

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2574/99-00
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

LegCo Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 2 June 2000 at 4:00 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members Present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok
Hon Christine LOH
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
- Members Attending** : Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
- Members Absent** : Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon FUNG Chi-kin

Public Officers : Item III
Attending

Mr NG Hon-wah
Acting Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Mrs Rachel CARTLAND
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security)

Ms Ann LAU
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family and Child Welfare)

Miss Juliana CHAN
Senior Legal Aid Counsel
Legal Aid Department

Mr Andrew CHEUNG
Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs

Item IV

Mr Robin GILL
Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare (3)

Miss Mary TSANG
Principal Assistant Secretary
for Health and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Ms Roxana CHENG
Senior Assistant Solicitor General
Department of Justice

Ms Ann LAU
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family and Child Welfare)

Mr Parrish NG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (4)

Mr Kenneth CHENG
Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mrs CHAM LAI Suk-ching
Principal Inspector (Creative Arts and Home Economics)
Education Department

Miss BAU Wai-ngun
Principal Curriculum Development Officer (Humanities)
Education Department

Mr LEUNG Min-cheung
Senior Labour Officer (Employment Services)
Labour Department

Item V

Mr NG Hon-wah
Acting Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Mr Francis LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (5)

Mr Jonathan MCKINLEY
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Recreation and Sport)

Mr Victor YUNG
Assistant Commissioner (Special Duties)
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority

Ms Grace YU
Senior Licensing Officer (Miscellaneous)
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority

Mr Peter LAI
Principal Executive Officer (Administration)
Information Services Department

Mr CHING Hon-kit
Senior E & M Engineer (General Legislation)
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr WONG Kwong-sang
Chief Officer (Licensing Authority) (Acting)
Home Affairs Department

Mr KWOK Lim-cho
Senior Executive Officer (Licensing Authority)
Home Affairs Department

Clerk in Attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Assistant Secretary (2)6

Staff in Attendance : Mrs Shirley NG
Senior Assistant Secretary (2)9

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1861/99-00]

The minutes of meeting held on 10 April 2000 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1940/99-00 and CB(2)1965/99-00]

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting -

- (a) a report provided by the Administration on further details of the measures to regulate the safety standards of privately-operated golf practice facilities ; and
- (b) concluding observations of the United Nations Committee Against Torture on the report on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment.

III. Intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2159/99-00(01), CB(2)2195/99-00(01) and CB(2)2271/99-00]

3. Members noted that the Caritas Family Services Project on Extramarital Affairs had made a written submission expressing support for setting up an intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments [Paper No. CB(2)2195/99-00(01)]. Members also noted that the Concerned Group on the Recovery of Alimony had also made a written submission expressing similar support. The written submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2271/99-00.

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4. Acting Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (Ag DS(HA)1) briefed members on the major recommendations of the report presented by "the inter-departmental working group on review of law and administrative measures affecting divorcees and children who are eligible for alimony" (the Working Group) [Paper No. CB(2)2159/99-00(01)]. He said that the report contained ten recommendations to improve existing administrative procedures for recovery of maintenance payments which had been accepted by the Administration. He added that some of the recommendations had already been implemented.

Setting up an intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments

5. Ag DS(HA)1 informed members that the Working Group had considered the proposal of setting up an intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments. However, it was concluded that an intermediary body would not be able to offer maintenance payees or taxpayers any significant benefits over and above those that could be achieved by improving the existing administrative system. The Administration had accepted the Working Group's recommendation not to set up an intermediary body.

6. Members present expressed disappointment at the Government's decision not to set up an intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments. They were also dissatisfied with the Administration's explanation of the rationale of the decision.

7. The Chairman noted that during the 24 months from April 1998 to March 2000, the Judiciary had received 57 applications for Attachment of Income Orders (AIO), although there were some 785 judgement summons issued for maintenance arrears during the same period. Only 18 of the 57 applications were approved and it took as long as six months for some cases to be approved. She queried why the Administration still maintained that the AIO was an effective means to address the problem of maintenance arrears.

8. The Chairman further said that the Legislative Council (LegCo) had passed two motions urging the Government to establish an intermediary body for the collection of maintenance payments in the past two years. LegCo Members and concerned organisations had reiterated on numerous occasions that an intermediary body was the only effective means to collect maintenance payments. She expressed regret that the report had failed to address Members' concerns.

9. Deputy Chairman said that he could not agree with the Administration's view that an intermediary body would not be able to offer maintenance payees or taxpayers any significant benefits more than those that could be achieved by improving the existing system. He pointed out that the Administration should

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not base its decision primarily on economic considerations. Deputy Chairman stressed that although the measures proposed by the Working Group could be of some assistance, the hardship and torment suffered by divorcees and their children in collecting maintenance payments would not be alleviated in the absence of an intermediary body. He added that the distress and bitterness that the children were exposed to in the process of collecting arrears would adversely affect the psychological development of these children. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed a similar view.

10. Ag DS(HA)1 responded that the Administration had not made the decision of not setting up an intermediary body primarily on economic considerations. He pointed out that maintenance payments were private affairs between the individuals concerned. It was a matter of principle that the Government should not interfere in personal matters unless there was a very strong reason to do so. For instance, Government's interference would bring substantial benefits to the individuals concerned and the taxpayers. Ag DS(HA)1 added that even if enforcement actions were to be taken by an intermediary body, a maintenance payee would still have to be approached by the body for confirmation that the maintenance payer had not paid direct to the payee; and to attend court hearings in case the court needed to vary a maintenance order.

11. The Chairman said that she did not agree with the Administration's position that setting up an intermediary body represented an intervention into private affairs. She remarked that divorce was also a personal matter but the Government had set up a pilot scheme on family mediation to assist couples who intended to separate or divorce. Deputy Chairman pointed out that the problem of maintenance arrears mostly affected divorced women and children in need of assistance. If they did not receive the payments, their livelihood would be in difficulty. Hence, the Government had the obligation to protect these needy people from financial hardship and mental stress.

12. Ag DS(HA)1 said that if an intermediary body would arrange advance payments in order to relieve the maintenance payee of financial hardship, it might give the wrong impression to the maintenance payer that he could pass the burden to the intermediary body. The Chairman remarked that the intermediary body could always recover arrears from the maintenance payer. Ag DS(HA)1 responded that the intermediary body probably would not be able to recover all arrears from the maintenance payers. The end result would be that taxpayers shouldered a financial responsibility which should be that of the maintenance payers. Miss HO Sau-lan remarked that making advance payments should be a main purpose of establishing an intermediary body. She added that an intermediary body would always be more effective than an individual in recovering arrears of maintenance payments.

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13. Mr LAW Chi-kwong said that it was illogical to decide against setting up an intermediary body on the grounds that it would be unable to recover all arrears. He stressed that the merit of setting up such a body was to save the divorced women and children from the pain and bitterness of having to collect money from the maintenance payers. It also saved them from the stress of having to go through the process of applying for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and legal aid. The Government's decision not to set up an intermediary body was tantamount to telling all maintenance payers that they could evade responsibility to pay maintenance payments and even a governmental body was unable to recover the arrears.

14. Ag DS(HA)1 reiterated that it would be unfair that taxpayers had to advance maintenance for the maintenance payers who could afford but were unwilling to make the payments. In addition, the job of the intermediary body could be achieved by improving the existing administrative systems. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare) (AD/SW(FCW)) supplemented that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was aware that divorced single-parents needed support and advice on various family matters irrespective of whether they were in need of financial assistance. SWD was very concerned about their emotional well-being and had provided counselling service and practical assistance to them through the Family Services Centres.

15. Deputy Chairman said that the idea of an intermediary body stemmed from the existence of child support agencies in some developed countries. He queried why the Administration considered that the problem of maintenance arrears could be dealt with more effectively in HKSAR without establishing an intermediary body. Ag DS(HA)1 responded that the main reasons for establishing child support schemes in overseas countries were that the courts were inconsistent in assessing the amounts of maintenance and the child support agencies took over from the courts the power to make maintenance orders. As far as he understood, those who supported the proposal of an intermediary body in HKSAR did not advocate the transfer of the courts' power to an executive body. He added that although the reviews conducted by Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom had re-affirmed the value and principles behind the child support schemes, there were many problems with their implementation. Referring to paragraph 5.1 of the LegCo Secretariat's research report dated April 1999, which stated that none of the countries "would want to dismantle the scheme", he suggested that the fact that dismantling was considered was indicative of the size of the problems.

Improvements on the existing administrative system

16. Members noted that the Working Group had recommended the court be empowered to order that maintenance specified in maintenance orders be paid into court in appropriate cases, and to impose a surcharge against defaulting

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maintenance payers. Deputy Chairman was of the view that these recommendations to improve the payment and collection methods were meaningless if the maintenance payers' addresses were not available.

17. Members also noted that another recommendation of the Working Group was that non-governmental bodies and professional bodies should be informed that cases of a maintenance payer failing to notify the maintenance payee of a change of address could be reported to the Police station nearest to the maintenance payer's last known address. The Working Group further recommended that the Law Society of Hong Kong be asked to inform its members that they could, with the use of a standard letter, request the Immigration Department to search its records for addresses of maintenance payers against whom legal actions would be taken for default on maintenance payments.

18. In response to the Deputy Chairman's query about the effectiveness of these recommendations, Ag DS(HA)1 explained that a maintenance payer must notify the maintenance payee of any change in address within 14 days. Failure to do so would constitute a criminal offence. However, no prosecution had been taken out apparently because even some lawyers did not know where to report such offences. Under the new procedure, cases of maintenance payers failing to notify the maintenance payees of changes of addresses could be reported to the Police station nearest to the maintenance payer's last known address. This would pose a deterrent effect on those maintenance payers who tried to conceal their addresses.

19. Ag DS(HA)1 further explained that a request for addresses of maintenance payers from government departments would normally be declined in the past because of concern of possible infringement of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) because the requestor did not state the purpose for which the personal data would be used. With the use of a standard letter, as recommended by the Working Group, the Immigration Department, Transport Department, and Housing Department could be requested to search their records for addresses of maintenance payers so as to facilitate the process in obtaining their addresses. However, Ag DS(HA)1 admitted that if the government departments concerned did not have the latest addresses of the maintenance payers, the recommendation would be of little assistance.

20. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman asked whether the maintenance payees would receive CSSA during or before the recovery proceedings. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security) (AD/SW(SS)) responded that applicants for CSSA had to go through the necessary verification procedures. To avoid some divorcees relying on CSSA and refraining from applying for maintenance, SWD had introduced new procedures in August 1998. Under the new procedures, in processing CSSA applications involving divorcees who had not received maintenance or whose ex-spouses had

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defaulted on maintenance payments, SWD would ask the applicants to declare on an undertaking form their intention to file a claim for maintenance/enforcement of the maintenance order before CSSA payments could be made to them. SWD would not stop or reduce CSSA payment until the CSSA recipients had successfully recovered the maintenance. SWD dealt with each case in the light of its particular circumstances. For urgent cases where there was a genuine need, the Department could provide cash assistance as early as on the same day the application was made.

21. In response to members' concern about the complicated and time-consuming procedures in applying for CSSA and legal aid, AD/SW(SS) informed members that the present practice was that CSSA recipients were not normally required to undergo a means test when they applied for legal aid. While maintenance payees applying for CSSA and legal aid in the past might have to make numerous visits to SWD and Legal Aid Department (LAD), a pilot scheme had been conducted to synchronise the procedures in processing applications for CSSA and legal aid. SWD had also requested its social security field units to centralise the collection and keeping of all information of the maintenance payees applying for maintenance and CSSA for all other relevant government departments.

22. Miss HO Sau-lan pointed out that some maintenance payers would withhold payment until shortly before the scheduled court hearings. However, after paying for a few months, they defaulted again and the maintenance payees had to spend time and effort in instituting legal proceedings time and again. Miss HO noted that SWD would stop or reduce CSSA payment when the CSSA recipients had successfully recovered the maintenance. She asked how SWD could ensure that the maintenance payees would receive immediate financial assistance whenever the maintenance payers defaulted on payments.

23. AD/SW(SS) responded that SWD was aware of the problem that some maintenance payers would stop paying or pay less and less in a sporadic manner. The whole aim of CSSA was to provide instant financial assistance to the needy. Maintenance payees were also advised to declare changes in the receipt of maintenance payments so that applications for CSSA could be filed as early as possible.

24. Miss HO Sau-lan expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's response. She remarked that a maintenance payee still had to go through the whole process of applying to SWD, LAD and the court should the maintenance payer cease or reduce payments sporadically. Ag DS(HA)1 responded that if the maintenance payee was in genuine financial difficulty, SWD could provide immediate financial assistance. He said that AIO was one of the available means to recover maintenance arrears and the most common means was to apply for a Judgement Summons. If the maintenance payer had defaulted on payments without reasonable excuse, the court could commit him to a prison.

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25. Miss HO Sau-lan said that a maintenance payee would be in great financial difficulty in case of default payment if she needed the maintenance for paying mortgage. Miss HO asked and AD/SW(SS) replied that the maintenance payee might be required to sell the property before applying for CSSA. If the maintenance payee had the custody of young children, she would not be required to sell the property unless the property value was great. Even if the maintenance payee was required to do so, a grace period would be given.

26. Deputy Chairman asked whether a maintenance payee seeking legal assistance would need to make numerous trips to SWD and LAD if the maintenance payer defaulted on payments time and again. Senior Legal Aid Counsel (SLAC) responded that under the pilot scheme, SWD would do preliminary investigations and collect all the relevant information about the maintenance payers and payees. Meritorious enforcement cases would be referred to LAD. Since only maintenance payees who had been granted CSSA would be referred to LAD, LAD did not have to do separate means tests and their processing time would be shortened. Where appropriate, the offer and acceptance documents for legal aid application would be signed by the payee at the first appointment. Under this scheme, the maintenance payee could save one trip to LAD. In the event the maintenance payer repeated default on payments, the maintenance payee did not have to go through the application procedure for legal aid if the legal aid certificate was still valid. However, self-employed persons or people not in receipt of CSSA would need to go through income check whenever they applied for legal aid. It normally took not more than 10 days for a person to get an appointment to make a formal application for legal aid.

27. In summing up the discussion, the Chairman said that it was a consensus among members that setting up an intermediary body would address the problem of maintenance arrears and the difficulties faced by the divorcees effectively. It would also help avoiding some divorcees relying on CSSA and refraining from applying for maintenance or from taking legal actions to recover arrears. Further discussion would not be fruitful if the Administration took a completely different view.

IV. Follow-up on concluding comments of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN Committee) on the initial report on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2159/99-00(02)]

28. Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare (3) (DS(HW)3) briefed

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members on the paper setting out the progress of implementing the recommendations in the concluding comments.

29. DS(HW)3 said that the Women's Commission which the Government had recently announced would be set up to promote the well-being and interests of women. It would perform the role of a central mechanism on women that the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had prescribed. He said that the Women's Commission would be a central body to identify women's needs and to specifically address matters of concern to women in a comprehensive and systematic manner. It would also develop a long-term vision and improved strategy to deal with women's issues. Miss HO Sau-lan pointed out that some LegCo Members had already clearly expressed the view during the Motion Debate on Women's Commission at the Council Meeting on 31 May 2000 that the Women's Commission to be set up under the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB), as proposed by the Administration, should not be accorded with the status of a central mechanism.

30. On the issue of marital rape, Miss HO Sau-lan said that Hon Margaret NG had specifically requested the Administration during the Motion Debate on Sexual Violence at the Council Meeting on 12 April 2000 to delete the word "unlawful" from section 118 of the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200). She asked whether there was any timetable for introducing the legislative proposal into LegCo. Senior Assistant Solicitor General (SASG) responded that a man committed rape under section 118 of the Crimes Ordinance if he had unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman who at the time of the intercourse did not consent to it. The Administration understood that the law was not entirely clear on marital rape. The Department of Justice was studying the proposed amendment and would revert to the LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services at its next meeting scheduled for 20 June 2000.

31. Miss HO Sau-lan asked about the follow-up actions taken by the Administration to ensure that law enforcement officers were aware that marital rape was unlawful under the law. SASG responded that training had been provided to law enforcement officers on a regular basis and all front-line police officers were instructed to handle marital rape cases according to the law.

32. Members noted that a number of improvement measures on services for battered spouses had been implemented by the Working Group on Battered Spouse to strengthen the co-ordination among government departments and non-governmental bodies in handling the problem of spouse battering. Members also noted that the Administration would seek funding from the Finance Committee shortly to provide more staff in the Family and Child Protective Services Units as well as in each refuge under the Promoting Self-reliance Strategy. Deputy Chairman asked whether the proposed improvements would be applicable to CSSA recipients only. AD/SW(FCW) confirmed that the proposed improvements would be applicable to all who

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were in need irrespective of whether they were CSSA recipients or not.

33. Members noted that the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) had set up a Task Force on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value with the objective of promoting the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Deputy Chairman asked whether the Government would play any active role in the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value as recommended by the UN Committee. DS(HW)3 responded that the Education and Manpower Bureau was working closely with EOC on the matter. He undertook to provide information on the timeframe of the Task Force for members' reference.

(Post-meeting note : The Administration had advised that the Task Force had an implementation plan for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value which would be divided into three phases. The civil service and public bodies would be included in the first phase, large companies with over 200 employees in the second, and small companies would be included in the last phase. Each phase would take one or two years to complete but the work of the Task Force would be expedited where possible.)

34. Members noted that there were a number of reservations and declarations to the Convention and the Administration were considering and reviewing their applicability to HKSAR. Deputy Chairman asked whether there was a timetable for the review. DS(HW)3 agreed to provide a written reply since there were a number of different issues involved.

(Post-meeting note : The Administration had advised that it might be possible to amend some of the reservations to the Convention and would consider further with relevant bureaux and departments. The Administration would also need to consult the future Women's Commission. Since the circumstances of each reservation varied, the Administration could not at this point of time provide a definite timeframe on the exercise. However, the Government would take the issue forward as a matter of priority.)

35. Miss HO Sau-lan expressed concern about the lack of gender statistics in HKSAR. She asked whether the Government had conducted any gender studies itself apart from the \$32 million allocated to academic institutions for the conduct of gender studies over the past three years. DS(HW)3 responded that the Administration acknowledged the need to conduct more gender studies and to collect the relevant data. One of the tasks of the Women's Commission would be to initiate surveys and research studies on women's issues. Miss HO pointed out that the census to be conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2001 was a good opportunity to collect gender data for future reference by a central mechanism on women's issues. DS(HW)3 said that

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HWB would discuss with the Department to ensure that the right kinds of data was collected.

V. The Administration's proposal to revise Government fees and charges not directly affecting people's livelihood or general business activities

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2159/99-00(03)]

36. Ag DS(HA)1 briefed members on the paper setting out the proposals relating to the revision of Government fees and charges which did not directly affect people's livelihood or general business activities which fell under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB).

37. Deputy Chairman asked why the Administration proposed fee and charge revision against the prevailing climate of deflation and downward trend of operating costs. Ag DS(HA)1 responded that while the fees and charges in question had been frozen since December 1997, most civil servants were still entitled to annual increments despite the pay freeze in 1999. He pointed out that the proposed increase in cost was attributed to an increase in staff cost.

38. Mr LEE Wing-tat noted that the fees and charges revision was proposed on the basis of full-cost recovery principle for items which did not directly affect the livelihood of the general public or general business activities. He pointed out that the high costs for provision of certain Government services might be a result of the inefficiency and cumbersome procedures involved. Referring to the full cost (at 2000-01 price level) for duplication of audio tape provided by HAB, Mr LEE said that the fee of \$383 was unreasonably high. He further said that while a black and white photograph with a size of 12cm x 17cm would probably cost about \$10 to \$15 in private sector, the Government's cost was as high as \$78. The Chairman also expressed surprise at the high level of licence fees for clubs and gambling establishments.

39. In response to members' queries about the cost for provision of Government services, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (5) (PAS(HA)5) explained that apart from the actual duplication of photos or issue of licences, a lot of administrative work e.g vetting of application and filing and despatch were involved. He added that some of the services would only be required on a one-off basis. Higher cost-effectiveness could be achieved if the provision was on a more regular basis.

40. Mr LEE Wing-tat did not agree with the Administration's explanation. He pointed out that mass media and research agencies would always need to purchase photographs and transparencies from the Information Services Department (ISD), but the cost was still very high. Principal Executive Officer (Administration) of the Information Services Department (PEO(A)/ISD)

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responded that only some 3 000 photographs and transparencies were produced on sales requests per year and the small amount of production had increased the average cost substantially. ISD had considered contracting out the service and would continue to consider outsourcing and other options with a view to reducing the cost. Mr LEE Wing-tat remarked that consideration should be given to contract out these services as early as possible in order to improve cost-effectiveness.

41. In response to Mr LEE Wing-tat's enquiry about the calculation of the central administrative overhead, Ag DS(HA)1 and PEO(A)/ISD said that as other government departments such as the Department of Justice and the Treasury would provide services to the department concerned, a fixed percentage of the central administrative overhead would be added to the cost for provision of all Government services as an indirect cost.

42. Referring to the fees for registration of electrical and mechanical services professionals, Deputy Chairman remarked that the cost was very high. He asked about the procedures involved in the issue of a registration certificate. Senior E & M Engineer (General Legislation) of Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (SEME(GL)/EMSD) responded that the procedures involved checking academic certificates, interviews and examinations, and sometimes site-testing would be required. SEME(GL)/EMSD informed members that the price of a job for an electrical and mechanical services professional was about \$4,000 to \$8,000. The cost of the certificate at \$5,457 would account for only a small portion of the annual operating cost of the services professional concerned.

43. Deputy Chairman asked whether an electrical and mechanical services professional staff would only require to register once. SEME(GL)/EMSD responded that an electrical and mechanical services professional staff would make an entry registration initially. All the games that could be handled by that person would be stated in the certificate. He would have to apply for amendment of the certificate if he wanted to handle other amusement machines. SEME(GL)/EMSD added that a majority of the electrical and mechanical services professional would not apply for amendment of certificate.

44. In response to the Deputy Chairman's further question, SEME(GL)/EMSD said that the annual number of registration of electrical and mechanical services professional was small. The number of applications depended very much on the market situation. The last application was received in 1997. However, with the impending construction of the Disneyland theme park, more applications were expected.

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VI. Draft Report of the Panel to the Legislative Council on 21 June 2000
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2159/99-00(04)]

45. Members endorsed the draft report of the Panel to be submitted to the LegCo on 21 June 2000 issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2159/99-00(04).

VII. Any other business

46. As the meeting was the last one for the current LegCo term, the Chairman thanked members for their work and contributions to the discussions of the Panel in the past two years.

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:35 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

20 September 2000