.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 15 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0045

Question Serial No.

0404

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subvention : Vocational Training Council – part (Education)
(2) Subvention : Vocational Training Council – part (Employment)

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please set out the number of students and the expenditure involved for the following courses provided by the Vocational Training Council for students of S.3 and S.5 or above levels in the past three years respectively :

- i Full-time courses provided by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education;
- ii Full-time pre-employment and in service training courses provided by the training centres.

Asked by : The Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

Reply :

The number of students and the expenditure involved for (i) the full-time courses provided by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and (ii) the full-time pre-employment and in-service training courses provided by the training centres for students of S.3 and S.5 or above levels in the past three years are shown in the table below -

	Academic year					
	1997/98 Actual		1998/99 Actual		1999/2000 Plan	
	Student No.	Total Recurrent Expenditure \$'M	Student No.	Total Recurrent Expenditure \$'M	Student No.	Total Recurrent Expenditure \$'M
<u>Institute of Vocational Education</u>						
Post S.5	13 860	1,115.0	15 681	1,306.2	17 288	1,386.8
Post S.3 ¹	1 509	81.5	1 591	92.1	1 500	86.5
Post S.3 (Cost of providing classroom lecturing to trainees of Training Centres)	-	82.3	-	88.9	-	40.2
Training Centres						
Post S.5						
-Pre-employment courses	422	21.2	448	31.1	582	37.8
-In-service Courses	22 130	62.3	20 877	52.1	27 221	74.3
Post S.3						
-Pre-employment courses	4 528	201.0	4 424	216.7	2 746	196.7
-In-service Courses	3 945	24.5	6 126	28.2	7 506	18.9

Note 1. These courses include Vocational Certificate courses in such subjects as hairdressing, word processing, etc., the minimum entry requirement of which is completion of secondary 4 education.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0046

Question Serial No.

0405

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead (No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subvention : Vocational Training Council – part (Education)
(2) Subvention : Vocational Training Council – part (Employment)

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please set out the expenditures of the apprenticeship scheme for the past three years and provide by trades the number of registered apprentices of S.3 and S.5 levels under the scheme in the respective categories of craft, technician and trainees.

Asked by : The Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

Reply :

The annual recurrent expenditures on the apprenticeship scheme for 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 are \$45 million, \$47.9 million and \$46.5 million respectively.

The numbers of apprentices registered under the Apprenticeship Scheme in the respective categories of craft, technician and trainees are as follows –

Craftsman Apprentices

Trade	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Automobile	1 404	1 139	914
Clothing	7	1	0
Construction	265	285	385
Electrical	1 227	1 303	1 277
Lift	636	503	447
Air-conditioning	856	801	755
Electronics	289	205	146
Metal Working	316	237	191
Gas	77	69	61
Aircraft	29	11	26
Plastic Manufacturing	178	112	79

Printing	129	116	113
Ship Repair	14	26	23
Textile	16	16	15
Jewellery	159	100	125
Hotel Cook	31	18	13
Furniture	7	0	0
Total	5 640	4 942	4 570

Technician Apprentices

Trade	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Automobile	77	71	58
Clothing	2	2	1
Construction	1 147	1 079	1 035
Electrical	94	103	101
Lift	40	60	58
Air-conditioning	73	73	63
Electronics	138	109	95
Metal Working	39	39	28
Gas	2	0	0
Aircraft	0	0	0
Plastic Manufacturing	0	0	1
Printing	9	7	7
Ship Repair	0	0	0
Textile	1	1	0
Jewellery	6	9	10
Hotel Cook	0	0	0
Furniture	0	0	0
Total	1 628	1 553	1 457

Trainees

Trade	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Accountancy	160	172	126
Insurance	134	105	97
Transport	10	0	0
Total	304	277	223

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0051

Question Serial No.

0844

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subvention : Vocational Training Council - part

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) With the amount of funds allocated for 2000/01 cut by 4.3%,
how will the VTC be affected in the provision of courses?
(b) What are the arrangements for the surplus manpower resulting
from the downsizing of the apprentice inspectorate?

Asked by : The Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

(a) The reduction in the estimated expenditure under Programme (1) is accounted for by cost saving measures to be implemented by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) under the Enhanced Productivity Programme and the redeployment of surplus staff in the apprentice inspectorate to a new grade of Vocational Studies Tutor (VST) for the Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) course. The provision of the CVS course is covered under Programme (2) : Education. In other words, the staffing expenses of the redeployed staff have been covered under Programme (2). The Executive Director of the VTC has confirmed that VTC's provision of industrial training courses will not be adversely affected and the number of training places will not decrease as a result of the reduction of provision for 2000-01.

(b) The VTC proposes that with the downsizing of its Apprentice Unit, about half or 33 staff of the inspectorate grade who are surplus to requirement will be invited to be redeployed internally within the VTC to take up posts in the new VST grade. The redeployment will enable the VTC to utilise its existing staffing resources more effectively and to carry out expanded activities (i.e. the CVS course). All staff in the inspectorate grade will be invited to be redeployed. The salaries of the redeployed staff will remain unchanged upon redeployment as

VSTs because the VST grade has the same salary structure as the inspectorate grade. The VTC has confirmed that sufficient vacancies in the VST grade will be made available to accommodate all the redeployed staff.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u>Joseph W P Wong</u>
Post Title	<u>Secretary for Education and Manpower</u>
Date	<u>18 March 2000</u>

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0052

Question Serial No.

0845

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) & (2) Subvention : Vocational Training Council

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the discrepancies between the estimated provisions and actual expenditures of the Vocational Training Council for the past three years? What are the reasons accounting for such discrepancies?

Asked by : The Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The provisions to the Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the actual spending of the VTC under Head 177-Subventions for the past three years are as follows –

<u>Financial Year</u>	Subvention	Actual Expenditure	<u>Variance</u>	
	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million	%
1998-99	2,014.5	1,957.7	56.8	2.8%
1997-98	1,826.5	1,774.2	52.3	2.9%
1996-97	1,682.0	1,640.4	41.6	2.5%

The Executive Director of the VTC advises that the above variances are mainly attributable to the freezing of vacant posts and the introduction of a number of cost saving measures to control spending in areas such as electricity consumption and overtime allowance.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0053

Question Serial No.

0846

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 177-Subventions : Non- Departmental Public Bodies Council
Subhead(No. & title) : 520, 871 and 976
Subventions : Vocational Training Council

Programme : (1) & (2) Subvention : Vocational Training Council

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding the Enhanced Productivity Programme of the Vocational Training Council for 2000-2001, please provide -

1. the estimated margin of adjustment of the remuneration of part-time staff working in the evening in line with the market situation;
2. the number of substitutes teachers and other temporary staff to be cut;
3. the detailed plan for the rationalization of teaching establishment for the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education; and
4. the estimated number of posts to be cut upon the retirement of existing full-time staff and the types of posts involved.

Asked by : The Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (1) The remuneration rates of part-time evening staff for the 1999/2000 academic year have been reduced by about 10%. This will contribute to savings in the 2000-01 financial year. A review will be conducted by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) shortly on whether the rates in the 2000/01 academic year should be reduced.
- (2) Under existing practice, supply teachers and temporary staff are employed as leave replacements to cover staff on leave. Reduction in provision for

supply teachers and temporary staff is achieved through sharing out of workload by VTC staff when a colleague is on leave. The VTC estimates that an annual saving of about \$12 million will be achieved.

- (3) In accordance with the plan for the rationalization of teaching establishment for the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, the student to staff ratio will increase from 18.7 to 1 in 1999/2000 to 19.0 to 1 in 2000/01.
- (4) The VTC estimates that about eight to ten posts at the ranks of Artisan/Workman and Workshop Attendant will be deleted in 2000/01 after the incumbent post holders have retired.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0056

Question Serial No.

1229

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subventions : Vocational Training Council - Part

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The Vocational Training Council plans to provide additional training programmes for Secondary 3 school leavers. What are the details? What are the estimated places? What are the cost and manpower implications?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) will provide additional industrial training and vocational education places which target at Secondary 3 school leavers. Details are as follows -

(a) The VTC will increase the number of training places in the Basic Craft Course and hotel-related pre-employment training courses by about 640 in 2000/01. The VTC estimates that 78 additional staff will be required for the additional places. The full-year recurrent cost is about \$40 million but it will be met by internal redeployment of resources.

(b) 500 additional places of the two-year Certificate in Vocational Studies will be provided by the VTC in 2000/01. We have earmarked a full-year recurrent provision of about \$14 million for 2000/01 for these places. Around 28 additional academic staff will be required.

(c) Commencing end 2000, professional training in Chinese cuisine will be provided by the new Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (CCTI). The training capacity for the full-time elementary level course (where the entry requirement is completion of Secondary 3 education) will be 30 in 2000/01 and will increase to over 100 by 2003/04. The net recurrent funding for the CCTI in 2000-01 is \$6.71 million and about 21

additional staff will be required. The amount covers the whole range of training and trade testing activities at different levels to be provided by the CCTI.

(d) 1 000 places for the IT Assistant Training Programme will also be provided each year by the VTC in collaboration with the Employees Retraining Board. We have earmarked \$18 million in 2000-01 for these additional places. We are discussing with the training bodies the time schedule for the courses and the exact manpower requirement.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0057

Question Serial No.

1230

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subventions : Vocational Training Council - Part

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The Vocational Training Council (CVC) stated that staff affected by the downsizing of the apprenticeship scheme will be redeployed. So why is there a decrease in the estimated expenditure for the coming year? Will there be downward adjustment in the salaries of the inspectors upon redeployment? Or will some inspectors be made redundant instead of redeployed?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) proposes that with the downsizing of Apprentice Unit, surplus inspectorate staff will be invited to be redeployed internally within the VTC to take up posts in a new grade of Vocational Studies Tutor (VST) for the Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) course for Secondary 3 school leavers. Such redeployment will enable the VTC to utilise its existing staffing resources more effectively and to carry out expanded activities (i.e. the CVS course). Thus, the need to recruit additional staff for the CVS course is minimised. The decrease in the estimated expenditure under Programme (1) : Employment is accounted for by the fact that provision of the CVS course is covered under Programme (2) : Education. In other words the staffing expenses of the redeployed staff have been covered under Programme (2).

The salaries of the redeployed staff will remain unchanged upon redeployment as VSTs because the VST grade has the same salary structure as the

inspectorate grade. All staff in the inspectorate grade will be invited to be redeployed. The VTC has confirmed that sufficient vacancies in the VST grade will be made available to accommodate all the redeployed staff.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0058

Question Serial No.

1231

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subventions : Vocational Training Council - Part

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the details of the project to modernise the equipment in training centres? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

To cope with the rapidly advancing technologies of the industry and the changing training needs in the market, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) intends to modernise the equipment in its training centres. The aim is to procure training equipment similar to those which are commonly in use in the industry, so that the training environment can simulate the actual work setting. In the coming year, the VTC plans to procure, for instance, gas analyser, multimedia PC repair and maintenance trainer, air-conditioning control systems, computer network equipment and software, casting machine and electronic prepress input system for the following six training centres : Automobile, Electronics, Electrical, Information Technology, Jewellery and Printing Training Centres. A total of \$10 million has been earmarked for these requirements.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Joseph W P Wong
Post Title Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0059

Question Serial No.

1232

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 177-Subventions : Non-Departmental Subhead(No. & title) :
Public Bodies

Programme : (1) Subventions : Vocational Training Council - Part

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the details of the consultancy to review the trade testing and certification system? When will the consultancy commence and when will it complete? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : The Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Reply :

The Consultancy Study on the Trade Testing and Certification System aims to review the current trade testing and certification system in Hong Kong, analyse the needs for trade testing and, where appropriate, propose improvement measures to the existing system. The Vocational Training Council has appointed the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to carry out the review. The consultancy study commenced in October 1999 and is scheduled to be completed by mid 2000. The consultancy fee is HK\$780,000.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Joseph W P Wong
Post Title	Secretary for Education and Manpower
Date	18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0037

Question Serial No.

1334

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 146 Government Secretariat – Education and Manpower Bureau

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Employment

Controlling Officer : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question :
- (a) The Government announced that \$ 26 million had been set aside for the provision of an additional component of three-months' on-the-job training for trainees of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme. Has the amount been included in the budget?
 - (b) Under Subhead 700, there is still a balance of \$ 3,800,000 in the provision for the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme. What will the Administration do with this amount of money this year?
 - (c) Please outline your plan to review the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme.

Asked by : The Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

- Reply :
- (a) An \$26 million additional recurrent expenditure has been earmarked in the 2000-01 budget for the provision of on-the-job training for trainees of the Youth Pre-employment Training (YPT) Programme. We will seek the Finance Committee's approval for funding these initiatives as appropriate.
 - (b) The \$3.8 million balance under Subhead 700 was in fact part of the \$9.8 million government funding committed in 1999-2000 for implementing the YPT Programme which started last September and will continue until April this year. Not all of the \$9.8 million is included in the expenditure for 1999-2000 because part of the expenses incurred under the Programme will not be required to be paid out until 2000-01. The \$3.8 million is the cash flow requirement for the current Programme for 2000-01.
 - (c) We will conduct a comprehensive review of the current YPT Programme in April 2000 with a view to strengthening the training and improving

the workplace attachment arrangements for the next Programme scheduled to commence around October 2000. The review will aim at ascertaining the level of satisfaction of trainees and other strategic partners, as well as the impact of the Programme on the employability of trainees. It will take into account operational statistics and feedback from all interested parties.

Signature :

Name in block letters : Joseph W P WONG

Post Title : Secretary for Education
and Manpower

Date: 21 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) The financial provision for Labour Relations for 1999-2000 (Revised) is 8.4% higher than the provision for 1998-99 (Actual), reflecting a greater demand for expenditure in this area. Why is the provision for 2000-01 (Estimate) only 1.7 % higher when compared with the previous year?
- (b) The number of labour disputes and claims handled in 2000 (Estimate) is smaller than the number in 1999 (Actual). What is the ground for that?
- (c) The successful handling of labour disputes depends on the conciliation provided by the Labour Department. However, the percentage of labour disputes and claims resolved through conciliation in 2000 (Estimate) remains at 60.7%, same as that in 1999 (Actual). Why cannot the percentage be raised?

Asked by : Hon LEE Kai-ming

Reply :

- (a) With a 8.4% increase in the revised provision for the Labour Relations Programme for 1999-2000 and a further increase of 1.7% in 2000-01, we believe that the financial provision should be able to meet the needs of the services provided under the programme. Where necessary, internal deployment of resources will be made to cater for special circumstances/needs.
- (b) Although the number of disputes and claims handled by the Labour Department in 1999 increased by 5.4% over that of 1998, the number of cases began to ease off in the last few months of 1999. Based on this trend, we project that while the caseload in 2000 would remain at a high level, it would be broadly comparable to that of 1999, that is around 32 000.

(c) We have not revised the settlement rate of conciliation for the following reasons :

- (i) Owing to the tough business environment in the past two years, many employers have experienced financial difficulties and become more cost conscious. They are less prepared to make concessions during the conciliation process. This has affected the settlement rate. Although the economy has shown signs of recovery in late 1999, it is too early to say whether this would help to improve the settlement rate.
- (ii) The claims for remedies under the employment protection provisions of the Employment Ordinance enacted in June 1997 are more difficult to settle through conciliation because they often involve complicated legal arguments. Moreover, as employers may be liable to pay a large sum of compensation in unreasonable and unlawful dismissal cases, the parties in dispute are less willing to compromise and would prefer to seek adjudication by the Court instead. The success rate is generally lower for this type of claims and has, in turn, affected the overall success rate of conciliation.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB119

Question Serial No.

0033

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :
Programme : (1) Labour Relations
Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour
Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As regards the matters requiring special attention in 2000-01, please set out the financial and staffing provisions for promoting the setting up of tripartite committees for improving communication between employer groups, employee organisations and the government on employment matters at the trade/industry level. What other trades and industries will this new plan be extended to?

Asked by : Hon LEE Kai-ming

Reply :

To strengthen the promotion of voluntary and direct negotiation between employers and employees, the Labour Department set up in April 1998 the Workplace Consultation Promotion Unit (WCPU). The WCPU assists employers to develop their in-house machinery for effective communication, provides information and guidance to employers and employees, organises promotional activities and provides consultation service to employers. In addition, the WCPU also promotes effective communication between employers and employees at the industry level through the setting up of tripartite committees.

In 2000-01, the WCPU has an establishment of 11, with a financial provision of \$6.6 million. As the promotion of industry-based tripartite committees is only one of the functions of the WCPU, it is not possible to provide a separate breakdown of the financial provision for this type of work alone.

Up to January 2000, we have formed six tripartite committees in the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse & cargo transport, property management and printing industries. We plan to set up two similar committees for the hotel and tourism as well as retail trades in 2000-01.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB120

Question Serial No.

0034

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As regards the matters requiring special attention in 2000-01, please state the time schedule and the estimated provision for compiling a comprehensive guide on employee rights and benefits under labour laws.

Asked by : Hon LEE Kai-ming

Reply :

The Labour Department has been producing separate guides on different labour legislation. To enable more employees to know their rights and benefits fully under the major labour laws and to provide them with a handy and comprehensive reference, it is considered necessary to set out these rights and benefits in one single publication. We have included \$100,000 under Head 90 Subhead 263 Campaigns, exhibitions and publicity to print initially 50,000 copies of the guide in the fourth quarter of 2000.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB121

Question Serial No.

0035

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The number of placements of able-bodied job-seekers in 2000 (Estimate) is 47 500, which only represents an increase of 389 when compared with the number in 1999 (Actual). In view of the economic recovery, there should be more job opportunities. Please state the ground for the estimation.

Asked by : Hon LEE Kai-ming

Reply :

The demand for the Labour Department's employment service usually increases during difficult economic times when it will be hard to find jobs. With the gradual recovery in the economy, many job-seekers will be able to find jobs themselves through their personal connections or other channels. We therefore estimate the number of registrants for the year 2000 to be at roughly the same level as the actual figure in 1999. As regards placement, it should be noted that the actual number of placements in 1999 is the highest ever recorded. This represents a success rate of 25 percent. We expect to be able to sustain this trend in the year 2000. Hence the estimate of 47 500.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB124

Question Serial No.

0076

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :
Programme : (1) Labour Relations
Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour
Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : How many trades or industries will be involved in forming new tripartite committees? What is the required expenditure?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

Up to January 2000, tripartite committees have been set up for six industries. They are the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse & cargo transport, property management and printing industries. Our aim is to set up more such committees in future. On present plan, we will set up two new committees for the hotel and tourism as well as retail trades in 2000-01.

The promotion of industry-based tripartite dialogue among workers' unions, employers and their organisations and the Labour Department is one of the major activities of the Department's Workplace Consultation Promotion Unit. No additional expenditure is required for setting up these committees.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB125

Question Serial No.

0077

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) For the 32 180 cases of labour disputes and claims handled in 1999,
- (i) please give a breakdown by trades and by the nature of claims; and
 - (ii) 18 481 cases were resolved. What is the situation of the remaining cases?
- (b) The number of working days lost from labour disputes in 1999 was 299, which showed a significant decrease when compared with 1 411.5 days in 1998. What is the reason for this?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

- (a)(i) We do not have a breakdown of claims by industry and trade. However, we keep a breakdown of claims by the nature of claim items and this is given in the table below. It should be noted that a claimant may claim more than one item.

Item of Claim	No. of Claims
Wages in Lieu of Notice	14 558
Arrears of Wages	14 955
Annual Leave Pay	11 031
End of Year Payment	8 014
Severance Payment	5 590
Long Service Payment	5 679
Holiday Pay	3 832
Sickness Allowance	471
Maternity Leave Pay	266
Others	6 729

(a)(ii) The position of the 13 699 cases which could not be settled through conciliation is given below :

Result	No. of Disputes and Claims
Referred to the Labour Tribunal for adjudication	10 535
Referred to the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board for adjudication (for claims not exceeding \$8,000 per claimant)	2 561
Referred to the Legal Aid Department for petition of insolvency and the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund for application of ex-gratia payment	602
Withdrawn	1
Total	13 699

(b) The number of working days lost owing to strikes in 1999 was significantly lower than that of 1998 because there were only three strikes in 1999 as compared with eight in 1998.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB126

Question Serial No.

0078

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :
Programme : (1) Labour Relations
Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour
Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding the compilation of a comprehensive guide on employee rights and benefits under labour laws, how many copies are to be published? What will be the expenditure to be incurred? In the past, the Labour Department had published guides on labour laws. Why is there a need for the compilation again?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The Labour Department has been producing separate guides on different labour legislation. To enable more employees to know their rights and benefits fully under the major labour laws and to provide them with a handy and comprehensive reference, it is considered necessary to set out these rights and benefits in one single publication. We have included \$100,000 under Head 90 Subhead 263 Campaigns, exhibitions and publicity to print initially 50,000 copies of the guide in the fourth quarter of 2000.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB127

Question Serial No.

0079

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :
Programme : (1) Labour Relations
Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour
Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please explain the revised mode of inspection to trade unions. Why is it planned to reduce the number of inspections to trade unions in the coming year?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

At present, the Registry of Trade Unions of the Labour Department conducts annual inspection to all registered trade unions. After a detailed review, we have concluded that the frequency of inspection should be revised according to the following new criteria so as to achieve better utilization of resources :

- (a) annual inspection will be made to newly registered unions and those with more complicated accounts or accounting irregularities detected in the previous year;
- (b) biennial inspection to unions other than those in (a); and
- (c) where circumstances warrant, inspections will be made to trade unions on a need basis to ensure their compliance with the Trade Unions Ordinance.

Under the new criteria, the number of inspections each year will be reduced. As a result, more manpower can be redeployed for launching new initiatives to promote sound trade union management. These initiatives include providing an enhanced consultation service, uploading information on the general rights and duties of trade union members on the Department's homepage, producing a resource kit on sound union management and accounting principles for distribution to trade unions, organising educational programmes and seminars for trade union officers.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 15 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0128

Question Serial No.

0092

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) Why is the waiting time for arranging conciliation meetings for claims planned to be five weeks in 2000 instead of meeting the original target of four weeks?
- (b) In 1999, how many labour disputes or claims had not been provided with conciliation service because the employers concerned were insolvent? How many labour disputes or claims had not been provided with conciliation service because the employers concerned could not be reached for conciliation?
- (c) Why did the Labour Department only hold 139 694 consultation meetings in 1999, which showed a decrease of 15% when compared with the estimate of the previous year and a decrease of about 20 000 meetings when compared with the actual number in 1998?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

- (a) In 1999, we could not meet the target of arranging conciliation meeting within four weeks for certain claims for the following reasons :
- there was a drastic increase in the number of claims received after the economic downturn in 1997 : 54% increase in 1998 and 43.4% increase in 1999 as compared to 1997.
 - the second half of 1998 recorded an all-time high number of claims received. The resultant backlog of caseload prolonged the waiting time in early 1999.
 - the number of claims received could fluctuate. In 1999, the heaviest case intake was recorded in the first quarter. The influx of claims, coupled with the backlog from 1998, had made it difficult for some offices to meet

the target in the first few months of the year.

As the number of claims in 2000 is expected to remain at a high level comparable to 1999, it is considered realistic to slightly revise our target to “within five weeks” in 2000-01. Notwithstanding the revised target, our aim remains to arrange conciliation meetings within the shortest possible time. In fact, we managed to arrange conciliation meeting within four weeks for about 80 percent of the claims received in 1998 and 1999.

- (b) In 1999, there were 602 labour disputes and claims where conciliation service had not been rendered because the employers concerned were insolvent. In addition, there were 1 149 claims where the employers concerned could not be reached for conciliation.
- (c) The decrease in the number of consultation meetings was mainly due to the following reasons :-
- The number of consultation meetings in 1998 was an all-time high record because there were more enquiries about the major amendments to the Employment Ordinance enacted in June 1997 covering employment protection, maternity protection, wage definition and long service payment etc. There were fewer consultations on these amendments in 1999.
 - With the gradual recovery of the economy especially during the latter half of 1999, the number of wage reduction, retrenchment and insolvency cases decreased. This partly explains the decrease in the number of consultations.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0129

Question Serial No.

0093

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What will be the financial provision for the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board in 2000-01? What will be the increase or decrease in its manpower? Generally speaking, how long will be the waiting time for claims to be handled?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

In 2000-01, an estimated sum of around \$10 million will be allocated to the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (the Board). The staff establishment of the Board (currently at 24) will remain unchanged.

With regard to the processing time for claims, appointments for filing claims will be arranged within one week upon the telephone request from claimants and adjudication of claims will be conducted within five weeks after filing.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB130

Question Serial No.

0094

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding the promotion of sound trade union administration and responsible trade unionism, what are the planned schedule and details of implementation? What is the expenditure required?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The Registry of Trade Unions of the Labour Department will launch the following new initiatives to promote sound union management and responsible trade unionism in 2000-01 :

- To designate officers to advise trade unions on matters relating to union management, accounting and the Trade Unions Ordinance. A letter has been sent to all registered unions informing them of the names and telephone number of the responsible officers to facilitate enquiries;
- To upload information on the general rights and duties of trade union members to the Labour Department's homepage on the Internet for public access in April 2000;
- To hold a seminar for union officers in the second half of 2000;
- To prepare a resource kit on sound union management and accounting principles for distribution to all unions in the fourth quarter of 2000; and
- To organise trade union educational programmes jointly with some major labour organizations later in the year.

We have included \$55,000 and \$15,000 under Head 90 Subhead 149 General departmental expenses respectively for producing the resource kit and organising a seminar for union officers. The cost of launching other initiatives will be absorbed within existing resources.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0131

Question Serial No.

0095

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : -

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Please give an account of the ranks and major areas of work of the 19 posts to be deleted in 2000-01. Apart from the five posts to be deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme, what are the reasons for the deletion of the other posts?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

Details of the net deletion of 19 posts under the Employment Services programme area are as follows:

(a) 11 posts relate to the administration of the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS)

These 11 posts, including four Assistant Labour Officers, one Labour Inspector and five clerical grade officers and one office assistant, are mainly involved in processing applications for labour importation under the SLS. Of these 11 posts, the Labour Inspector post is deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. The remaining ten posts are temporary ones which will lapse in 2000-01 and will not be required as a result of the rationalization and computerization of the application processing work.

(b) Six posts relate to the delivery of employment services and its support service:

Of the six deleted posts, three are deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. They include two Assistant Labour Officers responsible for providing employment service, and one clerical assistant mainly involved in the administrative duties in processing applications for employment agency licences.

The remaining three deleted posts, including one Statistician and two Statistical Officers, were required to conduct ad hoc statistical research on the labour market. They are funded by temporary resources and are due to lapse in 2000-01.

(c) Two posts relate to the provision of general support service

These two posts include one Senior Executive Officer (SEO) and one Typist. The Typist post, which is a vacant post, is deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. The remaining SEO post, which is funded by temporary resources for one year, is due to lapse in 2000-01.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : **Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung**

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB132

Question Serial No.

0096

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Why is it estimated that the number of applications under labour importation schemes processed in the coming year will be greater than that in 1999? From which trades or industries are these applications expected to come?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The estimate of 1 200 applications for labour importation to be processed in 2000 is no more than a projection based on the application intake under the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS) in 1999 as against a gradually improving economy and labour market. Any employer who has genuine local recruitment difficulties may submit an application for importation of labour under the scheme. Since the SLS is a non-industry specific scheme, our estimation is not made with reference to any specific industry or trade.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB133

Question Serial No.

0097

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the details of revamping the Careers Advisory Service in the coming year? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The Labour Department is to undertake a comprehensive review of the work of the Careers Advisory Service in 2000-01. The review aims at providing a more focused and effective service in the dissemination of career information and career advice to young people and school leavers. The review is expected to be completed by mid-2000 and the revamped service in place in early 2001. Generally, the review will cover the following areas:

- (a) to extend the target clientele from fresh school-leavers to include all young persons in need of career counselling;
- (b) to transform the existing static web site into a dynamic, interactive and fun-filled portal for students and young school leavers planning for their future careers;
- (c) to develop a comprehensive data bank of entry level jobs and training opportunities; and
- (d) to develop strategic partnership with employers associations, professional bodies and school career masters in the collection and dissemination of the latest labour market information for fresh school leavers.

Any extra manpower required to implement the recommendations of the review will be absorbed by re-deployment of existing staff within the department.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 14 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0134

Question Serial No.

0098

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) Will the plan of revamping the placement service and streamlining the work processes and procedures in the coming year only focus on the placement service to job-seekers with disabilities? What are the details? What is the expenditure involved?
- (b) What are the details of the plan of revamping the Job Matching Programme in the coming year? What is the expenditure involved?
- (c) How many job-seekers and employers used the Interactive Employment Service last year? What is the estimated number of users in the coming year?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

- (a) The revamping of the placement service and streamlining the work procedures for able-bodied job seekers have already commenced in 1999. They include the introduction of the Interactive Employment Service, Easy Registration and Telephone Employment Service. In this coming year, the focus would shift to the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of the Labour Department to render more focused and effective placement service to the disabled job-seekers. The programme includes the launching of a new "Self Help Integrated Placement Service" to supplement the traditional one-to-one personal placement service of SPD. It also includes streamlining the work processes and procedures of SPD to provide a more user-friendly service. In addition, it enables placement officers to have more time to network with employers, to promote public understanding of the working abilities of the disabled and to canvass more vacancies for the disabled. The programme is a part of the Enhanced Productivity Programme of the Labour Department and does not require extra expenditures.

(b) The Job Matching Programme was launched in 1995 to provide personalised counselling and job matching services to unemployed local job-seekers irrespective of age. Job-seekers joining the JMP are attended by placement officers who will identify for them suitable jobs according to their academic qualifications, job skills, work experience and job expectations. If training is required, job-seekers will be referred to retraining courses run by the Employees Retraining Board. We plan to add more values to job-seekers and enhance their competitiveness through introducing group counselling in the form of briefing sessions, followed by a workshop to complement individual counselling. The briefing covers dissemination of the latest labour market information, the supply and demand situation for individual sectors and job titles, employment traps, free retraining opportunities available and basic job searching skills. At the same time, the workshop provides core skills training in areas such as self-analysis of strength and weakness, networking, communication, interviewing skills, experience sharing, etc. This will be followed by intensive job matching service. The revamping of the Job Matching Programme refocuses existing services to add values to job seekers. The expenses incurred will be absorbed internally.

(c) The Interactive Employment Service (iES) was launched on 11 March 1999. It applies the latest Internet technology and allows employers and job-seekers to access the databank of the Local Employment Service 24 hours a day. They can use a specially designed search engine to look for their preferred jobs and candidates on the web readily at their home or office. Users who have registered as members can receive, through e-mails, summary information of the job openings and registrants meeting their selection criteria. The iES has become one of the most heavily visited government web sites. By the end of February 2000, it has recorded a total of 24 670 000 hits, or an average of 69 300 hits per day. A total of 39 070 job-seekers and 2 502 employers have signed up as members to request for additional job vacancy and candidate information.

The Labour Department is now further enhancing the functions of the iES web site. We have also participated in Phase 1 of the Electronic Service Delivery project of the HKSAR Government, which will be implemented in October 2000. It is expected that the hit rate of the iES in the year 2000 will continue to increase.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB135

Question Serial No.

0105

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : A dedicated web page will be developed in the website of the Labour Department's Interactive Employment Service for the construction industry. Who are the target users and what are their posts in the industry? What is the estimated number of users?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

The construction web page is developed to facilitate efficient matching of job-seekers with vacancies in the construction industry. The web page will contain a search engine for the easy retrieval of construction vacancies and construction registrants who have skills specific to the industry. Job-seekers who have passed the Trade Test or Intermediate Trade Test will have their information prominently displayed. Both employers and job-seekers can enrol as members of the web page and obtain regular updates of suitable vacancies and job-seekers. Relevant statistics on trade tested workers are also available in the web. The construction web page will be widely publicised, with the help of employer associations, trade unions and training bodies, among construction employers, contractors, sub-contractors and job-seekers. The system will be user-friendly and form part of the existing Labour Department's Interactive Employment Service (iES) web site, which is currently recording an average hit rate of some 70 000 per day. The target users include contractors and sub-contractors and construction workers. The number of users will depend largely on the speed of recovery in the construction industry and the industry's acceptance of the new technology.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB136

Question Serial No.

0106

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Will the number of participants of the Job Matching Programme be affected by the revamping of the Programme? If yes, what will be the changes in the number of participants?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

The revamping of the Job Matching Programme aims at providing more valued-added service to job-seekers and as such, should not adversely affect the number of job-seekers to be served by the programme.

Specifically, we plan to add more values to job-seekers and enhance their competitiveness through introducing group counselling in the form of briefing session followed by a workshop to complement individual counselling. The briefing covers dissemination of the latest labour market information, the supply and demand situation in individual sectors and job titles, employment traps, free retraining opportunities available and basic job searching skills. At the same time, the workshop provides core skills training in areas such as self-analysis of strength and weakness, networking, communication, interviewing skills, experience sharing, etc. This is followed by intensive job matching service.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0137

Question Serial No.

0107

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : At present, the Labour Department does not follow up its placement cases to find out the working situations of those job-seekers who are successfully placed. Will there be any resources allocated for the provision of such follow-up services?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

Reply :

Given the priority need to maintain and step up its services to the unemployed, the LES does not have any plan to follow up with registrants who have already been successfully placed in employment.

In 1999, the LES registered 188 784 job-seekers, made 603 762 referrals and successfully placed a record number of 47 111 job-seekers in employment.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0138

Question Serial No.

0111

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question : (a) Why is there no service target for the updating of job vacancy information? Will it be considered as one of the targets to be included?
- (b) At present, how frequently is the job vacancy information displayed in each Local Employment Service office updated? If an employer has recruited someone to fill a job vacancy, how soon will the information on that particular vacancy be removed?
- (c) How frequently is the job vacancy information on the website of the Labour Department updated? Will a service target be set for such work?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

- (a) We have pledged to display vacancy information within 24 hours upon receipt. The updating of the latest status of a vacancy posted in the Labour Department requires the input from employers. Employers, however, often forget to notify Labour Department when the vacancy is filled. This can create unnecessary inconvenience to job-seekers, the Labour Department and the employers themselves. When our placement officers approach an employer for arranging further referrals, or when the employer keeps on receiving enquiries from job-seekers, they would inform us if the vacancy has already been filled. The Labour Department will update the computer database immediately upon receipt of such information.
- (b) Upon receiving the information that a vacancy has been filled, the Local Employment Service (LES) will immediately update the computer database and remove the vacancy card from the displayed board. The LES adds new vacancies to the display windows four times a day.

- (c) For security reasons, vacancies received by the LES and vacancies available for the Interactive Employment Service are stored in separate databases. At present, in view of the sizable volume of data, the databases are synchronized twice a day. We are exploring if it is technically desirable to increase the frequency of synchronization.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB139

Question Serial No.

0112

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 9 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As regards the Telephone Job Matching and Vacancy Processing Service provided for job-seekers,

i. how many job referrals are handled each hour on average? Are there

any statistics on the time for users of this service to have their calls connected? If yes, what is the time?

ii. will resources be allocated for the review and improvement of this service?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

i. In the past 6 months, the Telephone Employment Service Centre handled 65 calls per hour on average, of which 46 calls were seeking job referral. The time used by callers to get through the line is not available.

ii. We plan to enhance the telephone employment service by installing an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS). The system can effectively disseminate voice and fax message on employment service related information, releasing telephone lines for more job-seekers to obtain our employment service. The cost for the system is \$210,000 and the installation work is expected to be completed in April 2000.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0156

Question Serial No.

0514

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) What is the breakdown of the occupational accident figures by industry and cause for each of the past two years?
(b) The accident rate and number of accidents in non-industrial undertakings showed an increase last year. What are the specific measures to improve occupational safety in the non-industrial sector for the coming year? What are the financial resources involved?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

(a) Occupational injuries for 1998 broken down by their economic activities and type are given in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively below.

Table 1.
Occupational injuries in 1998 by major economic activity

Major Economic Activity	1998	
Agriculture and Fishing	100	(2)
Mining and Quarrying	15	(1)
Manufacturing	7689	(30)
Electricity and Gas	93	(1)
Construction	19674	(70)
Wholesale & Retail Trades, Restaurants and Hotels	16855	(17)
Transport & related services,	5587	(33)

Storage and Communication		
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services (including Import & Export Trade)	3496	(47)
Community, Social & Personal Services	9901	(39)
Activities not adequately defined	116	
TOTAL	63526	(240)

*Note: Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities.
Occupational injuries include industrial accidents.*

Table 2
Occupational injuries in 1998 by type of accident

Type of Accident	1998	
Trapped in or between objects	681	(4)
Injured whilst lifting or carrying	9302	
Slip, trip or fall on same level	11104	(6)
Fall of person from height	2847	(48)
Striking against fixed or stationary object	7264	(2)
Striking against or struck by moving object	11180	(5)
Stepping on object	1468	
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance	617	(1)
Contact with electricity or electric discharge	103	(6)
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object	155	(6)
Struck by falling object	1538	(10)
Struck by moving vehicle	2340	(48)
Contact with moving machinery or object being machined	2253	(2)
Drowning	7	(6)
Exposure to fire	108	(1)
Exposure to explosion	42	
Injured by hand tool	6527	

Injured by fall of ground	1	
Asphyxiation	7	
Contact with hot surface or substance	4021	
Injured by animal	460	
Injured in workplace violence	610	(7)
Others	891	(88)
TOTAL	63526	(240)

Note: Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities

Occupational injuries include industrial accidents.

2. **Statistics for the whole year of 1999 are not yet available because some accidents, which occurred near the end of the year, have yet to be reported to the Labour Department by the employers. The statistics for the first three quarters of 1998 and 1999 are given in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively below for reference.**

Table 3

*Occupational injuries by major economic activity
First three quarters of 1998 and 1999*

Major Economic Activity	1st Three Quarters of 1998		1st Three Quarters of 1999	
Agriculture and Fishing	76	(2)	73	(1)
Mining and Quarrying	13	(1)	11	
Manufacturing	6009	(25)	4966	(27)
Electricity and Gas	72	(1)	42	
Construction	15447	(55)	10881	(50)
Wholesale & Retail Trades, Restaurants and Hotels	12845	(14)	12755	(8)
Transport & related services, Storage and Communication	4246	(23)	4203	(26)
Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services (including Import & Export Trade)	2650	(32)	2879	(33)
Community, Social & Personal Services	7536	(33)	8010	(32)
Activities not adequately defined	19		49	
TOTAL	48913	(186)	43869	(177)

Note: Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities

Occupational injuries include industrial accidents

- * As can be seen from Table 3, the number of industrial accidents in the first three quarters of 1999 has dropped noticeably when compared with the same period in 1998. The decrease is particularly striking in the construction sector.

Table 4
Occupational injuries broken down by type of accident
First three quarters of 1998 and 1999:

Type of Accident	1st Three Quarters of 1998		1st Three Quarters of 1999	
Trapped in or between objects	531	(4)	500	(3)
Injured whilst lifting or carrying	7074		6865	
Slip, trip or fall on same level	8542	(4)	8494	(4)
Fall of person from height	2192	(39)	1724	(28)
Striking against fixed or stationary object	5654	(1)	4936	
Striking against or struck by moving object	8774	(3)	7563	
Stepping on object	1137		350	
Exposure to or contact with harmful substance	494		413	(1)
Contact with electricity or electric discharge	81	(6)	71	(7)
Trapped by collapsing or overturning object	102	(5)	141	(5)
Struck by falling object	1188	(3)	775	(5)
Struck by moving vehicle	1807	(36)	1329	(52)
Contact with moving machinery or object being machined	1675	(1)	1535	(2)
Drowning	5	(5)	3	(3)
Exposure to fire	77	(1)	64	(1)
Exposure to explosion	29		27	(1)
Injured by hand tool	4930		4730	
Injured by fall of ground	1		4	
Asphyxiation	7		3	(1)
Contact with hot surface or substance	3156		3048	
Injured by animal	333		292	
Injured in workplace violence	459	(1)	498	(3)
Others	665	(77)	504	(61)
TOTAL	48913	(186)	43869	(177)

Note: Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities

Occupational injuries include industrial accidents

(b) The number of non-fatal accident cases which happened in the non-industrial sector in 1999 will not be available until early April 2000. A comparison of the figures for 1998 and the provisional figures for 1999 shows that the number of non-fatal accidents in the non-industrial sector has increased by 5.9%. It should be noted that most of the injuries were relatively minor. The Labour Department will tackle the problem of increased accidents in non-industrial undertakings by way of education, publicity and enforcement actions.

In 2000, the Labour Department will hold a number of safety seminars in collaboration with various trades and industries of the non-industrial sector, including the insurance industry, the hotel industry, the supermarket chains, the education sector, and the banking industry. The seminars serve as a platform for the exchange of views on trade specific safety issues such as causation of accidents and compliance standards. We also plan to use these seminars to promulgate the requirements of the law and to develop more trade specific compliance standards.

Since mid-1999, the Labour Department has stepped up enforcement actions against the non-industrial sector by targeting at the more hazardous industries and the poor performers. More improvement notices have been issued and there were more convictions. In 2000, we will continue to focus our efforts on industries that are more accident-prone basing on the analysis of the prevailing accident trend. We will also identify the top poor performers of the non-industrial sectors for close attention. All these efforts involve reprioritizing our activities and do not involve additional financial resources.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0157

Question Serial No.

0515

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : For each of the past two years, what is the breakdown of the number of prosecutions by industry and by the nature of offences? What are the conviction rates? What are the penalties?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

In 1998 and 1999, we initiated 2 523 prosecutions and 2 916 prosecutions respectively against employers or proprietors for contravention of the safety regulations. We do not maintain a breakdown of these figures by industry and nature of offence. However, from our experience, the most commonly prosecuted offences fall into the following categories:

- (a) failure to provide suitable scaffolds;
- (b) failure to provide guardrails to dangerous places to prevent the fall of persons;
- (c) failure to effectively guard the dangerous part of machinery;
- (d) failure to maintain exit doorways free from obstructions; and
- (e) failure to ensure wearing of suitable safety helmets.

/For conviction

For conviction rates and the average fines of cases heard in the same period, a breakdown by industry is given in the table below.

	All Establishments		Construction Sites		Catering Establishments		Manufacturing, Service and other industries	
	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
Conviction rate	91.8%	92.8%	90.8%	91.9%	97.4%	100%	93.7%	93.6%
Average fine(\$)	\$19,700	\$18,400	\$24,500	\$23,500	\$8,200	\$8,300	\$7,900	\$8,900

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0158

Question Serial No.

0516

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : New plans for the coming year include strengthening the liaison with the Works Bureau, Housing Authority and the two railway corporations to improve work safety through tighter contract conditions and disciplinary proceedings. What are the details of this plan? What are the resources involved?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

Since 1996, the Works Bureau has introduced a system of inquiry into major failures of Government contractors after a serious incident. The hearings may result in the contractor being asked to voluntarily refrain from tendering from one to twelve months. This has a positive effect on our enforcement as the ability of contractors to tender directly affects their chances of making profits or even survival. In July 1999, the Building Committee of the Housing Authority (HA) decided that if a contractor was found to be at fault in a hearing of the Works Bureau, his eligibility to tender for both HA and Government projects would also be adversely affected. The Labour Department will participate and assist in the inquiry proceedings. We believe that through this mechanism, contractors will be far more safety conscious and compliant.

We understand that the two railway corporations have included in their works contracts specific requirements on safety and health measures to be adopted and observed by their contractors. Statistics show that this self-regulatory approach has proved successful in reducing work injuries. We intend to act as a facilitator to involve the Works Bureau, the Housing Authority and the two railway corporations to share each other's experience and build in suitable terms in the works contracts to require their respective contractors to adopt specific health and safety measures at work in

accordance with this self-regulatory approach.

The Labour Department will maintain liaison, mainly at the directorate level, with the Works Bureau, the Housing Authority and the two railway corporations, as part of its overall strategy in accident prevention. There will be no additional resources involved.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

**EMB
0159**

Question Serial No.

0517

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under this programme, what is the job nature of the posts to be deleted in 2000-01? What is the basis for the deletion of the posts? In what ways will the original duties of the posts which are deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme be still carried out?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

There are altogether 13 posts under the programme of Safety and Health at Work to be deleted in 2000-01. These include posts for two Ship Inspectors, three Occupational Safety Officers II, one Medical and Health Officer, one Occupational Hygienist, two Assistant Clerical Officers, one Executive Officer I, one Office Assistant, one Motor Driver and one Workman II.

Ship Inspectors are responsible for carrying out inspections to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation. Occupational Safety Officers II undertake a full range of enforcement, investigatory and promotional duties under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance and the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and their regulations. Medical and Health Officers provide occupational health services to employers and employees, including the investigation of occupational diseases and environmental hazards of work, clinical consultation and medical assessment. Occupational Hygienists conduct occupational hygiene surveys and epidemiological studies, investigate occupational diseases and accidents, and advise on occupational hygiene issues. The other posts provide general support services.

The posts of Ship Inspectors, Occupational Safety Officers II, Medical and Health Officer, Occupational Hygienist and Assistant Clerical Officer are at present either unfilled or vacant. Duties of these posts will be absorbed by other officers of the respective grades through redistribution of work.

For the remaining four posts under the general support services, those for the Motor Driver and Workman II are deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme as their original duties could be absorbed by existing staff through more flexible redeployment. The Office Assistant post is deleted as the savings of a small-scale office-automation project. The remaining Executive Officer I post, which is of a temporary nature, is due to lapse in 2000-01 and the duties can be absorbed by existing staff through simplification of work procedures.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0160

Question Serial No.

0518

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : 280 Contribution to the Occupational Safety
and Health Council

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding Subhead 280, there is a big difference in the amount between the approved estimate and the revised estimate for 1999-2000. What is the reason for this?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

The provision under Subhead 280 is for the payment of the Government's contribution to the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to discharge its obligation under the law. The amount of contribution, which is paid to the Council on a quarterly basis, depends on actual statistical figures including the amount of levy collected, the size of the civil service and the working population in Hong Kong. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Government's contribution} = \frac{\text{Levy collected for the quarter}}{\text{Proportion of net resources distributed to OSHC (as specified in Cap. 411 Schedule 2)}} \times \frac{\text{No. of employees in the civil service}}{\text{Total no. of employees in Hong Kong (excluding the civil service)}}$$

The levy rate was adjusted in 1998 to increase the financial contribution to the OSHC. To cater for possible increase in contribution from the Government, we have set the 1999-2000 Approved Estimated at a high level of \$4.218 million

As it turned out, the levy collected for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 was lower than expected. This had led to a reduced Government's contribution of \$2.467 million for 1998-99 and \$1.46 million for the first two quarters of 1999-2000. Based on these two figures, the Revised Estimate for 1999-2000 could be forecast to be around \$2.8 million, hence the difference of 33% as compared with the Approved Estimate.

As at today, we have completed the disbursement of the Government's contribution to the Council for the 1999-2000 financial year, and the total sum amounted to \$2.828 million, which is at the same level as the Revised Estimate.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB161

Question Serial No.

0804

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the criteria for revising the number of inspections to trade unions?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

At present, the Registry of Trade Unions of the Labour Department conducts annual inspection to all registered trade unions. After a detailed review, we have concluded that the frequency of inspection should be revised according to the following new criteria so as to achieve better utilization of resources:

- (d) annual inspection will be made to newly registered unions and those with more complicated accounts or accounting irregularities detected in the previous year;
- (e) biennial inspection to unions other than those in (a); and
- (f) where circumstances warrant, inspections will be made to trade unions on a need basis to ensure their compliance with the Trade Unions Ordinance.

Under the new criteria, the number of inspections each year will be reduced. As a result, more manpower can be deployed for launching new initiatives to promote sound trade union management. These initiatives include providing an enhanced consultation service, uploading information on the general rights and duties of trade union members on the Department's homepage, producing a resource kit on sound union management and accounting principles for distribution to trade unions, organising educational programmes and seminars for trade union officers.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB162

Question Serial No.

0805

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

- Question :
- (a) How many trade union educational courses were conducted in 1999-2000? How many courses are planned for 2000-01?
 - (b) What are the specific contents of the trade union educational courses organised? Are trade union officers provided with education or training in the following aspects?
 - (i) The rights and protection of trade unions and their members set out in the International Labour Convention Nos. 87 and 98;
 - (ii) The decisions and recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association of the International Labour Organisation on these two Conventions;
 - (iii) The skills required by trade union officers to conduct collective bargaining on behalf of employees with employers; and
 - (iv) The training required by trade union officers to participate in the formulation of measures on occupational safety and health in enterprises.
 - (c) Will consideration be given to converting the resources for conducting trade union educational courses into a trade union educational fund for registered trade unions to apply to organise courses so that the Administration will not be suspected of interfering with the independent operation of trade unions by directly offering courses? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) In 1999-2000, the Registry of Trade Unions (RTU) of the Labour Department organised 18 trade union educational courses and seminars. In 2000-01, we plan to organise 19 such courses and seminars. In addition, we will co-organise educational programmes with some labour organisations.

- (b) The RTU regularly organises courses on trade union legislation, management, accounting, and auditing. The legislative and administrative measures by which the International Labour Conventions No. 87 and 98 are applied in Hong Kong are covered in the training courses and seminars organised by the Department. In addition, the Labour Department's Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre organises a variety of courses on occupational safety. Union officers and workers' representatives have attended such programmes.
- (c) We have offered these training courses in order to provide trade union officers with a better understanding and knowledge of trade union management and the relevant legislation. It is not our intention to interfere with the independent running of trade unions through such courses. We do not see the need to use public resources to sponsor similar courses organised by trade unions.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB163

Question Serial No.

0806

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Is there any financial provision for conducting regular surveys to find out to what extent are employers and employees satisfied with the labour relations so that the effectiveness of each job under this Programme can be more accurately assessed?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

We regularly monitor the effectiveness of our work under the Labour Relations Programme. Through our contacts with employers, employees and their organisations, we can get their feedback and views on our services. In addition, we have also taken other measures such as :

- (a) collection of views from users of our services via the Department's Customer Liaison Group;
- (b) conduct of customer opinion survey on the users' level of satisfaction with our services offered or with the activities we organized; and
- (c) designating Customer Service Manager and Office Managers to receive complaints, comments and views from the public on our services.

These activities are carried out using the existing resources of the Labour Department.

On the whole, we are of the view that the state of labour relations in Hong Kong is harmonious. It can be reflected by the small number of working days lost due to strikes in the past few years.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB164

Question Serial No.

0807

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) What specific measures will be taken to comply with the requirements of Article 4 of the International Labour Convention No.98 (i.e. Measures appropriate to local conditions shall be taken, where necessary, to encourage and promote the full development and utilization of machinery for voluntary negotiation between employers or employers' organizations and workers' organizations, with a view to determining terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements)?

(b) As an indicator to assess the effectiveness of the above measures, over the past three years, under the encouragement and promotion of the Labour Department, what were the respective numbers of (a) cases that terms and conditions of employment were determined by means of collective agreements between employers or employers' organizations and workers' organizations, (b) collective agreements reached between employers or employers' organizations and workers' organizations; and (c) employees under the protection of the above collective agreements?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

(a) The Labour Department has taken measures to promote and encourage voluntary and direct negotiation between employers and employees or their respective organisations. Apart from organising various promotional activities, it also encourages direct dialogue between workers' unions, employers and their organisations on a voluntary basis at the industry level. Up to January 2000, tripartite committees have been set up for six industries. They are the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse and cargo transport, property management and printing industries. Our aim is to set up more such committees in future. On present plan, we will set up two new committees in the hotel and tourism as well as retail trades in 2000.

Where machinery for negotiation has not been set up, the Labour Department will offer advice and assistance for its establishment. On the other hand, if voluntary negotiation between employers and employees fails, conciliation service will be provided. In the process of conciliation, the parties are encouraged to conclude an agreement in writing on the terms of settlement.

- (b) The Labour Department has always encouraged and promoted voluntary negotiation between employers and employees. Examples of the success of such efforts are the agreements reached on the re-structuring of remuneration packages.

Employers and employees are also free to negotiate and enter into collective agreements on the terms and conditions of employment. We understand that such agreements have been concluded in some companies. At industry or trade level, collective agreements have been reached in two construction trades, printing, ship maintenance as well as the goods loading, unloading and transportation industries.

As there is no legislation requiring employers to report collective agreements to the Government, we do not have statistics on the number of such agreements.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB165

Question Serial No.

0808

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : For the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme to be implemented at the end of the year, are there any resources earmarked for handling possible labour disputes and claims arising from employers' taking the opportunity of the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme to reduce the salary and benefits of the employees?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

Labour disputes and employment claims arising from the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund System are handled by the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department using its existing resources. We can cope with any sudden increase in the number of such cases through internal redeployment of staff.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0166

Question Serial No.

0809

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under Item 5, it is stated that new tripartite committees will be set up. What are the details regarding the following aspects?

- (a) What is the schedule of implementation?
- (b) For what trades/industries will the tripartite committees be set up first? Why?
- (c) Has the Administration considered devolving similar work of promoting labour relations to non-governmental organizations by providing them with cash subsidies?

Asked by : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

The Labour Department promotes direct and voluntary negotiation at the industry level through the setting up of tripartite committees. Such committees comprising workers' unions, employers and their organisations and the Department provide useful forums for employers and employees to discuss and agree on industry-specific issues.

- (a) Up to January 2000, we have formed six tripartite committees for the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse and cargo transport, property management and printing industries.
- (b) Our aim is to set up more such committees in future. On present plan, we will set up two new committees for the hotel and tourism as well as retail trades in 2000 because of the large number of persons engaged in these two trades.

- (c) In promoting tripartite communication, our activities have been well accepted by employers, employees and their respective organisations as being impartial and seeking to achieve an appropriate balance between the interests of employers and employees. We will continue with such efforts. We have no intention of devolving the work to non-government organisations as the Labour Department, and the Government for that matter, has a key role to play in this tripartite consultation.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0167

Question Serial No.

0810

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Has the Administration examined the difference in the effectiveness of securing placements for able-bodied job-seekers and disabled job-seekers by the Labour Department? What are the reasons for the difference? Is it due to the difference in the resources allocated? Have the methods of securing placements for disabled job-seekers been taken as reference for improving the relatively low effectiveness of securing placements for able-bodied job-seekers?

Asked by : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

The Local Employment Service (LES) and the Selective Placement Service (SPS) of the Labour Department provide employment service for their respective category of job-seekers. To meet the different needs of job-seekers, different modes of placement service are adopted. However, their performance effectiveness is not strictly comparable.

Owing to the physical or mental limitations imposed by their disabilities, disabled persons need special assistance in finding employment. Thus the SPS provides a specialised placement service to help them secure open employment jobs that best suit their abilities. Each disabled job-seeker is given personal attention by a placement officer who provides a full range of employment service including vocational assessment and counselling, job matching and referral, and follow-up service after placement.

The LES, on the other hand, registered some 190 000 job-seekers in 1999 and placed a record high of over 47 000 job-seekers into employment. Over the past year, the LES introduced a number of new initiatives to improve its effectiveness. These included, among others, the introduction of the Telephone Employment Service, Easy Registration procedure and the launching of the Interactive Employment Service. While most of the job-seekers make use of the semi-self help mode of service, the Job Matching Programme (JMP) continues to provide personalised counselling and job matching services to those

who

have difficulty in finding job. Job-seekers joining the JMP are attended by placement officers who will identify for them suitable jobs according to their academic qualifications, job skills, work experience and job expectations. If training is required, job-seekers will be referred to tailor-made retraining courses run by the Employees Retraining Board to improve their chances of successful employment. In 1999, both the LES and the SPS chalked up record high placement figures.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB168

Question Serial No.

0811

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : -

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question:(a) What is the usage rate of the "Recruitment e-Post" of the Labour Department by employers and job-seekers respectively?

(b) Has the effectiveness of the "Recruitment e-Post" of the Labour Department been assessed?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The Interactive Employment Service (iES) was launched on 11 March 1999. It applies the latest Internet technology and allows employers and job-seekers to access the databank of the Local Employment Service (LES) round the clock. They can use a specially designed search engine to look for their preferred jobs and candidates on the web readily at their home or office. Users who have registered as members can receive, through e-mails, summary information of the job openings and registrants meeting their selection criteria.

By the end of February 2000, the iES has recorded a total of 24 670 000 hits, or an average of 69 300 hits per day. A total of 39 070 job-seekers and 2 502 employers have signed up as members to request for additional job vacancy and candidate information.

The effectiveness of the iES is being reviewed internally on a regular basis. The increasing popularity of the website is, in itself, a reflection of its effectiveness. The Labour Department is now further enhancing the functions of the iES web site. We have participated in Phase 1 of the Electronic Service Delivery project of the HKSAR Government, which will be implemented in October 2000. We expect that the effectiveness of the iES in the year 2000 will increase with the enhancement of its functions and its increased accessibility.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : 263
Programme : (2) Employment Services
Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour
Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding the website of the Interactive Employment Service,
(a) what is the estimated expenditure this year?
(b) what is the estimated number of people who will secure employment through the website?
(c) is there any provision for the promotion of the website of the Interactive Employment Service? What are the details of the promotion programme?

Asked by : Hon TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

(a) In the year 2000-01, the operating cost of maintaining the Interactive Employment Service web site is about \$0.24 million. Besides, the Labour Department has also been allocated a non-recurrent sum of \$3.7 million to further enhance the capacity and functionality of the web.

(b) It is difficult to estimate the number of people who will secure employment exclusively through the web site. The iES is an open system which allows employers, job-seekers as well as non-government organizations to receive employment market information and to access the databank of the Local Employment Service 24 hours a day. Job seekers can use a search engine to look for preferred jobs and employers for candidates on the web. Job seekers normally use a range of channels to source vacancy information. Since its inception on 11 March 1999, the iES has become one of the most heavily visited government web sites, with an average of close to 70 000 hits per day.

(c) In the year 2000-01, we have reserved \$0.36 million for the promotion of our employment services including the Interactive Employment Service (iES). In order to arouse the awareness and interest of the public in the iES, we plan to hold a series of exhibitions at various universities, shopping arcades and exhibition sites. We shall demonstrate the functions of the iES and answer enquiries on the spot. In addition, leaflets on the iES will also be available for distribution to members of the public.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0170

Question Serial No.

0813

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Were there any changes in the number of employment agencies in the past two years? What is the estimated number of agencies this year? Why has the number of inspections to such agencies by the Labour Department remained the same for three years?

Asked by : Hon TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

According to the record of the Employment Agencies Administration of the Labour Department, the number of employment agencies was 1 104 in 1998 and 1 108 in 1999.

The number of employment agencies varies slightly from year to year, depending on the general economic situation and prevailing conditions of the labour market. Taking into account the recent recovery of the economy, it is anticipated that the number of employment agencies in 2000 may increase slightly.

Officers of the Employment Agencies Administration conduct regular and investigatory inspections to employment agencies to monitor their operation and ensure their compliance with the relevant legislation. The target is to inspect each employment agency at least once a year. With the relatively stable number of employment agencies in the past three years, the number of inspections to employment agencies has therefore stayed at broadly the same level.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB171

Question Serial No.

0814

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Why is it estimated that the number of applications under labour importation schemes processed for this year will increase by 12.5% when compared with the previous year?

Asked by : Hon TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

The estimate of 1 200 applications for labour importation to be processed in 2000 is no more than a projection worked out on the basis of the trend of the application intake under the Supplementary Labour Scheme in 1999, and in the light of a gradually improving economy and labour market in 2000-01.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0172

Question Serial No.

0815

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) In 1999, the number of placements for able-bodied job-seekers was 47 111, which showed an increase of 31.7% over that of 1998. The Government has expected that the economic growth of the current year will be greater than that of the previous year. Why is it estimated that the number of placements will only have a slight increase of 0.8% ?

(b) Does the Labour Department have any statistics on the job retention rates of the job-seekers successfully placed for the past two years? If yes, what are the rates? If no, will funds be allocated this year to conduct the survey?

(c) What was the actual establishment of the Careers Advisory Service for the past two years and what is its establishment for the current year?

Asked by : Hon TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

(a) We estimate that the number of able-bodied job-seekers registering with the Labour Department's Local Employment Service (LES) in the year 2000 will be in the region of 190 000 as the economy gradually recovers. As more jobs become available in the market, job-seekers will have more choices in jobs as well as in the vehicles of accessing vacancy information. The placement rate of the LES has improved from 18.8% in 1998 to 25% in 1999. The actual number of placements in 1999 is the highest ever recorded. We expect to be able to keep up this high placement rate in the year 2000. Hence our estimated total placement figure of 47 500.

(b) As we do not track those job-seekers who have successfully found jobs through the LES, we do not have any information on their job retention rate. The LES has no plan to compile such statistics in the near future, as our priority is to maintain and step up our employment and placement service for job-seekers.

(c) The establishment of the Careers Advisory Service has remained unchanged for the past three years. It comprises three (3) Labour Officers, four (4) Assistant Labour Officers I, two (2) Assistant Labour Officers II, two (2) Assistant Clerical Officers, and four (4) Clerical Assistants.

The launching of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme has imposed a huge additional workload on the Careers Advisory Service. We have been able to absorb the additional workload through internal re-deployment to the Careers Advisory Service. No additional resources have been requested for in the new financial year to increase the establishment of the Careers Advisory Service.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0173

Question Serial No.

0816

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : It is indicated that a number of reforms have been carried out, including “revamping the Job Matching Programme” and “streamlining the work processes and procedures”. However, the 5 targets listed under “the key performance measures in respect of employment services” remain unchanged throughout the period from 1998(Actual) to 2000(Plan). What is the reason for this?

Asked by : Hon CHU Yu-lin, David

Reply :

The key performance measures comprise two components, namely performance targets and performance indicators. With the exception of the target on ‘inspections to employment agencies’, all other targets refer to the targeted time within which the service will be delivered to clients. These targets are reviewed in line with the performance pledges which describes the standard of service the public can expect from the department. As such, the five targets remain adequate. During 1999, no complaint on non-fulfilment of pledges has been received.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0174

Question Serial No.

0817

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Are there any resources set aside to provide training for the workers' representatives of the safety committees under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation? If yes, what are the details of the provision and the plan? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre (the Centre) conducts regular legislation-related safety courses for trainers and briefing sessions on safety legislation and occupational health. For the first half of 2000, the Centre plans to conduct 24 half-day briefing sessions on the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation. Up to 14 March, 2000, nine such briefing sessions have been conducted and attended by 110 participants.

The Centre also conducts special tailor-made briefing sessions on the Regulation for existing or prospective members of safety committees. The primary objective of these sessions is to enable participants to understand the legal requirements and compliance standards and to invite feedback. Within this framework, the formation and execution of the functions of the safety committees are dealt with together with other elements of safety management. In January and February 2000, the Centre has conducted such briefing sessions for six organizations attended by 360 participants.

The Centre will continue to conduct regular and special tailor-made briefing sessions on the Regulation. However, employers also have the obligation to provide training for their employees so that they may competently discharge the duties of a worker representative in the Safety Committee. Such training should be in addition to the briefings and training courses on the provisions of the Regulation conducted by the Labour Department.

Resources for running the briefing sessions are absorbed by the funds allocated to running the Centre and no additional financial provision is required.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In respect of the applications for payment under the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund, in the past three years, what was the breakdown by the time needed for making payment to an applicant and what was the average time needed for doing so? Were there sufficient staff to process the applications?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The Labour Department's performance pledge is to complete the processing of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund and make payment to eligible applicants within 10 weeks from the date when a petition for the winding-up or bankruptcy of an employer is filed by applicants or after the Legal Aid Department has recommended payment without a petition. The average payment time was 4.5 weeks in 1997, 5.0 weeks in 1998 and 5.3 weeks in 1999. The breakdown by payment time is provided below :

<u>Payment time</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<u>4 weeks or less</u>	<u>36.02%</u>	<u>37.43%</u>	<u>36.62%</u>
<u>More than 4 weeks to 6 weeks</u>	<u>45.67%</u>	<u>24.06%</u>	<u>18.21%</u>
<u>More than 6 weeks to 8 weeks</u>	<u>8.68%</u>	<u>20.00%</u>	<u>22.92%</u>
<u>More than 8 weeks to 10 weeks</u>	<u>9.61%</u>	<u>18.51%</u>	<u>22.24%</u>
<u>More than 10 weeks</u>	<u>0.02%</u>	<u>=</u>	<u>=</u>
	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>100.00%</u>
			<u>%</u>

The number of applications received by the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund fluctuates at different times of a year and from year to year. We have been able to cope with the

increased workload in 1999 through internal redeployment of resources and the hiring of temporary staff and will continue to do so when circumstances require.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0176

Question Serial No.

0819

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) How many cases of illegal employment were detected in 1999-2000?
What was the total amount of expenditure involved? Where did the
illegal workers mainly come from?

(b) As regards the 'Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2000-01', what
are the details of the measures to be adopted for 'stepping up
enforcement by the Labour Department against illegal employment'?
Will there be any increase in the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon CHU Yu-lin, David

Reply :

(a) In 1999, Labour Department deployed 154 field Labour Inspectors for the purposes of enforcing labour legislation and for conducting both regular and campaign inspections to workplaces to combat illegal employment. During the year, a total of 1 541 employees suspected to be illegally employed was detected and referred to the Immigration Department for further investigation. The majority of these suspected illegal workers came from Mainland China and other neighbouring countries.

(b) The Labour Department will step up enforcement against illegal employment in 2000-01 by conducting more focused inspections to workplaces where illegal workers are more likely to be found. These additional inspections will be carried out by labour inspectors without the need for additional manpower resources. This quality enhancement is to be achieved through computerisation and streamlining of existing work procedures.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB177

Question Serial No.

0834

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under Subhead 263, what is the estimated expenditure for the careers exhibition? What were the respective expenditures in the past two years? As such activities have been well-received, will additional resources be allocated for organizing more exhibitions?

Asked by : Hon TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

A provision of about \$600,000 has been earmarked under Subhead 263 for organising the Education & Careers Expo 2001. This is about 15% over the corresponding allocation of \$523,000 for 1999-2000. In 1998-99, a sum of \$517,800 was allocated for the Education & Careers Expo '99.

The Education & Careers Expo 2000, held on 24-27 February 2000, attracted a record high attendance of 201 283 visitors. With additional resources provided for 2000-01, the Careers Advisory Service of the Labour Department should be able to make the next Expo more attractive and user-friendly.

The Education & Careers Expo is widely recognized as the most useful and successful annual careers exhibition. We do not see the need to increase its frequency as the department also conducts other careers activities such as school-based careers events and visits to workplace programmes for young people each year.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB178

Question Serial No.

0899

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In the coming year, what resources will be allocated by the Labour Department to oversee and ensure that employees' rights and benefits will not be reduced because of the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme, e.g. employers might take this opportunity to reduce their employees' benefits or might delay in joining the Scheme?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department works closely with the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) to coordinate the handling of all complaints about employment terms arising from the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) System. Insofar as enquiries on the rights and obligations under the Employment Ordinance arising from the implementation of the MPF System are concerned, employers and employees may contact our 24-hour general enquiry telephone service on 2717 1771. If an employer, in implementing the MPF Scheme, unilaterally introduces changes to the terms of employment, the employees may approach our Labour Relations Division for advice and assistance. The MPFA will be responsible for ensuring that employers do not delay setting up the MPF Scheme.

No additional costs will be incurred as the work involved will be absorbed within the existing resources of the Labour Department. Where circumstances warrant, we can cope with any increase in this area of work through internal redeployment of staff.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0179

Question Serial No.

0900

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What was the average time required for processing employee compensation claims in 1999? What was the average waiting time for injured employees to get their compensation? In the interim period, what was the total number of interest-free loans granted to injured employees to alleviate their financial problems?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

Compensation claims for fatal work injuries are decided by the court. The court normally takes 18 to 24 months to process a claim. Compensation claims for non-fatal work injuries are processed by the Labour Department. If permanent incapacity results from an injury, the injured employee's extent of incapacity will be assessed in order to determine the amount of compensation payable. As the assessment can only be conducted after the medical situation of the employee has stabilised, the processing time required depends on the duration of sick leave which the employee has to take for convalescence.

Compensation for temporary incapacity will be payable on the normal pay day of the injured employee during the period of sick leave. Compensation for permanent incapacity will be payable within six weeks after the medical assessment.

In 1999, the department approved 49 applications for the interest-free loan.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB180

Question Serial No.

0901

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : When will the study on the feasibility of recognising medical certificates issued by Chinese medicine practitioners be completed? Have any additional resources been allocated for the study?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The study on the feasibility of recognising medical certificates issued by registered Chinese medicine practitioners for the purposes of granting sickness allowances under the Employment Ordinance and compensation benefits under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and other labour legislation is expected to be completed in the second quarter of this year. The working group responsible for the study is consulting relevant parties, including the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong and the insurance industry before firming up its recommendations.

The study has been undertaken with the existing resources of the Labour Department.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0181

Question Serial No.

0902

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Why is the estimated number of cases related to imported workers to be investigated in the coming year smaller than the number in 1999? How much resource does the Labour Department plan to use in combating illegal employment?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

We expect a drop in the number of cases relating to imported workers to be investigated in 2000-01 in view of the reduction in the number of imported workers remaining in Hong Kong.

In 2000-01, the Labour Department plans to deploy some 160 field labour inspectors to conduct inspections to workplaces to combat illegal employment in addition to enforcing labour legislation. More focused inspections will be carried out to workplaces where illegal workers are more likely to be found.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0182

Question Serial No.

0903

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The total number of applications for payment under the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund processed in 1999 was 15 802, which showed an increase of over 12% when compared with the 14 000 cases estimated in the previous year. Why is there such a big difference? Why is it estimated that only 15 000 cases will be processed in the coming year? Please state the basis for the estimation.

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

In preparing the draft Estimates of Expenditure for 1999-2000, we presumed the number of applications to be processed by the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund in 1999 to be slightly higher than the 1998 figure of 13 253, hence the estimate of 14 000. However, it turned out that the local business environment remained tough. As a result, there were more insolvency cases in 1999. Hence, the actual number of applications processed was much higher than our estimate. Having regard to the gradual recovery of the economy, we expect the number of applications in 2000 to fall slightly, hence the figure of 15 000.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0183

Question Serial No.

1226

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What are the financial and manpower provisions for the two occupational clinics? Please provide data of the targets and performance of the clinics (such as number of workers served, number of examinations and consultations provided) in 1999-2000; and the corresponding projection for 2000-01. Please provide breakdown of the major diseases or abnormalities found amongst the workers served by the clinics in the past years. Amongst these, how many need further referral to other specialist care or hospitalisation? Does the Department plan to establish more occupational clinics in the near future, given that Hong Kong has a working population of over 3.5 million?

Asked by : Dr the Hon LEONG Che-hung

Reply :

The total expenditure of the two Occupational Health Clinics for 1999-2000 was \$5.39 million and the corresponding estimate for 2000-2001 is \$6.01 million. The two Occupational Health Clinics are manned by a total of three Occupational Health Officers, two Nursing Officers, four Registered Nurses, one Assistant Clerical Officer, four Clerical Assistants and two Workmen II.

The performance data of the two Occupational Health Clinics in 1999 and 2000 are given below:

	<u>1999 (Actual)</u>	<u>2000 (Estimate)</u>
Number of workers served	4,233	4,500
Clinical consultations & health counselling	5,614	6,700

Medical examination for workers in

hazardous occupations

1,556

1,600

In the past two years, a total of 2,989 new cases of work-related diseases were seen. These included 1,919 (64%) musculo-skeletal diseases, 567 (19%) occupational injuries, 178 (6%) occupational skin diseases, 130 (4%) occupational lung diseases, and 99 (3%) occupational deafness. A total of 1,576 referrals were made to other specialist clinics.

As the second clinic in Sham Shui Po was opened only in May 1999, the Department has no plan to establish more occupational health clinics in the near future.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) In the past three years, what was the number of claims for which conciliation meetings could not be arranged within 4 weeks? What percentage of the total number of claims did it account for?

(b) What was the average waiting time for arranging conciliation meetings for the claims handled by the various branch offices in each of the past three years?

(c) What are the reasons for the failure of the waiting time for arranging conciliation meetings in 2000 (Plan) (within 5 weeks) to meet the target (within 4 weeks)?

(d) Are there any measures (e.g. providing additional staff) to shorten the waiting time?

(e) Will consideration be given to setting priority to certain claims (e.g. claims for arrears of wages)? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

(a) The number of claims with waiting time for conciliation meetings exceeding 4 weeks and the percentage over the total number of claims received in the past three years are given below :

Year	Total no. of claims received	No. of claims with waiting time for conciliation meetings exceeding 4 weeks	% over total no. of claims received
1997	21 943	0	0%
1998	33 786	7 121	21%
1999	31 462	7 311	23%

- (b) The average waiting time (in terms of weeks) for arranging conciliation meetings in each branch office of the Labour Relations Division (LRD) in the past three years is given below :

Office	1997	1998	1999
<u>Hong Kong East</u>	3.5	4.3	4.8
Hong Kong West	3.2	4.4	4.9
Kowloon East	3.3	4.1	3.9
Kowloon West	3.2	3.7	3.7
Kowloon South	3.1	4.0	4.7
Kwun Tong	3.6	4.5	4.4
Kwai Chung	3.3	4.2	4.4
Tsuen Wan	2.8	3.9	3.5
Tuen Mun	3.2	3.9	3.6
Sha Tin	3.0	4.1	4.1
Tai Po	3.3	4.5	4.7

- (c) In 1999, we could not meet the target of arranging conciliation meeting within four weeks for certain claims for the following reasons :

- there was a drastic increase in the number of claims received after the economic downturn in 1997 : 54% increase in 1998 and 43.4% increase in 1999 as compared to 1997.
- the second half of 1998 recorded an all-time high number of claims received. The resultant backlog of caseload prolonged the waiting time in early 1999.
- the number of claims received could fluctuate. In 1999, the heaviest case intake was recorded in the first quarter. The influx of claims, coupled with the backlog from 1998, had made it difficult for some offices to meet the target in the first few months of the year.

As the number of claims in 2000 is expected to remain at a high level comparable to 1999, it is considered realistic to slightly revise our target to “within five weeks” in 2000-01. Notwithstanding the revised target, our aim remains to arrange conciliation meetings within the shortest possible time. In fact, we managed to arrange conciliation meeting within four weeks for about 80 percent of the claims received in 1998 and 1999.

- (d) We have taken the following measures to help shorten the waiting time for conciliation meetings :

- work simplification measures to streamline operation;
- redemarcating the boundaries for some branch offices to rationalise the distribution of caseload; and

- arranging internal redeployment to cope with the upsurge in workload of individual branch offices on a need basis.

(e) We provide express service for clients with particular needs (such as the elderly, the disabled and cases of wages overdue for more than one month) and arrange early conciliation meetings to resolve their claims.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Regarding the performance measures for the Labour Department in this area,

- (a) the target for effecting payment in respect of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund in 2000 (Plan) remains within 10 weeks. Why cannot the services be improved so as to expedite the work progress and shorten the time?
- (b) the number of applications for payment under the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund processed in 2000 (Plan) is smaller than the number in 1999 (Actual). What is the basis for the calculation?

Asked by : Hon LEE Kai-ming

Reply :

- (a) The Labour Department's performance pledge is to complete the processing of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund and make payment to eligible applicants within 10 weeks from the date when a petition for the winding-up or bankruptcy of an employer is filed by applicants or after the Legal Aid Department has recommended payment without a petition. This standard of pledge is reasonable because the length of time required to process and verify each application varies and depends on the complexity of the application and the adequacy of supporting evidence.

Notwithstanding the 10-week performance pledge, our aim is to make payment as soon as practicable. In fact, 54.8% of the applicants were able to receive payment within six weeks in 1999.

(b) In 1999, the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund processed 15 802 applications. This was the highest figure processed in a year since the inception of the Fund in 1985. Having regard to the gradual recovery of the economy, we expect that the number of applications in 2000 will be slightly lower than that of 1999. We therefore estimate the figure to be around 15 000 in 2000.

Signature : _____
Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung
Post Title : Commissioner for Labour
Date : 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0140

Question Serial No.

0113

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : -

Programme : -

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As there will be a reduction of 46 non-directorate posts in 2000-01, please provide a full list of the posts to be deleted.

Asked by : Hon CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

The net deletion of 46 non-directorate posts is as follows:

3 Assistant Labour Officer I
5 Assistant Labour Officer II
1 Senior Labour Inspector
4 Labour Inspector I
1 Medical and Health Officer
1 Occupational Hygienist / Assistant Occupational Hygienist
2 Ship Inspector
3 Occupational Safety Officer II
1 Statistician
1 Statistical Officer I
1 Statistical Officer II
1 Senior Executive Officer
1 Executive Officer I
1 Personal Secretary I
3 Clerical Officer
6 Assistant Clerical Officer
4 Clerical Assistant
2 Typist
2 Motor Driver
2 Office Assistant
1 Workman II

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0141

Question Serial No.

0127

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) What are the estimated respective increases in staff available to perform field operation duties and investigation in the coming year? What is the expenditure involved?

(b) What are the estimated expenditure and manpower required by the Labour Department to enforce the newly introduced occupational safety legislation in 2000-01? Please give a detailed account of the relevant promotion programmes.

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

(a) Enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance and their subsidiary legislation is undertaken by Occupational Safety Officers and Occupational Hygienists in the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department.

There will not be any increase in the establishment of the Occupational Safety Officers and Occupational Hygienists for 2000-01. However, the number of Occupational Safety Officers deployed to undertake field operation duties has been increased from 251 to 286 because some newly recruited Occupational Safety Officers who had completed their training were posted to the Operations Division in November 1999. There will also be seven Assistant Occupational Hygienists completing their training in the latter part of 2000 and they will become fully operational thereafter.

(b) In the Draft Estimates for 2000-01, there is no additional financial or manpower provision for the administration of new occupational safety and health legislation to be introduced in the year. This will be absorbed by the existing staff of the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department.

To promote the new occupational safety and health legislation, we shall adopt the following strategy :

- (a) to organize seminars and talks to introduce the legislation to persons employed in the relevant trades. These may be undertaken by the Labour Department or jointly organized with the Occupational Safety and Health Council, trade unions, District Boards or training organizations;
- (b) to provide training courses at the Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department to explain the 'compliance standards' of the legislation to the duty holders;
- (c) to publish pamphlets and guidebooks on the legislation for distribution through various channels, including 250 publications stands deployed at different locations across the territory; and
- (d) to give appropriate advice to employers and employees on the legislation during the day-to-day inspections by Occupational Safety Officers to various workplaces.

In addition, there will be a series of promotional activities for the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation. Information on the Regulation will be put on display at the Occupational Safety and Health Expo to be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 21 to 23 March 2000. A do-it-yourself kit, consisting of a CD-ROM and reference manuals, will be developed jointly with the Occupational Safety and Health Council for free distribution, primarily to small and medium-sized establishments. A draft Code of Practice will be sent to associations of employers and workers, organizations of safety professionals, relevant professional bodies and training institutions for their comments in April. A number of training courses, seminars and workshops will also be organized later in the year to publicize the Regulation.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0142

Question Serial No.

0128

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The number of non-fatal accidents happening in non-industrial undertakings in 1999 is 21 519, showing an increase over 1998. What is the reason for this? In what trades/industries did the accidents mostly happen?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

A comparison of the figures for 1998 and the provisional figures for 1999 shows that the number of non-fatal accidents in the non-industrial sector has increased by 5.9%. Most of these accidents happened in the wholesale and retail trades, hotel and boarding houses, non-government welfare institutions and non-government medical, dental, health and veterinary services.

Judging by the most common causes of these accidents as shown in the following table, most of these accidents are due to poor house-keeping.

5 most common types of accidents in the non-industrial sectors
First three quarters of 1998 and 1999

Types of Accidents	1998 1 st three quarters	1999 1 st three quarters
Injured whilst lifting or carrying 提舉或搬運物件時受傷	1 833	2 168
Slip, trip or fall on same level 滑倒、絆倒或在同一高度跌倒	2 365	2 761
Striking against fixed or stationary object 與固定或不動的物件碰撞	936	1095
Striking against or struck by moving object 被移動物件或與移動物件碰撞	1 332	1 664
Injured by hand tool 被手工具所傷	676	969

Most of the injuries arose from poor house-keeping and were usually very minor. Despite this, we accept that the situation should be improved and we shall continue our efforts in helping business to improve their housekeeping through more training, promotion and publicity provided to the trades and industries.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

**EMB
0143**

Question Serial No.

0129

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : With regard to the prosecutions taken in 1999, what was the number of cases in which the defendants were convicted? What were the sentences? Were the defendants workers or employers? What trades or industries were they engaged in?

Asked by : Hon CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply :

The Labour Department keeps prosecution statistics according to the year in which the verdicts of the relevant summonses are delivered.

In 1999, 2,110 prosecutions for breaches of occupational safety and health legislation were concluded, of which 1,959 resulted in convictions. One defendant in these cases was a construction worker and all the other defendants were proprietors or contractors. The total fine amounted to \$36 million.

For the conviction cases, 1,277 were from the construction industry, 108 from the catering industry and the remaining 574 from the manufacturing and other industries.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : 280 Contribution to the Occupational Safety and Health Council

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As regards the contribution to the Occupational Safety and Health Council, why is the revised Estimate for 1999-2000 lower than the approved Estimate by more than 30%?

Asked by : Hon CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

The provision under Subhead 280 is for the payment of the Government's contribution to the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to discharge its obligation under the law. The amount of contribution, which is paid to the Council on a quarterly basis, depends on actual statistical figures including the amount of levy collected, the size of the civil service and the working population in Hong Kong. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Government's contribution} = \frac{\text{Levy collected for the quarter}}{\text{Proportion of net resources distributed to OSHC (as specified in Cap. 411 Schedule 2)}} \times \frac{\text{No. of employees in the civil service}}{\text{Total no. of employees in Hong Kong (excluding the civil service)}}$$

The levy rate was adjusted in 1998 to increase the financial contribution to the OSHC. To cater for possible increase in contribution from the Government, we have set the 1999-2000 Approved Estimated at a high level of \$4.218 million

As it turned out, the levy collected for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 was lower than expected. This had led to a reduced Government's contribution of \$2.467 million for 1998-99 and \$1.46 million for the first two quarters of 1999-2000. Based on these two figures, the Revised Estimate for 1999-2000 could be forecast to be around \$2.8 million, hence the difference of 33% as compared with the Approved Estimate.

As at today, we have completed the disbursement of the Government's contribution to the Council for the 1999-2000 financial year, and the sum amounted to \$2.828 million, which is at the same level as the Revised Estimate.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 145

Question Serial No.

0180

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Are there any resources earmarked for the provision of tailor-made job matching and counselling services for the new arrivals with a view to facilitating their integration into society as soon as possible?

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

The Labour Department has earmarked \$4.75 million in 2000-01 for operating the two Employment and Guidance Centres for New arrivals which were set up in 1997 and 1999 respectively. The two centres provide a full range of employment and guidance services tailor-made for new arrivals. These include :

Careers Information Library

A Careers Information Library is provided in the two Centres. New arrivals can have access to reference materials on different trades and industries, prospectuses on vocational training and retraining, newspaper cuttings on job market information as well as booklets on job-hunting skills. The library also provides a series of videos on careers information tailor-made for the employment needs of the new arrivals.

Briefings

The Centres organize briefing sessions on employment for the new arrivals to equip them with the latest labour market information, prepare them for their job search and facilitate them to take up a new job promptly. These briefing sessions also cover guidance in job-hunting skills and adjustment and building of work habits to help the new arrivals integrate into the community as soon as possible.

Placement Service

Placement officers of the Centres help the new arrivals secure jobs which suit their preferences. Where appropriate, they will refer the new arrivals to attend suitable retraining courses organised by the Employees Retraining Board according to their interest, work skills and experience.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0146

Question Serial No.

0181

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Will there be any earmarked and additional resources for strengthening the development of internet services through which career and other relevant employment information can be directly provided for job-seekers using computers, thus enhancing the efficiency of the employment services of the Labour Department?

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

The Interactive Employment Service (iES) of the Labour Department was launched on 11 March 1999. It applies the latest Internet technology and allows employers and job-seekers to access the databank of the Local Employment Service round-the-clock. They can use a specially designed search engine to look for their preferred jobs and candidates on the web readily at their home or office. Users who have registered as members can receive, through e-mails, summary information of the job openings and registrants meeting their selection criteria.

In the context of the Government Electronic Service Delivery project, the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau has earmarked \$3.7m for the Labour Department to further improve the iES web site in 2000-01 to enrich the flow of employment information and speed up job application.

In addition to the employment web site, the Labour Department has launched another web site in February 1999 to disseminate career information and advice on job hunting for students and young job-seekers. The aim is to facilitate job-seekers to better plan their future and make informed decisions on their careers and job choices.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0147

Question Serial No.

0225

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : In 1998 and 1999, the waiting time for arranging conciliation meetings for claims was 4 to 6 weeks. However, it is 5 weeks in 2000(Plan), which requires one more week when compared with the target of 4 weeks. Why is more time required? Is an increase in the number of applications anticipated?

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

In 1999, we could not meet the target of arranging conciliation meeting within four weeks for certain claims for the following reasons :

- there was a drastic increase in the number of claims received after the economic downturn in 1997 : 54% increase in 1998 and 43.4% increase in 1999 as compared to 1997.
- the second half of 1998 recorded an all-time high number of claims received. The resultant backlog of caseload prolonged the waiting time in early 1999.
- the number of claims received could fluctuate. In 1999, the heaviest case intake was recorded in the first quarter. The influx of claims, coupled with the backlog from 1998, had made it difficult for some offices to meet the target in the first few months of the year.

As the number of claims in 2000 is expected to remain at a high level comparable to 1999, it is considered realistic to slightly revise our target to "within five weeks" in 2000-01. Notwithstanding the revised target, our aim remains to arrange conciliation meetings within the shortest possible time. In fact, we managed to arrange conciliation meeting within four weeks for about 80 percent of the claims received in 1998 and 1999.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 148

Question Serial No.

0226

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : The Labour Department is going to set up tripartite committees to promote communication among employers, employees and the government at the trade/industry level. Please provide the details and amount of resources involved.

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

Up to January 2000, tripartite committees have been set up for six industries. They are the catering, construction, theatre, warehouse and cargo transport, property management and printing industries. More such committees will be formed in the future. On present plan, we will set up two new committees in the hotel and tourism and retail trades in 2000-01.

The promotion of industry-based tripartite dialogue among workers' unions, employers and their organisations and the Government is part of the activities of the Labour Department's Workplace Consultation Promotion Unit (WCPU). In 2000-01, the WCPU has an establishment of 11, with a financial provision of \$6.6 million. As the promotion of industry-based tripartite committees is only one of the functions of the WCPU, it is not possible to provide a separate breakdown of the financial provision for this type of work alone.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 16 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0149

Question Serial No.

0227

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : For safety and health at work,

- (a) will savings arising from the deletion of posts be reallocated to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the health of employees frequently using computers and to carry out targeting promotion and education activities?
- (b) in view of the advancement of information technology and the emergence of new work types, will any resources be earmarked for a comprehensive study on the occupational health problems of all local employees, in particular, those in the non-industrial sector?

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

- (a) Savings from the deletion of posts in the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department in 2000-01 will go towards the Enhanced Productivity Programme of the Labour Department.

As part of the Department's promotional activities, funds will be allocated to promote health at work of habitual users of display screen equipment. On health surveys of these workers, the Occupational Safety and Health Council conducted a comprehensive survey on the occupational health of computer operators in nine different trades in 1997. A second and similar survey, funded by the Council, is being conducted by an academic institution. The data collected by these surveys will be used by the Council and the Labour Department in planning their activities to promote occupational health among computer operators.

- (b) The Labour Department closely collaborates with the Occupational Safety and Health Council in research projects in respect of occupational health problems of local employees, including those in the non-industrial sector. In 2000-01, the Council has earmarked \$1.8 million to fund such projects.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0150

Question Serial No.

0228

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : As projects like Disneyland are about to commence, have any measures been formulated to ensure that local workers have priority to employment? Will staffing and financial provision be increased for inspections and enforcement against illegal employment?

Asked by : Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

It has always been the Administration's policy that local workers should be given priority in employment. Should there be any genuine manpower shortage in the local labour market, employers may apply for the importation of labour under the existing Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS).

To ensure that local workers are given priority in filling available vacancies, each application under the SLS has to undergo stringent vetting, including local recruitment tests and scrutiny of the job requirements. Inspections will also be conducted to the workplaces and accommodation of imported workers to ensure that the SLS is not abused.

To further protect the employment opportunities for the local workforce, the Labour Department will step up enforcement against illegal employment in the year 2000. These inspections and enforcement actions will be carried out by existing staff without the need for additional manpower resources.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 20 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0151

Question Serial No.

0466

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :149 General departmental expenses

Programme : -

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : (a) Please provide a breakdown of the number of temporary staff employed by the Labour Department in the last two years by their job nature, post category and length of employment. What is the breakdown of the estimated number of temporary staff to be employed in 2000-01?

(b) Please make a detailed comparison of the remuneration and benefits offered to the temporary staff employed by the Labour Department and civil servants of similar job nature? Is less expenditure entailed?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

The Labour Department employed a number of contract clerks on non-civil service terms to provide temporary customer services and internal clerical support. For 1998-1999, **716** man-months of clerical service were provided by 192 contract clerks; and for 1999-2000, **800** man-months of clerical service were provided by 142 contract clerks. Details of such employment are as follow:

Year 1998-1999				
Nature of Duties	Number of Non-civil Service Contract Clerks Employed			
	Employment Period			
	Less than 3 months	3 – 6 months	More than 6 months	Total
(a) Customer services	90	27	64	181
(b) Internal clerical support	4	4	3	11
Total:	94	31	67	192

Year 1999-2000				
Nature of Duties	Number of Non-civil Service Contract Clerks Employed			
	Employment Period			
	Less than 3 months	3 – 6 months	More than 6 months	Total
(a) Customer services	37	18	54	109
(b) Internal clerical support	13	7	13	33
Total:	50	25	67	142

For the year 2000-01, it is estimated that a total of 240 man-months of non-civil service contract clerks would be required to provide similar customer services under the employment services programme.

As regards the detailed comparison of remuneration and benefits offered to temporary staff employed by this department, we have strictly followed the employment package including the fringe benefits as set out in the guidelines promulgated by the Civil Service Bureau for the employment of non-civil service contract clerks. In general, their employment terms are no less favourable than those laid down in the Employment Ordinance. They are, however, no more favourable than the civil service terms. We have also adopted the monthly salary of \$8,000 as set by the Director of General Grades in January 1999 to maintain a consistent salary for such contract clerks throughout the government. For the employment of the contract clerks in 1999-2000, we have achieved a saving of some \$1.06 m.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0152

Question Serial No.

0467

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Why is there a decrease in the number of medical clearance interviews for injured employees planned to be conducted in 2000?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

In 1998 and 1999, there were 77 198 and 71 009 occupational injuries reported to the Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department respectively. The corresponding number of medical clearance interviews for injured employees in 1998 and 1999 were 84 730 and 79 754 respectively. As there is a decreasing trend in the overall number of occupational injuries owing to the concerted efforts of the Government and all the stake-holders, the estimated number of medical clearance interviews for injured employees in 2000 is expected to fall, hence the downward adjustment to 75 000.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB
0153

Question Serial No.

0468

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : What new measures will be taken specifically in the coming year for “stepping up enforcement by the Labour Department against illegal employment”? Will additional resources be allocated to carry out the work? If yes, please provide the details.

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

The Labour Department will step up enforcement against illegal employment in 2000-01 by conducting more focused inspections to workplaces where illegal workers are more likely to be found. These additional inspections will be carried out by labour inspectors without the need for additional manpower resources. This quality enhancement is to be achieved through computerisation and streamlining of existing work procedures.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0154

Question Serial No.

0469

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : Under this programme, what is the job nature of the posts to be deleted in 2000-01? What is the basis for the deletion of the posts? In what ways will the original duties of the posts which are deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme be still carried out?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

There will be a net deletion of 12 posts in 2000-01 under the Employee Rights and Benefits programme area. Details are as follows:

(a) Eight posts involved in the labour importation schemes

These eight posts relate to post-entry enforcement work of the labour importation schemes.

As the Special Labour Importation Scheme has wound up with the completion of the new airport and that there is a reduction in the number of imported workers remaining in Hong Kong, six posts, which are temporary ones, can be deleted. As to the remaining two posts, which are permanent ones, they will be deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. The work of these two posts will be absorbed by the existing staff.

(b) Net deletion of one post involved in employee compensation

Temporary resources have been earmarked in 1999-2000 for the creation of one post and upgrading of two posts in anticipation of additional work required for improving the settlement of fatal compensation claims upon the amendment to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. Through productivity enhancement, the expected workload arising from the amendment can now be absorbed by internal

redeployment. Consequently, upgrading of the two posts is not required and the new post, which is a temporary one, can be deleted.

(c) Three posts involved in administrative support service

These three posts relate to the provision of administrative support services. Two of them will be deleted under the Enhanced Productivity Programme as their original duties can be absorbed by existing staff through more flexible redeployment. The remaining post, which is funded by temporary resources, will lapse in 2000-2001.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 17 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 0155

Question Serial No.

0470

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head 90 Subhead (No. & Title) : 700
Item 500: Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme

Programme : —

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : For Item 500 of Subhead 700, the approved commitment is expected to have a great amount in the balance in the foreseeable future. In view of this, is there any plan to relax the eligibility for and raise the amount of compensation under the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Scheme so that compensation to the pneumoconiotics can be enhanced?

Asked by : Hon LAU Chin-shek

Reply :

The fund under this subhead is provided for making a lump sum ex gratia payment to those persons who were diagnosed as suffering from pneumoconiosis before the commencement of the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Ordinance in 1981. Ex gratia payment was made to these persons because they could not benefit from the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Ordinance. The balance under the subhead is reserved to make payment in case some of those pneumoconiotics who have not yet received the lump sum payment turn up for assistance. An estimated cash flow of \$100,000 is included in the estimated expenditure for the 2000-01.

Given that the amount left under the subhead is not substantial and that the number of potential beneficiaries would be very small, there is no plan to make any change to this lump sum ex gratia payment scheme.

Signature : _____

Name in Block Letters : Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung

Post Title : Commissioner for Labour

Date : 18 March 2000

Bureau Serial No.

EMB 200

Question Serial No.

694

Examination of draft Estimates of Expenditure 2000-01

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head **100 Marine Department** **Subhead(No. & title)** :

Programme : (4) Services to Ships

Controlling Officer : Director of Marine

Bureau Secretary : Secretary for Education and Manpower

Question : During 2000-01, the Marine Department will compile codes of practices to provide safety guidance to workers engaged in marine industrial operations. How much resources will be involved and what is the progress?

Asked by : Mrs. Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP

Reply : (a) The draft Code of Practice for Shipboard Container Handling (船上貨櫃操作工作守則) has been completed. Department of Justice (D of J) is currently vetting the contents of this Code. It is proposed to carry out a consultation exercise with the industry on the contents of this Code in April/May once the D of J's comments are received.

(b) Existing manpower resources of about \$0.6 million will be utilized in 2000-01 in the preparation of the other Codes of Practice for providing safety guidance to workers engaged in marine industrial operation.

Signature

Name in Block Letters

Post Title

Date

S. Y. TSUI

Director of Marine

16 March 2000

