

**Extract from the minutes of House Committee meeting
held on 16 May 2003**

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X. Papers of the Committee on Rules of Procedure

**(a) Proposed arrangements for the debate on the next Policy
Address**

(LC Paper No. CROP57/02-03)

61. Mr TSANG Yok-sing, Chairman of CRoP, said that CRoP had reviewed the arrangements for the debate on the Policy Address in the 2002-03 LegCo session and considered the views of Members and the Administration on the arrangements. Mr TSANG further said that after discussion, CRoP was of the view that the arrangements for the debate on the Policy Address in the current session should continue, but six issues, as detailed in paragraph 2 of the paper, required further review.

62. Mr TSANG informed Members that CRoP had conducted a survey to consult all Members on the arrangements for the debate on the next Policy Address. A total of 56 Members had responded to the questionnaire survey and their views on the six issues were detailed in the Appendix to the paper. Mr TSANG pointed out that except for the issue of speaking time limit for designated public officers, there was a majority view on the other five issues. He added that Members' views on the issue of speaking time limit for designated public officers were summarized in paragraph 4 of the paper.

63. Mr TSANG further informed Members that having considered the consultation results at its meeting on 5 May 2003, CRoP agreed that the arrangements for the debate on the Policy Address in the current session should continue subject to the adjustments detailed in paragraph 6 of the paper.

64. Mr TSANG Yok-sing said that as the Administration had not been consulted on CRoP's proposal on the speaking time limit for designated public officers in each debate session, the LegCo Secretariat was seeking the Administration's comments. Mr TSANG added that should the Administration hold a different view on the proposal, CRoP would further consult the House Committee.

65. Referring to paragraph 6(a)(i) of the paper, The Chairman asked whether CRoP had considered limiting the speaking time for each

public officer to 15 minutes, even though there would only be one or two public officers speaking.

66. Mr TSANG Yok-sing responded that the Administration had in fact proposed this option, i.e. irrespective of the number of public officers speaking in a debate session, each of them would be allowed to speak for a maximum of 15 minutes. Mr TSANG said that CRoP had considered this option, but was of the view that the present proposal of allowing each public officer to speak for not less than 15 minutes, subject to the total speaking time limit of 45 minutes if there were only one or two officers speaking a debate session, would allow flexibility for a public officer to speak freely on important policy issues.

67. Members endorsed the proposed arrangements for the debate on the next Policy Address, as set out in paragraph 6 of the paper.

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