立法會 Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)5/12-13 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/BC/3/10/2

Bills Committee on Companies Bill

Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting held on Friday, 10 February 2012, at 8:30 am in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present	:	Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP (Chairman) Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP (Deputy Chairman) Hon Albert HO Chun-yan Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP Hon James TO Kun-sun Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Members absent	:	Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Public officers attending	:	Agenda item I Mr Darryl CHAN Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)

Mr Nick AU YEUNG Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)

Ms Rita HO Registry Solicitor Companies Registry

Mrs Karen HO Deputy Principal Solicitor (Company Law Reform) Companies Registry

Ms Polly YIP Assistant Principal Solicitor Companies Registry

Miss Nancy YAU Acting Deputy Registry Manager (Company Formation & Enforcement) Companies Registry

Mr Edward TYLER Senior Assistant Law Officer (Civil Law) Department of Justice

Ms Natalie WONG Senior Government Counsel Department of Justice

Miss Selina LAU Senior Government Counsel Department of Justice

Clerk in attendance :	Ms Connie SZETO
	Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Mr KAU Kin-wah Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 3

Mr Timothy TSO Assistant Legal Adviser 2

Ms Sharon CHUNG Senior Council Secretary (1)4

I Meeting with the Administration

Action

Clause-by-clause examination of the Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1)744/11-12(04) -- Comparison Table for Part 13 -- Arrangements, Amalgamation, and Compulsory Share Acquisition Takeover in and Share Buy-Back Comparison LC Paper No. CB(1)943/11-12(01) --Table for Part 16 -- Non-Hong Kong Companies LC Paper No. CB(1)1003/11-12(01) --Comparison Table for Part 17 -- Companies not Formed, but Registrable, under this Ordinance Comparison Table LC Paper No. CB(1)1003/11-12(02) -for Part 18 -- Communications to and by Companies -- The Bill (Part 13, Parts 16 LC Paper No. CB(3)412/10-11 to 18 and Schedules 1 to 10) of LC Paper No. CB(1)339/11-12(01) Summary of -views deputations made at the meeting on 9 April 2011 Administration's the and response) Other relevant papers (File Ref: CBT/17/2C -- Legislative Council Brief LC Paper No. LS26/10-11 -- Legal Service Division Report LC Paper No. CB(1)1406/10-11(01) -- Paper on Companies Bill

prepared by the Legislative

Council

Secretariat

	Council Secretariat
	(Background brief)
LC Paper No. CB(1)1671/10-11(03)	Administration's paper on
	Part 1, Part 3 and Part 17 of
	the Companies Bill
LC Paper No. CB(1)1671/10-11(04)	Administration's paper on
	Part 16 and Part 18 of the
	Companies Bill
LC Paper No. CB(1)1879/10-11(02)	Administration's response
	to issues raised by members
	at the meeting on
	29 March 2011 in relation
	to Parts 1, 3 and 16
LC Paper No. CB(1)2389/10-11(01)	Administration's paper on
	Part 13 and Part 14 of the
	Companies Bill
LC Paper No. CB(1)2636/10-11(02)	Administration's response
	to issues raised by members
	at the meetings on 6 May
	and 17 June 2011 in
	relation to Parts 5, 6, 9 and
	13)

<u>The Bills Committee</u> deliberated (Index of proceedings attached at the **Appendix**).

Admin 2. <u>The Bills Committee</u> requested the Administration to take the following actions --

<u>Clause 691 -- Notice to minority shareholders</u> <u>Clause 692 -- Minority shareholders' right to be bought out by</u> <u>offeror</u>

(a) to consider deleting clauses 691(6), 692(4)(d), 702(5), 703(4)(b), 709(6) and 710(4)(b) in the light of members' views on clause 684(4)(d) to maintain the position under the Companies Ordinance ("CO");

Clause 702 -- Notice to minority shareholders

(b) to amend "an offeror" in clause 702(3) to "the repurchasing company";

Clause 765 -- Registration of non-Hong Kong company

(c) to consider restating section 333AA(1) of CO, which stated explicitly the Registrar of Companies' obligation to keep a register of non-Hong Kong companies, in Part 16 of the Companies Bill ("CB");

Clause 762 -- Interpretation

<u>Clause 764 -- Certain non-Hong Kong companies must apply for</u> registration

- (d) to provide information about the practices and precedent cases in other common law jurisdictions in respect of the definition of "place of business";
- (e) to review the criteria for requiring a non-Hong Kong company to register;

<u>Clause 778 -- Directors may revise accounts not complying with</u> <u>certain requirement</u>

(f) to consider extending the time allowed (7 days) for a non-Hong Kong company to comply with the requirement under clause 778;

<u>Clause 783 -- Authorized representative of registered non-Hong</u> <u>Kong company must notify Registrar of dissolution</u>

(g) to consider introducing a defence for the authorized representative under clause 783 in case he was genuinely not aware of the dissolution of a non-Hong Kong company that he represented;

Clause 788 -- Conditions for granting application

(h) to review clause 788 to address the concern that a non-Hong Kong company would not be able to apply for restoration under the clause if it temporarily did not have a place of business in Hong Kong at that point in time when its name was struck off the register of companies;

Clause 797 -- Registrar must not register without members' assent

(i) to provide information about the number and nature of existing unlimited companies in Hong Kong;

Clause 812 -- Time specified for purposes of sections 816(7)(b), 817(5)(a), 819(7)(b) and 820(5)(a)

(j) to review the formulation of "the time in the ordinary course of post";

Clause 816 -- Communication in electronic form

Clause 819 -- Communication in electronic form

Clause 821 -- Communication by means of website

- (k) to provide written response to the following queries/concerns --
 - (i) while clause 816(7) and clause 819(7) provided for deemed receipt of a document/information, the document/information might not actually be received;
 - (ii) if a member/debenture holder of a company had not received a notification from the company under clause 821(3)(c), whether he would be regarded as having received the document/information posted on the company's website;
 - (iii) whether a member/debenture holder of a company who had not received the company's request under clause 821(4)(b) or clause 821(5)(b) would be regarded as having agreed that the company could send a document/information to him by means of putting it up on the company's website;

Divisions 3 (Other Communication to Company by Person who is not Company) and 4 (Other Communication by Company to Another Person)

(1) to provide the background and reasons for proposing the new

clauses under Division 3 and the distinction between the "person" in Divisions 3 and 4;

Clause 820 -- Communication in hard copy form

(m) to provide written information on whether an address under clause 820 could be a post office box number;

Clause 823 -- Joint holders of shares or debentures

(n) to clarify whether clause 823 should apply to existing companies whose articles did not provide for the matter; and

Clause 824 -- Death or bankruptcy of holder of shares

(o) to consider whether the scope of the clause should be expanded to cover a holder of shares who was mentally incapacitated.

II Any other business

3. <u>The Chairman</u> reminded members that the next meeting of the Bills Committee would be held on Friday, 17 February 2012 at 8:30 am to meet with the Administration.

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:11 pm.

Council Business Division 1 Legislative Council Secretariat 11 October 2012

Bills Committee on Companies Bill

Proceedings of the twenty-eighth meeting on Friday, 10 February 2012, at 8:30 am in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
000428- 000701	Chairman	The Chairman's advice that the meeting with deputations for views on clause 664 (relating to the retention of the headcount test for members' schemes) would be held at 9:30 am on 23 March 2012	
	clause examination of the Bill the Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1)744	4/11-12(04))	
000702- 001324	Administration Ms Audrey EU Chairman	Clause 689 Offeror may be required to buy out minority shareholdersThe Administration's briefing on the clauseMs Audrey EU and the Chairman seeking clarification on the conditions under which a shareholder might require the offeror (of a takeover offer) to acquire his shares	
001325- 001622	Administration	Clause690OfferormustnotifyminorityshareholdersofrighttobeboughtoutClause691Clause691NoticetominorityshareholdersClause692Clause692Minorityshareholders'righttobeboughtoutbyofferorClause693ShareholdertoberegardedasnothavingexercisedrighttobeboughtoutincertaincircumstancesTheAdministration'sbriefingontheaboveclausesand itsadvicethat, inthelightofmembers'viewsonclause684(4)(d)(regardingofferor'spaymentincashincertaincircumstances)expressedatapreviousmeeting, itwouldconsiderdeletingclauses691(6),692(4)(d),forfor	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		702(5), 703(4)(b), 709(6) and 710(4)(b) to maintain the position in the Companies Ordinance ("CO")	The Administration to take action as in paragraph 2(a) of the minutes
001623- 001842	Administration	<u>Clause 694 Interpretation</u> <u>Clause 695 Application of Division to</u> <u>convertible securities and debentures</u> Briefing on the above clauses	
001843- 002023	Administration Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 3 ("SALA3")	<u>Clause 696 General offer</u> The Administration's briefing on the clause	
		SALA3's enquiry on whether the clause was consistent with the Listing Rules of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited	
		The Administration's response that the clause and the Listing Rules applied to different areas of merger and acquisition activities and were not in conflict	
002024- 002425	Administration Assistant Legal Adviser 2 ("ALA2")	Clause 697 Non-communication etc. does not prevent offer from being general offer Clause 698 Shares to which general offer relates Clause 699 Revised offer not to be regarded as fresh offer Clause 700 Member may give notice that member will not tender shares for buy-back under general offer Clause 701 Repurchasing company may give notice to buy out minority shareholders Clause 702 Notice to minority shareholders Clause 703 Repurchasing company's right to buy out minority shareholders Clause 704 Obligations of repurchasing company with right to buy out minority shareholders Clause 705 Repurchasing company	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		must pay for shares to which notice relatesClause 706 Provisions supplementary to section 705The Administration's briefing on the above clausesALA2's remarks that "an offeror" in clause 702(3) in fact referred to "the repurchasing company" and the Administration should amend the clause 	The Administration to take action as in
002426- 002742	Administration ALA2	Clause 707 Repurchasing company may be required to buy out minorityClause 708 Repurchasing company must notify minority shareholders of right to be bought outClause 709 Notice to minority shareholdersClause 710 Minority shareholders' right to be bought out by repurchasing company Schedule 10 Transitional and Saving Arrangements (for Part 13) Sections 114 and 115The Administration's briefing on the above clausesALA2's remarks that there was a note in clause 710 and the Administration would discuss the use of notes and examples in 	
	clause examination of the Bill he Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1)943	/11-12(01))	
002743- 003442	Administration SALA3 Mr Ronny TONG	<u>Clause 762 Interpretation</u> The Administration's briefing on the clause	
		SALA3 seeking clarification on the difference in the prosecution thresholds for contravention of provisions in CB by	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		a responsible person, an agent and an authorized representative	
		Mr Ronny TONG's enquiry on the definition of "responsible person" of a company	
		The Administration's response that it had reviewed the definition of "responsible person" and would propose a Committee Stage amendment to the term in Part 1 of CB	
003443- 003917	Administration SALA3	Clause 763 Certified copy Clause 764 Certain non-Hong Kong companies must apply for registration	
		The Administration's briefing on the above clauses	
		SALA3's enquiry on clause 764 on the Administration's policy on the translation of the domestic name of a non-Hong Kong company, and the Administration's response	
003918- 004547	Administration Chairman	Clause 765 Registration of non-Hong Kong company	
	SALA3	The Administration's briefing on the above clauses	
		The Chairman's enquiry on the definition of "the Secretary" in clause 763(3) and the Administration's response	
		SALA3's suggestion for the Administration to consider restating section 333AA(1) of CO, which stated explicitly the Registrar of Companies' obligation to keep a register of non-Hong Kong companies, in Part 16 of CB	The Administration to take action in paragraph 2(c) of the minutes
004548- 005339	Administration Chairman SALA3	Clause 766 Company must notify Registrar of addition, change or cessation of name or translation of name	
		The Administration's briefing on the	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		 clause The Chairman's enquiry on the proposed reduction in penalty for contravention of the clause and the Administration's response SALA3's enquiry on the Administration's policy on a company's adoption of both a corporate name in Roman script and a name in English, and the Administration's response 	
005340- 005746	Administration Mr Andrew LEUNG	Clause 767 Registration of corporate nameClause 768 Registrar may serve notice to regulate use of corporate names or approved namesClause 769 Effect of noticeThe Administration's briefing on the above clausesMr Andrew LEUNG's enquiry on how a company could take action against another company using a name that might cause harm to it, and the Administration's response	
005747-010432	Mr Ronny TONG Administration	Clause 762 Interpretation Clause 764 Certain non-Hong Kong companies must apply for registrationDiscussion on the definition of "place of business" under clause 762, and clause 	Administration to take action as in paragraphs 2(d)

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		 (a) provide information about the practices and precedent cases in other common law jurisdictions in respect of the definition of "place of business"; and (b) review the criteria for requiring a 	
		non-Hong Kong company to register	
010433- 010518	Chairman Administration	Clause 769 Effect of noticeThe Chairman's concern on increasing the fines for contravention of the clause, and request for the Administration to include in the paper on the review of penalties under CO (to be submitted to the Bills Committee in due course) justifications for the changes to be introduced	
010519- 011237	Administration	Clause 770 Registration of approved name for carrying on business in Hong Kong Clause 771 Withdrawal of notice 	
011238- 011619	Administration Chairman	Clause 778 Directors may revise accounts not complying with certain requirement Clause 779 Company must deliver return for registration in case of change of certain particularsThe Administration's briefing on the above clauses	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		The Chairman's view that the period of 7 days under clause 778 might not be sufficient for a non-Hong Kong company, of which the management might be stationed outside Hong Kong, to file a statement with the Registrar of Companies about the revision of its accounts Request for the Administration to consider extending the time allowed for complying with clause 778	
011620- 011910	Administration	Clause 780 Non-Hong Kong company must state names, place of incorporation, etc. Clause 781 Registered non-Hong Kong company must notify Registrar of commencement of liquidation etc. Clause 782 Registered non-Hong Kong company must notify Registrar of cessation of place of business in Hong Kong Briefing on the above clauses	
011911- 012346	Administration Chairman	Clause 783 Authorized representative of registered non-Hong Kong company must notify Registrar of dissolution The Administration's briefing on the clause The Chairman's view that it was not uncommon that an authorized representative of a registered non-Hong Kong company had difficulties in obtaining up-to-date information about the company, including its dissolution, albeit taking all reasonable steps Request for the Administration to consider introducing a defence for the authorized representative under the clause in case he was genuinely not aware of the dissolution of a non-Hong	Administration to take action as in paragraph 2(g) of

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
012347- 013716	Administration SALA3 Chairman	Clause 784 Registrar may send inquiry letter to registered non-Hong Kong company Clause 785 Registrar must follow up under certain circumstances Clause 786 Registrar may strike off registered non-Hong Kong company's name Clause 787 Application to Registrar for restoration of non-Hong Kong company Clause 788 Conditions for granting applicationThe Administration's briefing on the clausesSALA3's view that a non-Hong Kong company would not be able to apply for restoration under clause 788 if it 	The Administration to take action as in paragraph 2(h) of the minutes
013717- 014525	Administration	Clause 789 Registrar's decision on applicationClause 790 Registrar to keep index of directorsClause 791 Service of process or noticeClause 792 Financial Secretary may make regulationsClause 793 Financial Secretary may make regulationsSchedule 10 Transitional and Saving Arrangements (for Part 16) Sections 124 - 132Briefing on the above clauses and the Administration's response to deputations' views on Part 16 of the Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1)339/11-12(01))	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
Break (014	4526- 020415)		
	-clause examination of the B the Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1		
020416- 021342	Administration SALA3 Mr Andrew LEUNG	Clause 794 Interpretation Clause 795 Registrar may register eligible companyThe Administration's briefing on the above clausesSALA3 and Mr Andrew LEUNG seeking clarification on the definitions of "eligible company" and "joint stock company"	
021343- 022340	Administration Mr Andrew LEUNG Chairman Mr James TO	Clause 796 General restrictions on Registrar's power to register Clause 797 Registrar must not register without members' assentThe Administration's briefing on the above clausesMembers seeking clarification on a company's registration as an unlimited companyRequest for the Administration to provide information about the number and nature of existing unlimited companies in Hong Kong	take action as in
022341- 022513	Administration	Clause 798 Registrar must not register without resolution declaring amount of guarantee Clause 799 Eligible company must pay 	
022514- 023222	Administration Mr James TO SALA3	Clause 801 Application of Division Clause 802 Status, property, rights and liabilities of eligible company	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		The Administration's briefing on the clauses Discussion on the relation between clauses 802(1) and 802(2)	
023223- 023647	Administration	Clause 803 Continuation of existing proceedings Clause 804 Continuation of existing constitutional document Clause 805 Eligible company may substitute articles for non-statutory constitutional document Clause 806 This Ordinance applies to eligible company Clause 807 Exceptions to section 806(1) Clause 808 Eligible company's power to alter constitution Schedule 10 Transitional and Saving Arrangements (for Part 17) Section 133	
		Briefing on the above clauses	
	clause examination of the Bill the Bill (LC Paper No. CB(1)100	3/11-12(02))	
023648- 024214	Administration Mr James TO	<u>Clause 809 Interpretation</u> The Administration's briefing on the clause Discussion on the definition of "business day"	
024215- 025612	Administration Mr James TO	Clause 810 Minimum period specified for purposes of sections 816(3), 819(4) and 821(6)Clause 811 Period specified for purposes of sections 816(7)(a), 819(7)(a) and 821(11)(b)The Administration's briefing on the above clausesDiscussion on issues relating to	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		communication in electronic form (use of company websites and emails)	
		Request for the Administration to provide written response to the following queries/concerns	The Administration to take action as in paragraph 2(k) of
		 (a) while clause 816(7) and clause 819(7) provided for deemed receipt of a document/information, the document/information might not actually be received; 	the minutes
		 (b) if a member/debenture holder of a company had not received a notification from the company under clause 821(3)(c), whether he would be regarded as having received the document/information posted on the company's website; and 	
		 (c) whether a member/debenture holder of a company who had not received the company's request under clause 821(4)(b) or clause 821(5)(b) would be regarded as having agreed that the company could send a document/information to him by means of putting it up on the company's website 	
025613- 030232	Administration SALA3 Mr Ronny TONG Mr Andrew LEUNG SALA3 Chairman	Clause812Timespecifiedforpurposesofsections816(7)(b),817(5)(a), 819(7)(b)and 820(5)(a)TheAdministration'sbriefingon	
		clause	
		Members seeking clarification on the meaning of "delivered in the ordinary course of post"	
		Members' concerns that in reality a letter/document sent out by post might not be received on the following working day, and the late delivery of a document by post would affect the time allowed for	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		the next step for the processing of the document Request for the Administration to review the formulation of "the time in the ordinary course of post"	The Administration to take action as in paragraph 2(j) of the minutes
030233- 030407	Administration	Clause 813 Address specified for purposes of sections 819(3)(b)(iii) and 820(2)(b) Clause 814 Effect of this Part on sending documents etc. to Registrar Clause 815 Service of document Briefing on the above clauses	
030408- 030918	Administration SALA3	22	paragraph 2(l) of
030919- 031439	Administration Mr WONG Ting-kwong SALA3	Clause 818 Communication in other forms Clause 819 Communication in electronic formThe Administration's briefing on the above clausesMr WONG Ting-kwong seeking clarification on the meaning of "another person"SALA3 seeking clarification on the applicability of the clauses under	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		Division 4 of Part 18	
031440- 031952	Administration Mr WONG Ting-kwong Ms Audrey EU Mr Ronny TONG Chairman	Clause 820 Communication in hard copy formThe Administration's briefing on the clause	
		Discussion on whether an address could be a post office box number under clause 820, and request for the Administration to provide written information on the issue	Administration to
031953- 032808	Administration Mr WONG Ting-kwong Chairman SALA3	Clause 821 Communication by means of website	
		The Administration's briefing on the clause	
		Mr WONG Ting-kwong seeking clarification on clause 821(3)(d) (the requirement of making a document available on the website for 28 days)	
		SALA3 seeking clarification on clause 821(9) (on failure to make a document or information available on website)	
032809- 033256	Administration SALA3	Clause 822 Communication in other forms Clause 823 Joint holders of shares or debentures	
		Discussion on the above clauses Request for the Administration to clarify whether clause 823 should apply to existing companies whose articles did not provide for the matter	
033257- 033528	Administration Mr Ronny TONG	Clause 824 Death or bankruptcy of holder of shares	
		Discussion on the clause Request for the Administration to	The
		consider whether the scope of the clause	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		should be expanded to cover a holder of shares who was mentally incapacitated	take action as in paragraph 2(o) of the minutes
033529- 033642	Administration	Clause 825 Member or debenture holder may require hard copy Briefing on the clause	
033643- 034118	Chairman Mr Ronny TONG Ms Audrey EU SALA3 Mr WONG Ting-kwong Mr Andrew LEUNG	Discussion on the work of the Bills Committee for the coming meetings Date of the next meeting	

Council Business Division 1 Legislative Council Secretariat 11 October 2012