

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Thursday, 10 November 1983****The Council met at half past two o'clock****PRESENT**

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR EDWARD YOUDE, G.C.M.G., M.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF SECRETARY
SIR CHARLES PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, K.B.E., C.M.G., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
SIR JOHN HENRY BREMRIDGE, K.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR. MICHAEL DAVID THOMAS, Q.C.

THE HONOURABLE ROGERIO HYNDMAN LOBO, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DENIS CAMPBELL BRAY, C.M.G., C.V.O., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS

THE HONOURABLE DAVID AKERS-JONES, C.M.G., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

DR. THE HONOURABLE HARRY FANG SIN-YANG, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LO TAK-SHING, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS YUAN-HAO TIEN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALEX WU SHU-CHIH, C.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHEN SHOU-LUM, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LYDIA DUNN, C.B.E., J.P.
THE REVD. THE HONOURABLE PATRICK TERENCE MCGOVERN, O.B.E., S.J., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALAN JAMES SCOTT, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT

THE HONOURABLE WONG LAM, O.B.E., J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE THONG KAH-LEONG, C.B.E., J.P.
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE ERIC PETER HO, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

THE HONOURABLE CHARLES YEUNG SIU-CHO, O.B.E., J.P.
DR. THE HONOURABLE HO KAM-FAI, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALLEN LEE PENG-FEI, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW SO KWOK-WING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE GERALD PAUL NAZARETH, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.
LAW DRAFTSMAN

THE HONOURABLE HU FA-KUANG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG PO-YAN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DONALD LIAO POON-HUAI, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-CHUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE COLVYN HUGH HAYE, C.B.E., J.P.
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS. SELINA CHOW LIANG SHUK-YEE, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARIA TAM WAI-CHU, J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE HENRIETTA IP MAN-HING

THE HONOURABLE PIERS JACOBS, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES

THE HONOURABLE DAVID GREGORY JEAFFRESON, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR SECURITY

THE HONOURABLE HENRY CHING, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE CHAN NAI-KEONG, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS

THE HONOURABLE RONALD GEORGE BLACKER BRIDGE, J.P.
COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YING-LUN

THE HONOURABLE MRS. RITA FAN HSU LAI-TAI

THE HONOURABLE MRS. PAULINE NG CHOW MAY-LIN

THE HONOURABLE PETER POON WING-CHEUNG, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES NEIL HENDERSON, O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE PETER C. WONG, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN MARTIN ROWLANDS, C.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM CHARLES LANGDON BROWN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN JOSEPH SWAINE, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE YEUNG PO-KWAN, C.P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MRS. JENNIE CHOK PANG YUEN-YEE

Government Business

Motion

MOTION OF THANKS

Resumption of debate on motion (9 November 1983)

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY:—

The crime rate

Sir, three Members were particularly concerned about the present level of criminal activity. As you, Sir, stressed in your opening address, the maintenance of law and order is a primary aim of this Government. The object of those who deal with law and order within the Government is to reduce crime.

It is important that we keep this object clearly in view. Because in practice it is extraordinarily difficult to achieve, there is considerable scope for wandering down profitless side roads and for means of achieving it to become ends in themselves.

The results, too, are difficult to measure. Miss DUNN said that compared with today, twenty years ago Hong Kong could pride itself on its remarkably low crime rates. Certainly in terms of reported crime per 100 000 of the population she is absolutely correct. In 1962, the rate was 452, in 1972 834 and in 1982 it was 1671. This year is not going to see a reduction in the rate and it looks to me as if there may well be an increase in violent crime. But the fact is that we do have a well-run and dedicated police force. While comparisons must be treated with caution because of variations in laws and in the way the Police record crime, Hong Kong's crime rates do seem to be low compared with those in other densely populated cities. And our detection rates are high by international standards. So, can a significant part of the increase in reported crime in Hong Kong be attributed to the fact that, because our Police Force *is* more effective than it used to be, more people are now prepared to report crime?

That question, like so many others on the issue of law and order, cannot be answered. Does it really need to be? Mr. Peter WONG is absolutely right when he said 'the man in the street is not entirely satisfied with the law and order situation'. That is the point that really matters. Let us focus on our object, which is to reduce crime.

Fight Crime Committee

As the Chief Secretary said in answer to Miss DUNN earlier this year, the fact is that there is too much crime generally and violent crime in particular. He hinted that proposals were underway to see how the collective effort of the various Government departments involved in the fight against crime could be made more effective. The result is the reconstituted Fight Crime Committee with expanded terms of reference, a more representative and high-powered membership and with the Chief Secretary in the chair. The Unofficial Members on it are one former member and two present members of this Council, and a member of a District Fight Crime Committee. The essence of its terms of

reference is to draw up plans for a co-ordinated effort to reduce crime, to coordinate the work involved, to monitor the results and to report to you, Sir, every six months. Already some interesting ideas are coming forward (and, it is surprising when one gathers it all together how much is *already* being done on the ground by many Government departments and voluntary agencies in the sort of work that should help to reduce crime.)

Housing Estates

So on the general front, the battle continues. Turning to more specific points made in this debate, Miss DUNN, rightly I am sure although again we can't prove it statistically, linked 'vast and impersonal housing estates' with the 'deplorable increase in crime'. But I don't think this link is just caused by the break up of long established district communities. I would guess that an equally telling factor is that multi-storey buildings are extra-ordinary difficult to police. To illustrate my point. If you put the flats in a multi-storey Housing Authority block side by side as terraced houses on both sides of a street, a constable on beat duty can stand in the middle of the street and by simply looking round him see a fair number of the front doors. He can walk down the street maintaining a watchful eye on all the front doors to make sure no one is attempting to break-in. Then there is the public wandering up and down the street, also greatly limiting the opportunities for criminals. Multi-storey building with its staircases, lifts and numerous corridors is an entirely different matter as far as police patrolling is concerned. During the night, a burglar has ample opportunity to work away undisturbed at the front door of a flat. And with their victims captive in lifts or on staircases robbers have a relatively easy task. I am sure the caretaker of a multi-storey building in Wan Chai, from his experiences to this week, would only too readily confirm what I am saying.

The Housing Authority is acutely conscious of these difficulties as far as public housing is concerned. To reduce opportunities for crime, the Housing Department consults the Police on the layout of estates. The Department's architects include in the design of individual blocks as many measures as they can to reduce the opportunities for criminals. For example, they pay particular attention to the lighting of public places and are careful not to include in public areas alcoves where criminals can hide. Maybe these practices can be developed and extended into, say, a code of practice for architects generally. We will be asking the Fight Crime Committee to consider this possibility.

Once any estates are built, enormous efforts spearheaded and co-ordinated by the district officers and the district boards are made to develop a community spirit. But it takes time to achieve results. As far as policing is concerned, the Commissioner of Police makes every effort to introduce neighbourhood policing into estates as soon as new tenants begin to move in. In this way an early start is made on building a good mutual understanding between the new tenants and the local police.

There are already signs that these efforts, coupled with the greatly improved design of our new estates, incorporating a much wider range of community

facilities, are succeeding. Over the last eighteen months overall reported crime per 100 000 of the population was 40% less in our newer public housing estates than in the older ones. A similar comparison for serious assaults showed a difference of 52%.

Strengthening of the Police Force

As regards the Police generally, I am grateful to Miss DUNN for forcefully pointing out that the Police cannot operate effectively without the support of the public. Unless crime is reported and the public help in investigations, the Police really are hamstrung.

The Police themselves do much to encourage the public to help. For example, they are making strenuous efforts to make the reporting of crime as convenient as possible. A recent Police Headquarters Order stressed that, whenever practicable, statements should be recorded on the spot or wherever is most convenient to the member of the public involved rather than in a police station. The introduction of 'crime information forms' which are now even available in many banks as well as in all district offices and all post offices has also helped. The police, next week, will start a survey of 2 000 victims of crimes with a view to finding out whether they have any criticisms of the existing systems so that further refinements can be introduced. Perhaps an indication of success in this general direction is that statistics now show a high level of 'citizen arrests' (12% of all arrests in 1981 and 13% so far this year), indicating an increasing willingness of members of the public to assist actively in reducing crime levels.

Mr. Peter WONG again rightly draws our attention to the need to strengthen our Police Force in order to combat the rising crime rate. I can assure Mr. WONG that even in these days of austerity, we will be fighting to get additional posts for the Police into next year's Estimates to ensure that levels of policing appropriate to the criminal activities the Police have to respond to are maintained. Increasing the manpower is not the only way the Force can be strengthened. The Police are embarking on several technical innovations which will also improve their efficiency. You, Sir, mentioned the new computer assisted command and control system which will help greatly in the dissemination of information to policemen on the ground and enable them to be used much more effectively when reports come through that crimes are being committed.

Punishment

Miss DUNN also emphasizes the important part played by punishment in providing a deterrent to crime. But by implication at least, she appeared unimpressed by the Government's efforts at 'rehabilitation of the offender'. If this phrase were to mean starry-eyed efforts to save criminals from themselves, I would agree with her. But it doesn't. Our object in this context again remains firmly to reduce crime. We are concerned with making sure as far as we can that prisoners when released do not start committing crimes again. So the Correctional Services Department tries to find out why particular not yet hardened younger criminals turned to crime in the first place and to put them

back on the straight and narrow. The Department tries to keep prisoners employed productively so that they can acquire a trade they can use on release (and incidentally prison industries save taxpayers a lot of money). For young inmates, the Department tries to teach them skills so that they can stand a chance of getting employment on release and with the help of the Technical Education and Industrial Training Department is now introducing new courses that should give those under training a recognized certificate at the end of it. The Department also runs an after-care service to help young ex-detainees to get back into society without reverting to crime. The Social Welfare Department runs a probation service for offenders of all ages and five residential institutions providing academic, prevocational, social and recreational training for juvenile offenders. These are further examples of an effort designed to reduce crime. From my frequent references to the young, Members will appreciate that it is primarily directed at those likely to benefit from it.

Problems involving young people

Which brings me to Mrs. CHOW's concern regarding the increasing involvement of young people in three problem areas; crime, drug abuse and corruption. This worrying situation has arisen in spite of the considerable efforts of those in departments and voluntary agencies involved with the young.

(a) Crime

One example of these efforts is the liaison the Police maintain with the many voluntary organizations that provide services for the young. Another is that Junior Police Call now has a membership of over 350 000 and plays a vital role in creating a better relationship between young people and the police; it also provides a positive means for young people to participate actively in the fight against crime. Yet another is the Education Department's promotion of activities and services, carefully described by the Director yesterday designed to keep the young from wandering into trouble. The Social Welfare Department and the voluntary agencies work in different ways outside the schools to the same end.

The Fight Crime Committee oversees the Fight Youth Crime Campaign now well underway with a full programme of publicity and community-related activities targetted at young males aged between 14 and 20. The public are supporting this campaign well. Once more Junior Police Call is spearheading the campaign in the districts.

(b) Drugs

We share Mrs. CHOW's concern at the marked upward trend in the number of young people on drugs. In the first half of 1983, newly reported drug addicts under 21 years of age made up 29% of the total, compared with 24% in the first half of 1982. Mrs. CHOW's assumption that this increase must be reflected in an increased involvement of young persons in drug trafficking is borne out, I am afraid, by recent statistics. Prosecutions of juveniles (persons under the age of 16) for serious narcotics offences, expressed as a percentage of all prosecutions

for such offences, rose from 1.5% in 1980 to 2.1% in 1982, while the proportion for young persons (those aged between 16 and 21) increased from 9.1% in 1980 to 13.5% in 1982.

Although the proportions for the first nine months of this year are slightly less than they were last year, in response to the general trend the Action Committee Against Narcotics is increasingly focusing activity on the young, particularly with a view to stopping them starting on drugs. Publicity campaigns are pointed firmly in this direction. Efforts to step up the teaching of the anti-drug message in schools now include fully trained teams visiting schools.

(c) Corruption

The position is less serious in respect of Mrs. CHOW's third area of concern, corruption, although the short term trend is a bit worrying. In the first nine months of this year, I.C.A.C. prosecuted eleven young people representing 3.5% of all prosecutions during that period. The figure for the last six months of 1982 was 1.8%.

(d) Conclusion

Mrs. CHOW gathers the various statistics on these three areas, crime, drugs and corruption, together to illustrate how Hong Kong's youth is generally at risk. The Government has recognized the need to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to tackle these problems. The Fight Crime Committee is examining ways of improving and co-ordinating more effectively from an anti-crime point of view the wide range of services for youths offered by the Education, Social Welfare and Correctional Services Departments and the police and by the various voluntary organizations.

Summary

To return to the overall picture, as I have stressed our object is to reduce crime. What I have said I trust illustrates how we seek to advance on a broad front: we try to stop people turning to crime in the first place; but when they do, we try to make sure the Police are properly equipped to bring them to the courts; and lastly we try to keep them from reverting to crime when they are again released into the community.

Sir, I with these remarks I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY:—

Exhibition Centre

Sir, Miss DUNN, Mr. WONG PO-yan, Mr. LEE and Mr. Stephen CHEONG spoke on the Exhibition Centre project urging its early completion and questioning Government's procedures.

The Government's process for dealing with ideas beyond the provision of basic infrastructure is simply to test its economic viability and value for money. Where public funds have to be allocated in addition to other resources, there

will be the further test of priority in competition with other claims for those limited financial resources. Do we need hospitals or traffic improvements more? This, Sir, also answers Miss DUNN's 'not whether but how?'. The Government will support an Exhibition Centre project only if it is viable. And in response to Mr. WONG's plea for the allocation of resources for the manufacturing sector the Administration stands ready to recommend the grant of the valuable site on the Wan Chai waterfront, free of premium, for an Exhibition Centre, but without further grant from general revenue.

A review indicates that this Council's re-kindled interest in the Exhibition Centre project may be dated from Mr. Alex WU's speech of 26 October 1977 in the 1977 debate on the Governor's Address. In his reply the then Secretary for Economic Services confirmed that the Industry and Customs Department was gathering material to support the view that an exhibition centre was greatly needed and would be widely used. It was noted that an adequate exhibition centre would not be inexpensive and that it would have to be viable.

The Government's view that the Exhibition Centre had to be viable was endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Diversification (A.C.D.). While A.C.D. was still engaged on its studies the then Trade Industry and Customs Department was already authorized in late 1978 to embark on a two-stage consultancy to ascertain the demand for an exhibition centre in Hong Kong, its viability, and to provide specifications and estimates. The consultants for the stage one study were appointed in August 1979 and reported in early 1980 confirming the demand. In November 1980 the Governor in Council ordered that consultants be appointed to undertake stage two of the study to draw up specifications for an exhibition centre and to prepare estimates of capital and recurrent costs, and potential income. A Non-Statutory Board under the chairmanship of Mr. M. G. R. SANDBERG was appointed in March 1981 to select the consultants for the stage two study and to oversee their work.

Early in its deliberations with the prospective consultants, the Non-Statutory Board concluded that the site originally earmarked by the Government in Tsim Sha Tsui East was not suitable and stage two of the consultancy could not be started until July 1982 after a valuable site on the Wan Chai waterfront had been identified as a more appropriate location. The stage two consultancy report completed in April 1983 proposed a design for a multi-purpose complex on the Wan Chai site providing for exhibition halls, conference facilities, carparking, hotel, shopping and office space. The consultants advised that no major exhibition centre could of itself generate sufficient direct income to meet the financing and capital costs, and therefore recommended that the non-exhibition elements, that is, the shops, hotel and offices be included in the complex for sale to recover the capital costs involved in the construction of the exhibition centre.

These findings were submitted to the Executive Council in July this year. Because of the changed values in the property market since the study was

undertaken a further financial study was required with respect to viability before a decision could be taken. This further tough and clearly essential study which has now been completed has come to a somewhat more circumspect conclusion. A recommendation will be made shortly to Your Excellency in Executive Council as to how best the project should be pursued further.

Sir, this review indicates systematic action by the Government in the consideration of this project consistent with the need to ensure its viability. I note that the Japanese Government while not unaware of the value of exports have refused to subsidize an exhibition centre. In their advocacy my Unofficial Colleagues were seemingly unconcerned about viability. If I may say so, this is no way to control public sector expenditure. In conclusion, I must repeat that any Exhibition Centre must be viable. This is the issue to be faced.

Investment in industry

I agree with Mr. S. L. CHEN and Mr. P. Y. WONG about the importance of continued investment by industry in modern plant and equipment. This is required to maintain Hong Kong's competitive position in world markets, and our prosperity tomorrow depends on investment decisions made today.

I am therefore grateful to Mr. LEE for his assurance that the Hong Kong Productivity Council, under his chairmanship, will continue to contribute towards productivity improvements in our industry. The proposal for an Industrial Automation Unit will be considered by the Government when it is submitted.

In this connection Mr. WONG PO-yan may wish to note that all grants to the Hong Kong Productivity Council form part of the considerable allocations of resources for the development and upgrading of manufacturing industry.

For its part, the Government will continue to ensure the provision of an efficient infrastructure and support services. The Industry Department works closely with trade and industrial organizations, especially the Industrial Estates Corporation, to encourage local and overseas industrialists to invest in industry in Hong Kong through its industrial investment promotion activities conducted by the One-Stop Unit in Hong Kong and four overseas offices in London, Tokyo, Stuttgart and San Francisco. The wide-ranging industrial investment promotion programme includes such activities as seminars, attendance at trade and industrial fairs and industrial promotion missions. I should like to urge our industrialists who are interested in upgrading, diversifying or expanding their manufacturing facilities to take advantage of this programme.

Sir, I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT:—Sir, transport has attracted little attention in this debate; however, I am bound to reply to Miss Lydia DUNN's allegation that the Civil Service failed to use reasonable anticipation in the latter part of the 1970's

in pursuing studies for what she was pleased to refer to as the 'Lei Yue Mun non-bridge'.

I have been counselled by an eminent member of this assembly to avoid sarcasm, but perhaps I may be permitted to flirt delicately with asperity. The length of my reply is perhaps more a measure of respect for a redoubtable colleague than of the depth of research which supported her caustic references to the level of intelligence and anticipation of the Civil Service.

The reality, however, is that studies were continuing, at various levels, not only of such a possible bridge but of other harbour crossing options; and at least as important, of the priority for such a bridge, as compared with other transport projects. This priority was being examined at a time when public sector expenditure was expanding substantially in response to demands from all Government programmes for increasing funds. And as my colleague the Secretary for Trade and Industry said a moment ago, it would in this connection be discourteous to overlook Miss DUNN's clearly and often stated views on controlling public sector expenditure.

In regard to a bridge, Sir, it was not only a question of commissioning studies; its feasibility depended, among other things, on preserving the integrity of the airport instrument landing system (I.L.S.). This could not be determined until detailed designs of possible bridges were available, which in turn depended on up-to-date information and requirements in marine and transport terms.

I must, in passing, Sir, enquire where Miss DUNN obtained the information that 'the Lei Yue Mun bridge was *always* a non-starter' which is simply not the case. The professional consultant who examined the I.L.S. aspect was initially of the view that a design for a bridge could be found which would be compatible with the I.L.S. It was not until early this year that it began to seem that this would not be possible. But whatever the initial prognosis, pessimism or optimism, the study work had to be done with a scale model, using several successive design types of bridge.

The detailed sequence of events in the overall transport context was as follows. In April 1976 the Governor in Council, in considering the question whether the Government should invite commercial groups to submit declarations of interest in constructing and operating a toll bridge at Lei Yue Mun, decided that such a decision could not be taken until a further study of the general economic benefits of the proposed bridge (that is, the economic benefits as opposed to the transport benefits) had been conducted, and an assessment made of the priority to be given to the bridge as compared with other bridge or tunnel projects territory-wide.

This study was accordingly undertaken, and the conclusions were: first, that the benefits of improved communications were greater than the economic benefits deriving from the development of areas which would be opened up by a bridge at Lei Yue Mun; and second, that the Aberdeen Tunnel should be given

priority before the bridge. It was noted that the Lei Yue Mun bridge timetable would in any case depend upon the completion date of the Island Eastern Corridor in the mid-1980's.

At this stage, attention switched to the centre of the harbour, when the Cross-Harbour Tunnel Company submitted proposals either for putting in a mezzanine deck in the existing twin-tube tunnel; or to build a third tube alongside the existing twin tubes. A study of this proposal indicated that the former (mezzanine level) would cause too much disruption during construction and posed certain safety complications; and that both proposals would overload the approach roads. I would, with some hesitation in the light of certain Members' views, draw attention to the present level of congestion at peak hours on both sides of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel, and ask them to consider the effects of increasing the throughput by 50%.

Various other proposals came forward, and the evidently very high cost of any new fixed crossing led to the conclusion in 1979 that in order to identify the optimum next crossing, wider engineering studies would be needed. The result was the 'Additional Cross-Harbour Facilities; Study of Long Term Options Report' issued in June 1981.

This recommended a bridge at Lei Yue Mun as the first option in the transport, economic and financial contexts. The necessary scale model was commissioned, in order, as I said earlier, to determine compatibility of bridge designs with the I.L.S. This required careful and detailed work overseas, and the safety implications for aircraft cannot be over-emphasized in this connection.

The result was that in August 1983 the Government announced that a Lei Yue Mun bridge of satisfactory height for marine purposes was not compatible with the existing I.L.S. and that Government would continue to study other bridge and tunnel crossing options. A full report is due to you, Sir, in Council by August 1984, after one or more interim reports. One year, Sir, not 'a couple of years', I am happy to assure Miss DUNN.

Sir, I have two final points, but first an observation: I cannot in this connection accept the proposition sometimes advanced that regardless of cost and the effect on the transport programme, Government should make it possible for everybody who wishes, whenever they wish, to take a vehicle through or over the harbour. Eighteen months ago, I addressed this Council at some length on the priorities of transport in Hong Kong, and I will not do so again on this occasion, although brevity seems to be going out of style. The road network is an expensive public asset; to expand and improve it is becoming increasingly expensive; and however clear what is desirable may be to intelligent anticipators (and I would hope with modesty to include my own staff and colleagues in this category) our resources do not permit us to provide everything that is desirable, at the moment it is desired.

My penultimate point is this: planning is in itself an essential activity of management, that goes without saying. But however much planning is done,

it does not in itself produce results, it makes nothing happen, it creates no resources; it is only a basis for decision, usually for making a choice between options. Even the best planning and intelligent anticipation, Sir, does not guarantee agreement on the measures and their necessary timing to deal with future requirements and contingencies (particularly when the resources must be sought in competition with claims on resources at a present moment). Other factors may supervene which affect judgments, including social, political and economic factors. Perhaps a relevant example is the need for restraints on the growth of private motor vehicles. The increase in their number and the problems of congestion which would result were anticipated and were described in studies of the mid-1960's and on into the 1970's, and are set out clearly in the 1979 White Paper on Transport Policy. But notwithstanding the obvious case for restraint, it was not found acceptable until 1982.

The last point is that a Lei Yue Mun bridge, or any other big project, is not implemented in isolation from other projects in the transport programme; and further, the transport programme is not allocated resources in isolation from the many other important programmes of Government. The next fixed harbour crossing will be expensive, and it cannot be assumed that a commercial operator will consider it viable, certainly not in the usual Hong Kong context of getting your money back within ten years or less. There will almost certainly be, at least in respect of the road network interlinking at each end of the crossing, a requirement for some Government investment.

Sir, I support the motion.

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION:—Sir, I am grateful to Mr. WONG, Mr. HU, Mr. YEUNG, Mrs. NG and Mr. CHAN for the interest they have shown in and for their constructive observations on District Administration.

District Administration as a concept is not new but District Administration applied to Hong Kong's densely populated, highly urbanized and industrial society is new and is evolving. District Administration with elected representatives is hardly a year old but it is already evident, as I shall exemplify shortly, that the interaction at district level between representatives of the people and government servants has created new opportunities for responsible government. Of course it has revealed weaknesses but in doing so it has created opportunities to improve performance! District Management Committees of officials are the executive arm of the Boards and a lot depends on them to respond positively to points of view and proposals made by the Unofficial Members. For some officials this is a new experience; some may not have the facts available on the spot; many will not be able to give an instant affirmative to probing questions or propositions which go outside established policy. But let me assure Members in this Chamber and members of the District Boards that there is no weakening of Government's resolve to support the Boards in their work.

Despite a year of solid achievement there lingers in some quarters a lack of understanding of the essential role of the District Boards. Theirs is a quiet revolution; their achievements do not make the headlines. Bus timetables become more convenient, refuse collection creates less nuisance, factory workers find they can more easily find a place to eat, footbridges are built, car parks provided, maxicab and ferry services are re-arranged: all these matters and more besides come under the quiet scrutiny of the District Board and its Committees. Problems are sorted out and compromises reached, life for thousands of people becomes more tolerable, more pleasurable, and without high drama or confrontation.

An example of this quiet application to problems affecting the people is to be found in Kwun Tong. The Kwun Tong District Board was the first to begin to tackle the anarchy infecting the environment, to clear away obstructions and structures and to restore pavements and footpaths to their proper use; it has helped find study rooms for students living in cramped homes; it has made successful representations on the ferry service; it has worked out a night doctor service; pressed successfully for the early implementation of the Cha Kwo Ling Road; improved squatter areas and organized festivals. What Kwun Tong has done has been echoed in different ways by all the District Boards.

District Boards have extended their discussions to territory-wide issues such as metrication, film classification, amusement game centres, taxi policy and, as mentioned by Mr. CHAN, the Report on Education. In the latter case, intensive discussions were held by all eighteen Boards and their reports will prove a valuable indication of public reaction to the numerous highly complex and controversial questions which are involved in modifying our education system. In Yau Ma Tei the pilot scheme on the management of private multi-storey residential buildings, initiated by the District Board, will form the basis for action to tackle that most intractable of problem—building management. The Boards have been forthcoming and forthright and I can assure Mr. CHAN that consideration and discussion by the Boards will not stop at the examples that I have mentioned.

The District Boards have become a focus and a catalyst for district recreational and cultural programmes. Funds devoted by District Boards to such activities are but a small proportion of the resources that are generated as a result of the initiative of the Boards. And, as they develop experience, these activities are becoming more wide-ranging and spread their appeal. In this connection Mr. CHAN's suggestion that the District Boards should assume a more active role in the management of community and recreational facilities is most interesting. I, too, think there is scope for greater district involvement. After all these facilities were put there for the benefit of the local people, and if there are criticisms or proposals for improvement in their management, let us hear them.

Squatter area improvement is an area where the District Boards have made some progress in difficult circumstances: they have repaired footpaths, built

shelters and recreational areas and so forth. Having said this, as the Secretary for Housing also pointed out yesterday, it is not easy to improve some of our squatter areas on the steep hillsides of Shau Kei Wan and Kwun Tong. But I take Mr. CHAN's point and agree that the Boards, where possible, should play a more active role in assisting with the improvement of squatter areas.

Both Mr. HU and Mr. CHAN have spoken in favour of establishing stronger links between the District Boards and the other councils of Government in the broad sense of the term and Your Excellency has spoken of the examination of these relationships which is to be made. In this connection, it will be of interest to Members to learn that there have been 68 appointments of District Board members to Government Boards and Committee since March last year. I therefore welcome Mrs. NG's proposal that the relationship between District Boards and area committee should be strengthened. Indeed, apart from area committees, there is already a strong cross-membership between the Boards and mutual aid committees and numerous other residents' associations and community organizations.

It is a frequent criticism that the District Boards have no 'executive powers' but the critics do not explain exactly what they mean by this. To look at various practical examples of what executive power at the District level might mean, I see no advantage in burdening these busy men and women with the day-to-day work of licensing; similarly the collection of refuse, the control of hawkers and the sweeping of streets are already in the executive control of the Urban Council; other executive powers, in our circumstances, are more effectively administered centrally. 'Executive powers' has become a rallying crying for some critics, perhaps looking for excitement, without looking at the solid record of achievement of the Boards.

Nevertheless it was in a spirit of critical appraisal that the first Conference on District Administration was organized in May this year. After the Conference, the consensus was that it proved to be a useful and stimulating experience for those who took part. Discussion was, however, somewhat generalized and I hope, at the next Conference to be held in the first half of next year, that a more concentrated examination can be given to specific problems. This time the Boards themselves will play an active part in the organization of the Conference.

Sir, I hope that these words have done something to dispel the suspicion in some quarters that the District Boards are a talking shop without aim or achievement, and I hope Mr. CHAN and those who spoke with him are reassured by what I have said.

I support the motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:—Sir, I rise to support the motion of thanks for your Address and in doing so I would like to take up four topics in which I have a keen personal interest that have been raised by Unofficials in the debate.

Capital Punishment

Miss Lydia DUNN, alone among Members, thought fit to raise again the controversial topic of capital punishment. Her beguiling logic like every good political speech contained something for everyone. Capital punishment is popular she says and the recent British Parliamentary vote was a disappointment to the people of Hong Kong. So let's keep capital punishment. On the other hand she says it makes a mockery of our system to retain the procedures of capital punishment given the present realities. So let's get rid of capital punishment.

Sir, I would rather not take my seat on the uncomfortable horns of that dilemma. On this issue I would prefer to stand up and be counted. I have previously made known my personal conviction that society has no right deliberately and in cold blood to kill one of its members unless there is some necessity for doing so. And so long as there is the fearful prospect of life imprisonment, there is no need to kill merely to punish. Equally I have previously made known that I share Miss DUNN's concern that in retaining capital punishment, we unfairly impose upon judges and those who guard condemned prisoners under sentence of death awesome and morbid responsibilities.

But given the feelings of the ordinary people of Hong Kong and of Parliament in Westminster, I can see no immediate prospect of action here in Hong Kong to satisfy either of Miss DUNN's demands. The Government therefore takes note of her points but the political realities are well known to her and indeed to all honourable Members.

Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme

Miss Maria TAM calls for the introduction of a Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme to assist those persons who are too poor to pursue litigation without considerable sacrifice but too rich to qualify for legal aid—the so called 'sandwich' class. Since then in press reports the Acting Director of Legal Aid has announced that a scheme along the lines suggested by Miss TAM has been proposed by a working party made up of representatives of my Chambers, of the Legal Aid Department, of the Judiciary and of the two legal professions. However as Mr. MOSS also said, the proposals still have to be approved by the Executive and the Legislative Councils and the necessary funds have still to be made available.

Miss TAM suggested that there may be as many as 1 700 applicants each year whose means are above the present limits of legal aid. The working committee in fact proposed that as a start the Scheme should be restricted to plaintiffs in personal injury actions brought in the High Court. These are reckoned to number about 75 each year. Experience gained from such a pilot scheme could then be assessed and in the light of it, it would be open for consideration whether the Scheme could be expanded on a conservative basis. Since there is

no precedent for the Scheme it would be preferable if it were started on the relatively small scale presently proposed.

The object of the Scheme is to be self-financing and it is that which is the novel feature. It is proposed that those who are successful in litigation should pay to the Scheme a percentage of their damages. This would cover the costs of their own litigation in so far as they are not recovered from the defendant, it will cover the relatively few unsuccessful cases which are brought with the benefit of legal aid and also the costs of administering the scheme. Some funds must be made available at the outset to prime the pump but it is envisaged that in two years or so this sum would be repaid.

I am convinced there is much merit in this proposed Scheme and that it would fulfil a worthwhile social purpose. In the last few days I have been examining with the Councils and Administration Branch and the Finance Branch certain aspects of the Scheme and further thought is now being given by the Acting Director of Legal Aid to the sums of money required to meet the costs of the Pilot Scheme for the initial two year period.

Imprisonment of Civil Debtors

I now turn to the topic of imprisonment of civil debtors raised by Mr. Peter C. WONG. Members of this Council well know, as I have learned by reading the files, that he has waged an impressive campaign for reform and has deployed powerful arguments to support his plea. I hope and believe that the law will soon be changed. If that is achieved, it will be a good example of how one Member of this Legislative Council can press for law reform with single minded determination and achieve change by his persistence.

Of course Mr. Peter C. WONG is right, poverty is not a crime. However, there is a powerful lobby in Hong Kong that is strongly opposed to change. Small traders and their lawyers find that many debtors pay up rather than go to prison. Many debtors only give details of their assets in order to get out of prison. It is also suggested that there would be difficulties in tracing judgment debtors if they had first to be summoned to Court before they could be sent to prison.

While I acknowledge the force of all these arguments I cannot accept that it is right, outside the scope of criminal law, for any person to lose his liberty without an order of the court. Nor can I accept that it is right that any person should be imprisoned merely because he cannot pay his debts. Indeed Article 11 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights provides in terms:

‘No one shall be imprisoned merely on the ground of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation.’

So, Sir, I intend to bring forward proposals for change in the near future. I should like to see procedures altered so that it is put beyond doubt that in all cases it is necessary for the judgment creditor to obtain an order from a

judge before a debtor can be cast into prison. Even then, I would like to see the power of the court to imprison restricted to those cases where a debtor has obstructed the execution process, for example, by deliberately hiding his assets or by refusing to disclose his assets or by refusing to use his assets in order to discharge his debt. At the same time, I have taken note of some powerful judicial criticism that we have seen recently of Order 44A of the Rules of the Supreme Court. Under that order a visitor from overseas may find himself forced to give security before leaving the Territory under threat of imprisonment, even before the proceedings have been brought to judgment, indeed, even before a writ has been issued. I consider as some learned judges also consider, that some changes are necessary in those procedures too. I shall also take note of some other unsatisfactory features of the present rules, some of which (I am told) may be the subject of argument before the High Court in a case that will begin tomorrow.

Accordingly I hope that Mr. Peter C. WONG will be assured that his determined efforts to see the law changed in this area have my full support and I hope it will not be too long before his efforts succeed.

The Rule of Law

This may well have been the first debate of this kind in which a number of Members have gone out of their way to find words of praise for the concept of the rule of law and for the legal institutions that are its guardian in Hong Kong. Even lawyers, used so often to comparison with scavengers and pariahs and other less complimentary things (*laughter*), have come in for some complimentary references.

I have no doubt that Members are right to have in mind at this time in our history those features of our legal system that make Hong Kong a free and open society in which those who are but individuals are guaranteed basic human rights, in which those who are powerful find themselves subject to control and correction, and in which all are equal before the Courts. The freedoms established by law give energy, enterprise and confidence to Hong Kong's people. Our sophisticated commercial laws attract the banker, the shipowner, the insurer and the traders to do their business in Hong Kong. But above all, the independence, incorruptibility and the ability of its fair-minded judges attract the litigants. Everyone knows that in the last resort their right will be enforced by the Courts of Justice in Hong Kong. That gives them confidence in their dealings with one another and in their dealings with Government.

As Mr. John SWAINE pointed out in his telling and incisive speech, it is essential to the well-being of this community that the cardinal features of our legal system be preserved. I would unhesitatingly support his remarks. I would also wish to support your remarks, Sir, When you stressed in your Address the importance to Hong Kong's reputation as a major commercial and trading centre that all who live and trade here should have confidence in the rule of law.

Sir, I heartily support the Motion of Thanks.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY:—

Introduction

Sir, the underlying theme of your Annual Address to this Council at the beginning of last month was Building for Further Prosperity. In pursuance of this theme you laid down the Government's near term policy intentions and explained how policies and programmes were being planned and developed to take us forward into the 21st century. You concluded by saying that '(the) Government will be getting on with the job of making Hong Kong a better place in which the people of Hong Kong can live, work and bring up their children' ... and that it will be '(your) constant concern to ensure that Hong Kong continues to enjoy steady and progressive government'.

I have repeated your words today, Sir, because, as Mr. LOBO said in his speech opening this debate a fortnight ago, 'the worst thing we could do at this time is to lose our sense of resolution and ... purpose as an Administration'.

I agree, and I believe there is no question of our losing our sense of resolution and purpose, but resolution and purpose require to be matched by performance and that brings me straight up against Miss DUNN and to a lesser extent Mr. BROWN.

Government Organization and Procedures

In just under a total of three pages, Miss DUNN managed to call for a fundamental re-appraisal of the central machinery of Government and its management structure generally, which she perceives as being over-centralized and top-heavy; for reform of bureaucratic procedures which she perceives as being complex; and for a continuing review of policies, coupled with a more intelligent and urgent anticipation of situations likely to arise in the future.

As Miss DUNN kept casting her eye in my direction during this part of her speech and Mr. BROWN, anxious to enliven our decorous proceedings, was vigorously nodding his head, (*laughter*) I gained the distinct impression that, as Chief Secretary, they, at least, thought I had a lot to answer for. (*laughter*) As I'm a sensitive human being I felt guilty but, at one and the same time, as the apotheosis of Miss DUNN's image of a defensive civil servant, I was seized with an anxiety to explain away our shortcomings. (*laughter*) Having listened to the Secretary for Transport on the Lyemun Bridge, the Secretary for Trade and Industry on the exhibition centre and the Secretary for Economic Services on the nuclear power plant, I have concluded that the history of these projects does not provide very telling evidence of our shortcomings. So, I think I need only make one general point: the decision-making process in the public sector is complicated, particularly in the case of major infrastructural projects, by the need to reconcile many conflicting considerations. Inevitably, therefore, the decision-making process in the public sector is a somewhat argumentative, to say the least, and time-consuming process.

But, of course, it is quite impossible to argue with the thoughts underlying Miss DUNN's call to arms, that is to say, there is always room for improvements, sometimes quite a lot of room. Where it is possible to argue with her is in her assessment of how much room there is and how best to effect improvements, given the many legislative and conventional constraints under which a government bureaucracy must operate.

So taking each of the three elements in Miss DUNN's catalogue in turn, beginning with the organization of Government, a subject on which I have spoken on several occasions during the past couple of years: I see no necessity for—and even less wisdom in—what Miss DUNN described as 'a fundamental re-appraisal' of the organization of Government, even if it was undertaken as an in-house exercise, rather than by outside consultants. I believe organizational (and procedural) reforms are best devised, I believe, and introduced progressively and I think the record clearly shows that we do introduce adaptations to meet changing requirements.

Let me summarize our efforts during the past three years. In 1981, we replaced the former Environment Branch of the Government Secretariat by the Lands and Works Branch and the Transport Branch; we established the City and New Territories Administration in place of the old Home Affairs Department and New Territories Administration, and redistributed associated responsibilities between the Secretary for Home Affairs and the then Secretary for the New Territories; and we created the new Recreation and Culture Department. In 1982, we defederalized the former Trade, Industry and Customs Department and created three separate departments and a new Trade and Industry Branch of the Government Secretariat; we defederalized the old Public Works Department and created six separate departments, including a new Lands Department; and we created the new Technical Education and Industrial Training Department. This year, 1983, we redistributed certain policy responsibilities within the Government Secretariat, which led to the creation of the Education and Manpower Branch and the Health and Welfare Branch; we clarified the functions of the Information Services Department and the Home Affairs Branch; we established a new Hong Kong Government Office in New York; we hived-off the K.C.R.; we shall soon be setting up a new Science and Technology Office within the Government Secretariat; and, presently, as part and parcel of the review of local administration, we are looking at existing relationships between the various bodies in the recreation and culture fields.

At the same time, in order to achieve a more coherent relationship between the Government Secretariat and executive departments, there has been considerable delegation of powers from the Government Secretariat to departments in recent years, particularly in the areas of staffing and financial control; and many departments have regionalized their organizational structures in order to improve their services at district level.

Also, during this year, we have reviewed the complex network of some 320 advisory boards and committees, with a view to ensuring that the terms of

reference and composition of these bodies are kept fully up-to-date with the constantly changing needs and circumstances of Hong Kong and that new blood is injected into the veins to maintain their strength and vitality.

Now as regards Miss DUNN's two specific charges that our Administration is over-centralized and top-heavy, let me say straightaway that there will always be differences of opinion about the amount of central control necessary. But a certain degree of central control over departmental policies and the deployment of resources is essential to devise overall policy objectives and, once they have been approved, to see that they are achieved. In any case, I find it difficult to accept that our present central government organization, the Government Secretariat, of 11 policy branches and two resource branches, staffed by just under 2 000 officers of all ranks, can truly be described as over-centralized, when it is remembered that there are some 55 executive departments staffed by about 166 000 civil servants, most of whom are in very close and regular contact with the people they serve.

Nor can the charge that the Government's bureaucracy is top-heavy be substantiated by the facts: the total strength of the civil service at 1 October this year was just under 168 000, comprising 880 directorate scale officers and 1 400 officers at senior management/professional level and 165 600 officers at all other levels. Put simply, 2 280 senior officers are in charge of 165 600 staff of all other ranks: I would have thought that any reasonable person would regard these overheads as thin rather than thick.

Nevertheless, and whilst noting with profound displeasure Mr. BROWN's unkind reference to that favourite Aunt Sally located next door to this Chamber, I am fully aware of the stifling effects of complex regulations and procedures and would add this comment: those of us who have to live within the system, and do our best to make it work efficiently, are as likely to be critical of the system as professional commentators and as frustrated by unnecessary complexity as those whom the system seeks to serve. We bureaucrats have, therefore, or so I would like to think, a built-in incentive to effect reforms, quite apart from the external pressures brought to bear upon us by, for example, the auditor's scrutiny and the examination of his published annual report by the Public Accounts Committee. But the scope for reforms must be indicated by experience and the introduction of reforms has to be a continuous process. Secretaries and Heads of Departments are well aware of their obligations in this area and the Finance Branch has been tasked to conduct a wide range of value for money studies in departments. I might also add that, in an effort to speed up their services to the public in the most effective and economical manner, a steadily increasing number of departments have computerized their operations in recent years with a considerable degree of success, and more will be doing so in the future. Greater use is also being made of modern office technology although here, I must confess, we tend to be distinctly conservative.

Finally, there is Miss DUNN's plea that existing policies be reviewed, with a sense of urgency, so as to adapt them to changing requirements: apart from the

obvious point that there is a certain virtue in continuity of effort, I would have thought Your Excellency's review of the Government's near term intentions and longer term plans provided sufficient evidence of the Government's dynamic approach.

Civil Service Training

Miss DUNN linked her valid concern that Government business should be despatched expeditiously with doubts about the adequacy of present training schemes for the civil service. I am sure these doubts are well taken. It would be surprising if they were not, given the range of skills required for the multifarious tasks of the civil service. But we have invested considerably in training programmes in recent years. This year, for example, the Government's total expenditure on civil service training will be just over \$400 million. It may surprise Members to learn that the Government operates 41 training schools and institutions, plus 50 training units or divisions which, together, have a full-time staff of 700 and part-time staff of 120. Service-wide, the Government's training facilities can deal with 10 000 trainees a year.

Increasing emphasis has been placed on management training in recent years. This year, for example, of the \$400 million being spent on training generally, \$46 million has been allocated to management and supervisory training. For in-house training programmes 40 full-time and 20 part-time staff are available. This year, also, we have sent more than 40 officers to Oxford, Henley, Harvard and other centres of management education; and we have sponsored 145 officers on management courses at local institutions. There is thus no question of our limiting management training to on-the-job training, although it would be wrong to under-rate the value of such training.

As regards future management training, as Miss DUNN has pointed out, our first priority is the introduction of the civil service senior staff course which is designed to prepare mid-career officers for senior directorate level responsibilities. I note her view that the civil service needs a staff college. Our experience from the senior staff course will help us to decide on the need or otherwise for a more permanent arrangement which could well take the form of a staff college to provide all aspects of senior staff management training. I have also taken note of Miss DUNN's view that a staff college should never have permanent instructors. I am not sure that I agree with her entirely, and I doubt whether career academics would either, but I do agree that such a college should draw on the services of experienced administrators in both the public and private sectors.

Public Expenditure

I have now dealt, Sir, with Government organization and procedures and civil service training and wish to conclude with a few brief remarks on the question of the future. Before doing so, however, there are two subjects which have not been dealt with by earlier Official speakers and which I should, therefore, take up. Mr. CHAN Kam-chuen suggested that the maintenance of expenditure on capital works had made an important contribution to protecting the economy

from some of the effects of the world recession. This may be so but, in fact, the motivation behind that expenditure was not so much anti-cyclical as the need to sustain the momentum of investment in the economic and social infrastructure so necessary to Hong Kong's development.

Even when prudent budgetary policy demands that the growth rate of public expenditure be trimmed, the nature and importance of the Government's capital works programmes require that commitments entered into be adhered to despite any temporary difficulties to which the economy may be subject.

Overseas Public Relations

Mr. WONG PO-yan rightly reminded us of the importance of projecting an accurate image of Hong Kong abroad, particularly at a time when Hong Kong is featuring more frequently in foreign news media. I agree, and to this end the Government, the quasi-Government agencies and, where appropriate, private companies identified with Hong Kong, should all be seen to be working together through their respective offices overseas. With many different organizations involved, co-ordination is important. Earlier this year, therefore, I asked the Secretary for Home Affairs to establish an informal group of executive directors of those organizations which deal with trade, tourism and overseas public relations so that they could discuss with those concerned with similar matters in the Government ways and means of enhancing and protecting Hong Kong's image abroad. This group meets regularly and ensures that there is a regular flow of information between all those involved. At the same time, the heads of our overseas offices in London, Brussels and New York are developing closer working relationships with the overseas representatives of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourist Association.

It is equally important that overseas visitors develop a greater understanding of Hong Kong. To help achieve this, a Visits Office has recently been established within the Home Affairs Branch to co-ordinate arrangements and to assist in planning programmes for personalities of influence visiting Hong Kong. This Office complements the activities of the Director of Protocol's Office which is concerned with official visitors and the Government Information Services which looks after visiting journalists. The new office liaises closely with quasi-Government organizations and I am confident it will help such visitors to meet a wide cross section of people during their visits and be exposed to the many and varied aspects of Hong Kong life.

The Future

Many Members, Sir, raised the question of the future in their speeches, and I believe the various themes which emerged reflect accurately the feelings of the people of Hong Kong. Several Members, notably Mr. SWAINE and Mrs. CHOW, spoke of a deep attachment to the principles and systems on which Hong Kong's success has been built. Mr. Allen LEE eloquently expressed the justifiable pride felt by Hong Kong people in their achievements. Several other Members,

Mr. Stephen CHEONG, for instance, expressed their faith in the determination of Her Majesty's Government to negotiate acceptable arrangements for Hong Kong's future. But there was a note of anxiety too running through many speeches: Mr. S. L. CHEN spoke about the effect on Hong Kong of the bumper patches which we have encountered during the search for such acceptable arrangements; and Dr. Ho Kam-fai referred to a widespread sense of frustration at the lack of detailed knowledge about the course and conduct of the negotiations.

It will be evident from the scale and ambition of the plans outlined in your address, Sir, just how determined the Government is to Build for Further Prosperity. Clearly, in this context, it may be assumed that the search for acceptable arrangements for our future is being, and will be, pursued vigorously. It is impossible to make any useful prediction as to how long this search will take. The problems which have to be discussed and resolved are complex and the negotiations will, therefore, take time. As Mr. LOBO pointed out, intense speculation about the negotiations, whilst understandable, is not a fruitful pastime. Dr. HO Kam-fai called for periodic announcements to be made in order to reduce the level of uncertainty and speculation. I sympathize with the thought behind this suggestion. But we should encourage the press and the public to think of the negotiations as an on-going process and the reasons why they have to be confidential have been explained many times. Meanwhile, as this debate has amply demonstrated, there is plenty of work to be done and, as Mr. Allen LEE and Mr. F. K. HU have reminded us, we should get on with it.

Sir, I beg to move.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjournment and next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 November 1983.

Adjourned accordingly at fifteen minutes to four o'clock.