

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1888/99-00
(These minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP/1

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Minutes of Special Meeting
held on Thursday, 2 March 2000 at 4:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** :
- Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP (Chairman)
 - Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
 - Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
 - Hon David CHU Yu-lin
 - Hon Michael HO Mun-ka
 - Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
 - Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
 - Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
 - Hon CHAN Yuen-han
 - Hon CHAN Wing-chan
 - Hon CHAN Kam-lam
 - Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
 - Hon SIN Chung-kai
 - Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
 - Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
 - Hon SZETO Wah
- Members attending** :
- Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
 - Hon NG Leung-sing
 - Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
 - Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
- Members absent** :
- Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
 - Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP
 - Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP

Public Officers : Mr Joseph WONG, CBS, JP
attending Secretary for Education and Manpower

Mr Philip K F CHOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower 1

Mr Ivan K B LEE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Education 5
and Manpower

Prof LEE Ngok
Executive Director
Vocational Training Council

Dr L H LEES
Deputy Executive Director (Academic)
Vocational Training Council

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

Mrs Amy LO
Finance Officer
Vocational Training Council

Attendance by : Representatives from the Preparatory Committee for the
invitation Federation of Trade Unions in Vocational Training Council

Mr WONG Chun-fai
Representative

Mr LI Kwok-lee
Representative

Mr CHEUNG Fook-kwong
Representative

Mr IP Wing-kin
Representative

Mr KO Fai

Representative

Mr CHAN Siu-lun
Representative

Mr CHENG Kay-kin
Representative

Mr TAM Wai-keung
Representative

Mr LAU Yim-pui
Representative

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

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

Action

I. Review of the role of Vocational Training Council (VTC) in the education system of Hong Kong and its system of technical and vocational training (LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 1228/99-00 and CB(2) 1263/99-00(01))

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr WONG Chun-fai and Mr TAM Wai-keung briefed Members on the submission of the Preparatory Committee for the Federation of Trade Unions in VTC.

2. Executive Director of VTC (ED/VTC) said that the establishment of the Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), which involved the integration of nine former technical institutes, was made after thorough consideration and consultation with the academic staff of VTC, as well as the Academic Board in which students from all campuses were represented. Upon VTC's approval, the implementation of IVE was effected over an 18-month period, with consultation at different staff levels. Before implementation, all of IVE's academic policies, such as the introduction of a common first year for students of Diploma and Higher Diploma courses, were also approved by the Academic Board of IVE and by VTC. There was no question of mistake and thus no one need to apologize for the mistake.

Action

3. Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) briefed Members on the role of VTC in the education system of Hong Kong and VTC's system of technical education and vocational training. He highlighted the following -

- (a) The main objective of VTC was to provide vocational training for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers. VTC would not emulate into a tertiary institution;
- (b) To provide education and training directly applicable to the requirements of the economy, mechanisms had been established for VTC to identify and respond to the needs of the employment market. More emphasis had been placed on training in generic skills, such as training in language skills and computer operation; and
- (c) A reduction in the training places of some courses offered by VTC to Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers would be accompanied by an increase in the number of training places of other courses offered by VTC to the same group of school leavers. Thus, there was no reduction in the overall training opportunity for these school leavers.

4. Referring to paragraph 9 of the paper entitled "An academic system for the education and employment of young people" tabled at the meeting, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that he was pleased to note that the number of training places in Craft Courses and Foundation Diploma courses would be increased in 2000/01. Referring to paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper on the role of VTC, he expressed concern that 2 898 Secondary 3 school leavers and 19 430 Secondary 5 school leavers had to discontinue their study. He said that some Secondary 5 school leavers had chosen to study courses intended for Secondary 3 school leavers, thus resulting in reduced training opportunity for Secondary 3 school leavers.

(Post-meeting note : The paper tabled at the meeting was issued to absent members vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1273/99-00.)

5. ED/VTC responded that VTC's ability to provide sufficient vocational training for these persons was constrained by the availability of resources. SEM said that the Administration would strive at securing more resources for the training of Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers. It would, in association with VTC, look into ways of providing more training opportunities for these persons. He added that the Administration had successfully secured additional resources for organizing courses such as Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) courses and the Information Technology Assistant Course. The Youth Pre-employment Training (YPT) Programme had also enabled more than 2 000 trainees to find a job. Training places in hotel and catering services would also be increased.

6. In response to the Chairman's question about the amount of additional resources

Action

to be allocated for the vocational training of Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers, SEM said that the draft estimates for 2000-01 had yet to be approved. However, financial provision in the amount of tens of millions had been redeployed during the current financial year for implementing measures adopted by the Task Force on Employment.

7. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about whether the annual financial provision of \$2 billion to VTC was utilized in the most effective manner. She considered that there was a mismatch between the demand and supply of training courses offered by VTC. SEM said that about 80% of the financial provision to VTC was used on staff salary and remuneration. A reduction in the financial provision would inevitably lead to a reduction in the number of employees of VTC. Referring to paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper entitled "Role of VTC in the education system of Hong Kong and its system of technical education and vocational training", SEM said that the placement rates of VTC's graduates were generally satisfactory. He said that if there was a decrease in the demand for apprenticeship training, resources should be redeployed to ensure the full utilization of resources. This might result in a redeployment of staff members. Particular caution would be exercised in the process if such a redeployment affected the interests of staff members. He said that the overall provision of resources for vocational training should not be reduced.

Adm

8. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that the Administration should examine the staff costs of VTC in more detail to see if the staff cost at senior levels was much higher than that at junior levels. SEM said that VTC could provide a comparison between the ratio of staff costs at different levels of VTC and those of other tertiary institutions. SEM reiterated that the Administration would, in association with VTC, examine what could be done to provide training opportunities for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers. He cautioned that it might be unfair to restrict the entry requirement of some courses to Secondary 3 level only, as students with higher academic qualifications would then be deprived of the training opportunity. He said that courses offered by VTC could basically be divided into two categories, one offering training in generic skills to enhance a person's employability and the other providing a progression route for a person to continue his training in Diploma or Higher Diploma levels.

9. Miss CHAN Yuen-han questioned why consultation with staff members on the redeployment of Inspectors of Apprentices (I of As) was made by VTC after the redeployment had been decided. SEM responded that communication with VTC's staff members should be dealt with by VTC, which was an autonomous statutory body.

10. Referring to the Administration's paper entitled "A management response to the union submissions to the LegCo Panel on Manpower", Mr CHAN Wing-chan asked why trade unions of VTC had not been consulted on the implementation of IVE. ED/VTC responded that the senior management of VTC was responsible for administrative matters, while IVE's Academic Board, which comprised 78 staff members at different levels including elected representatives of IVE staff as well as student representatives, was responsible for academic matters. The trade unions were not consulted on these matters, which were outside their ambit. They were consulted on changes which might affect the working conditions of employees such as

Action

salary structures and working hours. Regular meetings were held by an advisory committee with trade unions at regular intervals.

11. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the introduction of a common first year for Diploma courses and Higher Diploma courses involved a structural change. The cessation of such an arrangement in the face of general opposition from staff members and students one year after implementation indicated that the arrangement had been a wrong one. He considered that VTC should determine the target group of participants for its courses. It should provide training courses specifically for the following groups -

- (a) Secondary 3 school leavers;
- (b) Secondary 5 school leavers with poor academic results; and
- (c) Secondary 5 school leavers who wished to study Diploma or Higher Diploma courses.

Mr CHEUNG said that the training opportunities of students with lowest academic qualifications would be most affected if there were inadequate resources and training courses were not confined to specific target groups. He added that VTC had a responsibility to provide a progression route for its students to advance to higher levels instead of screening them out as they advanced to higher levels.

12. ED/VTC responded that Mr CHEUNG's suggestion would be considered having regard to whether it would be unfair to students with better academic results. He added that there might be difficulties in implementing the proposal especially when employers generally preferred trainees with better academic qualifications.

13. Dr Raymond HO suggested that VTC should establish dialogue with trade union representatives and consider inviting a trade union representative to meetings of VTC. He said that a similar arrangement involving a student union representative had been working well when he sat on the Council of the City University of Hong Kong. ED/VTC responded that he would convey the suggestion to the Council of VTC for consideration. In response to Mr LEE Kai-ming, he said that he personally had no objection to such an idea. The Chairman said that the Administration should seriously look into the suggestion, given that it came from a Member not representing any trade union.

Adm

14. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether VTC would look into its students' general dissatisfaction regarding the introduction of a common first year for Diploma and Higher Diploma courses. He also asked whether VTC would apologize for the mistake. ED/VTC said that the academic system incorporating a common first year for Diploma and Higher Diploma courses and the revised system in which students were earmarked for Diploma or Higher Diploma courses at the outset were both implementable. The decision to adopt the latter system was made after considering the views of students. There was no question of mistake. He stressed that

Action

communication with students had always been maintained by different management levels of VTC. A bimonthly meeting was also held with representatives of student unions.

Adm

15. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung suggested that the Administration take the lead in recognizing CVS in its employment of new staff. ED/VTC said that the Diplomas and Higher Diplomas issued by VTC had been widely recognized in Hong Kong. The contents of Foundation Diploma courses and courses in CVS were designed in consultation with employers. DSEM1 said that the suggestion would be referred to the Civil Service Bureau for consideration.

16. Mr Michael HO asked whether the Education and Manpower Bureau had given guidelines to VTC regarding the target group of students of VTC's courses. DSEM1 reiterated that the major role of VTC was to provide vocational training for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers. The Administration would continue to monitor whether this was adhered to. It considered that CVS courses should mainly be provided for Secondary 3 school leavers. The Administration would examine, in conjunction with VTC, how this could be achieved. He cautioned that it might be unfair to students with higher academic qualifications if CVS courses were confined to Secondary 3 school leavers only. As VTC was a statutory body, it was inappropriate for the Administration to restrict the entry requirements of courses. Nevertheless, the Administration would take steps to ensure no reduction in the number of training places for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers.

17. The Chairman considered that adequate training places should be provided for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers. ED/VTC said that confining CVS courses to Secondary 3 school leavers would not be difficult to implement. However, as employers generally preferred graduates with higher academic qualifications, such a restriction would affect the placement rate of graduates of CVS courses. More resources would be needed if the training needs of Secondary 5 school leavers were to be fully met.

18. Mr CHAN Kwok-keung said that the training places of VTC were taken into account in calculating the progression rate, which exceeded 90%, of students who completed Secondary 3 education. If the number of training places provided by VTC for Secondary 3 school leavers were to be reduced, the overall progression rate of Secondary 3 students would also be affected. He considered that school leavers should not be deprived of the training opportunities merely because of a lack of sufficient resources. DSEM1 reiterated that the Administration hoped that VTC would continue to provide training to Secondary 3 school leavers, especially through its CVS courses.

19. Dr LUI Ming-wah said that the major issue was the separate provision of training for Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers so that Secondary 3 school leavers would have the opportunity of undergoing further training. He added that according to information provided by the Administration, 3.6% and 25.1% of Secondary 3 and 5

Action

school leavers had discontinued full-time study respectively. This indicated that the problem of insufficient training places was more serious with Secondary 5 school leavers. He considered that more training courses in information technology (IT) should be offered in this IT era.

20. Mr LEE Kai-ming commented that if insufficient resources were provided for the training of Secondary 3 and 5 school leavers, resource provision for penal institutions would have to be increased. He asked whether VTC would consider including the 17 new designated trades under the Apprenticeship Scheme as suggested in a submission from the Association of I of As to VTC.

21. DSEM1 said that there were established criteria for the inclusion of new designated trades into the Apprenticeship Scheme. ED/VTC said that the submission of the Association of I of As had been discussed by the senior management of VTC. It would also be considered at the meeting of VTC on 21 March 2000. He stressed that the inclusion of new designated trades would usually depend on the acceptance of employers and the need for apprentices in the relevant trades.

22. Mr Howard YOUNG said that the relevant Training Boards of VTC should be consulted on the proposed new designated trades, as employers had the best knowledge of the need for apprentices in their industries. Deputy Executive Director (Training & Development) of VTC said that the Training Boards of VTC were being consulted on the proposed new designated trades and three of them had already held meetings to discuss the issue. A report on the issue would be submitted to VTC after it had been discussed by the Training Boards.

23. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that some employers in the hotel industry had expressed the view that the one-year training course in hotel and catering service was inadequate. Most of the graduates from the training course were also too young to be employed. He suggested that the issue be discussed by the relevant Training Board of VTC. Referring to the Appendix of the paper entitled "An academic system for the education and employment of young people", he expressed concern that graduates from training courses of VTC had to face many barriers instead of being provided with a progression route in furthering their training in more advanced courses. He asked about the percentage of graduates from CVS courses that could continue to undergo training in Foundation Courses. He hoped that the Administration would take the lead in the recognition of CVS so that it would be generally accepted by employers as equivalent to Secondary 5 standard.

24. ED/VTC said that VTC would try its best to promote the recognition of CVS. As regards the progression route of graduates from CVS courses, he said that a trainee's academic achievements in CVS courses to be considered in conjunction with his other academic qualifications and a conversion table would be established for such a purpose. He envisaged that about one-third of the graduates from CVS courses could further their training in Foundation Diploma courses.

25. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that VTC should set out specific entry requirements

Action

for its training courses. She added that there were serious problems in VTC's communication with staff members. DSEM1 responded that as VTC was a statutory body, the Administration was not in a position to issue guidelines regarding entry requirements for the training courses of VTC. Nevertheless, the Administration would discuss with VTC the feasibility of restricting the CVS course to Secondary 3 students. He added that besides the courses offered by VTC, the YPT Programme had also provided training for more than ten thousand school leavers and successfully helped more than 2 000 of them to secure a job.

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr CHAN Siu-lun from the Preparatory Committee for the Federation of Trade Unions in VTC said that apprenticeship training was a fundamental training for the youth at their initial engagement in a job of technical nature. In order to change the general perception of the public, the Association of I of As had proposed a new name to replace the term "apprentice" in its submission to VTC. He drew Members' attention that while it was stated in paragraph 39 of the paper entitled "A management response to the union submissions to the LegCo Panel on Manpower" that job placement and student counselling were not the duties of I of As, VTC's guidelines for I of As clearly stated that I of As had to provide counselling and placement service to job seekers. Regarding the common first year, Mr LI Kwok-lee said that although no one had to apologize for his mistakes, it was still necessary to understand what the mistakes were. He added that the SQW consultancy report clearly stated that technical institutes should be given autonomy. Thus, they should not have been integrated into IVE. Referring to paragraph 34 of the paper entitled "A management response to the union submissions to the LegCo Panel on Manpower", Mr CHENG Kay-kin said that he was surprised at the view that the Basic Craft Course was promoted and designed to be a "terminal", trade specific course. He further said that it was only a one-year course whereby the graduates from the course could participate in the Apprenticeship Scheme. He added that he was opposed to the requirement under the new progression route for Basic Craft Certificate holders that a person who completed a Basic Craft Course would have to take the second and third years of CVS courses and a two-year Foundation Certificate Course, which represented a total of four years' training unrelated to technology. Mr WONG Chun-fai asked about the criteria to be adopted by VTC in allocating objectively students between Diploma and Higher Diploma courses after their common first year, and the projected proportion of students allocated between the two courses. The Chairman requested VTC to respond to these issues in writing.

Adm

27. Members agreed that the subject be discussed again in June. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide written response on issues raised by Members but not addressed at the meeting.

Adm

28. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:45 pm.

Action

27 April 2000