

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 6th November 1975

The Council met at half past two o'clock

PRESENT

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR CRAWFORD MURRAY MACLEHOSE, KCMG, KCVO, MBE
THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
SIR DENYS TUDOR EMIL ROBERTS, KBE, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
MR CHARLES PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, CMG, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR JOHN WILLIAM DIXON HOBLEY, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS
MR DENIS CAMPBELL BRAY, CVO, JP
THE HONOURABLE JAMES JEAVONS ROBSON, CBE, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
THE HONOURABLE IAN MACDONALD LIGHTBODY, CMG, JP
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING
THE HONOURABLE DAVID HAROLD JORDAN, CMG, MBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRY
THE HONOURABLE LI FOOK-KOW, CMG, JP
SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE DAVID AKERS-JONES, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES
THE HONOURABLE LEWIS MERVYN DAVIES, CMG, OBE, JP
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY
THE HONOURABLE KENNETH WALLIS JOSEPH TOPLEY, JP
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
THE HONOURABLE IAN ROBERT PRICE, TD, JP
COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR
DR THE HONOURABLE THONG KAH-LEONG, JP
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES (*Acting*)
DR THE HONOURABLE CHUNG SZE-YUEN, CBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE ROGERIO HYNDMAN LOBO, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE MRS CATHERINE JOYCE SYMONS, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE PETER GORDON WILLIAMS, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE JAMES WU MAN-HON, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LI FOOK-WO, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE JOHN HENRY BREMRIDGE, JP
DR THE HONOURABLE HARRY FANG SIN-YANG, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE MRS KWAN KO SIU-WAH, MBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LO TAK-SHING, JP
THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS YUAN-HAO TIEN, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE ALEX WU SHU-CHIH, OBE, JP

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE DAVID WYLIE McDONALD, JP
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
THE HONOURABLE LEE QUO-WEI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE OSWALD VICTOR CHEUNG, OBE, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, OBE, JP

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR GERALD AIDIAN HIGGINSON

Motion**Address of thanks****Resumption of debate on motion (5th November 1975)**

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—Sir, Unofficial Members have emphasized their concern about the control of crime, and in particular violent crime. You have already said, Sir, that there is no easy or quick solution and in these circumstances the Government is naturally as disturbed as Members at the level of violent crime. The best that can be said is that there seems to be a levelling off.

It is not easy to get a complete measure of the level of crime, and Hong Kong is not alone in that. But we can get a reasonable idea of trends—increases or decreases—from figures of reported crime provided there are no marked changes in the willingness of people to report crime. There is always unreported crime as my honourable Friend Dr CHUNG reminds us. We cannot be certain of the amount but we can and do get independent indications which show whether unreported crime, as a proportion of total crime, is on the increase or not.

At present there is no evidence to support the assertion of mounting reluctance and fear to report crime—far from it, there is increased willingness and increased opportunity. Contacts and feedbacks from kaifongs, MAC's and police officers in day-to-day contact with the people—and there are many of them—indicate a greater willingness on the part of people to act against crime; this ranges from organized community resistance to which I will refer later, to reporting crime to

the increasing number of reporting centres, police stations and neighbourhood policing units. The police and the Government Information Services are currently campaigning the "report crime" cause. This campaign is aimed at explaining the revised and simplified procedure for doing so; more reporting centres are being established, and, in order to complement the public response to report crime, a revised reporting procedure has been adopted by the police. Furthermore, as my honourable Friend Mr CHEONG-LEEN remarked, forms have recently been distributed widely to the public explaining how to report crime and what this involves.

Crime, Sir, as you have emphasized, is at too high a level. To say this is not to despair, for if there is sufficient determination the tide will turn. Much is being done, but I would like to explain how the Police Force is countering this problem, and how police action is linked to the furtherance of better community relations and the reporting of crime. These techniques are very much a part of the force's organizational approach—one of the three main lines of attack to which you, Sir, referred.

The neighbourhood policing scheme is one area where new police concepts appear to be proving successful. The main aim of the scheme is to help reduce the absolute level of crime through closer police involvement with the community. The scheme is particularly applicable to low-cost housing estates and other areas of high density population. To date, priority has been given to those areas where residents have demonstrated some degree of community awareness.

The principal tasks of these units are to establish good relations with the public and to render efficient advice and service to the public, including an effective response to calls for assistance.

In furtherance of these primary duties officers also visit schools to talk on road safety and other police related subjects; help youth recreation; and take part in community projects organized by the city district offices, estate management or kaifongs. Personnel are carefully selected for this work, and usually remain with a unit for not less than a year. The scheme absorbs manpower, but it is certain that the neighbourhood policing scheme has an important role to play in policing densely populated estates. The Commissioner is therefore planning expansion of these units, within the limits of his permitted establishment.

Neighbourhood policing units complement police reporting centres and *vice versa*. A reporting centre provides a useful point of contact between residents of an area and the police, but unless supported by a

[SECRETARY FOR SECURITY] **Motion**

policing unit it does not provide adequate coverage; nor does it, in itself, act as a deterrent to crime. Thus, the two operating strategies are increasingly being used in conjunction with one another.

From critical analyses of the effectiveness of these units and reporting centres, and detailed police examination of crime in areas where they are most frequently situated, it has been concluded that the measures, jointly, are a successful method of policing, particularly (but not exclusively) in high rise residential areas.

In addition to these measures, there is increasing involvement of the police in community affairs and greater co-operation by the public in the fight against crime in areas where there is a permanent police presence. This co-operation is best where active mutual aid committees have mobilized the public. Their success in eliminating crime in buildings where they work has produced a demand for more committees. Additional staff have been deployed in the Home Affairs Department to form new committees and maintain liaison.

Nor is public co-operation confined to deterring criminals. Out of every ten people arrested for committing a crime this year, one has been apprehended by a member of the public. Last year it was one in twelve and three years ago it was one in twenty. These figures reflect a trend of increased public willingness to assist actively in fighting crime. It certainly does not suggest fear or apathy.

The job of the police is to fight crime but they cannot do this with complete effect unless they become an integral part of the community in which they work and no longer remain outsiders regarded with distrust, if not suspicion. To achieve this the police community relations scheme was started.

Eleven major divisions have police community relations officers. They have been accepted by the community—by organizations and groups such as MACs and area committees, by schools and youth organizations and we believe, by the man in the street. The number of invitations to advise on problems, participate in and organize seminars and a wide variety of functions and to deliver talks are considerable, and are increasing. Although the officers frequently take the initiative in developing projects, an increasing proportion of their time is now taken up with direct requests for their help.

Another successful aspect of police community relations is the Junior Police Call which has blossomed within a year to an astonishing 130,000 members. Its aim is to provide both the incentive and the opportunity for young people of all ages to help the force in its efforts to curb crime. Membership engenders a spirit of service and youngsters participate actively in the fight against crime by responding to police requests for help made during television programmes. Junior Police Call is also intended to be educational and young people are given an insight into the many facets of police work through films and visits to police formations. The results have been most encouraging. Information given by JPC members has led to the arrest of robbers, to convictions for trafficking in dangerous drugs, to missing vehicles being traced, and to valuable lost property being returned.

Obviously, Sir, the drive against crime does not rest solely on increased public support or improved friendliness with the community. Operational measures have been developed and modernized too.

The re-structuring of the CID has been extended to all urban areas. Since then and following an assessment of the workload of investigation and support officers, the strength of the CID has been increased by 700 men, and training facilities have been expanded. Notwithstanding this the work-load remains heavy and a further examination is being under-taken to assess the precise manpower needs which the CID requires. This review will also include the needs of the specialized units set up to tackle special problems such as narcotics, triads, special crimes, and commercial crimes (where a small increase in staff has already been made) and to which reference was made by my colleague Mr BREMRIDGE. These measures are essential if the optimum organization and strength of the CID is to be achieved. Already there are definite indications of improved intelligence results, particularly in the preventive field. It was after, and I stress after, the initial reorganization had taken place that total reported crime levelled off; there was also a marginal decrease in reported key crime, and despite the burden on the CID the rate of detection has also been maintained.

For the future I can report good progress on the beat radio scheme. It is expected that police officers on the streets will be equipped with these radios in a little more than a year. Not only will the scheme inspire greater confidence in the police and engender greater public co-operation, it will also greatly improve the effectiveness of the force. For the policemen on the beat it will mean that:

officers nearest the scene of a crime can be directed to it;

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patrolling officers who see important incidents at too great a distance to intervene personally, will be able to notify control centres, and other officers will then be directed to assist.

For the force as a whole it will mean that:

supervising officers will be able to control patrol officers and co-ordinate action as required;

a wider police presence will be maintained because the present static reporting points can be reduced; and

increased vigilance ought to result as patrol officers will at all times be aware of reports in their area.

For the public it will mean a quicker response by the police.

Turning to perhaps the most important part of the three-pronged attack on crime—as Your Excellency has indicated—plans are being formulated to bring the force up to strength next year and to increase the establishment with the intention that reported crime be pursued even more inexorably, and even stronger preventive measures implemented. On this point I have noted my honourable Colleague Mr WU's suggestion that we should employ more auxiliary policemen to assist their regular counterparts until the reorganization of the force is complete. I have already explained earlier in the year that the average daily strength of the auxiliaries is being maintained at 1,300 despite the very steady increase in the regular force. The Commissioner of Police believes that this represents the proper level of auxiliary assistance at present and that any additional funds must be geared towards expansion of the regular force. Also, Sir, whilst there are not expected to be any redundancies amongst Gurkha soldiers, individual applications to join the force by redundant locally employed servicemen will, of course, be considered. I would add that it would only be practical to post them to companies of the Police Tactical Unit if we modified the present practice by which all policemen are required to train both in internal security and normal police duties. So far we are not persuaded that this change is desirable.

Of course, none of the above measures can be considered in isolation. All are contributory to, and influence, the fight against crime.

My honourable Friend, Mr CHEONG-LEEN, has suggested that fight violent crime committees be established in all city districts. Such

committees, Sir, already exist, albeit under a different name. There is in each city district a city district committee which is chaired by the city district officer, with a membership comprising regional representatives of certain other Government departments and leading members of the district community. Although these committees are broadly concerned with all the problems of their respective districts, they originated from, and are still particularly concerned with, the Fight Violent Crime and Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaigns. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the day-to-day co-ordination of the fight against crime, the central Fight Violent Crime Committee has evolved proposals to enable city district committees to appoint standing sub-committees to be charged with specific responsibilities for the detailed planning, co-ordination and monitoring of district fight violent crime activities. These sub-committees will be chaired by the CDOs and will include representatives from unofficial members of the city district committees, district committees and, where appropriate, other Government departments. It is expected that these standing sub-committees will be established in the immediate future.

I turn now to some comments by honourable Members on what might be termed "the standard of living" in prisons. I am sure, Sir, that it is appreciated that the Prisons Service has two main tasks.

The first is to ensure that those in their charge are kept under discipline in secure accommodation. For this purpose the facilities provided by Government, or planned in prisons, must be sufficient to allow prisoners to sleep, work and eat in circumstances in which adequate supervision can be maintained. To achieve this there must be certain minimum standards of space and so on. The second task is to secure as much rehabilitation as can be achieved so that recidivism is kept at as low a level as possible. Again this requires facilities. The fact that such facilities may be greater than individual members of the public may enjoy does not argue strongly for their reduction in prisons—after all one of the important elements in the causes of crime is the activities of those who are released from prison and revert to crime, thus starting off the whole wretched cycle of offence, enquiry, detection, convictions.

Any person who has visited Stanley Prison which houses 43% of the prison population will not have departed with a feeling that the standards are unduly high. The size of an average cell there is 54 sq. ft. On Monday night this week of the 2,490 prisoners 1,700 or 68% of the total were in cells accommodating three prisoners giving an average of 18 sq. ft. per prisoner: toilet facilities consist of a

[SECRETARY FOR SECURITY] Motion

bucket in the corner. In these "facilities" prisoners are locked up for twelve hours a day. Likewise at Victoria Remand Centre more than half those on remand are three to a cell, the dimensions of which vary from 40 to 60 sq. ft. In the new institutions, including the very successful detention centres, the floor areas per detainee are greater but the success rate is also greater. In Stanley where the conditions are over-crowded, three out of four prisoners released in 1971-73 have returned to serve a further sentence. I believe, Sir, that there is food for thought here, which brings me to diets.

The diet scales in the institutions administered by the Prisons Department are monitored by the Medical and Health Department. They take into account the fact that prisoners and inmates of other prison institutions perform physical labour. It is this factor—and not generosity or softness—which accounts for the fact that the basic diet in Prisons Department institutions cost \$6.29 per day compared with the cheapest hospital diet of \$4.63. It must also be remembered that the prison scale provides the sole form of nourishment and that there is a responsibility placed on the Prisons Department to keep prisoners in good health. The nutritionists of the Medical and Health Department have this very much in mind, but human nature being what it is I think we must assume that they do not overstate the prison requirements. Additionally there is a punishment diet of 99¢ per day and in the last 21 months 660 prisoners in Stanley Prison were awarded some 3,000 days' dietary punishment and 800 prisoners in other institutions were awarded a total of 3,500 days'.

Prison routine is deliberately made demanding and in the case of the detention centres for young offenders it is tough and rigorous, and so it should be. Furthermore there is a wide variety of restrictions imposed upon prisoners as a matter of routine. These must all be taken into account in comparing the standards in prisons, with those applicable elsewhere, where people are at least free to come and go. Finally it is important to expand the scope and coverage of prison industries so that a greater number of those who are incarcerated there can be usefully and productively employed and trained in a wide variety of tasks for a longer proportion of the day than at present. Plans to achieve this are now being formulated. In sum, life in prisons is rigorous. I can assure honourable Members that the Commissioner of Prisons and his staff are alive to the necessity of ensuring that those sentenced to terms of imprisonment are properly supervised

in a disciplined environment, work hard and are not provided with facilities above those which are the minimum essential to ensure, so far as possible, that on release they do not revert to their previous criminal tendencies.

To sum up: the fight against crime will continue to be one of the Government's top priorities. We believe that sound progress is being made with the approaches to which I have referred. These will be modified and adapted if circumstances demand, but, at this stage, we believe them to be right. They will be pressed forward with the greatest determination.

I support the motion.

MR JORDAN:—Sir, for a civil servant to be a trend-setter would be a contradiction in terms but I can climb on a bandwagon when I see one. I have been poring over my dictionary of quotations too.

You said, Sir, that you saw light at the end of the tunnel. I think that the way things are going shows that in our case it is not just the light of the train coming towards us. Nor is it a dim religious light (Milton) but I think a kindly light amid the encircling gloom (Cardinal Newman).

My honourable Friend Dr CHUNG looked into his personal crystal ball and said he did not expect any significant advance in our economy during the next few months. I haven't even got a crystal ball (so I have to be even more cautious) and I found that William of Occam, the well-known barber, had said some 600 odd years ago *Eutia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*, or "Things not known to exist should not, unless it is absolutely necessary, be postulated as existing".

Nevertheless I think we can draw some encouragement from the latest trade figures. We must never put too much emphasis on one month's figures—we can see the trouble that some other people have got into from taking this narrow-focus view. The September trade figures for both exports and imports—around 18 *per cent* up on September 1974—look very good, but there were some unusual factors in that month. The more important thing is while our export performance at the beginning of the year showed declines of up to 16 *per cent*, the percentage by which the figures have been below last year's figures has been declining in recent months and indeed, thanks to the surprisingly high September figure, the value of domestic exports in the three months to the end of September was up by three *per cent* on 1974.

[MR JORDAN] **Motion**

Imports too are up and this perhaps is even more encouraging than the export figures.

There are, I am glad to say, signs that the decline in manufacturing employment has stopped too. In June the total was 544,000. This was two *per cent* below the figure a year before, but it was four *per cent* up on March of this year.

Another significant statistic is that for electricity consumption. In the three months to the end of August consumption by the industrial sector was up three *per cent* on last year, in the three months to the end of September it was up by over eight *per cent* to seven hundred and seven million kilowatt-hours, though this is partly accounted for by a heavy drop in consumption in September 1974.

Even though we cannot be sure of how fast or how far we shall move, the signs certainly are that we are moving in the right direction and this is reflected in a general air of confidence that is spreading again in Hong Kong.

Most of the available economic statistics point to the end of our recession and I think it's reasonable to hope that the improvement will continue. But it has been a really bad recession. By the end of this year we shall have had virtually no growth for two years, and a return to the growth trend that we had been used to is dependent on a sustained recovery of world trade and the maintenance of our competitive position.

Personally, I am confident that Hong Kong's combination of enterprise and skill, and old-fashioned hard work, which have seen us through this recession, will enable us to resume our interrupted growth, though perhaps not at the same rate as before.

I have been happy to live and work in Hong Kong for twenty four years now. Hong Kong's achievements during those years have been remarkable by any standard, particularly when one remembers the serious crises that we have from time to time faced and overcome.

In the job that I have the good fortune to hold at present I have been able to observe—and admire—at first hand the robust and realistic reaction of everyone engaged in Hong Kong's trade and industry to the very real difficulties that nearly all have faced in the last two years. As John Stuart Mill truly said "The worth of a community, in the long

run, is the worth of the individuals composing it". I am sure that none of us in the Commerce and Industry Department would claim any credit for this. All we can do is to provide some support and encouragement to those who really do the work.

It is quite natural, I suppose, for people to believe that we should take more positive action to ensure the health and growth of our economy; and I fear that there are people who believe that the reason the Hong Kong Government doesn't do more lies in inertia or indifference. But in fact our "non-interventionism" as my honourable Friend the Financial Secretary so elegantly described it recently, derives not from indifference but from the facts of our situation: we have made a virtue of a necessity. (I couldn't find the source of that one.)

For an explanation of how our economy works and of the limitations on "interventionism" in Hong Kong, I would like to recommend my honourable Friend's recent address to the *Financial Times* Asian Business Conference—and I'm not saying that just because he's my boss, though I don't suppose it will do me any harm.

I will limit myself (apart from that dreadful word "non-interventionism"), to one quotation:

"Such is our dependence on trade that attempts, through demand management techniques, to maintain real incomes against a decline in external competitiveness via attempts to export our own inflation in times of world recession would quickly rebound. The explanation for this is brutally simple: the impact on the economy of adverse cost movements or of recession abroad is not masked, as it often is in more self-sufficient, or less resourceless, economies by large-scale production for the domestic market.

I am labouring this point, perhaps, but for this reason. Inevitably over the past months, the question has been put: rather than allow, indeed insist, that the economy should deflate out of trouble, why not regulate the economy by managing the level of aggregate demand? Because Hong Kong has such an externally oriented economy, action along these orthodox lines would be quickly self-defeating."

As my honourable Friend Mr Q. W. LEE put it, "we cannot spend more than we earn". In many countries more and more people have thought that this self-evident truth could be covered up by various forms of printing money. We have known all along that it couldn't be. They are learning it now. I will here resist the temptation to quote Mr MICAWBER.

[MR JORDAN] **Motion**

An enforced switch from profligacy to penury is a painful business, and scapegoats are much in demand. It is, I suppose, natural that industries in any country tend to blame competition from imports for their difficulties instead of looking for the real causes. Fortunately the developed countries, among which are our principal markets, have so far set their faces against a resort to new trade restrictions as a way out of their difficulties. Perhaps they remember the words of Benjamin Franklin: "No nation was ever ruined by trade"; and the corollary of that remark.

Two industries however are the great exceptions to this: agriculture and textiles, which around the world, though not in Hong Kong, enjoy more protection than any other industries. Since textile products are still around half our total exports, this means that the Commerce and Industry Department is one that has more work in a recession than in a boom. We have to conduct more and more difficult negotiations and we have to conduct them in an atmosphere that is frankly inimical to the basic purpose of the International Arrangement regarding Trade in Textiles. I think some people have lost sight of the declared purpose of that Arrangement—I quote again "to promote on a sound basis the development of production and expansion of trade in textile products and progressively to achieve the reduction of trade barriers and the liberalization of world trade in these products".

My honourable Friend Mr TIEN referred to the difficulties we face in this situation and Dr CHUNG said he hoped Government would exert every effort to remove any discriminatory restrictions on our trade. We will do what we can but we have not the resources to do all of it. Financial stringency makes it impossible. As it is, we are pretty severely stretched to deal with all the matters that demand attention: those that can wait have to do so.

To illustrate this by an example. In the field of Generalized Schemes of Preferences, we have concentrated our efforts on seeking improvement in our position in the EEC and Japanese Schemes and on seeking inclusion in the US Scheme. Five other countries operate schemes from which we are wholly or partly excluded and we have been able to do very little about this in the past year.

As my honourable Friend says, the work continues to grow in volume and complexity (but the staff available to cope with it doesn't grow at the same rate) but I am not, as he is, so much afraid that the

department may become unwieldy and lose its flexibility. What worries me is the pressure of work. Many men and women in the department have worked very long hours this year (and many without extra pay, since no one above the rank of Clerical Officer qualifies for overtime pay) and I can see no light at the end of this tunnel.

My honourable Friend suggests that we should split the department into two new departments, a textiles department and an other industries department. The two departments would be co-ordinated by a Secretary for Trade and Industry. I recall that a similar suggestion was made in this Council a year ago by my honourable Friend Mr Q. W. LEE and supported by other Members.

This is, however, more of a question for my honourable Friend, who is sitting directly in front of me, as head of the civil service, than it is for me. However, there is one aspect of Mr TIEN's proposals on which I am afraid I disagree with him and I should like to comment on that. It concerns the division of responsibilities between his two proposed departments. I don't think we should have one policy and service for and attitude towards the textile industry and a different one for other industries, and this would unavoidably be the way things would tend to go. In commercial relations, textiles are a special case—because of that special protection they receive—but, for instance, in the multilateral trade negotiations which are taking place under the GATT, we have to look at the discussions on the "safeguard" clause, which provides for action to be taken against imports that are damaging domestic industry—we have to look at this clause in relation to trade generally, because it can be applied generally, to textiles or to other products. We have a similar situation with regard to GSP. Although textiles are excluded from some schemes—or Hong Kong textiles are excluded—when they are included the same rules apply to them as to other products.

To take another example, while we could decide that industrial investment promotion should be the responsibility of the department of other industries, I don't think that it's any part of the Government's job to make arbitrary decisions as to what we think investors should do. I believe that the information we have and the service we provide should be made available to any potential investor, local or overseas, textile or other industry, but this can be done only if we have one Industrial Promotion Branch in one department.

It is customary for Directors of Commerce and Industry when speaking on these occasions to pay tribute to the department's un-official advisers. They have all given unstintingly of their time and

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effort in the past year but perhaps I might this time single out the Textiles Advisory Board, which has come in for a good deal of criticism over the Agreement with the EEC. I don't think the critics took sufficient account of the very awkward framework within which the board—and the department—was operating. They—and we—were faced with some very difficult decisions. I am sure that they would not claim that they were absolutely right every time nor would I make any such claim for the department. But I think I can claim that we have all of us done our best for Hong Kong as a whole, within our own limitations and within those imposed on us, and I am personally very grateful to the members of the board, who have throughout all the turmoil given me—and during my absence, MR MCGREGOR—advice which I think will be seen, when, as you put it, Sir, the dust has settled, to have been pretty sound.

I should also like to pay a tribute to the staff of the department, who, as I have mentioned, have worked very long hours and worked very well, to defend Hong Kong's interests and, in the implementation of our systems, to get the right balance between fairness to the individual and protection of the interests of the community as a whole. Our quota system is not perfect, we know, and we have long intended to make a thorough-going review of it, but have been prevented by the pressure of immediate needs to keep the system working. Nevertheless we hope over the next few months to complete this review, and we are giving everyone who is interested the opportunity to put their views to us.

I felt, Sir, I ought to conclude a speech concerned mostly with aspects of our economy with a quotation from Adam Smith but the only one in my book is that hackneyed nation of shopkeepers thing so I turned to Sydney Smith, a much more fertile source.

I present honourable Members with this one, which after listening to this speech, they may well wish to turn on me: "Macaulay had occasionally flashes of silence that made his conversation perfectly delightful".

Sir, I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Sir, in the absence of any criticism of Hong Kong's environment, I am pleased to assume that

honourable Members find it to their liking and that I need not waste their time ringing its praises or mentioning its fixed assets and their rates of depreciation. Nevertheless I would like to thank Mr CHEONG-LEEN for drawing attention to the first report produced by the consultants engaged to advise Government on the drafting of legislation to protect the environment, and on the establishment of a centralized pollution control unit.

This report puts forward recommendations on the broad principles which the consultants feel should be incorporated in legislation, and also on the structure of the proposed control unit. Their recommendations are now being considered in depth by Government, and by the Advisory Committee on Environmental Pollution. It is hoped that, by early next year, we will be in a position to instruct the consultants to begin work on the final stage of their assignment, which is to prepare formal drafting instructions for an Environmental Protection Ordinance.

One of the most important recommendations in this first report is for the establishment of a small pollution control unit, responsible to myself, which would set environmental objectives, co-ordinate environmental monitoring programmes, and oversee the enforcement of legislation by Government departments.

Instead of a system of rigid environmental standards, the consultants have recommended a flexible approach to pollution control which would allow the control unit to judge the best method of protecting the environment in each area, taking into account economic and social needs as well as environmental factors. Needless to say such an approach will protect existing industries, and hence the economy, as well, of course, the environmental conditions because enactment of the proposed legislation and the establishment of a pollution control unit should not only lead to better control of all types of pollution, as advocated by Mr Hilton CHEONG-LEEN, but would also established clear but practical environmental guide-lines within which industry could develop without detriment to the environment.

Mr Hilton CHEONG-LEEN also suggested proposals for tightening up the scheme for subsidizing secondary school students travelling on public transport and using any savings achieved for secondary school allowances. The Director of Education has dealt with this but I would like to correct the impression given that the scheme is being abused and that more season tickets are being issued than there are students. Unfortunately, because of the different types of season tickets which are issued, the statistics available are not easily understood and I apologize for this, but the latest facts are that:

[SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT] **Motion**

The Tramway Company issued 36,262 annual season tickets.

The China Motor Bus Company issued 11,567 annual season tickets on its suburban routes and 12,687 monthly season tickets on its urban routes in the month of June.

The Kowloon Motor Bus Company issued 20,990 annual season tickets on its rural routes and 175,595 annual season tickets on its urban routes.

Thus in the month of June there were 257,100 student tickets issued as compared with the figure of 370,573 students quoted by my honourable Friend. He will, I am sure, now understand that his calculation which indicated that there were 403,966 season tickets in use probably included some 10 months of double accounting of the monthly season tickets sold by the China Motor Bus Company.

Sir, with these few remarks, I support the motion before Council.

SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS:—Miss KO SIU-WAH spoke about film censorship and television and I think she is quite right to be worried about the number of films being made that are unsuitable for children. Half the films being screened fall into this category. This sad picture is a little softened by the fact that about half the films classified as unsuitable for children would not be unsuitable for them provided the children saw them in the company of adults who could tell them about some sequences they might otherwise find disturbing. The Commissioner for Television and Films is therefore thinking about the introduction of a classification which would cover those films considered unsuitable for children except where they are seen in the company of an adult. I believe that an extended advisory system of this nature would be helpful to cinema audiences generally and parents in particular.

We have considered previously whether it would be appropriate to enforce these classifications by law and prohibit the admission of children when adult films are being shown. This has been rejected in the past for practical reasons and problems of enforcement. It is therefore thought right that parents should remain responsible for deciding what their children may or may not see on the screen.

The honourable Member also suggested there should be greater public participation in film censorship. I agree. We are now preparing

amendments to the Film Censorship Regulations to enable the Commissioner for Television and Films to invite people other than the censors themselves to be present at censorship sessions and increase the size of the Film Board of Review to include two members of the public. I shall discuss these regulations with my honourable Friend when they are ready.

I agree that, as she said, the Television Advisory Board has fulfilled its role over the past eight years with "diligence and determination" and I would like to thank the chairman and members of that board, particularly the three unofficial members, for their dedicated and energetic service during these strenuous years of television development in Hong Kong. The unofficial membership of the board was recently increased from two to three members and I think we should leave it at that for the time being. Nor do I think that there is any justification for a change in chairmanship of the board or the major alterations to the Television Ordinance which this step would require. The board, which consists of three unofficial members and two public officers, is not an executive body. The executive and statutory authority appointed to administer and control the standards of television in Hong Kong is the Television Authority, that is a civil servant, and the board is appointed to advise him in the exercise of these functions. It is appropriate that the Television Authority, as the chief executive in television matters, should be the chairman of this group and there are precedents for this in the composition of other similar advisory bodies.

Communication

I am grateful to the honourable P. G. WILLIAMS for his comment that the Government's voice through the Home Affairs and the Information Services Departments and Radio Hong Kong must not be muted because of economy cuts. We have managed to avoid much muting so far by concentrating on the reductions that have been necessary on the more expendable areas. The key features of our communications organization—for instance the city district officers and the production by Radio Hong Kong of top quality Chinese public affairs television programmes—these have not been seriously affected. Except to say that these organizations have made a major contribution I am not speaking about their operations to stimulate community development in the fight against crime as my honourable Friend Mr DAVIES has dealt so competently with this subject already.

As to our efforts overseas, we have made a start by the establishment in the Government Information Services Department of an Overseas

[SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS] **Motion**

Publicity Unit which is responsible for making contact with the news media overseas and providing a steady flow of accurate information about Hong Kong. This unit is also encouraging journalists and film teams to visit Hong Kong, and is providing for them whilst they are here, in an effort to offset some of the damage done by unfair and uninformed criticism that we have had to suffer in recent years.

I am sure the heads of these departments will be glad to know that we shall have at least one unequivocal supporter in Finance Committee waiting for the day when the Government will ask him for more funds for this work.

Recreation and Sport

My honourable Friend, Mr BREMRIDGE, continues to pursue with his characteristic tenacity his crusade to launch a thousand ships on our reservoirs. I am afraid we have not yet found a Helen fair enough to beguile the Director of Water Supplies.

The Council for Recreation and Sport was advised that in other countries where recreational use of reservoirs is permitted the reservoirs are generally larger than those in Hong Kong; the number of people allowed to frequent the reservoir banks is strictly controlled and—certainly in the United Kingdom—the water is fully treated and purified before it is fed into the supply system. Despite these measures, some of the reservoirs have to be closed from time to time to help keep the water at a reasonable level of purity, because algal growths are encouraged by the pollution which seems to occur despite the strict controls.

We had to recognize that the circumstances in Hong Kong are different. In a typical hot summer it would be extremely difficult to restrict to a sufficiently low level the numbers who would seek to use the reservoirs for recreation. Part of our water purification system relies on the fact that the reservoirs are not heavily polluted. We could not take the risk of having to close down a reservoir and reduce our water supply because of pollution. The Council for Recreation and Sport has therefore accepted, with extreme reluctance, that recreational use of our reservoirs for boating would be too costly in capital works to maintain the present high standard of purity of our water supply. We could not justify this sort of spending when smaller sums

on the development of other recreational activities would be far more worthwhile.

It may yet be possible to allow a strictly limited amount of sporting use—as distinct from recreational use—of one reservoir. This is still under examination. If we can arrange it I am sure it would be helpful to the Hong Kong canoeists who are looking forward to taking part in the forthcoming Montreal Games to get in some practice on fresh, still water. These are the conditions under which the Montreal races will be held, and we would certainly like Hong Kong's representatives to have an opportunity to practise beforehand in similar conditions.

My honourable Friend Mr WILLIAMS expresses the hope that Hong Kong will make a better showing in the international arena. We must concentrate on mass recreation first in ways that Your Excellency has already explained and the Recreation and Sports Service has organized numerous schemes for coaching in various sports. This should in due course produce sportsmen of high calibre. We have not in the past made much of a showing abroad, but this is changing slowly. The gold medals the bowlers brought home from the Commonwealth Games in 1970 were a start. In 1973 three medals for athletics were won in the First Asian Goodwill Track and Field meet at Seoul. This last summer Hong Kong took one gold medal at the Schools International Swimming Meet in Djakarta. If I were a modest man I should refrain from saying that the Hong Kong team in the Admiral's Cup beat Australia, France, Italy, Canada and seven other countries in the world's premier ocean racing event. And if the selectors do their job properly we may yet see a Hong Kong cricket team beat the MCC at Lords next year.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:—Sir, last year, at the conclusion of the debate on the address, I commented that the speeches of Members had been dominated by their fears and hopes for the economy and by the impact which the world recession had made upon our prosperity and upon our ambitions.

This year, although Members continue to be anxious about the effects upon Hong Kong of world economic difficulties, particularly as these affect those members of our society who are less capable of survival in a period of trial, it is clear that their principal preoccupation is crime in general and violent crime in particular. I hope that they are in no doubt that this canker looms as large in the mind of the Government as it does in the thoughts of Unofficial Members and of the population as a whole.

[THE COLONIAL SECRETARY] **Motion**

The Government accepts that the prevalence of crime has become a major challenge. The desire for mutual protection of person and property is perhaps the most important single motive which has impelled men to form themselves into groups at all stages of civilization and the fulfilment of this desire becomes one of the fundamental tasks of any Government. An administration which cannot provide a reasonable degree of personal security for its citizens has therefore failed to perform one of the duties which are the foundation of, and justification for, its existence.

Statistics suggest that the surge of crime is levelling off, although this is scant consolation to a community which had previously enjoyed and rightly expected no more than a moderate degree of lawlessness. We believe that crime can and will be reduced to an acceptable level. But this will demand both an intensification of the efforts of the law enforcement agencies and the willing co-operation of the public.

I urge everyone to take such precautions as are open to them to reduce their vulnerability and above all to report what they see and to be prepared to come forward to give evidence, even though this may involve them in substantial personal inconvenience.

Sentences

Before dealing with the views expressed by several Members on the proper level of punishment I would like to correct any misapprehension which may have been caused by references made by one Member to the work of the Board of Review for long-term prison sentences.

Every prisoner earns remission for good conduct, at the maximum rate of one-third of the sentence imposed upon him. No doubt the likelihood of such a remission is one of the factors which a court will bear in mind when deciding upon the proper length of sentence. While there may be argument as to the amount of remission which should be accorded, it is generally accepted that a system of this kind is essential to good prison administration. We must not lose sight of the objectives of imprisonment among which, in addition to deterrence and punishment, is the reformation of the offender, in the hope that he will not return to unlawful activity on his release.

The Board of Review, under the chairmanship of the Attorney General, considers all long-term sentences at specified intervals and has

power to recommend early releases to the Governor in exceptional circumstances. In practice, such recommendations are rare. In the past four years, the Governor has ordered the release of only five prisoners as a result of recommendations of this board. Three of these had shown great courage in giving evidence against prison warders or fellow prisoners in relation to offences committed inside prison, one was suffering from a grave illness and one was an old man. I hope that this will satisfy Members that there is no indiscriminate release of prisoners through the agency of this board.

Honourable Members have, not for the first time, been sharply critical of the general level of sentences imposed by the courts. They have made clear their opinion that the courts have a vital part to play in the community's battle against crime and that the courts are not discharging his role effectively.

I fear that there is a widespread concern that the courts are not affording to innocent citizens the measure of protection against criminal conduct which the public expects. This belief is founded on the conviction that the public is properly protected only if offenders are punished in a manner which manifests the outrage of society at the greed and wickedness that motivate the majority of crimes and which acts as a real deterrent to wrong-doers.

The Attorney General informs me that he has represented to the Chief Justice his concern that current sentences are not severe enough to contribute effectively in Hong Kong's present circumstances to the restoration of law and order.

The courts have to hold a balance between the state and the individual, a task of great difficulty, particularly in a period of law-lessness. But they are not and should not be, insensitive to the feelings and convictions of the society in which they operate. I have no doubt, therefore, that the Chief Justice and the members of the Judiciary will have taken due and careful note of the strength of the views pressed by honourable Members.

Capital Punishment

It was apparent to me from the tone of the speeches of several members that the implementation of the death penalty in Hong Kong is a matter on which they feel deeply. I well understand the realities of Hong Kong as expressed so forcibly by members, whose views undoubtedly accurately represent the deeply-held conviction of the great bulk of our population.

[THE COLONIAL SECRETARY] **Motion**

There are differences of attitude, to which the honourable Dr CHUNG has referred, between what is acceptable in the United Kingdom and what is acceptable in Hong Kong. These different attitudes may suggest that capital punishment could be a more effective deterrent here than in other places. They definitely do mean that the great majority of the Hong Kong population are convinced that the death penalty would serve as a substantial deterrent to violent crime. It is also the common view that even if it does not deter, then it should be imposed as a measure of the outrage of the community and because it is widely believed that evil conduct should be visited by punishment.

I can assure Members that all these realities are understood. But unfortunately the issue does not end there. Any prisoner sentenced to death in Hong Kong has the right to petition Her Majesty the Queen for clemency. The Queen, in reaching her decision, acts upon the advice of the appropriate United Kingdom Minister, namely the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. In tendering his advice to the Queen the Secretary of State must take into account the likely reaction in the United Kingdom Parliament, to which he is answerable, to the advice which he tenders to Her Majesty. Recent Secretaries of State have been of the opinion that they would not be supported in the House of Commons if they were to advise that death sentences should be carried out in Hong Kong. Moreover, there are no signs that this attitude of the House of Commons is likely to change in the immediate future.

I well understand the sense of frustration of honourable Members, which is shared by your Government.

I am authorized by His Excellency to say that he fully recognizes the fierceness of conviction with which so many residents of Hong Kong hold the view that, unless the death penalty is carried out in appropriate cases, the flood of crime and violence will not be turned back.

In recognition of these factors he has once again represented to the Secretary of State in the strongest terms the wish of Hong Kong for a restoration of the death penalty in those cases in which the circumstances of the crime leave no reasonable justification for clemency.

His Excellency has asked me to say that he accepts the fact that public opinion on this issue is so strong and so universal that a change to current practice must be made in terms which go some way to meet

the genuine feelings of the community, which clearly sees this issue as a test of the determination of the Government to tackle violent crime with determination.

In future, whenever he commutes a death penalty, the Governor will impose the alternative punishment of life imprisonment, unless, in exceptional circumstances, he feels able to accept advice from Executive Council that a lesser sentence should be imposed.

The only exception which might be made to this principle, is where, after a long period of imprisonment, strong humanitarian considerations might have emerged such as would justify the earlier release of a particular offender.

Population Policy

The honourable Mr LI has urged us to adopt a more positive population policy. Of course, we are aware of the difficulties which an excessive growth of population will cause to our social development plans, bearing in mind particularly the limited areas of land within which we have to meet the community's needs.

The working party, which I informed honourable Members during the debate on the address last year would be established, has been studying this question in detail and its conclusions will be embodied in a paper to be presented to the Executive Council in the near future.

The two major factors which influence our population growth are migration and natural increase.

The measures that we have felt obliged to take to reduce inward migration have, I believe, produced a visible and welcome reduction from the peaks experienced in recent years.

We have also seen a dramatic fall in the birth rate during the last 15 years. The dedicated work of the Family Planning Association, and the more recent involvement of the Medical and Health Department, have provided a widespread network of family planning clinics, at which professional advice and facilities are available at a cost which makes them accessible to all. The increasing numbers attending these clinics, and the decline in our birth rate, indicate that family planning is well accepted by the people of Hong Kong.

So far, our approach has been to encourage voluntary limitation of family size and we have not yet felt obliged to resort to the more coercive methods which have been adopted elsewhere, though it must

[THE COLONIAL SECRETARY] **Motion**

be recognized that there may come a time when it will be necessary to introduce measures which will operate as a positive discouragement to large families.

Government Machinery

Honourable Members will recall that four broad categories of change in our previous arrangements aimed at improving the machinery of Government, were adopted about the middle of 1973.

The first category consisted of procedural improvements, most of which have been adopted. After about two years' satisfactory experience of standardized requests for staff and special expenditure we have recently extended the process to cover proposals for changes to existing policies and for the development of new ones.

Further progress has been made in delegating authority within the Secretariat and from the Secretariat to departments, particularly in establishment matters. But much remains to be done, since in any large organization many decisions tend to be taken at a higher level than is justified by their importance or difficulty.

There are regular reviews of what can be done to delegate further and the newly appointed Secretary for Administration, about whom I shall say more in a moment, will continue to identify areas in which this is possible. In general terms, decisions taken at the lowest reasonable level are reached more quickly and less expensively.

Since the adoption of the consultants' recommendations in 1973, we have expanded our use of data processing machinery, so that we now have computer projects in about twenty departments and our annual expenditure on them has increased more than three-fold since 1972-73.

The second category was the introduction of planning processes. During the past two years, we have made some progress in the better use of them. Programme plans, covering activities which absorb about 50% of public expenditure, have been completed or are in the course of preparation. In addition to the first plans for secondary education and medical and health services, we have embarked on plans to cover law and order, housing, fire and emergency services, the co-ordination of services in the new towns and social welfare services.

These plans, however, though comprehensive in their approach to a given activity, have not been linked together. We have, therefore, decided that there should be an overall development plan, which will embody the various programme plans and will attempt to assess the total needs of Hong Kong for land, money and other resources during a ten-year period. Work on this plan has just begun.

Some work has also been done on annual operating plans. As I mentioned last year, the technique of preparing these is not an easy one; and I doubted our ability to achieve significant results for another year or two. My doubts have proved to be justified.

As the honourable Mr BREMRIDGE noted, we have prepared one major plan during the past year—although two other pilot plans were completed before that. The preparation of this plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has led us to re-assess the procedures which have been suggested by the consultants.

The third group of recommendations dealt with the improvement of personnel management and I believe that we have been able to improve the relationship between the Government, as an employer, and the public service. Our consultative machinery has been expanded and improved so as to provide members of the service with better access to, and communication with, management. As the Secretary for the Civil Service regularly reminds me, this is an important factor in fostering and maintaining the morale of serving officers.

Fourthly, we have tried to re-define the respective responsibilities and functions of the Secretariat and departments. The most important change, two years ago, was to create branches in the Secretariat which assumed greater responsibility for the formation of policy and for its effective enforcement.

Each branch works under a Secretary with adequate authority to perform these functions. Based on lessons learnt during the past two years, we have recently revised the distribution of responsibilities between Secretaries, to remove overlapping and to enable them to perform their duties more effectively. A review of all Government committees is now under way, with each Secretary responsible for assessing both the usefulness and membership of those which fall within his area of responsibility.

A new post of Secretary for Administration has been created, with the imminent departure of the Deputy Colonial Secretary on retirement. I hope that honourable Members will permit me to express to Mr Michael CLINTON my deep personal gratitude for his loyal and unselfish

[THE COLONIAL SECRETARY] **Motion**

support since I was appointed to my present post. I do not know how I would have managed without his long experience, his kindly and tolerant guidance and his devotion to the public service. He has served Hong Kong well and we are fortunate that he has agreed to succeed Sir Ronald HOLMES as Chairman of the Public Services Commission.

The main task of the Secretary for Administration will be to organize and supervise the work of the Government's Management Unit, which is responsible for improving the machinery of Government and for initiating, supervising and sometimes carrying out, work on programme plans and annual operating plans. He will also be responsible to me for suggesting improvements to the machinery of Government, and for ensuring that those which are adopted are effectively implemented. His jurisdiction will extend to all departments of the Government and not be confined to the Secretariat.

One of his tasks in the near future will be to continue the assessments of the extent to which the reforms introduced in 1973 have functioned properly. In the course of this task, I should expect him to consider the proposal put forward by the honourable Mr TIEN for the creation of a Secretary for Trade and Industry. If a good case is made for such a post, a recommendation for its creation will be put to the appropriate bodies. Nevertheless, we must be sure that we do not create too many Secretaries, nor over-centralize authority in the Secretariat at the expense of the initiative and responsibility of departments.

Honourable Members may be assured that we shall continue to pursue vigorously the task of strengthening and adapting the machinery of Government to meet our evolving requirements.

The Public Service

I welcome, as I am sure the members of the public service do, the tribute which was paid to it by the honourable Mr Q. W. LEE. I suppose that any civil service is likely to be rather better than most members of the public give it credit for, and rather worse than its own members claim.

But I have no doubt that Hong Kong has a fine service, which will stand comparison with any other. We are very adequately paid, equipped on a scale which should ensure a high degree of efficiency and generally well accommodated and supplied. We have been able to

recruit many officers of excellent quality in a competitive market. All these features, justify, I believe, the assertion that Hong Kong is well served by its Government departments.

The quality, efficiency and loyalty of the service are particularly evident in difficult times, such as those which we have faced in the past year. Heads of departments found that many plans for expansion had to be trimmed and that their ambitions for an improvement of services had to be curbed. In some cases they had to meet changed or increased demands without additional resources of staff or money. The response of the civil service has been most gratifying, and I am deeply appreciative of the uncomplaining and helpful way in which disappointments have been accepted and heavier burdens carried.

I can confirm to the honourable Mr P. G. WILLIAMS that merit is the principal criterion for promotion and that youth is no bar to the early advancement of an officer of ability. This is well illustrated in the administrative class, to which the honourable Member referred. Promotions to directorate level in this class from 1972 to 1974 included ten officers between 32 and 35 years of age; six of whom were local officers. Moreover, we try to ensure that a promising young administrative officer is given an early opportunity to act at directorate level, sometimes before the age of 30. However, the effort to identify and advance the very best officers must not be allowed to impair the morale of the service or to lead us to underrate the value of experience and consistent performance during a long period.

With regard to the localization of the civil service, may I refer to my reply to a question from the honourable Mr Wilson WANG on the 22nd January last. I said then, and I reaffirm it now, that it is Government's established policy to recruit overseas only when suitable and qualified local candidates are not available. Overseas officers are normally recruited on contract terms and may transfer to permanent terms only if it is apparent that a local candidate is unlikely to become available to replace the overseas officer in the reasonably foreseeable future. Only in the administrative class and the police inspectorate is there a regular intake of a proportion of overseas officers.

Nearly all senior posts are filled by promotion within the service, and all qualified candidates irrespective of origin are considered on equal terms. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of local officers at directorate and equivalent level. On the 1st January of this year, there were 118 local officers out of 471 and by the 1st November, there were 136 local officers out of 475.

[THE COLONIAL SECRETARY] **Motion**

I suggest that this represents a steady and reasonable progress and that it establishes that the principles to which I have referred are being properly applied.

Conclusion

It has been a hard year for the world. Inevitably Hong Kong has suffered from the recession and doubt which have adversely affected many of the countries whose prosperity has a significant effect on our own. So far we have ridden the storm, through our pragmatism, our flexibility and our willingness to react in a way demanded by hard facts rather than by theory.

But this has not been possible without cost and, as always, those who are least able to bear it have had to carry much of the weight of misfortune.

The fall in our trade must not be measured in cold statistics of goods but in the human terms which lie behind them. The loss of a market may mean the closure of a factory and the unemployment of many people. Lack of work brings not only poverty but frustration and hostility for a society which has failed to provide employment for willing but idle hands. Sadly, the pause in world trade has meant a slowing down of the provision of many essential facilities for which Hong Kong has waited with patience and forbearance. It postpones the attainment of our objectives of decent housing, proper schooling and adequate medical facilities. We shall strive to recover the ground lost when better times emerge, within the constraints necessarily imposed by the size and shape of our economy. For financial prudence must always guide our counsels and without a stable and well managed economy all our projects are at risk.

Let me assure honourable Members that we are in no way discouraged by the setbacks of the past two years or weakened in our determination to provide a better standard of life for our citizens.

In good and bad times alike, the essential machinery of public administration must continue and an important part of this is the contribution of Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils who devote, to the prejudice of their business and personal affairs, a substantial proportion of their time and energies to the conduct of public business.

As observers in other countries sometimes need to be reminded, the task of Unofficial Members is not to oppose, but to participate in the formulation of Government policy, to improve proposals presented to them by the administration and to monitor their effective implementation.

At all these stages, they ensure by a long experience of Hong Kong and its problems, that the Government does not become divorced from reality or more influenced by the enchantment of its own programmes than by the needs of our citizens. While, it can be argued that, as a form of government we may cast an old-fashioned shadow, the substance is very much of our times.

I would like to record the Government's heavy debt to the knowledge, integrity and wise guidance of Unofficial Members, without which the task of the Government in leading Hong Kong safely through the myriad trials of the day would be much more difficult.

Unofficial Members may also take much of the credit for what I believe to be a growing awareness in the community that the Government's prime objective is to ensure that our citizens live in conditions which are not an affront to human dignity. In our restricted circumstances this is not a simple task. Sometimes we shall falter, sometimes we shall take the wrong road but let no one doubt the reality of our aim or the sincerity with which we shall pursue it.

Sir, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—Since the ayes have it, I thank Members for their courteous motion.

Adjournment and next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday the 19th of November.

Adjourned accordingly at ten minutes to four o'clock.

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