

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1298/99-00

Ref : CB2/H/5

House Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 16th meeting
held in the Legislative Council Chamber
at 2:30 pm on Friday, 3 March 2000**

Members present :

Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Michael HO Mun-ka
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing
Hon Margaret NG
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon Christine LOH Kung-wai
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon CHAN Wing-chan
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, JP
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai

Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon FUNG Chi-kin
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

Members absent :

Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, JP
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Clerk in attendance :

Mrs Justina LAM Clerk to the House Committee

Staff in attendance :

Mr Ricky C C FUNG, JP	Secretary General
Mr Jimmy MA, JP	Legal Adviser
Mr LAW Kam-sang, JP	Deputy Secretary General
Mr LEE Yu-sung	Senior Assistant Legal Adviser
Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1

Mr Ray CHAN	Assistant Secretary General 3
Ms Bernice WONG	Assistant Legal Adviser 1
Miss Anita HO	Assistant Legal Adviser 2
Miss Connie FUNG	Assistant Legal Adviser 3
Mr Arthur CHEUNG	Assistant Legal Adviser 5
Mr KAU Kin-wah	Assistant Legal Adviser 6
Mrs Vivian KAM	Chief Assistant Secretary (Complaints)
Miss Kathleen LAU	Chief Public Information Officer
Mr Andy LAU	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2
Ms LEUNG Siu-kum	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)4
Mr LAW Wing-lok	Chief Assistant Secretary (2)5
Mrs Betty LEUNG	Chief Assistant Secretary (3)1
Miss Mary SO	Senior Assistant Secretary (2)8

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I. Confirmation of the minutes of the 15th meeting held on 18 February 2000
(*LC Paper No. CB(2) 1171/99-00*)

The minutes were confirmed.

II. Matters arising

(a) Letter of 21 February 2000 from the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) regarding moving of Committee Stage amendments by Members

(CS's reply of 21 February 2000 and the Chairman's letter of 19 January 2000 issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1191/99-00 dated 25 February 2000)

2. The Chairman said that CS had reiterated the Administration's stance in her reply. He did not consider that there would be any point in entering into further argument with the Administration on the issue. He was of the view that if a Bills Committee felt strongly that the CSAs proposed by the Bills Committee and supported by the Administration should be moved by the Bills Committee, the Chairman of the Bills Committee should proceed with giving notice to move the CSAs concerned. Miss Emily LAU echoed the Chairman's view.

3. Referring to the latter part of paragraph 3 of CS's reply, Miss Emily LAU said that she did not accept the Administration's contention that the required resources for undertaking complex and time consuming drafting work were best met by the Department of Justice. Miss LAU asked whether the Legal Service Division had the necessary resources and expertise to handle the drafting work of amendments proposed by Members.

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4. The Legal Adviser responded that past performance of the legal advisers in the Legal Service Division was a testament to their ability in this regard. He added that it was a fact that the Law Drafting Division of the Department of Justice had a much larger team of lawyers who were dedicated to law drafting work, while the relatively small team of legal advisers in the Legal Service Division were mainly providing legal service in relation to the scrutiny of legislation and other matters relating to the business of the Legislative Council. Legislative drafting work was only one aspect of their duties.
5. The Secretary General said that the Legal Service Division was only responsible for drafting amendments proposed by Bills Committees. The Legal Adviser added that if individual Members wished to propose their own amendments, the Legal Service Division would as far as possible assist the Member concerned in line with the Legal Service Division's duty to provide assistance to Members in Council-related matters.
6. Mrs Selina CHOW pointed out that in the former Legislative Council (LegCo), the chairman or individual members of a Bills Committee were able to move CSAs which were supported by the Administration and the Bills Committee. She added that she did not think that the Administration's acknowledgement of a Bills Committee's work when moving the CSAs initiated by the Bills Committee would adequately reflect the contributions and effectiveness of the Bills Committee.
7. Miss Margaret NG said that both the Administration and the Legal Service Division had the responsibility to ensure that the legal and drafting aspects of amendments proposed by Members were in order and that the amendments, if enacted, would not give rise to problems.
8. The Legal Adviser said that the Legal Service Division, in drafting amendments proposed by Members, would normally have cooperation from the Law Drafting Division of the Department of Justice. The Legal Adviser hoped that this close working relationship would be maintained.
9. Miss NG was concerned that the Legal Service Division might not have adequate staff resources and time to assist Members in drafting amendments.
10. The Legal Adviser said that the Legal Service Division would do its best to assist Members in preparing CSAs which they wished to propose. If difficulties were encountered in the drafting process, the Legal Service Division would raise them with the Members concerned. The Legal Adviser added that given the notice requirement for submitting CSAs, both the Legal Service Division and the Members concerned had to face the practical problem of having to complete the drafting of the CSAs against a tight schedule.

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11. Mr Andrew WONG said that under Rule 51 of the Rules or Procedure, if the Law Draftsman was satisfied that a bill to be presented by a Member conformed to the general form of Hong Kong legislation, the Law Draftsman would issue a certificate to that effect. Mr WONG was of the view that the issue of the certificate also carried the implication that the legal effects of the bill were in order. Mr WONG therefore considered that the Law Drafting Division of the Department of Justice also had the responsibility to ensure that the draft amendments proposed by Members were legally in order.

12. Mr NG Leung-sing expressed concern that the Legal Service Division might not be able to cope if it also took on the responsibility of drafting CSAs proposed by individual Members.

13. The Legal Adviser said that if the Legal Service Division required additional resources to cope with additional workload, he would raise the matter with The Legislative Council Commission.

14. Mr Andrew WONG said that the problem mentioned by Mr NG had not occurred so far. He added that individual Members who wished to propose CSAs should provide the amendments in draft to the Legal Service Division as early as possible, so as to allow adequate time for the Legal Service Division to advise on the drafting.

(b) Report by the Chairman on his meeting with the Chief Secretary for Administration

(Letter from the Director of Administration of 3 March 2000 tabled at the meeting and issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1305/99-00 on 8 March 2000)

15. The Chairman informed members that the Director of Administration had stated in her letter that apart from another two or three pieces of legislation which would be introduced at the Council meeting on 15 March 2000, the Administration did not intend to introduce any more bills after that date unless it was absolutely essential and urgent.

(c) Road Traffic (Traffic Control) (Amendment) Regulation 2000

16. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that he was not aware that Mr James TO had raised further queries on the term "driving" appearing in the Amendment Regulation.

17. Mr Andrew WONG said that the Administration should provide clarification on the meaning of "driving" in the Amendment Regulation.

18. The Legal Adviser explained that the term "driving" was not defined in the Road Traffic Ordinance or its subsidiary legislation. The Court would

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determine whether a particular set of facts would constitute "driving" in the context of the relevant legislation in which the term appeared. He added that the courts had developed the principle that a person was driving a vehicle if he was "substantially in control of the movement or direction of the vehicle".

19. Members raised no further query on the Amendment Regulation.

(d) **Employees' Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2000**
(LC Paper No. LS 95/99-00)

20. The Legal Adviser drew members' attention to paragraph 2 of the paper which detailed the Administration's clarification to the query raised by Mr Ronald ARCULLI regarding the retrospectivity provision in the Bill. The Legal Adviser added that the legal and drafting aspects of the Bill were in order.

21. As Mr Ronald ARCULLI was not present to give his views, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that a decision on the Bill be deferred to the next meeting.

(e) **Family Status Discrimination (Amendment) Bill 2000**
(LC Paper No. LS 102/99-00)

22. The Legal Adviser said that Miss Margaret NG had written to the Administration seeking clarification on the retrospective operation of certain provisions in the Bill upon its enactment. He drew members' attention to Miss NG's letter and the Administration's reply which were annexed to the paper.

23. Miss Margaret NG said that the Administration's reply had not addressed the concerns raised in her letter. She added that the contents of certain provisions in the Bill were not clear and suggested that a Bills Committee be formed to study the Bill. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed support for Miss NG's suggestion.

24. Members agreed that a Bills Committee be formed. The following members agreed to join : Miss Cyd HO Sau-lan, Mr Albert HO Chun-yan, Mr LEE Kai-ming, Miss Margaret NG, Miss Christine LOH, Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Dr YEUNG Sum.

25. The Chairman said that the Bill was among the priority bills proposed in the Director of Administration's letter of 2 March 2000, which would be discussed under agenda item VI(a) below.

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(f) **Security and Guarding Services (Amendment) Bill 2000**
(LC Paper No. LS 100/99-00)

26. The Chairman said that members agreed at the last meeting that a decision on the Bill be deferred pending Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's discussion with the Chairman of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority and the Administration on the membership of the Authority.

27. Mr LEE Kai-ming said that he, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and several Members who were trade unions representatives had discussed and considered that a Bills Committee would not be required.

28. Referring members to the Administration's proposed technical amendment as detailed in paragraph 2 of the paper, the Legal Adviser said that the Legal Service Division was satisfied that the legal and drafting aspects of the Bill were in order.

29. Members did not raise objection to the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

III. Business arising from previous Council meetings

(a) **Legal Service Division's reports on bills referred to the House Committee in accordance with Rule 54(4)**

(i) **Employment (Amendment) Bill 2000**
(LC Paper No. LS 82/99-00)

30. The Chairman said that the object of the Bill was to clarify that taking part in a strike was not a lawful ground for the termination of an employee's contract of employment without notice or payment in lieu.

31. Mr LEE Kai-ming said that Mr LEE Cheuk-yan had suggested that a Bills Committee be formed to study the Bill. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed support for Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's suggestion.

32. Members agreed that a Bills Committee be formed. The following members agreed to join : Mr LEE Kai-ming, Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Mr CHAN Wing-chan and Mr Andrew CHENG Kar-foo.

(ii) **Entertainment Special Effects Bill**
(LC Paper No. LS 83/99-00)

33. The Chairman introduced the paper and said that the purpose of the Bill was to establish the Entertainment Special Effects Licensing Authority to

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regulate the production of special effects in films, television and theatrical performance.

34. The Chairman further said that the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts had sent in a submission to the Secretariat requesting a review of the Bill. The Chairman added that the Administration had briefed the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on the details of the Bill on 8 November 1999 and 14 February 2000. Panel members had expressed concern over several aspects of the Bill.

35. Mr MA Fung-kwok suggested that a Bills Committee be formed. Members agreed. The following members agreed to join : Mr MA Fung-kwok, Mr James TO (as advised by Mr LEE Wing-tat), and Mr Andrew WONG.

(iii) Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Bill
(LC Paper No. LS 93/99-00)

36. The Chairman said that the purpose of the Bill was to establish a regulatory scheme of treatment centres providing voluntary residential treatment and rehabilitation for drug dependants.

37. The Legal Adviser added that the Bill sought to repeal the Drug Addicts Treatment and Rehabilitation Ordinance and provide for the making of subsidiary legislation and the issue of Codes of Practice relating to the operation, management and control of treatment centres.

38. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that Mr James TO had suggested that a Bills Committee be formed to study the Bill. Members agreed. The following members agreed to join : Dr LEONG Che-hung, Miss Cyd HO Sau-lan and Mr James TO (as advised by Mr LEE Wing-tat).

(iv) Road Traffic Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2000
(LC Paper No. LS 96/99-00)

39. The Legal Adviser explained the proposed amendments as detailed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the paper. He added that the Legal Service Division was seeking clarification from the Administration on certain drafting points.

40. The Chairman said that the Transport Advisory Committee and the Road Safety Council had expressed support for the proposals in the Bill.

41. Mrs Miriam LAU said that the proposal to increase the penalty levels for speeding offences was discussed by the Panel on Transport in December 1999 and January 2000. Members of the Panel did not object to the proposed

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increase in penalties for speeding in excess of the speed limit by more than 30 km/h. Some Panel members were, however, of the view that the speed limits of certain road sections should be reviewed.

42. The Legal Adviser responded that amendments to revise speed limits might be outside the scope of the Bill.

43. Mrs Miriam LAU suggested that a Bills Committee be formed. Members agreed. The following members agreed to join : Mr Bernard CHAN, Mr SIN Chung-kai, Mr Andrew WONG, Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yea and Mr Andrew CHENG Kar-foo.

(v) Employees' Compensation (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2000
(LC Paper No. LS 97/99-00)

44. The Chairman introduced the paper and said that the Bill sought to revise the scheme of statutory compensation payable by the employer where his employee died from injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment. He added that the Labour Advisory Board had endorsed the proposals in the Bill.

45. Miss CHAN Yuen-han suggested that a Bills Committee be formed as members of the Panel on Manpower had expressed reservations on the proposals in the Bill. Mr LEE Kai-ming expressed support for Miss CHAN's suggestion.

46. Members agreed that a Bills Committee be formed to study the Bill. The following members agreed to join : Mr Kenneth TING, Miss Cyd HO Sau-lan, Mr LEE Kai-ming, Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Mr CHAN Wing-chan and Mr Andrew CHENG Kar-foo.

(b) Legal Service Division's reports on subsidiary legislation tabled in Council on 23 February and 1 March 2000 (gazetted on 18 and 25 February 2000)

(LC Papers Nos. LS 89 & 94/99-00)

47. Members did not raise any query on the subsidiary legislation gazetted on 18 and 25 February 2000.

IV. Further report by the Legal Service Division on outstanding bills

Adaptation of Laws (No. 17) Bill 1999

(LC Paper No. LS 92/99-00)

48. The Legal Adviser said that the Bill dealt with the adaptation of ten ordinances relating mainly to the registration of certain professions including the Midwives Registration Ordinance (the principal Ordinance) and the Midwives Registration (Amendment) Ordinance 1997 (the Amendment Ordinance).

49. The Legal Adviser further said that members agreed at the meeting on 24 September 1999 that the Second Reading debate on the Bill could resume. However, as the Amendment Ordinance had been brought into the operation on 30 September 1999, it was necessary that the adaptations proposed in the Bill in respect of the Amendment Ordinance should be made to the principal Ordinance. The Administration had therefore proposed CSAs to achieve this technical change. The Legal Adviser added that the Legal Service Division was of the view that the legal and drafting aspects of the proposed CSAs were in order.

50. Members did not raise objection to the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

V. Business for the Council meeting on 15 March 2000

(a) Questions

(LC Paper No. CB(3) 640/99-00)

51. The Chairman said that 20 questions (six oral and 14 written) had been scheduled.

(b) Bills - First and Second Readings

(i) Securities and Futures Legislation (Provision of False Information) Bill 2000

(ii) Karaoke Establishments Bill

52. Members noted that the above Bills would be introduced into the Council on 15 March 2000 and considered by the House Committee on 17 March 2000.

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(c) **Bills - resumption of debate on Second Reading, Committee Stage and Third Reading**

53. Members noted that no notice had been received.

(d) **Government motions**

(i) **Resolution under section 30 of the Discovery Bay Tunnel Link Ordinance (Cap. 520) - to be moved by the Secretary for Transport**

(LC Paper No. LS 99/99-00)

54. The Legal Adviser said that the proposed resolution sought the Council's approval of the Discovery Bay Tunnel Link Bylaw made by the Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited. The Legal Service Division was seeking clarification from the Administration on certain technical points, in particular the issue relating to "specified vehicle" referred to in paragraph 2 of the paper and the legal basis for making the Bylaw apply to the Government when the principal Ordinance might not apply to the State which included the Government by virtue of section 66 of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1). He added that a further report would be submitted.

55. The Chairman suggested that the Administration be asked to withdraw the notice for moving the proposed resolution at the Council meeting on 15 March 2000 so as to allow Members more time to study the Bylaw. Members agreed.

(ii) **Resolution under section 7(1) of the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) - to be moved by the Secretary for the Treasury**

(LC Paper No. LS 90/99-00)

56. The Chairman said that the purpose of the proposed resolution was to seek funds on account to enable the Government to carry on existing services between the start of the financial year on 1 April 2000 and the enactment of the Appropriation Ordinance. He added that the Legal Service Division was of the view that the legal and drafting aspects of the proposed resolution were in order.

57. Members did not raise any query on the proposed resolution.

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(e) **Members' motions**

(i) **Motion on "Manpower in the information technology industry"**

58. Members noted the wording of the motion which would be moved by Mr SIN Chung-kai.

(ii) **Motion on "Details of promoting Mandatory Provident Fund schemes"**

59. Members noted the wording of the motion which would be moved by Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun.

60. The Chairman reminded members that the deadline for giving notice of amendments (if any) to the motions was 8 March 2000. The speaking time limits stipulated in rule 17(c) of the House Rules would apply.

VI. Reports

(a) **Position report on Bills Committees/subcommittees**

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 1213/99-00 and Director of Administration's letter of 2 March 2000 tabled at the meeting and issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1305/99-00 on 8 March 2000)

61. The Chairman said that there were 13 Bills Committees and seven subcommittees in action. The Bills Committee on Securities (Margin Financing) (Amendment) Bill 1999 and the Bills Committee on Education (Amendment) Bill 1999 had completed work and would report under items (c) and (d) below.

62. The Chairman referred to the Director of Administration's letter tabled at the meeting, which proposed that certain bills be given priority. Members agreed to the Administration's proposed priority.

63. The Chairman informed members that the two vacant slots would be taken up by the Bills Committee on Urban Renewal Authority Bill and the Bills Committee on Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2000 in accordance with the priority agreed to by members.

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(b) Report of the Bills Committee on Adaptation of Laws (No. 9) Bill 1999

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1084/99-00)

64. The Chairman said that Miss Margaret NG, Chairman of the Bills Committee, had made a verbal reported to the House Committee on 18 February 2000.

65. Miss Margaret NG said that the Administration had yet to give notice of resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill. She added that upon the Administration giving notice, she would give notice to move a CSA to the provision on the granting of exemption to vehicles owned by the State from taking out third party insurance.

(c) Report of the Bills Committee on Securities (Margin Financing) (Amendment) Bill 1999

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1085/99-00)

66. Introducing the paper on behalf of Mr Ronald ARCULLI, Chairman of the Bills Committee, Mr Albert HO highlighted the main deliberations of the Bills Committee, in particular its deliberations on the conduct of securities margin financing business relating to the pooling of clients' assets as detailed in paragraphs 23 to 25 of the paper. Mr HO said that the Administration would move a number of CSAs to address the Bills Committee's concern over several aspects of the Bill.

67. In response to Miss Emily LAU's question as to why the Bills Committee would not be moving the CSAs, Mr HO explained that members of the Bills Committee had put forward a number of proposals on the policy and drafting aspects of the Bill. The Administration had accepted these proposals and agreed to move the CSAs detailed in Appendix IV of the paper.

68. Miss Emily LAU was of the view that as the proposed amendments were initiated by the Bills Committee and agreed to by the Administration, the Bills Committee, and not the Administration, should move the CSAs.

69. Miss Margaret NG said that if amendments proposed by a Bills Committee were agreed to by the Administration, it would be acceptable for the Administration to take over the amendments. However, it would be unacceptable if the Administration took over amendments which were initiated by the Bills Committee but not accepted by the Administration.

70. Mr Albert HO said that the amendments proposed to the Bill involved complex technical issues. He considered it appropriate for the Administration to take over the amendments since the drafting work required was very complex and time consuming.

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71. Mr HO informed members that he would consult Mr ARCULLI as to whether he would, in his capacity as Chairman of the Bills Committee, move a CSA proposing that the Financial Resources Rules to be introduced by the Administration be subject to positive vetting by LegCo. Mr HO further said that he would give notice to move the CSA should Mr ARCULLI decide not to move the CSA.

72. Mr HO added that the Bills Committee had recommended that the Second Reading debate on the Bill be resumed on 15 March 2000.

73. The Chairman reminded members that the deadline for giving notice of CSAs to the Bill was 6 March 2000.

(d) Report of the Bills Committee on Education (Amendment) Bill 1999
(LC Paper No. CB(2) 1262/99-00)

74. Mr CHAN Kam-lam introduced the paper on behalf of Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung, Chairman of the Bills Committee. Mr CHAN said that the Bills Committee supported the policy of setting the retirement age for teachers and principals at 60 and permitting an extension of service until the age of 65 at the discretion of the Director of Education.

75. Mr CHAN highlighted the Bills Committee's deliberations on the scope of application of the retirement policy, assessment and appeal mechanism, as well as the transitional period for implementation of the retirement policy as detailed in paragraphs 13-16, 17-23 and 24-25 of the paper respectively. He informed members that the Bills Committee had recommended that the Second Reading debate on the Bill be resumed on 15 March 2000, subject to the CSAs set out in Appendix II of the paper to be moved by the Administration. He added that a member of the Bills Committee might move CSAs to extend the application of the Bill to Direct Subsidy Schools.

76. The Legal Adviser pointed out that the proposed amendment to clause 5(b) had no practical meaning in view of the amendment proposed to clause 7 of the Bill. He added that the proposed amendment to clause 5(b) would be removed from the CSAs to be moved by the Administration.

77. Members raised no objection to the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

78. The Chairman reminded members that the deadline for giving notice of CSAs was 6 March 2000.

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(e) **Report of the Subcommittee on Review of Operating Expenses for Members of the Legislative Council**
(*LC Paper No. AS 153/99-00*)

79. Miss Emily LAU, Chairman of the Subcommittee, introduced the paper and highlighted the Subcommittee's deliberations as detailed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the paper. She added that the Subcommittee had recommended that Members' remuneration and operating expenses reimbursement should continue to be paid after 30 June 2000 up to and including the election day on 10 September 2000.

80. Mr Andrew WONG referred to paragraph 7 of the paper and pointed out that apart from members of the Singaporean Parliament, members of the United States Congress also received remuneration up to the end of their elected term of office.

81. Members endorsed the Subcommittee's recommendation and agreed that a copy of the report be sent to the Administration.

VII. Expediting scrutiny of bills
(*LC Paper No. CB(2) 1222/99-00*)

82. The Chairman introduced the paper which detailed the measures adopted in the former LegCo towards the end of the 1995-97 term to speed up the scrutiny of bills. He said that currently there were 15 Bills Committees and seven subcommittees in action as well as 20 Bills Committees on the waiting list, with the possibility that additional Bills Committees would be formed to study some of the bills expected to be introduced before mid-March 2000.

83. The Chairman sought members' views as to whether the following measures should be adopted to expedite the scrutiny of bills -

- (a) commencing preparatory work for two Bills Committees at the top of the waiting list (as opposed to four Bills Committees in the 1996-97 session);
- (b) increasing the present quota of active Bills Committees to 16 or 17 (as opposed to 18 in the 1996-97 session); and
- (c) providing an additional meeting slot during lunch hour.

84. Miss Emily LAU supported the measures proposed in paragraph 83 (a) and (c) above. However, she expressed reservations about the proposal of

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increasing the quota of active Bills Committees, as this would result in clashing of meetings, hence affecting the operation of the Bills Committees concerned.

85. Mr Edward HO did not favour providing an additional meeting slot during lunch hour. He was also concerned that increasing the quota of Bills Committees in action to 18 would lead to clashing of meetings. He further said that the Panels should avoid holding special meetings as far as possible.

86. Miss Margaret NG said that the measures proposed in paragraph 83(b) and (c) were related, as additional meeting slots would be needed if there was an increase in the number of active Bills Committees. She added that the Secretariat would require additional resources to cope with the increase in workload. As regards the measure proposed in paragraph 83(a), Miss NG was of the view that it was straightforward and should be put in place immediately.

87. The Secretary General pointed out that although the number of active Bills Committees was increased from 15 to 18 in the last few months of the 1996-97 session, the number of subcommittees in action averaged only two to three. Given that in the current session, there were six to seven subcommittees in action at any one time, the Secretariat would be able to cope only if the number of Bills Committees in action would not exceed 16, as suggested by the Chairman.

88. Mrs Selina CHOW said that the Chairman of Panels and Bills Committees should exercise stricter control in the allocation of speaking time to prevent meetings from overrunning. Dr YEUNG Sum added that in conducting meetings, committee chairmen should avoid taking an active part in the discussion.

89. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the following measures be adopted -

- (a) increasing the present quota of Bills Committees in action from 15 to 16;
- (b) commencing preparatory work for the two Bills Committees at the top of the waiting list;
- (c) providing an additional meeting slot during lunch hour; and
- (d) scheduling the next Bills Committee meeting within two weeks from the date of the last meeting.

90. Miss Emily LAU suggested that clashing of meetings should be avoided as far as possible. Members agreed.

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91. Miss Emily LAU further suggested that a Bills Committee should not schedule a few meetings in a row within a week as Members had other commitments and might find it difficult to attend the meetings. Mr Andrew WONG said that sometimes it might be more efficient for the Bills Committee to meet a few times in a week to complete deliberation of an issue and then convene the next meeting in two weeks' time.

92. The Chairman said that the Bills Committee on Broadcasting Bill would be activated, and that the Bills Committee on Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2000 and the Bills Committee on Evidence (Amendment) Bill 1999 should commence preparatory work.

VIII. Any other business

93. The Chairman reminded members that the Legislative Council Building Open Day would be held on 25 March 2000 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. He urged Members to make an effort to participate in the event.

94. There being no further business, the meeting ended at 3:53 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
15 March 2000