

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Wednesday, 7 June 1978****The Council met at half past two o'clock****PRESENT**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR CRAWFORD MURRAY MACLEHOSE, GBE, KCMG, KCVO

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF SECRETARY (*Acting*)
MR IAN MACDONALD LIGHTBODY, CMG, JP

THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (*Acting*)
MR DAVID HAROLD JORDAN, CMG, MBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR JOHN WILLIAM DIXON HOBLEY, CMG, QC, JP

THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (*Acting*)
MR JOHN CHARLES CREASEY WALDEN, JP

THE HONOURABLE LEWIS MERVYN DAVIES, CMG, OBE, JP
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

THE HONOURABLE DAVID WYLIE MCDONALD, CMG, JP
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

THE HONOURABLE KENNETH WALLIS JOSEPH TOPLEY, CMG, JP
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

THE HONOURABLE DAVID GREGORY JEAFFRESON, JP
SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE GARTH CECIL THORNTON, QC
SOLICITOR GENERAL

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD HEWITT NICHOLS, OBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

THE HONOURABLE THOMAS LEE CHUN-YON, CBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE DEREK JOHN CLAREMONT JONES, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

DR THE HONOURABLE THONG KAH-LEONG, JP
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE ERIC PETER HO, JP
SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE JOHN MARTIN ROWLANDS, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE JAMES NEIL HENDERSON, JP
COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR

THE HONOURABLE AUGUSTINE CHUI KAM, JP
DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS (*Acting*)

THE HONOURABLE DONALD POON-HUAI LIAO, OBE, JP
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING (*Acting*)

THE HONOURABLE JOHN RAWLING TODD, CVO, JP
SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES (*Acting*)

THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM DORWARD, OBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS (*Acting*)

THE HONOURABLE SIR SZE-YUEN CHUNG, CBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE LEE QUO-WEI, CBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE ROGERIO HYNDMAN LOBO, CBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE JAMES WU MAN-HON, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE LI FOOK-WO, OBE, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE HARRY FANG SIN-YANG, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE MRS KWAN KO SIU-WAH, OBE, JP

THE REV. THE HONOURABLE JOYCE MARY BENNETT, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHEN SHOU-LUM, JP

THE HONOURABLE LYDIA DUNN, OBE, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE HENRY HU HUNG-LICK, OBE, JP

THE REV THE HONOURABLE PATRICK TERENCE McGOVERN, SJ, JP

THE HONOURABLE PETER C. WONG, JP

THE HONOURABLE WONG LAM, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE CHARLES YEUNG SIU-CHO, JP

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE OSWALD VICTOR CHEUNG, CBE, QC, JP

THE HONOURABLE PETER GORDON WILLIAMS, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE JOHN HENRY BREMRIDGE, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE LO TAK-SHING, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS YUAN-HAO TIEN, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE ALEX WU SHU-CHIH, OBE, JP

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG TAT-SHING, JP

DR THE HONOURABLE RAYSON LISUNG HUANG, CBE, JP

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR STEPHEN TAM SHU-PUI

Oath

MR J. R. TODD made the Oath of Allegiance and assumed his seat as a Member of the Council.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—I should like to welcome Mr TODD to this Council.

Papers

The following papers were laid pursuant to Standing Order 14(2):—

<i>Subject</i>	<i>LN No</i>
Subsidiary Legislation:	
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance. Library (New Territories) (Amendment) Regulations 1978.....	100
Road Traffic Ordinance. Road Traffic (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 1978	101
Road Traffic Ordinance. Road Traffic (Roads and Signs) (Amendment) Regulations 1978	102
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Evidence Ordinance. Evidence (Authorized Persons) (No 6) Order 1978	106
Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance. Lands and Survey Department (Change of Title) Notice 1978	107
Mass Transit Railway Corporation Ordinance. Resolution of the Legislative Council (Commencement) Notice 1978	108

<i>Subject</i>	<i>LN No</i>
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance. Cheung Chau Cemetery, Sandy Ridge Cemetery and Wo Hop Shek Cemetery (Removal and Disposal of Human Remains) Order 1978.....	109
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance. Public Health and Urban Services (Public Pleasure Grounds) (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) (No 2) Order 1978	110
Registrar General (Establishment) Ordinance. Registrar General (Establishment) (Amendment of Second Schedule) Order 1978.....	111
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance. Hawker (Permitted Place) Declaration No 2/1978.....	112
Sessional Paper 1977-78:	
No 47—Supplementary Provisions for the Quarter ended 31 December 1977 (published on 7.6.1978).	

Oral answers to questions

Speculative property dealings—control

1 MISS DUNN asked:—*Sir, is the Government aware of the current speculation on initial deposits paid on domestic housing involving the transfer of receipts between purchasers at large premiums, without any payment of stamp duty thus driving up the ultimate prices of domestic housing? If so, will Government take steps to control this practice?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—*Sir, the Government is aware that there is speculation on initial deposits, whereby individuals, for a relatively small outlay, are able to book a flat while the Sale and Purchase Agreement is being drawn up; and meanwhile to sell this 'booking' at a profit before they are required to pay the balance of the first instalment of the purchase price.*

At present the Government has no powers to control this practice. It is one of a number of speculative activities in the domestic property market which reflect the current imbalance between the supply of and demand for domestic accommodation. As the then acting Financial Secretary said in reply to my honourable Friend, Mr S. L. CHEN, on 12 of May, the Government is monitoring the property market to ensure that it has adequate warning if the

effects of this imbalance should appear to be damaging to the economy or to the supply of domestic accommodation.

As regards my honourable Friend's reference to stamp duty, the fact of the matter is that the receipts to which she refers are not dutiable documents. Apart from the enforcement problems involved in collecting the stamp duty if such documents were made dutiable, the rate of duty would have to be very high to act as a deterrent to speculation.

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, in what form exactly does this monitoring of the property market take and would it not be prudent to act before actual damage is done to the economy?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Generally speaking, Sir, I would agree that it would always be prudent to act before damage is done if one can be sure that damage is about to be done. So far as monitoring is concerned, we are monitoring consents to start, actual and expected completions, land sales and prices, tender and building materials prices, building plans submitted and approved, prices and rents and vacancies.

MR CHEN:—*Sir, will Government wish to have the power to control this practice?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—I beg your pardon, Sir, I didn't quite catch the question, to control what?

MR CHEN:—*In the second paragraph of your reply, it is said, at present the Government has no powers to control this practice, my question is, will Government wish to have the power to control such practice?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Not at present, Sir.

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, the Financial Secretary refers to relatively small outlays in these deposits. While accepting that the amount of money involved in the transfers are small in absolute terms, would the Government agree that they are substantial in relative terms to the man in the street who buys a flat once in a life time?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Not knowing the resources of the people concerned, Sir, I couldn't say one way or the other, at the moment.

MISS DUNN:—*Although these receipts are not dutiable documents, at the moment, would there be any difficulty in amending the legislation to make them dutiable so that at least the public purse will benefit?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—I would like to take advice on the question of whether there will be any difficulty about amending the law; I would think

not. The difficulty, as I have suggested already, will be in enforcement and, unless we could enforce satisfactorily, then the public purse would not benefit.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, may I ask when and how soon is it expected or anticipated that the so-called current imbalance between supply of and demand for domestic accommodation will be redressed?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—It seems to be another question, Sir, I wouldn't wish to seem frivolous in my reply, but I think I can only say my guess is as good as yours or vice versa.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—On a point of order, Sir, it does not seem to me to be *another question because it does arise as a supplementary out of the second paragraph of my honourable Friend's reply, and on another point of order it cannot be any guesstimate because in his reply my honourable Friend did say that they were monitoring the situation most carefully and surely they must have some idea as to what level of speculation would be reached before Government should intervene.*

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—It was a statement, not a question.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, with due respect, it was two small points of order.*

Stamp duty on domestic housing

2 MISS DUNN asked:—*Sir, will the Government substantially increase the stamp duty payable on the transfer of Purchase and Sale Agreements prior to the issue of occupation permits as well as resales of domestic housing within 2 or 3 years of purchase in order to discourage speculation?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Sir, stamp duty is a charge on documents, or I should say on certain classes of documents and not on transactions as such. The documentation that the transfer of a purchase/sale agreement involves, does not *necessarily* bring a dutiable document into existence. Whether it does or does not do so in any particular case can be decided only in the light of the actual facts of the transaction and the nature of the documents concerned.

Although, in principle, a dutiable document could be made a necessary part of the transfer of a Sale and Purchase Agreement, this step would be subject to the same drawbacks as regards enforcement as in the case of sales of 'bookings', or initial deposit receipts. As regards having an especially high rate of stamp duty both on transfers of Sale and Purchase Agreements and on resales within two or three years, the same problems, over the very high rates required to deter speculation and their unfairness to those with genuine

reasons for selling, particularly where there was little or no speculative profit (or even a loss) involved, would make the stamp duty an inappropriate instrument with which to combat speculation.

In any case, even if it were practicable to devise a way of using stamp duty to control speculation, I should be very doubtful about widening the ambit of the Stamp Ordinance in this way to make it a regulatory instrument. The Stamp Ordinance is one of our main instruments of indirect taxation and changes in the rates of duty imposed under it are principally a matter of fiscal policy undertaken to change the revenue yield of the tax.

However, it is the increases in prices either of Sale and Purchase Agreements or of actual property that is presumably worrying my honourable Friend. To discourage by fiscal means the speculation that is felt to be responsible for these increases, it would be more appropriate to attack the profit arising from it than to increase the tax on the total value of the transactions. Under present tax legislation, to the extent that a profit has accrued from a speculative transaction, especially from a series of such transactions by the same individual, the individual involved could be deemed a habitual trader so that the profit would attract the attention of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue as being liable to Profits Tax.

If it were felt that the possibility of Profits Tax liability would provide too little deterrent to speculation through leaving too much of the speculative profit intact, the form of fiscal control measure that would be required, in principle, would be a direct tax on speculative profits from property—a form of capital gains tax. If levied at rates sufficient to remove much (or all) of the profit from property speculation, such a tax would undoubtedly provide a deterrent to such speculation. However, unless the new tax was framed to cover all speculative gains—including those on stocks and shares, foreign currency, commodities, antiques etc, as well as property—it would breach one of the fundamental requirements of our tax system, as spelt out in the Budget Speech this year, that ‘the tax system is as neutral as possible as regards the internal cost/price structure and investment decisions’. The introduction of a capital gains tax aimed specifically against property dealings would violate this requirement. A more widely drawn capital gains tax, to satisfy this requirement, would involve considerations going well beyond the question of property speculation.

I would hesitate to propose the introduction of a Bill to make such a fundamental change in our tax system.

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, I too would hesitate to propose the introduction of such a change in our tax system, but is there not an analogy between the share market in 1973 and the present real estate market? If so, why is it felt today that an increase of stamp duty would not be a deterrent to speculation when, in 1973, the Government obviously felt that it was, by increasing the stamp duty on share transactions?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—With these long supplementaries, I find it a little difficult to remember the beginning of it by the time the Member asking it gets to the end of it. The stamp duty on share transactions was increased, but it was not increased to a, what you might call a penal or punitive, level and I don't think it had very much effect on the stock market and I think other factors were responsible for the subsequent decline in the stock market. It's not just a question of increasing stamp duty. It would be a question of introducing new stamp duties on documents that are not at present subject to it and my basic point, I think, is in fact illustrated by what happened when we increased the stamp duty on share transactions. It was increased to be still a relatively small proportion of the money involved in the total transactions; it had very little effect. In order to have any large effect it would have to be very sharply increased.

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, following on the argument that the Financial Secretary has put forward in his answer, wouldn't a substantial increase in stamp duty in fact mean taking a larger share of the bigger speculative profits now being made by many people, some of whom are not even residents of Hong Kong and who cannot be subject to normal taxation?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Yes, I suppose it would, Sir.

MISS DUNN:—Thank you.

Pyramid selling schemes

3 MR LOBO asked:—*Sir, will the Government state what the present position is on the introduction of legislation to protect investors who join pyramid selling schemes having regard to the answer given to a similar question asked in this Council in January 1974?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, when my honourable Friend the Attorney General, answered the question in 1974, he said the problem could be tackled either by regulating or by prohibiting pyramid sales. He had just issued a draft Bill, he said, designed to regulate the practice to the Government departments concerned for their comments. But, the Bill represented initial thinking only.

In reacting to the Bill, the consensus was for prohibition. So another Bill was drafted accordingly. This one has run into the serious snag that we are unable to find a definition of pyramid selling that does not include other types of selling which we do not wish to prohibit. We are now trying to get hold of legislation in use elsewhere to see how others have tackled this problem. If we don't get a satisfactory answer, we shall have to reconsider the possibility of regulation. But the administrative difficulties

involved in regulating pyramid selling are formidable and we would need to be satisfied that the problem was sufficiently serious to justify overcoming these difficulties.

MR LOBO:—*Sir, I can appreciate that there are difficulties, but in the meantime, 4 years have gone by; can we be assured that this matter will be looked into more vigorously?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Yes, Sir.

Control of money lenders

4 MISS KO asked:—*Sir, will Government consider introducing*

- (a) tougher restrictions and tighter checks to vet applications from money lenders for registration, and
- (b) effective enforcement of the legislation controlling the operation of money lenders?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Sir, there are at present no restrictions on who may register as a money-lender under the Money-Lenders Ordinance. So it follows that applications are not vetted. The Commissioner of Police considers this situation unsatisfactory and has recently made proposals for strengthening the legislation. As to the second part of the question, the police take action on allegations of breaches of the Money-Lenders Ordinance that are brought to their attention. In 1977 five persons were convicted of offences under the Ordinance.

MISS KO:—*Sir, does it mean that Government will introduce legislation on who may register as a money-lender under the Money-Lenders Ordinance?*

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—No, Sir, it does not. It means that the Government will consider the proposals that have been made by the Commissioner of Police but the Government has not yet made a decision on them.

Sha Tsui Detention Centre

5 MR LOBO asked:—*Sir, how many detainees aged over 21 have been sent to the adult Detention Centre at Sha Tsui since it was opened in September last year?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—Sir, up to 1 June 1978, 36 young adults have been sentenced to the Centre. Of this number 8 have been removed, 7 having been given alternative sentences on appeal or review by the courts and 1

having been found not guilty on appeal. The balance of 28 have been detained for the prescribed period. And so far 3 have been released and placed under supervision.

MR LOBO:—*Sir, in view of the fact that the capacity of this centre is about 80, does Government think that it is serving a useful purpose?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—*Sir, in fixing the capacity we took account of the likely demand. The scheme has been in operation for 9 to 10 months. The build-up in the population in the detention centre has, I think, on the whole, proved satisfactory. It is too early to say what the results will be once those who have been released have completed their supervision period, 3 of them were released after 6½, 5 and 7 months respectively. But on the whole the scheme has made a good start.*

Illegal structures on rooftops

6 MR F. W. LI asked:—*Sir, is Government aware of the existence of the practices by private building developers who, contrary to building regulations, sell roof space for the purpose of erecting unauthorized structures and encourage illegal changes of use of building and, if so, what steps does Government propose to take to stop these practices?*

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:—*Sir, Government is aware that roof areas are included in developers' sale brochures either as part of a unit for sale, or as a separate item. This practice in itself does not contravene any law. Although the high prices paid for some flat roofs suggests there may be an intention to change the use of the flat roof by erecting accommodation illegally, many people value the amenity provided by a flat roof simply as a garden or sitting out area.*

Action should therefore be directed against those who break the law and currently the Buildings Ordinance Office is having all illegal structures in all new buildings systematically removed. This policy has received some publicity which has served to alert the public as to the true situation as regards roof spaces and it is intended to embark on a publicity campaign to increase public awareness of the pitfalls related to the erection of illegal structures generally. The first publication, dealing with the particular subject of flat roof spaces, will be issued next month.

Honourable Members will be aware that, for the present at least, it is logistically necessary for the BOO to confine its attention to illegal structures erected on or after 1 August 1975 or those which pose a positive life risk. The BOO is not therefore able to deal with the difficult question of changes of use within buildings, although lease enforcement action is being taken by the Registrar General in some of the worst cases.

A further expansion of the BOO is envisaged later in this financial year which will enable more resources to be brought to bear on breaches of the Buildings Ordinance.

MR F. W. LI:—*Sir, does Government have any idea as to how many cases of these types of illegal structures on roof-spaces there are and how many cases of prosecution have come to the notice of the Buildings Ordinance Office?*

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:—*Sir, some 250 to 300 complaints are received monthly by the Buildings Ordinance Office of which about half result in the issue of removal notices. The present policy is, of course, not to take legal action on first offences and since none of these cases have been repeated, no prosecutions have taken place.*

Inertia selling

7 MR LOBO asked:—*Sir, in view of the possible damage to Hong Kong's international trading reputation caused by inertia selling, will the Government take steps to prevent such undesirable activities?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sir, I assume that my honourable Friend is referring to the practice of sending invoices to companies overseas seeking payment for entries in trade directories without the companies having asked for such entries. Apparently these companies tend to pay the invoices without question.*

The Post Office Ordinance makes it illegal to send these invoices by post to countries which themselves forbid their importation or circulation. Enforcement is difficult on two counts: first the difficulty of identifying such material in post leaving Hong Kong; and second the difficulties involved in getting overseas postal administrations to give evidence in Hong Kong as to the law in their country. The same sort of difficulties I am afraid would apply if we were to try and devise legislation to make the sending of invoices for unsolicited entries in trade directories an offence in Hong Kong in its own right.

Speculation on land prices

8 MR CHEONG-LEEN asked:—*Sir, in order to reduce the level of speculation on land prices, will Government shorten the payment period for public land purchases?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—*Sir, this question follows very closely a similar question, what has become known as a famous question, asked by*

Mr S. L. CHEN in this Council two sittings ago—except that Mr CHEN's question related to speculation in property dealings while Mr CHEONG-LEEN is referring to speculation in land. The two are in many respects interrelated and, in answering this question, I can only echo the reply given at that time by the then Acting Financial Secretary. The Government is monitoring the markets in both property and land and, if this shows that speculation in land is damaging the economy or slowing down the supply of accommodation and that this is likely to continue, then steps will be taken to counter the situation. Should such action prove to be necessary Mr CHEONG-LEEN's suggestion will certainly be borne in mind.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Since my honourable Friend said that the speculation in property and speculation in land are inter-related, does that mean then that Government accepts or condones or is in favour of the very high level of speculation in both land prices and in property and, of course, in land prices I am referring to public land prices as well?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—I think if I can recall my honourable Friends' attention to the answer which was given by my Friend, the then Acting Financial Secretary, he explained that not all speculation was necessarily pernicious, that in some cases speculation actually served to increase supply.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*What are the indications, Sir, that such speculation would be damaging to the economy? What would be the indicators from Government's point of view, which would lead it to consider the suggestion that is contained in the question?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Sir, unfortunately, I am not now responsible for economic policy but I would say that it might be difficult to say in advance, as the Acting Financial Secretary said this afternoon, to say in advance when damage is going to occur, but on the whole I believe that these matters are self-regulating or they tend to be self-regulating as in due course the stock market proved to be self-regulating, rather too much for some people I am afraid. I have a feeling that the same will also apply to the property market in due course.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, if my honourable Friend's view is that the market would be eventually self regulating, does that infer then that the Government would, in all likelihood, do absolutely nothing about the situation even if it keeps on rising to further astronomical proportions?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Sir, I think that to counter...if excessive speculation were to prove to be damaging, the time to counter it would be in the early stages of a boom market. By the time it has really

fuelled itself up, it is probably rather too late and the fire has to burn itself out.

SIR S. Y. CHUNG:—*Sir, is it true that the introduction of payments by instalments for land sales was made with a view to stimulating land sales at that time? And if so, is that need still necessary under these circumstances?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—*Sir, the introduction of instalments for land sales I think happened long before I took up my present post, so I cannot say firmly what were the motives of those who introduced it at that time. I would say that Sir S. Y. CHUNG is probably right that this was one of the motives and it would be possible by reducing the number of instalments or by increasing the down payment, for instance, to slow down land sales or slow down the excessive demand for land, but our feeling is that it is better to try to get more land on to the market at the moment rather than do this.*

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, with your permission, may I ask a final supplementary? Bearing on what my honourable Friend said a while ago, in his view then, it would probably eventually happen that this current wave of speculation on land and property will have to burn itself out rather than any potential action being taken by Government?*

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—*Sir, I think we are getting rather beyond the question and rather too dangerously close to general economic policy. I could make certain suggestions, but I won't in this case.*

Drug addicts

9 MR CHEONG-LEEN asked:—*Sir what is the present estimated number of drug addicts in Hong Kong, as compared to 3 years ago, and by how much and by what means Government plans to reduce this number in the next 3 years?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—*Sir, no accurate estimate of the number of drug addicts in Hong Kong 3 years ago or now is available. This is due to the nature of the problem, and the inadequacy of the data base.*

Since 1 September 1976, when a new system of reporting was introduced 54,000 individual reports have been accumulated from 21 agencies and 102 reporting sources. The number of addicts represented by these reports is likely however to be considerably less, but even then the resultant figure is not comprehensive because we do not know the number of addicts receiving treatment from private medical practitioners, or those who have escaped arrest.

When the computerization of the Central Registry is completed in August, we shall have, for the first time, reliable data on the characteristics and trends of, our addict population, and on the effectiveness of our various treatment programmes. In the meantime we already know that we are making considerable inroads into the number of young addicts. This is very promising.

The number of addicts being treated at 30 April this year in the methadone programmes at SARDA and at Treatment Centres was 7,326 compared with 3,282 three years earlier.

In the next 3 years we shall continue our four inter-locking programmes of law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation, preventive education and publicity and international co-operation on which our anti-narcotics strategies are based, adjusted as appears necessary in the light of all available facts.

We shall aim to keep street drug prices high, to induce more addicts to come into treatment at the 21 existing methadone maintenance clinics to continue treatment at 4 Drug Addiction Treatment Centres and the voluntary treatment by the Society for Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts and to persuade our young people to stay off drugs.

It is not possible to estimate by how much these measures will reduce the actual number of addicts, but on the basis of experience in the last five years, I assess that there will be a decline in the overall total, especially in the numbers of young persons turning to drugs.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, I would agree there has been substantial progress. Would it be too early to say at this point of time whether the decline over the next few years would be fairly substantial or would it be at a steady rate?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—It is extraordinarily difficult obviously to predict. The figures in the past have shown that there has been a very steady decline, for example the number of persons entering prisons who are addicted to drugs has fallen from 96% in 1966 to 40% in 1977. There is a continuing trend downwards, and I would expect it to be maintained.

Contract terms for civil servants

10 MR WONG LAM asked in the Cantonese dialect:—

閣下，政府是否會考慮將現時給與醫生選擇以合約條件任職的措施擴展到其他本地聘請公務員，由其是專業職級的人員？

(The following is the interpretation of what Mr WONG LAM asked)

Sir, will Government consider extending the practice of granting Medical Officers an option to be put on contract terms of employment to other local civil servants, particularly those in the professional grades?

SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE:—Sir, the practice of offering local candidates the option of appointment on agreement terms, as opposed to pensionable terms, was introduced in 1968 in respect of Medical and Legal Officers because of recruitment difficulties. The practice has since been extended to a total of 98 grades, mostly professional, throughout the Civil Service. I propose to extend the practice still further where that would help to over-come difficulties in attracting suitable local candidates.

MR WONG LAM asked in the Cantonese dialect:—

閣下，除了專業人士之外，何時可以考慮到擴展到其他本地聘請的公務員？

(The following is the interpretation of what Mr WONG LAM asked)

Apart from professional officers, can Government consider extending this practice to other local civil servants?

SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE:—Sir, in general there is no difficulty in attracting suitable local candidates for the non-professional grades in Government, for example the executive grade, the main grades in the social service departments and in the disciplined services. I think, therefore, that it would be wiser to continue with the present policy wherever possible of appointing people on the permanent and pensionable establishment, since this does provide the community with some assurance of a stable service able to provide a continuing service to the public.

New Macau Ferry Terminal

11 DR FANG asked:—*Sir, will Government inform this Council of the present position on the proposed construction of a new Macau Ferry Terminal?*

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:—Sir, a schedule of accommodation for the Government and other public facilities to be provided in the proposed new terminal has been agreed and design drawings and estimated costs of construction have been prepared. Government and the developer are now in the final stages of negotiation to determine the extent of commercial development rights that should be granted in return for the construction costs of the Government and public facilities and once this has been done a submission will be made to the Finance Committee of this Council. If the proposal is approved a formal agreement will be entered into and the developer can proceed with the project.

Disciplinary Inquiry for Seamen

12 MR PETER C. WONG asked:—*Sir,*

- (a) *Will Government state how long a seaman who has been convicted in Court or has been accused of misconduct is required to wait before a disciplinary inquiry is conducted to determine whether his registration as a seaman should be suspended under the Merchant Shipping (Recruiting of Seamen) Ordinance, Cap. 135?*
- (b) *Is Government satisfied that the present waiting time is reasonable bearing in mind that pending the disciplinary inquiry the seaman concerned is invariably debarred from going to sea and is thus deprived of his regular means of livelihood; and if not, what steps will Government take to rectify the situation?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sir,* the answer to the first part of my honourable Friend's question is 'Generally two months', and the answer to the second part is, 'Yes, Sir'.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir,* is it not correct that the current practice is to suspend a seaman's registration even before he is required to make his representations pursuant to section 18 of the Ordinance?

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—As far as I know, Sir, no, it is not.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*The answer is 'no?'*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Yes.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir,* is Government aware of two cases this year in which the seamen concerned are required to wait for five and six months respectively with their registration as seamen suspended during the waiting period?

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sir,* when I answered my honourable Friend's question in the first place, I did say the time a seaman would normally have to wait is generally two months. There are, however, odd cases particularly where we have to get evidence of conviction from overseas in which the seamen have to wait for longer periods. But I would draw to Honourable Members' attention that in the case of conviction in courts overseas, we are generally talking about drug offences or assault, in both of which cases it would be most undesirable to allow the seamen to go back onto ships.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir,* perhaps my Friend has not really answered my question or perhaps I have not really made it very clear because this is really

a question of law and what I was suggesting is that de facto the current practice of de facto suspension before a seaman is required to make his representations pursuant to section 18 of the Ordinance is ultra vires; would my honourable Friend agree that that is the case, that the current practice is to suspend a seaman's registration before he is required to make his representation pursuant to section 18 of the Ordinance?

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, I must confess that my detailed knowledge of the Ordinance does not run to answering that question.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, if the de facto suspension is ultra vires, would Government take steps to shorten the waiting period to, say, 3 to 4 weeks?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, that would be quite impossible. In most cases, as I said, we have to get evidence of conviction. In many cases this conviction has taken place overseas or, in cases where a seaman is being considered in the context of desertion, we have to get proper and adequate evidence of the desertion. It would be quite impractical to reduce the time the seaman has to wait any less than 2 months.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Would Government agree that the present long waiting period is due to shortage of staff?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—No, Sir, definitely not.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, then if the de facto suspension is ultra vires and contrary to law, would Government take steps to amend the law so that the de facto suspension is not ultra vires?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, I think that question classifies itself under the general heading of 'When am I going to stop beating my wife?' As such, I cannot answer it.

Home Ownership Scheme

13 MR CHEONG-LEEN asked:—*Sir, will Government expand even further its existing plans for the Home Ownership Scheme, with or without the cooperation of the private building sector, so as to reduce over-speculation in small and medium-sized flats by individual purchasers?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING:—Sir, the production of small and medium-sized flats by the private sector has increased significantly over the average of some 18,000 flats for the past five years. This year private developers are expected to complete over 28,500 flats in this range, together with a similar

number in 1979. This illustrates the demand for this type of property among home buyers.

In 1979, Phase I of the Home Ownership Scheme will add a further 8,300 flats, and in 1980, Phase II and the Private Sector Participation Scheme, a further 6,700. While there is no scope for expanding production in these first two years, the experience gained from these schemes will be taken into account in reviewing the size of future phases.

Details for Private Sector Participation in the Home Ownership Scheme were announced on 28 April, and interested developers have been asked to submit tenders for two sites by 28 July. All aspects of the development proposals presented by developers will require careful evaluation, and when the projects are further advanced, it would be possible to consider whether and where this experimental scheme should be further expanded.

In addition to this, by 1979-80 the Housing Authority will reach and maintain an annual production of over 30,000 small flats in its rented programme. This level of production by both private and public sectors should have a stabilising effect on the housing market.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*Sir, in view of the pretty high level of speculation existing at the present time when will the stabilizing effect, referred to by my honourable Friend, begin to show itself?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING:—*Sir, by 1980, we will have a record production both in the private and public sectors of over 70,000 flats a year. In my view that should begin to have some stabilizing effect.*

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*So, in other words, Sir, we will now have to wait until 1980?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING:—*Sir, that is the year when we reach the high level of production.*

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—*When will the review mentioned by my honourable Friend as to the scope and size of future phases be looked at?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING:—*Sir, there is already an existing building programme to produce over 5,000 flats per annum for the Home Ownership Scheme beyond 1980. Towards the end of next year when flats in Phase I are completed and occupied we should be in a position to review the future programme.*

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, in view of the increasing interest being shown in the Home Ownership, would it be prudent for the Government to review its total housing programme and to consider whether it should reduce the*

number of housing in the rental programme and increase the number of units in the Home Ownership Programme?

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING:—Sir, we are still in the experimental stage of the Home Ownership Scheme. We have only started inviting applications for Phase I and we have yet to invite applications for the second phase. As I said when the flats in Phase I are completed and occupied we shall have a full cycle of experience, and we will then be in a position to review the programme.

Air traffic during night ban

14 MR PETER C. WONG asked:—*Will Government state the number of*
(i) arrivals; and
(ii) departures
of aircraft at the Kai Tak Airport during the night ban in 1977-78?

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, the Director of Civil Aviation generally allows only flights delayed because of unforeseen circumstances to take off and to land at Kai Tak between midnight to 6.30 a.m. He does not allow aircraft to take off over Kowloon City during this period. And unless weather conditions would make this dangerous, all landing aircraft must approach over Lei Yue Mun.

Between 1 April 1977 and 31 March 1978 he allowed 403 aircraft movements between midnight and 6.30 a.m., comprising 192 arrivals and 211 departures. Only 23 aircraft were allowed to approach Kai Tak over Kowloon City.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, in his reply, the Secretary for Economic Services said that the Director of Civil Aviation generally allows; would he give us some examples of exceptions?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Well, you might, as an exception find an aircraft that hasn't been delayed because of unforeseen circumstances passing close to Hong Kong, finds itself in an emergency and asks for permission to land; that I think is the only outstanding example of an exception to what I have said in my answer to the initial question.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, is Government satisfied that permissions are given only when they are absolutely necessary?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Yes, Sir, definitely.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, has any serious consideration been given or study conducted to see if these permissions could, in any way, be reduced?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—No, Sir, the Director of Civil Aviation is responsible for giving permission for aircraft to land and take off between midnight and 6.30 a.m. and I have complete confidence in his discretion in this matter.

MR PETER C. WONG:—*Sir, would Government give some serious consideration to see if these permissions could be reduced?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—No, Sir, because I don't believe they can.

Government assistance to businesses/industries

15 DR HU asked:—*Sir, will Government make a statement on the present form of assistance it makes available to small scale businesses and industries in Hong Kong and whether additional assistance is being contemplated?*

DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS:—Sir, depending on the definition one chooses, nearly all industrial establishments in Hong Kong could be described as small. Factories with less than fifty workers, for example, account for about 90 per cent of the total. While I have no comparable statistics for non-industrial businesses, I am sure the ratio of small units to big would be even higher.

It could therefore be said that virtually any assistance Government renders to trade and industry benefits small units.

This assistance is given mainly through the medium of statutory bodies which Government subvents or otherwise supports. These include notably the Hong Kong Productivity Centre, which was established with small to medium operations primarily in mind and which continues to place great emphasis on serving this sector. It caters, through courses, in-plant training, consultancy and technical information services, to the needs of both industry and commerce.

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council's work in promoting exports by means of missions, trade fairs and dissemination of trade enquiries is well enough known not to need rehearsal here. The same I think is true of the activities of such bodies as the Export Credit Insurance Corporation and the Packaging and Industrial Design Councils.

As regards finance, I reported to this Council on 21 July 1976 that a Loans for Small Industry Scheme, which had by then been running for four years, was being discontinued due to lack of demand. Only 10 loans were made during its life, apparently bearing out the contention of those who had said from the outset that the Hong Kong banking system was capable of providing adequate facilities. I have no reason to believe the

situation has changed, as witness the current liquidity of the banks and their relatively low prime rate.

Small industries and businesses are the sinews of Hong Kong. It is their adaptability and flexibility which have been primarily responsible for our export growth. I believe the various forms of direct and indirect assistance so far given them by Government have served them adequately; and the list I have given of course has been indicative rather than exhaustive, for I have not even mentioned, for example, technical education and training.

I am not aware of any deeply felt deficiencies in the present level of Government assistance. The need for expansion of such assistance, in scope or form, to keep pace with the changing requirements of trade and industry will, however, continue to be kept under review.

MR JAMES WU:—*Sir, can my Friend tell this Council what is the budget of the Hong Kong Productivity Centre?*

DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS:—Quite fortuitously, Sir, I notice my honourable Friend, Mr CHEN, rising to ask a supplementary question also. I have got to confess that I don't know the answer offhand. However, perhaps in posing his supplementary question Mr CHEN, who is also the Chairman of the Productivity Council, would be good enough to quote the budget figure.

MR CHEN:—*Sir, is this in order?*

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—No.

MR CHEN:—*Then may I ask my supplementary question? Will the Director of Trade, Industry and Customs let us know why there was a lack of demand for the Small Industrial Loans Scheme? Was it insufficiently attractive or was it due to too many regulations?*

DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS:—Sir, that is a difficult question to answer because the situation was a negative one. We discontinued the scheme due to lack of demand and therefore because people didn't ask for loans, it is difficult to know why they didn't ask for loans. I think the answer is that, as I implied in my statement earlier and as I think I said to this Council back in 1976, the banking system was capable of satisfying the needs which existed and that the experiment for three years in the first instance and one year extension with modified terms proved that the contention of those who had said that the banking system could cope were correct.

MR JAMES WU:—*Since neither Mr Dorward nor Mr Chen has answered my question, could I suggest to him if it is correct that the annual budget*

of the Hong Kong Productivity Council is in the neighbourhood of HK\$5 million?

DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS:—That is quite an expensive neighbourhood, Sir, but I think it is of that order. The Centre is, of course, increasingly self-supporting. It does charge for its consultancy services and I think that the ratio of its expenditure, its income to its expenditure, has been steadily increasing over the years.

MR JAMES WU:—*Sir, considering the important work that the Council or Centre has to do, would \$5 million be adequate?*

DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS:—Sir, that again is, if I may say so, a difficult question. The Productivity Centre has shown itself to be a very vital and lively organization. I personally think that its role will be much expanded in future, that it has an increasingly important part to play, and I would anticipate seeing it expand its activities. Now, whether that should be by means of an increased subvention from Government or increased earnings from its own activities, it is not really for me to say at this stage.

Traffic congestion warnings

16 MR YEUNG asked:—*Sir, has Government any plans to forewarn motorists of traffic congestion occurring in the major highways of the New Territories such as Route TWSK, Lion Rock Tunnel, Tai Po Road, Castle Peak Road and Tuen Mun Road so as to enable them to take alternative routes?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Sir, the Police monitor the traffic situation on a continuing basis and, when congestion occurs on any road, they inform Radio Television Hong Kong and Commercial Radio for the news to be broadcast. As regards the Lion Rock Tunnel, there are warning signals at junctions at both ends of the tunnel which are activated when the tunnel is closed and this enable traffic to divert to alternative routes. Similar facilities will also be provided at the Aberdeen and Kai Tak tunnels when they are opened.

The Government has also commissioned consultants to prepare a report on Traffic Control and Surveillance. This will, among other things, examine means of providing early warning of traffic congestion and incidents on the network of high speed roads now being built, including the Tuen Mun and Sha Tin—Tai Po roads, as well as on other roads where the provision of an early warning system is felt to be necessary.

MR YEUNG:—*Sir, can my Friend be more specific on the words 'at the junctions of both ends of the tunnel?' Does he mean when one travels from Kowloon to Sha Tin, one can see a signal at the junction of Cornwall Street and Waterloo Road?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Yes, Sir, I think the answer to that is in the affirmative. These signals have only just been made to work. I think they have been installed for sometime. They are only just working a few weeks ago. I think that this particular signal is just before the junction with Cornwall Street and Waterloo Road.

MR YEUNG:—*Thank you. The signal will be operated only when the tunnel is closed. How about when the tunnel is congested, like a traffic accident that occurred in the tunnel some time ago?*

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:—Sir, I think if there was a traffic accident once the news got back then the tunnel would be closed. In fact now we have a new control room for the tunnel which is much more sophisticated than the old one and which has TV monitoring inside the tunnel. The tunnel can then be closed quite quickly by switching on a red light at the end.

Airfreight exchange rate—Government intervention

17 MR JAMES WU asked:—*Sir, can Government now confirm that through the intervention of their respective Government agencies, shippers in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and S. Korea pay for IATA US dollar air freight tariffs at current bank rates for the US dollar?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Sir, I can confirm that, respectively from 1 February and 3 March this year, the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore have unilaterally directed that freight payments for cargo from these two countries destined for the USA, are required to be made in local currencies converted from the US dollar tariff at the bankers' buying rate.

In the case of Taiwan and Korea, I understand that the IATA exchange rate system still applies. But the IATA rates are close to their market rates.

MISS DUNN:—*Sir, is there any reason why the Hong Kong Government should not also take the same action as Malaysia and Singapore?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Could I reserve my answer to that question till my honourable Friend Mr James WU asks it as question No 18?

Airfreight exchange rate—Hong Kong Shippers

18 MR JAMES WU asked:—*Sir, can the Hong Kong Government intervene in like manner to save HK shippers from paying at a discriminating rate which is now 21% higher than the current market rate of the US dollar?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sir, air services between Hong Kong and the USA are governed by a treaty between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States. It provides, among other things, mechanism for establishing tariffs to be charged by airlines serving British and American points. This mechanism includes that both the UK Civil Aviation Authority and the United States Civil Aeronautical Board would need to be in agreement on any changes to tariffs. Against this background, I think it would be simply unrealistic to think in terms of Hong Kong taking unilateral action.*

Meanwhile, we are pursuing the course of action I described in answering my honourable Friend's question on 26 April.

MR JAMES WU:—*Sir, presumably, the UK Government and the US Government agree the rate to be in US\$? What is there, therefore, to prevent us from paying with US\$ which we can buy at market rate in HK?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sir, I am afraid I cannot answer that question offhand but I will be pleased to write to my honourable Friend and give him the answer.*

MR JAMES WU:—*Sir, may I ask, if the same unreasonable exchange rate apply to air fares for travellers initiating from HK?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*Sorry, could I ask my honourable Friend to repeat the question? I think I didn't quite grasp his point.*

MR JAMES WU:—*Is the same unreasonable rate of exchange applicable to the US\$ air fares for travellers initiating from HK?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—*In other words, is there discrimination against passengers leaving HK the same way as there is in respect of freight? I apologise, Sir, I must consider that question to be out of order as the initial question referred to freight. But again, I will give my honourable Friend an answer in writing.*

SIR S. Y. CHUNG:—*Sir, is it not obvious that the existing mechanism would require major overhauling in order to protect Hong Kong's interests more timely than at present?*

SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES:—Yes, Sir, this is certainly the direction we have been pursuing. As I said when I answered my honourable Friend, Mr James WU's question in April, we have been developing quite satisfactorily our relationship for example, with the Civil Aviation Authority in Britain and also with the Department of Trade in Britain. I think this development of our relationship is beginning to have an effect.

Government business

Motion

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE

THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS moved the following motion:—That the Royal Nepalese Liaison Officer shall be exempted from the payment of the duties prescribed under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance in connexion with alcoholic liquors and tobacco as if he were a consular officer within the meaning of the Consular Relations Ordinance subject to the following conditions—

- (a) this exemption shall be personal to the incumbent of the post of the Royal Nepalese Liaison Officer in Hong Kong;
- (b) this exemption shall cease immediately in the event of any material change in the duties presently performed by the Royal Nepalese Liaison Officer in Hong Kong.

He said:—Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

This resolution seeks to exempt, under section 4(1) of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, the Royal Nepalese Liaison Officer in Hong Kong from payment of duty on liquor and tobacco.

The position of the Liaison Officer in Hong Kong is primarily that of military liaison, but he is also commissioned by the Royal Nepalese Government with responsibility, *inter alia*, for issuing visas for Nepal. Although he performs these and other consular functions, however, he does not have formal consular status as covered by the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and is therefore not entitled to any of the privileges accorded to consular officials under the Consular Relations Ordinance.

The Royal Nepalese Government permits members of the British Army serving in Nepal duty free concessions in respect of liquor and tobacco. It is therefore proposed, on the grounds of reciprocity, to grant the Liaison Officer similar duty free privileges in Hong Kong. The estimated cost to the revenue is \$700 per annum.

Sir, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion (in Committee)

Supplementary provisions for the quarter ended 31 December 1977

Council went into Committee, pursuant to Standing Order 58(2), to consider the motion standing in the name of the FINANCIAL SECRETARY.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the following motion:—

That this Council approves the supplementary provisions for the quarter ended 31 December 1977 as set out in Paper No 47.

He said:—Sir, I move the motion standing in my name in the Order Paper, feeling fairly confident that this subject at least would not prove controversial.

The schedule of supplementary provisions made in the third quarter of the financial year 1977-78, that is during the last three months of 1977, covers a total amount of 245 million dollars. Of this sum, 97 million dollars were required for expenditure on public works projects, including a sum of 15 million dollars for 25 new projects upgraded to Category A of the Public Works Programme.

Other items worth mentioning include 79 million dollars for maintaining the desalters in full operation until the end of the financial year, 26 million dollars to meet grants to the Urban Council and voluntary agencies arising as a result of the salaries revisions for the Civil Service in July 1977, 16 million dollars for estimated payments of *ex-gratia* allowances to eligible persons involved in clearances schedule during the year and 12 million dollars for additional purchases of sand to meet increased demand from the construction industry.

The supplementary provisions covered by the schedule resulted in a net increase of 105 million dollars in the expenditure approved for the year, the remainder being offset by savings under other subheads of expenditure and by the freezing of funds provided under Head 50 Miscellaneous Services Subhead 100 Additional commitments.

The Finance Committee has approved all the items in the schedule. The purpose of this motion is to seek the covering authority of this Council.

Question put and agreed to.

Council then resumed.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY reported that the motion had been agreed to in committee without amendment.

Question agreed by the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 58(4).

First reading of bills

DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1978

Bills read the first time and ordered to be set down for second reading pursuant to Standing Order 41(3).

Second reading of bills

DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY moved the second reading of:—‘A bill to amend the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance’.

He said:—Sir, as explained in the Explanatory Memorandum the main purpose of the Bill is to provide a new definition of cannabis and to increase the maximum penalties for unlawfully moving dangerous drugs through Hong Kong. The opportunity has also been taken to make a technical amendment to the Ordinance to authorize the Government Chemist to be in possession of opium, poppy straw and cannabis in addition to other dangerous drugs.

The current definition of cannabis originated at the time when it was thought that only the fruits, flowers or seeds of the plant contained the hallucinogenic principle known as tetrahydrocannabinol. As it has now been established that such substances are normally present in the entire plant, the existing definition has given rise to difficulties in prosecuting cases involving cannabis. More seriously, the active ingredients normally found in the plant can now be synthesised, and if these are encountered, there are no other provisions in the Ordinance on which to base a prosecution.

Although no major problem concerning the use of cannabis exists it is prudent to amend the definition and accordingly a new definition is proposed in clause 2(a) of the Bill.

Under section 14(1) of the Ordinance drug couriers moving dangerous drugs unlawfully through Hong Kong are, on conviction, liable to a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment and a fine of \$10,000. Although the drugs

are not for local consumption, the offence is similar to trafficking which is punishable by life imprisonment and/or a fine of \$5 millions on indictment and 3 years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$500,000 on summary conviction. Clause 3 seeks to increase the penalties to 10 years imprisonment and/or a \$100,000 fine on indictment and 3 years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine on summary conviction. We have an international responsibility to do every- thing in our power to eliminate Hong Kong as a source, or place of transit, of drugs intended for other countries and the proposed increased penalties should prove an even greater deterrent to the use of Hong Kong even in transit.

The implementation of the provisions of this Bill will not give rise to any additional public expenditure.

Motion made. That the debate on the second reading of the Bill be adjourned—THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY.

Question put and agreed to.

DETENTION CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY moved the second reading of:—‘A bill to amend the Detention Centres Ordinance’.

He said:—Sir, when the scheme of detention was extended to apply to persons over 21, but under 25 years of age, it was decided that detainees in this age bracket would be subject to a minimum period of detention of three months and a maximum period of twelve months. This compared with a minimum detention period of one month and a maximum period of six months for detainees under 21 years of age.

The Detention Centres (Amendment) Ordinance 1976 failed to amend section 6(2) of the principal Ordinance covering recall orders to make the appropriate distinction between young offenders under and over the age of 21 years. It is necessary to rectify this omission. This Bill does so.

Motion made. That the debate on the second reading of the Bill be adjourned—THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY.

Question put and agreed to.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1978

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT moved the second reading of:—‘A bill to amend the Road Traffic Ordinance’.

He said:—Sir, section 4A of the principal Ordinance, which section came into force on 1 November 1977, provided for the abolition of the category of public or red plate car. And it offered the registered owners of those vehicles the opportunity to convert their cars into taxis, on payment of a premium, when their current licences expired. The majority of these vehicles have now been converted to taxis and, within two or three months, the category of public car will cease to exist.

This section of the Ordinance, however, does not expressly prohibit the Commissioner for Transport from registering further public cars, although it does so by implication. Some applications have recently been made for such registrations and it is clear that the aim of the applicants is solely to obtain taxi licences on favourable terms.

The Commissioner has refused these application and, in order to make it absolutely clear that no further public cars are to be registered, this Bill seeks to add a new subsection (6) to section 4A of the principal Ordinance to underline that the Commissioner's power to license a vehicle as a public car ceased on 1 November 1977.

Motion made. That the debate on the second reading of the Bill be adjourned—THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

Question put and agreed to.

MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

Resumption of debate on second reading (24 May 1978)

Question proposed.

REV. MCGOVERN:—Sir, I rise to support the proposed amendment. I support it for the very good reason that it takes a step in the right direction. By the right direction I mean, of course, a step towards agreeing with me. In the debate on the Appropriation Bill in March 1977 I expressed my views on Vehicle Tax with special reference to space-eating fume-spewing metal monsters. While every sane person understands that Government is mad either in pretending that the motor car has not been invented, or that if it has, private cars can be taxed off the road, it is gratifying to note that some method has now been introduced into the madness. To levy a heavier tax on excessively large vehicles is quite a sane approach—after all, it must be, seeing that, as I think I mentioned once already, with due modesty, I suggested it.

Now that the first step has been taken in the right direction, I will be optimistic enough to hope that a few more steps may be taken in the same direction.

I agree that 5% of a large sum of money is a bigger amount than 5% of a smaller sum of money. This is amply illustrated by the percentage increases in Civil (*laughter*) Servants' salaries by which the worst paid always get relatively less. But in the context of vehicle tax it would be better if the degree of progressivity were greater in the higher brackets. Some Unofficial Members, including the senior Member who asked to be quoted, agreed with my further suggestion that this amendment would be better if it contained a 5% increase as a first or second step for non-luxury cars, and then progressively higher percentage increases for each succeeding step, even, it was suggested, up to 100% for the top bracket. To be just under such a system there should be more categories introduced, perhaps roughly corresponding with the present eight steps in the annual licence fee based on cylinder capacity.

Which gets me to a second suggestion. Now that the principle of a greater degree of progressivity has been introduced into the vehicle tax rate, I suggest that the same might be done with the annual licence fee. As I pointed out before, that is in 1977 under the present system the owner of a small vehicle pays more per cc than the owner of a large vehicle. This should obviously be reversed. To what degree depends on whether policy is to raise more revenue or to encourage the use of small cars or to discourage metal monsters, or perhaps a bit of each. For four wheeled vehicles of 1000 cc a fee of 35 cents per cc would bring in the same amount of revenue as the present \$350. The same rate of 35 cents would bring in \$25 more from the \$500 class. Even if there were no progression a flat rate for all would be fairer to the small car owner and bring more revenue from the luxury car. Two wheeled vehicles would have to be treated separately as at present, and perhaps divided into utility and higher classes to discourage over-powered cycles which might tempt the owner to indulge in speeding or illegal racing. All cycle owner should of course be treated most sympathetically. (*laughter*)

In all of this, provided that a reasonably sized car is not considered as a luxury but a necessity, there would be no hardship for anyone except those who can afford to pay for luxury. Motoring in Hong Kong mostly consists of travelling at ten miles an hour behind an underpowered soft drinks lorry, or an overloaded construction lorry. The only time one really needs a very powerful engine is when one has to accelerate to escape the flank attacks of lane jumping public light buses. Enforcement of existing laws could remedy that problem, and thus eliminate the need for very high powered cars.

One other suggestion arose in connection with vehicle tax and I regret that I find myself unable to agree with it. The thought behind it was something like this: This is the Year of the Horse. This amendment is likely to disproportionately affect some members of a well-known non-profit body

situated in Happy Valley and Sha Tin. (*laughter*) Also, because of the popular concept of the political power structure in Hong Kong, the suggestion was that vehicle tax should be based not on an *ad valorem* concept, nor on cylinder capacity, but on horse-power. I cannot agree with this because I favour metrication. Also, I have been assured by shirtless punters that the power of any one horse on different days is neither scientifically reliable nor constant. (*laughter*)

With these minor suggestions, involving only a total review of the vehicle tax structure, I support the amendment. (*laughter*)

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:—Sir, I am sure that when I say I am glad to know that Father MCGOVERN supports the Bill, this will not be construed by anyone, least of all by Father MCGOVERN himself, to mean that I agree with everything or indeed with anything else he said. I do of course, but I don't intend to give any clues as to which of his remarks I would agree or disagree with. I hope, Sir, that I have made my attitude sufficiently obscure to preserve enough room for manoeuvre by the substantive Financial Secretary (*laughter*).

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

STAMP (AMENDMENT) (NO 4) BILL 1978

Resumption of debate on second reading (24 May 1978)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

Resumption of debate on second reading (24 May 1978)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1978

Resumption of debate on second reading (10 May 1978)

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

Bill committed to a committee of the whole Council pursuant to Standing Order 43(1).

Committee stage of bills

Council went into Committee.

MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

STAMP (AMENDMENT) (NO 4) BILL 1978

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1978

Clauses 1 to 14 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

Third reading of bills

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL reported that the

MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) (AMENDMENT) BILL

STAMP (AMENDMENT) (NO 4) BILL

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL and the WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL

had passed through Committee without amendment and moved the third reading of each of the bills.

Question put on each bill and agreed to.

Bills read the third time and passed.

Unofficial Member's motion

GREEN PAPER ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

DR HARRY S. Y. FANG moved the following motion:—

That this Council takes note of the proposals in the Green Paper on 'Services for the Elderly'.

He said:—Your Excellency, I rise to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Not very long ago the papers reported that a man who lived with his aged mother up in the hills was making a living by gathering dry wood. He was so poor that whatever he got from selling what he had gathered was barely enough to keep him and his mother alive. One day his mother fell ill. The son did all he could to provide for her but what he could earn from selling fire wood at the time was insufficient to pay for the bare essentials of life plus medication for his mother. One day he went out on his usual chore and never returned. The mother later found him hanging from a tree. Recently we have also heard of the plight of a number of old folk living in cages in

Tsuen Wan. Welfare of the aged is becoming an increasing problem even in advanced countries as the structure of population changes. It is necessary to develop a coherent and co-ordinated policy to cater for this sector of our community. Government's Green Paper on Services for the Elderly is therefore a very timely and important document.

UMELCO as a whole welcomes the Green Paper whole-heartedly. The *ad hoc* group formed to examine in depth this Green Paper is of the opinion that this is one of the best Green Papers produced by Government in recent years as it attempts to deal with all aspects of the problem of the elderly. Perhaps one general criticism is that a number of paragraphs appear to be rather vague. The *ad hoc* group of which I was privileged to be the Convener met a number of times, including a long session with representatives of the Government departments concerned. We look forward to a definitive statement of Government's policy in the subsequent White Paper. While my Colleagues in the *ad hoc* group will be speaking on a number of specific items, I shall confine myself to some general remarks as well as commenting on medical and health services for the elderly.

Cash Support

It is gratifying to note that Government has increased cash assistance to the elderly in a number of ways: firstly, by instituting an old age supplement for people over 60 who are receiving public assistance, secondly, by extending payment to old folk who are in institutions who were not previously eligible for the allowance, and thirdly, by lowering the eligibility age from 75 to 70. On the last proposal, we would wish to see that the age limit lowered in one stage instead of two as proposed in the Green Paper. With regard to those elderly people who are in institutions, although Government is apparently giving them a cash allowance, it is however taking away a major part of the allowance by reducing subventions to the institutions concerned as stated in paragraphs 3.13 and 3.14 of the Green Paper so that in real terms, therefore, the elderly inmates benefit very little and the voluntary agencies who are responsible for running these institutions are discredited because they are asked to increase their charges. This unhappy situation should not be allowed to exist and a good deal of explanatory and public relations work has to be done by Government to convince both the voluntary agencies and the elderly people of the justification of such a move.

As stated in the Green Paper, the present cash allowance for the elderly is an arbitrary figure which is half of the public assistance allowance receivable by a single person. The Green Paper proposes that an index of old age needs should be drawn up, giving special attention to such factors as transport, home help, expenses arising out of ill health and infirmity, special diet, and personal expenses. I hope that such an index could be compiled and introduced as soon as possible in order to make the Old Age Allowance more realistic in catering for the needs of the elderly.

Community Support Services

Many of the community support services listed in the Green Paper, such as home help, visiting service, etc., can well be provided by young volunteers through organized student groups, such as Rotaracts, Interacts, girl guides, boy scouts, etc. I hope that Government will mobilize the resources available in this quarter to help meet its objectives.

Health Services

Of a number of suggestions in Chapter 4 of the Green Paper there are two proposals worthy of examination in detail. Firstly, community nursing: this would certainly go a long way in providing care for the aged within their family environment. It would reduce unnecessary and expensive bed occupancy in hospitals, whereby releasing beds for cases which require more intensive medical care. A planning ratio of 1 community nurse for every 3,000 elderly people of 65 and over is recommended. On this basis, the total number required would be 91 for this year increasing by 5 annually to a figure of 130 in 1986. Community nursing is a service which can be expanded with relative ease and economy to give substantial health benefits to the elderly. I strongly urge that Government should implement this proposal at the earliest possible moment. The ratio of 1:3,000 is a very conservative figure and I hope that this planning target will be closely reviewed with the experience gained.

Provision of Care and Attention Homes

There is a real and urgent need to expand care and attention homes for the aged. An increasingly large number of elderly people, because of their deteriorating health, require personal and some nursing care although they may not require medical care. These old people should not occupy a bed in the geriatric ward in a hospital but they are not able to be cared for by their families without help. Nor are they suitable for homes for the aged which are for people in relatively good health and who are capable of looking after themselves. The provision of more care and attention homes will fill a gap in our existing services. This can either be in the form of purpose-built nursing homes or as a care and attention section attached to homes for the aged. At the present moment in Hong Kong we have only 316 such places altogether. The Green Paper proposes that an additional 1,000 places should be provided by 1981 and on the basis of available data, a planning ratio of 4 places per 1,000 elderly has been recommended. It is felt by the *ad hoc* group that these homes do not impose a heavy drain on resources, either financially or in terms of manpower. We, therefore, strongly recommend that greater priority should be given to the early implementation of this proposal. This together with the community nursing scheme should, in my opinion, go a long way in improving the health programme for old people in our midst.

The main objective of the Green Paper is to provide appropriate services so as to enable old people to remain in the community for as long as possible. The attitude of the community can be a deciding factor in sustaining the elderly persons' self-respect and integration in the community. Public education is an area which should not be neglected and I hope that Government will explore every possible means of promoting public understanding and consideration of the problems of the aged. We all stand to benefit from this, some sooner than others.

Sir, I beg to move.

MR CHEONG-LEEN:—Your Excellency, there are many of us who subscribe to the Chinese saying (人生五十五，才是出山虎) 'When a man is fifty-five he comes like a tiger out of his lair'. Perhaps some of us in this Chamber will even claim with justification that we are in the 'Super-Tiger' class when it comes to being active in our career and in community service.

There is yet another Chinese saying:

(七十風前燭，八十瓦上霜)

'At seventy life is a candle in the wind; at eighty it is frost on the tiles'.

On the other hand, legislation has recently been enacted in the United States to permit the retirement age to be raised to seventy, which only goes to show the extent to which an improved living environment and public health service in an industrialized community can increase the life span and productivity of the average human being.

Here in Hong Kong, while the retirement age in the Civil Service is fifty-five (at a time when most of us have just become 'tigers'), the trend in Government seems to be to give more opportunity to those who wish to do so to continue in the Service until the age of 60. This trend is to be encouraged so long as it maintains the efficiency of the Civil Service.

As a general yardstick, it is practicable to define 'old age' as including those aged 60 and over, providing that flexibility is applied to the planning of the different types of services and in determining eligibility criteria. Moreover, the 60th birthday in Chinese tradition signifies the attainment of the elderly status, not to mention the fact that in practice retirement age in Hong Kong usually begins at 60. In fact, of the 60-64 age group among both males and females only 4% were found to be unemployed in 1976.

The Green Paper therefore flexibly defines 'old age' in the following manner:

- (a) for the purpose of Public Assistance, 55 is the eligibility age;
- (b) for most welfare services such as homes and social clubs for the aged, 60 is the eligibility age;
- (c) for the purpose of geriatric medicine, old age is 65 and over; and

- (d) to collect the non-means tested Old Age Allowance, the qualifying age will soon be 70 (previously 75).

Having different age eligibility criteria is a pragmatic approach to provide services for the elderly in accordance with our local traditions, social, economic and population factors.

While I support the Green Paper in broad terms, there are a few aspects in it on which I would like to emphasize, as they are very relevant within the Hong Kong context.

Firstly, old people should be allowed or even encouraged to be active while they are physically able to do so. Several years ago, while driving through an Australian city in one of its peaceful and attractive suburbs reserved for old people, I was told that the residents there were complaining that life was boring and uninspiring as they felt that they were segregated from the rest of the community.

In Hong Kong we have a high proportion of persons between 55-65 who are still employed as compared with other cities in the industrialized countries. This state of affairs should not be discouraged, and I am all for giving every opportunity to old people, their health permitting, to be economically active or to participate in community service work. By so doing, they will feel they are wanted, are part of our society, and what is more, they will still retain their self-respect.

Even in the age group of 65 and over, about 35% of the males and 15% of the females, were working in 1976. I have suggested on a previous occasion that elderly women could be employed to look after younger children while both parents are out at work. This is already done in South Korea.

Secondly, old people are entitled as a fundamental human right to be taken care of by society, since when they were young (at least those who were born here or have lived here for a long time) they contributed through labour to the prosperity and well-being of our city.

A wide range of services for old people have been spelled out in the Green Paper, and they include cash payments through the Public Assistance Scheme, the proposal for a Medical Service for Old People on the general lines of the School Medical Service, an increase in geriatric beds, more housing of old people in the public housing estates, multi-service centres and social clubs for the aged, just to mention a few.

In 1976, nearly 400,000 people or 9% of our population were 60 years and over. With the increased life expectancy it is anticipated that there will be 573,000 persons or 10.7% of the total population who will be aged 60 and over by 1986.

Services to the elderly as outlined in the Green Paper will be meaningful only if they are provided in sufficient quantity as well as quality to take care of the increased number of old people projected for by 1986.

This will require careful planning, close co-ordination, and maximum use of limited resources of finance, equipment, trained personnel and space. Many people are reaching 60 from year to year, and they cannot wait for 5 or 10 years before Government catches up in providing them with the services they desperately require.

Although Public Assistance will be available to old people who have been in Hong Kong for at least one year, it is necessary due to limited resources that priority of service be given to those who have lived and worked in Hong Kong for 5 years or longer. The eventual solution of course is that for all Hong Kong belongers, Government ought to proceed with plans to set up a Central Provident Fund or Pension Scheme as expeditiously as possible.

Thirdly, both Government and the voluntary organizations will have to promote the concept of the 'caring community' for old people. This can be done in a number of ways.

Because of the Chinese tradition of close family ties, many old people still live with their children, and this makes it easier for Government to more rapidly expand its services for the elderly. The latest recognition by Government of this is the decision to bring back the Dependant Parents Allowance.

According to the 1976 By-Census, 85.7% of all persons aged 60 and over were living with family members and related persons. However, there is no guarantee that changing economic and social conditions, and different attitudes on the part of young people will not erode the traditional family cohesiveness.

Therefore a balance will have to be struck by Government in providing services for the elderly where:

- (a) on the one hand, support services ought to be provided by Government and the voluntary agencies to encourage and help families to look after their elderly members; and
- (b) on the other hand, additional services such as residential care or hospital care should be available for those elderly persons who cannot be cared for within the family environment.

In many advanced welfare countries, old people (often called 'senior citizens') after they have retired from helping to make their community prosperous, are to be found still active within the community, and are given the chance to lead a useful and dignified life. Through community education and district organized activities, the old and the young can live and be active together in harmony and mutual respect.

As regards accommodation for the elderly in public housing estates, it should be part of the Housing Authority's policy to allow for extra space over and above the standard norm for families which have persons aged 60 and over. This would be a further incentive offered by Government to

families to take care of their elderly members, in the same way as the Dependant Parents' Allowance.

Now in the case of old people who have no family, suitable accommodation should be provided for them in hostels in Housing Authority estates if no other accommodation is available. This ought to be done as a matter of priority since the old people in their 60's cannot wait around too long for Government to provide them with much needed services in the same way that young people can.

Turning to leisure activities for the elderly, the Green Paper proposes a diversity of facilities, such as social clubs which have meetings at regular intervals, and social centres which are open every day. At present, such social clubs and centres cater for less than 10% of the estimated demand, and there ought to be a rapid build-up of these facilities on a district basis. Since it is evident that the resources of the Government as presented in the Green Paper will be unable to cope with the demand in the short-term, every effort should be made to encourage more voluntary initiative at the district level to become involved in this particular type of service.

On traffic safety education for the elderly, I hope that special efforts will be made to conduct a continuous campaign, starting with this year, until such time as there is a substantial decrease in fatal traffic accidents among the elderly. In 1976, one-third of all the victims of fatal traffic accidents were aged 60 and above.

Sir, old age hears two contradictory voices; one says, 'You've stood it so long, why bother any more'; the other says, 'You still have some time to go, make the most of it'.

Let us help our old people to make the most of it by giving them the services they need to do so.

Sir, I support the motion.

MISS KO:—Your Excellency, I fully agree with the objective of the Green Paper, that in providing services for the elderly, we should aim to allow them to remain members of the community for as long as possible, and that the community as a whole must preserve and foster the caring role of the family. Increased services for the elderly must not in any way encourage families to forsake this role, but rather should enable them to do a better job. This must be kept firmly in mind when planning services for the elderly, or else Hong Kong will be, to them, an uncaring city.

I recognize the breadth of the Green Paper, and that almost every area of provision related to the elderly has been covered. I am confident that when the proposals are fully implemented, more elderly persons will be well provided for. But at the same time, we should not be satisfied merely with adequate provision. Elderly people must be allowed a role in society

so that they do not feel segregated. I know that loneliness and isolation are almost inevitable for most elderly persons in industrialized societies, but as far as possible, we must work to prevent this from occurring in Hong Kong.

Services in cash

I applaud the proposals to lower the qualifying age for the Old Age Allowance from 75 to 70, and to extend welfare allowances to the elderly in institutions. I hope that this relaxation can be implemented as soon as possible, and that the effective date for lowering the qualifying age from 70 to 73 can be advanced by six months to October 1978 along with the 73-74 age group.

The introduction of an old age supplement for public assistance recipients, aged 60 and above, is a recognition of the extra needs of the elderly, as many are solely dependent on public assistance. I hope that when a suitable index of the needs is devised, we may readjust the amount of supplement given. The Green Paper suggests that if elderly persons in institutions become eligible for welfare allowances, account should be taken of the level of the fees charged in subvented institutions. Although some adjustment of fees charged may be necessary, I hope that it will not be such that the Government will be accused of giving with one hand, and taking back with the other. The Government should also ensure that no one is jeopardised or prevented from using the services, because of the increase in fees.

Health services

I suggest that general out-patient clinics should set aside certain hours to treat old people alone. I hope that such hours will be convenient to the elderly, that the medical and other para-medical personnel assigned to serve during these hours are specifically trained for geriatric work, and that specially designed courses will be offered by the two Universities. I also suggest that a more generous planning ratio than the present 3 beds per thousand patients should be used in order to provide more much-needed geriatric beds.

I fully support the extension of the Community Nursing Service and the introduction of health education programmes. The positive impact of the Community Nursing Service has been clearly demonstrated by a pilot scheme conducted by a number of voluntary agencies and a review of this scheme by the Joint Consultative Committee will take place shortly. I hope that encouraging recommendations will be made by the Committee, and that Government will commit itself to financially assisting the agencies concerned in its expansion. In addition, I suggest that community nurses train volunteers to visit old people and to carry out minor nursing duties, following the successful experience of the St. John's Ambulance. I also suggest that careful consideration be given to combining the services of the Health Visitors and the community nursing, so that we can ensure that adequate health education is brought to the notice of the elderly.

Dental treatment is also important, and I hope that these services can be strengthened and dental subsidies for elderly public assistance recipients regularly reviewed and adjusted if necessary.

The suggested medical insurance scheme is well worth considering, but I suggest that before implementing it extensively, pilot projects should be carried out to explore its feasibility. The experience gained by the United Christian Hospital, which operates such a scheme for the elderly, should be studied.

Multi-purpose centres for all age groups

I recommend that multi-service centres should be provided in the form of multi-purpose centres, somewhat similar to the present community centres, in each district or neighbourhood. A variety of services could be provided there for different age groups in different sections of the centre. Joint activities could be arranged from time to time. In this way the elderly could be helped to better integrate into the whole community.

Furthermore, these centres should provide handicraft work opportunities for the elderly, not necessarily income-oriented, but to enable them to feel that they are making a worthwhile contribution to society.

Community support services

Home help is a much needed service for the elderly although it is provided not specifically for the aged but to meet family needs. However, the specific needs of the elderly in this area have not been recognized. I think the target of a total of 80 home helpers by 1979-80 is too modest. The service is not an expensive one, and many joining as home helpers do not do it purely for monetary reward. Many community projects could help recruit volunteers as home helpers. Volunteers are also essential in providing visiting services, and I suggest that some voluntary agencies should be subvented specifically to organize and train volunteers.

I have stressed the importance of involving the whole community in understanding the problems of old age. I suggest that discussions on the problems of old age should be part of the curriculum in secondary schools. Family life education programmes should also aim at helping the public understand the needs of the elderly and how to get along with them.

I understand that the quota for compassionate rehousing has not been used fully for the past two years. I attribute this to the lack of publicity for this service. I suggest that the voluntary agencies involved should be informed of the quotas determined each year, so that they may refer elderly people who are in need of the rehousing service to the Housing Authority. More housing units, specially suited to the needs of the elderly should be made available in public housing estates.

Efforts must be made to integrate the elderly as far as possible into the community by providing them with suitable job opportunities. Transport

to their places of work or social centres should also be provided to facilitate their mobility.

I hope that the Urban Services Department will be able to provide more reasonably-priced funeral services, and where appropriate, free services should be made available without the need for complicated procedures. A study of Pak Kam Wui is necessary to see what measures should be taken to protect its subscribers.

Institutional care

I urge Government to set down suitable standards for institutions for the elderly to follow. These standards must be realistic and suitable for the Hong Kong situation. They should, however, serve to indicate the level of quality of service at which institutions for the elderly should maintain. I understand that some standards have already been set for homes for the aged, but I hope that similar efforts can be made for other institutions. An improvement in quality of service will necessarily require a greater financial commitment on the part of Government; an assessment of the number, type, and kind of persons to be trained, appropriate training facilities for them, and the levels of training required need to be spelled out. I hope that Government will look into these areas as well when it contemplates an expansion of institutional care for the aged and I suggest that a study of *chai tongs* should be carried out in the future.

Conclusion

The number of elderly persons will continue to increase and many societies have tried to help them live a happier life by providing a wide range of social and medical services. Unfortunately, their efforts have not always been successful, and increasingly evidence indicates that the success or otherwise of a project hinges on the extent to which the whole community cares about its elderly members. Therefore, we must employ every possible means to make Hong Kong a place where the elderly can find love, care, and respect, and where the provision of services is an expression of these qualities.

Sir, I support the motion.

REV. JOYCE M. BENNETT:—Your Excellency, the Green Paper on Services for the Elderly concerns us all, as the day will come when we too are 60, for paragraph 1.6 proposes to ‘define “old age” as meaning those aged 60 years’. Certainly all of us hope that when we have to retire from full employment we shall be able to remain ‘members of the community for as long as possible, which is, as paragraph 2.5 states, the overall objective of the Green Paper. I hope however that when the White Paper is issued this phrase can be reworded so that we help the elderly to remain not just ‘members of the community’, but ‘*self-respecting* members of the community’. Many elderly can be living at home, ordinary members of the community. I hope

we shall see them preserve their self-respect so that they know themselves to be persons of worth in their families and in the community.

For this reason I trust that we can lower the age of eligibility for the Old Age Allowance to 70 this October. Certainly the Green Paper gives no convincing argument for delaying this. 'To spread the administrative workload and to avoid undue delays in payments' does not sound a very valid reason for a Government department postponing action. Do not let us forget that our civil servants are the servants of the people. Therefore if we believe it is right to give the Old Age Allowance at 70 we should not postpone this benefit for administrative convenience.

I have one further point to note in connection with the cash services; it relates to paragraph 3.11 where the reference to the United Kingdom is not clearly made. There residents in private nursing homes still receive the State pension. Distinction must be made between institutions receiving recurrent subsidies from the Government and the private institutions. If a person chooses to use his old age allowance to enable him to reside in a private old people's home or nursing home, he should not be penalized. There are singletons who would value the benefits of a home and who, by so doing, would provide space in housing accommodation for others.

Of course the real question is how to ensure that the elderly do remain self-respecting members of the community for as long as possible. To achieve this the community nurses will play an important role. Details of the suggested needs are spelt out in paragraph 4.15 with details shown in Exhibits 6 and 7. The planning ratio for Hong Kong is suggested as 34 community nurses per one hundred thousand aged 65 and over, i.e. one community nurse is planned for 3,000 people over the age of 65. However, it should be noted the ratio in England is one for 1,400 such elderly and in England there are far more doctors willing and able to make home visits. The Green Paper paragraph 4.14 gives the number of general practitioners' consultations with patients over 65 that were held in the patients' homes in England in 1974. Then there is a curious reference to the figures available for such visits in Hong Kong. I note that there is no reliable data. Certainly I would imagine that the number of such visits by doctors to the homes of patients in Hong Kong is negligible. Is it possible or practicable for the Medical and Health Department to make a survey? Whether or not a survey is possible or practicable, certainly it is already clear that we shall require more community nurses to supplement the lack of doctors' visits to the homes of patients. Therefore I urge the ratio of community nurses to the elderly population be increased.

This subject cannot be separated from the whole consideration of geriatric care. Sadly we find no in-depth study in this Green Paper of geriatrics. Yes, it is true, as paragraph 4.20 informs us, 'specialization in geriatrics is relatively new in Hong Kong'. Unfortunately there is no definition of geriatrics in this Green Paper, so that I have to rely on the work done by

the first Geriatric Unit in Hong Kong, which was established in the United Christian Hospital on 13 January 1975. The object of this Unit is the restoration of independence for the elderly. It is not designed for long-term care for the severely disabled; nor is it for the general, surgical and medical needs of the elderly. Instead it is to help them to adjust to the slower pace of their condition which may have been brought about by accident or illness. It is to provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychological adjustment to living within the limitations of old age. The aim is to enable the patient to return home, so that part of the work of this unit must be with the families of the elderly. One of the most distressing aspects of this side of medical care is the frequent desire of the other family members to refuse the elderly to return home. There needs to be a massive education programme. The community nurses are ideally placed to do this, as they meet with and discuss with the family members how they can continue to provide the post-hospital care. I think we are very frightened of not knowing how to deal with the partly-incapacitated elderly. The community nurses on their visits, perhaps daily at first, can provide the reassurance to enable the elderly to remain in the community.

Clearly there are some disabled elderly without adequate family support. For them we must have far more 'care and attention' homes. There is a real need for all old people's homes to provide a section for the 'care and attention' of those no longer able to look after themselves. I hope a clear estimate can be provided of how those needing extra places in care and attention homes can be provided for. The Green Paper wisely concludes there are restraints in the provision of more places giving residential care to the elderly. I urge legislation to be drawn up now to control the running of these institutions. Do not let us be too idealistic as regards standards, but let us state a decent average regarding space for toilet and kitchen facilities and for the training of staff. Let us hasten on those new courses in institutional management at the Polytechnic. Our elderly deserve a fine old age, a time for them to enjoy the respect of the young and to provide a sounding board for some of the way-out ideas of the young. Hong Kong needs the maturity of our senior citizens to ensure that the young retain a sense of history and the wisdom and perspective of those who lived in Hong Kong and China through the stirring years of the 30's and 40's. We are indeed a young community. We neglect the elderly at our peril. There should be a place for them to sit in our parks and sitting out areas of our estates, and inspire the younger generation with tales of yester-year.

Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR PETER C. WONG:—Sir, I shall confine my comments to the role played by Chai-tongs in relation to services for the elderly.

I find myself in general agreement with paragraph 6.8 of the Green Paper, with two notable exceptions.

- 1 The Green Paper has omitted to mention one very important element of chai-tongs, and that is, they are mostly religious organizations, either Buddhist or Taoist. As such, normal standards of services are not readily applicable.
- 2 Since chai-tongs are religious bodies, direct Government intervention would be undesirable. Any attempt to do so would violate the principles of freedom of religion.

I am all for a study on chai-tongs as contemplated by paragraph 6.8, but this should preferably be done, either separately or jointly, by the Hong Kong Buddhist Association and the Taoist Association under the auspices of the Social Welfare Department. Any steps that would have to be taken for improvements in their operations should also be undertaken through these two Associations. The advantages are obvious. The aims of the Green Paper would be achieved without compromising the principle of freedom of religion.

Sir, with these observations, I support the motion.

MR WONG LAM delivered his speech in Cantonese dialect:—

督憲閣下：老人服務綠皮書所討論的各項服務，既全面而又詳細，且與其他醫療及房屋等服務計劃，緊密呼應，殊堪嘉許。本人只就其中數點提出補充。

首先是金錢援助的問題，將老弱傷殘津貼中的老年人部份分開，改稱高齡津貼，實在是對老年人的一種尊重的表示，也是大家所樂聞的。政府同時提議把該項津貼的合格歲數降低，由七十五歲分兩階段降至七十三和七十，對一般老人來說，自然是令人感到欣慰的改變。不過，本人不大明白政府為何不能夠一次過把合格歲數由七十五減至七十，所謂行政上的困難到底包括些甚麼因素？如果因為經費不足支付所有符合規格之申請人，自然無話可說；如果只是因為人手不足，那倒不是難以解決的事，因為所需要的人手，只是一些非專業性的文職人員，招聘起來，並不困難，希望政府對這問題，再詳加考慮及在可能的情形下盡早將該津貼的合格年齡降至七十歲。

其次是社康護理計劃的問題，目前社康護理服務，只有在數個志願機構的支持下推行。過往政府並無實際支持社康護理的行動，直至最近才改變態度，予以某種程度的支持。綠皮書中並無言明到底社康護理的計劃，今後是否仍然只由志願機構推行。本人認為，除非有特殊原因，否則政府實在也應該推行此項服務。綠皮書中第四章第十五節估計每三十四名社康護士便足以照顧十萬名的年齡超過六十五歲中所需要照顧的老人，雖然書末第六附表解釋了這數字的由來，但其中實在引用了太多假設的因素。如果把花在交通，寫報告及與醫生在研究病情等工作時間計算在內，每一名護士每天能否探訪近八名的老人，實在令人懷疑；而每一護士每年除去公眾假期及年假外，又何來五十個工作星期之多的服務時間？本人無意過份討論綠皮書中的細節，不過在目前醫療病床不足的情況下，社康護理服務實在是最重要和值得推行的計劃，相信很多市民和社會工作者都同意這種看法，本人不厭其詳地討論某些細節，目的只是希望政府對此項計劃，能夠更作深入和詳細的研究，以便及早全面性推行此項極符本港需要的服務。

綠皮書中對社會工作人手的訓練雖有提及，但對象主要是透過兩所大學、各專上學院及理工學院所訓練而具有專業資格的社會工作者；這些具有專業資格人士，未必肯參與部份毋須專業知識的工作——如到老人家中為其洗衣煮飯等服務。據悉某些安老院雖然盡力招聘社會工作者為舍監，但仍然未能找到適合條件而肯屈就的人才。故此在訓練社會工作者方面，最好能夠高低兼顧，使一些毋須具有高度專業知識的服務，也有人樂於擔任。

另外要提及的是部份老人服務的財政問題。綠皮書中提及某些服務之費用如安裝假牙及老人入住公共樓宇的裝修費等，並未說明政府在這方面有如何具體的財政安排，只是概括地說政府正考

慮由有關的慈善基金予以援助，這點實有重新考慮的必要。綠皮書所標榜的是維護老人的自尊，使他們藉着政府所提供的服務，繼續留為大眾的一份子，把過往的慈善的意識大為減低，而代之以服務的意識，例如把老弱傷殘津貼的老弱部份改為高齡津貼，便是一個明顯的例子；假如上述所提的假牙服務，政府不肯予以財政支持，而要求有關的老人伸手向慈善基金請求援助，相信很多老人會因心理作用而放棄申請，大失綠皮書的原意。退一步而言，各慈善基金很多已有指定用途，而且數目有限，即使有關的老人願意申請，各基金也未必能夠提供足夠的幫助；故此在這方面，政府實有作更詳細考慮的必要，如果可能的話，不妨予以某種程度的財政支持。

綠皮書中提到護理安老院，這是極為值得支持的一種服務，不過本人對綠皮書中的建議，頗感失望。首先是建議每千名老人中應設四個護理安老院名額，不知所依據的資料之可靠性如何；另一方面，綠皮書透露在最近的將來達到這項目標，則在人力物力方面仍有所不逮。最為令人失望。本人認為此項服務，在本港而言，是相當急切的，值得政府重加考慮，在提供各項服務的次序時，將這項服務列為最優先提供的服務，即所謂優先中之優先者。最後，本人要提及目前在灌輸老人健康知識方面和宣揚敬老方面的不足。綠皮書中提及要加強這方面的工作，實在令人興奮，希望政府在加強這方面的宣傳，能夠充份利用各民間組織和團體，例如互助委員會、街坊福利會、同鄉宗親會等助力，雙方緊密合作，以收事半功倍的效果。

督憲閣下，本人支持此項動議。

(The following is the interpretation of what Mr Wong Lam said.)

Sir, the Green Paper on Services for the Elderly not only covers a comprehensive range of services for the elderly, but also echoes other Government programmes on health services, housing etc. This is indeed commendable. I shall add my comments on only some of its proposals.

Firstly, cash assistance. The separation of the Disability and Infirmity Allowance and renaming the Infirmity Allowance as Old Age Allowance demonstrate respect for the elderly and is a welcome step in the right direction. At the same time, Government proposes to lower the qualifying age in two steps, i.e. from 75 to 73 initially and then to 70. The elderly as a whole are naturally gratified with this relaxation. However, I do not quite understand why Government is unable to lower the qualifying age immediately from 75 to 70. What really are the so-called administrative difficulties? It will, of course, be a different matter if there is a shortage of funds; but if it is only because of a shortage of staff, the difficulties do not appear insurmountable, as only non-professional clerical staff will be required and it should not be difficult to recruit them. I hope Government will reconsider the matter in greater depth, and lower the eligibility age to 70 as soon as is practicable.

Secondly, community nursing is at present being implemented only by a number of voluntary agencies. In the past, Government did not give any real support to the community nursing scheme and has only changed its attitude recently by offering a certain amount of assistance. It is not clearly stated in the Green Paper whether this scheme will continue to be implemented by voluntary agencies in future. I consider that Government should provide such a service unless there are special reasons against doing so. It is estimated in paragraph 4.15 in the Green Paper that 34 community nurses will be enough to look after one hundred thousand old people aged above

65 who need care. Although the basis for these figures is explained in Exhibit 6 in the Green Paper, there are simply too many planning assumptions. If the time spent on transport, writing reports, and discussing with doctors about the patients' conditions etc. is also taken into account, it is doubtful whether one community nurse can undertake 8 visits to the elderly per day. And after deducting public holidays and annual leave, how can a community nurse have 50 working weeks per year? I do not propose to go into details here, but suffice it to say, having regard to the present shortfall of hospital beds, the community nursing scheme is indeed the best approach. I believe many members of the public as well as social workers will all agree with me in this respect. I hope that Government will conduct a more thorough study on the scheme so as to provide this much needed service in Hong Kong on a full scale basis and at an early date.

The training of social workers is also discussed in the Green Paper, but the emphasis is placed on the training of professional social workers in the two universities, the post-secondary colleges and the Polytechnic. These professional workers, however, may not be willing to take up jobs which do not require their professional knowledge, such as visiting the elderly to help them with their laundry, cooking, and other home help services. It is said that some care and attention homes have tried hard to appoint a social worker as superintendent, but are still unable to find a qualified person willing enough to accept the job. I therefore suggest that attention should also be paid to the training of non-professional social workers so that there will be people willing to perform services which do not call for highly professional expertise.

Another point I would like to raise is the financial implications in the provision of some of the services for the elderly. The Green Paper mentions the expenditure on some of the services proposed, such as the provision of dentures and renovation expenses for the elderly who move into public housing. It only states broadly that Government is considering making use of charitable trust funds to provide the necessary assistance, but does not spell out the detailed financial arrangements. This calls for re-examination. The Green Paper stresses the self-respect of the elderly so that with the services provided by Government, the elderly will continue to remain part of the community. The concept of charity is much reduced and has given way to the concept of services. Renaming the Infirmary Allowance as Old Age Allowance is no doubt a prominent example. If Government does not provide needy elderly persons with financial assistance to obtain dentures but requires them to turn to charitable trust funds for help, I believe many would feel so uneasy psychologically that they will simply not bother, thus defeating one of the objectives of the Green Paper. Furthermore, even if ignoring the fact that many charitable trust funds have been committed to specific uses, the limited income of the funds may not be sufficient to meet all the applicants' requests for assistance. There is therefore a need for

Government to consider the proposal in greater detail and if possible, to give some kind of financial support to such services.

The care and attention homes discussed in the Green Paper are a worthy service deserving enthusiastic support, but the actual proposals are some-what disappointing. A planning ratio of 4 places per 1,000 elderly is recommended for the provision of care and attention homes. I do not know how reliable the data are on which this ratio is worked out. Moreover, it is revealed in the Green Paper that there are resource constraints in achieving this target in the immediate future. This is most disappointing. I consider that there is an urgent need for this service in Hong Kong and that Government should consider giving it greater priority over other priority services. Finally, I must say that the dissemination of health information to the elderly and the promotion of respect for the aged are inadequate at present. The Green Paper's proposal to reinforce Government's efforts in this direction is most encouraging. In this connection, I hope Government will make greater use of and work closely with such civic bodies as Mutual Aid Committees, Kaifong Associations and Clansmen Associations in order to achieve maximum results with the least effort.

Sir, I support the motion before Council.

SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES:—Sir, I am grateful to Honourable Members for their warm support of the Green Paper on Services for the Elderly. I think it is also fair to say that the public too consider that more should be done for our senior citizens, indeed, at a faster pace than that proposed in the Green Paper. The Government will now consider carefully all the points raised about the services to be provided and the priorities to be accorded, and will seek to implement its plans as fast as resources permit.

There are four recurrent themes in my Unofficial Colleagues' speeches this afternoon, which I should like to comment on briefly. Firstly, that the qualifying age for the Old Age Allowance should be lowered from 75 to 70 in one step instead of two. Here I should explain that the Green Paper proposal for introducing this improvement in two steps is partially financial, but is mainly due to the size of the potential new case load which a single step could involve. The 70-74 age group is now estimated to be 74,000 on 1 November 1978. Even if this results in an initial take-up rate of 50% or 37,000 this would still represent nearly a 60% increase on the present clientele of about 64,000. Accordingly, if such a large number of new applicants did come forward and it is only reasonable that they will—some initial delays in processing them would be inevitable. However, in view of Honourable Members' observations the Government will now consider the possibility of lowering the qualifying age to 70 from 1 October, on the understanding that while the Social Welfare Department would make every effort to effect payments as soon as possible from that date, if the proposal was approved,

where delays could not be avoided such cases would eventually receive back payments.

Secondly, the expansion of community nursing to cope with the health care of the elderly is strongly supported. I am glad to say that the Medical Development Advisory Committee at a recent meeting has also recommended the early expansion of the community nursing service for this purpose, and we will be considering in the coming few months the most practical means of achieving our objective in the shortest possible time. The planning target of 34 community nurses for each 100,000 aged 65 and over is a modest but realistic start, and we shall be refining this target on the advice of the Medical Development Advisory Committee in the light of experience gained.

Thirdly, that there is a need to provide adequate care and attention facilities for the elderly who are at present either inadequately cared for at home, in homes or are occupying much needed hospital beds although they do not require medical care. This is an area where fairly rapid expansion is required and a careful examination is being made of the respective roles of the voluntary sector and the Government in meeting planned targets. That the planning ratio of 4 places for every 1,000 aged 60 and over is a tentative one, and based on rather limited information, is admitted. But a start has to be made somewhere and I think honourable Members will agree that if we can reach even this target within a few years, we would not be doing too badly. Of course, there is a well established machinery to review and update this and all other planning targets, so there need be no fears on this score.

Fourthly, emphasis has been placed on the value of education, not only of the community at large as to their responsibility towards the elderly, but also of the elderly themselves on health matters and on bridging the generation gap. Determined and sustained efforts in this area will be made and we shall mobilize every resource in doing so.

Dr FANG commented on the increased charges levied by institutions as a result of the introduction of an old age supplement in April this year. I should point out that both this supplement and the old age allowance are to assist the elderly and their families to meet any additional financial needs which may arise out of old age. This includes the purchase of services in whatever form. To the extent that an old person requires to enter an old people's home or a care and attention home, it is not unreasonable that he should pay towards his maintenance as he or his family would have to in ordinary circumstances in the family home. In making this point, I should, nevertheless, explain that it is not the Government's intention that any increased allowance should be taken away entirely by fees charged in subvented institutions. Since April 1978, our operational guideline is that, in general, Government and subvented institutions should allow the elderly singletons under their care to retain \$100 of their monthly cash allowances to spend as they please instead of the previous sum of \$36 allowed to them

as pocket money under public assistance arrangements. As regards private institutions, charges and payments are a matter entirely between the institution and the elderly person concerned and there is no question of Government penalizing such persons by withholding any allowances they may be entitled to. Staff of the Social Welfare Department are visiting subvented institutions to explain to both the operators and the residents the relationship between charges and Government cash allowances, and to devise payment arrangements which satisfy both parties concerned.

I wish to assure Mr Peter WONG that the proposed survey on chai-tong is not a prelude to direct Government intervention. Since these chai-tong cater for a sizable number of elderly persons, the Government is anxious to obtain better information on existing services and to see in what ways we could assist the organizations concerned to improve their standards, if such is indicated. Religious practices will not be disturbed and the survey will certainly be carried out in close consultation with the religious associations concerned.

Miss KO urges quicker expansion of home help service. I am glad to report that response from the voluntary agencies has been encouraging so far and a greater number of home helpers should be available by the end of this year than that envisaged in the Green Paper. It should be possible to provide at least 100 home helpers by the end of 1979-80.

In expanding residential institutional care for the elderly, the Government is, of course, concerned not only to provide adequate places but also to ensure a reasonable level of service with appropriate financial assistance if necessary. Work is proceeding on the latter aspect at present. I agree with Miss Ko and Miss BENNETT that these standards must be realistic and suitable for Hong Kong's situation, and I can assure them that in devising standards, Government will have regard both to the welfare of the elderly and to a realistic level of service in term of resources available.

Sir, I support the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Unofficial Member's bill

First reading of bill

MASONIC BENEVOLENCE FUND INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

Bill read the first time and ordered to be set down for second reading pursuant to Standing Order 41(3).

Second reading of bill**MASONIC BENEVOLENCE FUND INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL
1978**

MR LOBO moved the second reading of:—‘A bill to amend the Masonic Benevolence Fund Incorporation Ordinance.’

He said:—Sir, I move the second reading of the Masonic Benevolence Fund Incorporation (Amendment) Bill 1978. The purpose of this Bill is fully described in expance of memorandum to which there is nothing I can usefully add. Sir, I move that the debate on this motion be adjourned.

Motion made. That the debate on the second reading of the Bill be adjourned—MR LOBO.

Question put and agreed to.

Next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—In accordance with Standing Orders, I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 21 June.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes to five o'clock.