

# OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 8 January 1986

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 DAVID AKERS-JONES, 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, C.M.G., Q.C.

THE HONOURABLE LYDIA DUNN, C.B.E., J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE PETER C. WONG, 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 HU FA-KUANG, O.B.E., 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 DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-CHUEN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, O.B.E., J.P.

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

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

THE HONOURABLE MARIA TAM WAI-CHU, O.B.E., J.P.

DR. THE HONOURABLE HENRIETTA IP MAN-HING

THE HONOURABLE CHAN NAI-KEONG, C.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS

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 YEUNG PO-KWAN, C.P.M.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN WALTER CHAMBERS, J.P.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

THE HONOURABLE IAN FRANCIS CLUNY MACPHERSON, O.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT

THE HONOURABLE JACKIE CHAN CHAI-KEUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHENG HON-KWAN  
THE HONOURABLE HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, C.B.E., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE CHUNG PUI-LAM  
THE HONOURABLE THOMAS CLYDESDALE  
THE HONOURABLE HO SAI-CHU, M.B.E., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE HUI YIN-FAT  
THE HONOURABLE RICHARD LAI SUNG-LUNG  
DR. THE HONOURABLE CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING  
THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, M.B.E., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, Q.C., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE LEE YU-TAI  
THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE LIU LIT-FOR, J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE NGAI SHIU-KIT, O.B.E., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE PANG CHUN-HOI, M.B.E.  
THE HONOURABLE POON CHI-FAI  
PROF. THE HONOURABLE POON CHUNG-KWONG  
THE HONOURABLE HELMUT SOHMEN  
THE HONOURABLE SZETO WAH  
THE HONOURABLE TAI CHIN-WAH  
THE HONOURABLE MRS. ROSANNA TAM WONG YICK-MING  
THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG  
DR. THE HONOURABLE DANIEL TSE CHI-WAI, O.B.E., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WONG WANG-FAT  
THE HONOURABLE MICHELANGELO PAGLIARI, J.P.  
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER (*Acting*)  
THE HONOURABLE HAIDER HATIM TYEBJEE BARMA, J.P.  
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING (*Acting*)  
THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL SZE CHO-CHEUNG, J.P.  
SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY (*Acting*)

#### **ABSENT**

THE HONOURABLE JOHN JOSEPH SWAINE, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.  
THE HONOURABLE KIM CHAM YAU-SUM, J.P.  
DR. THE HONOURABLE CHIU HIN-KWONG

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
MR. LI WING

**Affirmation**

MR. H.H.T. BARMA made the Affirmation of Allegiance.

**Oath**

MR. M. SZE CHO-CHEUNG took the Oath of Allegiance.

**Papers**

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

*Subject* *L.N. NO.*

Subsidiary Legislation:

Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species)(Amendment of Schedules) Order 1985 .....	347
Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species) Ordinance Animals and Plants (Protection of Endangered Species)(Exemption) (Amendment) Order 1985 .....	348
Ferry Services Ordinance Ferry Services (Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company, Limited) (Determination of Fares)(Amendment)(No. 2) Order 1985.....	349
Stock Exchanges Unification Ordinance Stock Exchanges Unification (Extension of Period) Order 1985.....	350
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance Designation of Museums (Hong Kong Railway Museum) Order 1985.....	354
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance Public Health and Urban Services (Public Markets)(Designation and Amendment of Tenth Schedule)(No. 6) Order 1985.....	355
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance Public Health and Urban Services (Public Pleasure Grounds) (Amendment of Fourth Schedule)(No. 4) Order 1985.....	356
Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance Declaration of Markets in the New Territories (No. 2) .....	357
Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation By-Laws 1985 Kowloon-Canton Railway (Restricted Area)(No. 4) Notice 1985 .....	358

<i>Subject</i>	<i>L.N. No.</i>
Stock Exchanges Unification (Amendment) Ordinance 1985 Stock Exchanges Unification (Amendment) Ordinance 1985 (Commencement) (No. 2) Notice 1985 .....	359
Shipping and Port Control Ordinance Shipping and Port Control (Hong Kong-China and Macau Ferry Terminals)(Amendment)(No. 3) Regulations 1985.....	360
Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance Merchant Shipping (Safety) Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule) Order 1985 .....	361
Pensions Ordinance Pensionable Offices (Amendment)(No. 5) Order 1985 .....	362
Port Control (Cargo Working Areas) Ordinance Port Control (Public Water-Front)(No. 2) Order 1985.....	363
Electoral Provisions Ordinance Regional Council Constituencies (Number of Vacancies) Order 1985.....	364
Electoral Provisions Ordinance Urban Council Constituencies (Number of Vacancies) Order 1985 .....	365
Hawker (New Territories) Regulations Restriction of Hawking in Special Areas (New Territories) Notification 1985 .....	366
Merchant Shipping (Liner Conferences) Act 1982 Merchant Shipping (Liner Conferences) Act 1982 (Commencement) Notice 1985..	367
Shipping and Port Control (Hong Kong-China and Macau Ferry Terminals) Regulations Hong Kong-China Ferry Terminal Boundaries Order 1985.....	368
Shipping and Port Control (Hong Kong-China and Macau Ferry Terminals) Regulations Hong Kong-China Ferry Terminal Restricted Area Boundaries Notice 1985 .....	369
Registration of Persons Ordinance Registration of Persons (Application for New Identity Cards) Order 1986 .....	1/86
Sessional Papers 1985-86:	
No. 31—The Prince Philip Dental Hospital, Hong Kong—Report by the Board of Governors for the period 1 April 1984-31 March 1985.	

Other:

Letter dated 3 January 1986 from Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong to Members of the United Kingdom Parliament.

## Oral answers of questions

### Visitors from China

1. MR. CHAN YING-LUN asked: *Regarding visitors holding two-way permits from China, will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *the number of movements during the last three years;*
- (b) *the number of applications for permanent stay in Hong Kong;*
- (c) *the main reasons given; and*
- (d) *the number of successful applications?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the number of two-way permit holders arriving from China during the last three years was 30 738 in 1983, 45 898 in 1984 and 53 149 in 1985.

The number of applications received from two-way permit holders for permanent stay in Hong Kong was 1 161 in 1983, 794 in 1984 and 780 in 1985.

The main reasons given in their applications fall into two main groups. The first comprises statutory claims to right to land in Hong Kong under section 8(1) of the Immigration Ordinance. These include those who claim to have Hong Kong belonger status by virtue of being born in Hong Kong before 1 January 1983, by descent or by registration under relevant sections of the British Nationality Act 1981 and others who claim to have been ordinarily resident in Hong Kong for a continuous period of seven years. The second group is compassionate, such as the desire to join husbands, wives, parents, children or other relatives in Hong Kong.

The number of successful applications was 234 in 1983, 476 in 1984 and 545 in 1985. Virtually all were approved on the ground that the applicant had a statutory right to land in Hong Kong.

MR. LIU (in Cantonese): *Sir, could I ask what criteria the Government adopts to approve such applications and whether such criteria also apply to persons of other nationalities?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the criteria are those which I set out in the third part of my answer; they are claims that arise in relation to section 8(1) of the

Immigration Ordinance, and any person who can claim to come within one of the grounds I there set out would be entitled to land and hence would be entitled to stay.

MR. PETER C. WONG: *Sir, does the Attorney General have with him figures of successful applications on compassionate grounds?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: The answer is no, Sir, I do not but there are very very few indeed.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, there is agreement between the Governments of Hong Kong and China on the number of people entering Hong Kong with one-way permits. Is there an agreement on the number entering Hong Kong with two-way permits and if not, what are the reasons?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Oh, Sir, yes, the two-way permit scheme was established on the basis of an understanding with the Chinese authorities on 23 December 1982 and the understanding was initially that there should be 75 a day, and since then there has been an understanding for a gradual and controlled increase in the number of two-way permit holders. The present number is averaging about 140 per day and the situation is being closely monitored and is regularly reviewed by the Border Liaison Review Meetings which were attended by Government officials from both sides.

### **Repatriation of Vietnamese refugees**

2. MR. CHEONG-LEEN asked: *Will Government take steps through the appropriate channels to negotiate with the Vietnamese authorities to accept the repatriation of refugees coming to Hong Kong in the future?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the Hong Kong Government has no diplomatic status to negotiate with the Vietnamese Government. Such negotiations could only be initiated through Her Majesty's Government.

The general situation is that negotiations with the Vietnamese Government on voluntary repatriation are undertaken by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees because voluntary repatriation is regarded by the UNHCR as the most desirable solution to refugee problems.

However, an essential ingredient for voluntary repatriation is of course volunteers. Since 1975, out of the 110 000 refugees who have come to Hong Kong only 22 have asked to return to Vietnam. Only 14 of that number have actually returned. We and the UNHCR have been awaiting a reply from the Vietnamese Government since 1983 on whether it is prepared to accept the remaining eight.

So, Sir, this causes us to doubt whether voluntary repatriation on a large scale is likely to be feasible in the foreseeable future.

As regards involuntary repatriation, as stated by the Secretary for Security in this Council on 6 February 1985, if those arriving here were judged to be illegal travellers rather than genuine refugees, then the Hong Kong Government would consider it a viable option to return them to Vietnam in the same way that all illegal travellers are returned to their country of origin. However, we could only do this provided that the Government of Vietnam would accept them and provided that we could be satisfied that they would not be treated inhumanely on their return. To date the Vietnamese Government, with whom Her Majesty's Government maintains contact, has considered repatriation on a case by case basis, but has given no indication that it would be prepared to meet either of these provisos.

Sir, we do not think, therefore, that involuntary repatriation is feasible at present.

### **Meter parking for goods vehicles**

3. MR. POON CHI-FAI asked (in Cantonese): *As parking meters for lorries in industrial areas operate from 8 am to 12 midnight and the majority of factories close at 7 pm or 8 pm, most lorry drivers are forced to park their vehicles in the neighbourhood of their residence and as a result there is a situation where 'some car parking spaces are vacant while some drivers cannot find a place to park their cars'. In view of the above, will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *whether there are plans to tackle the series of problems resulting from such a situation e.g. parking of lorries in residential areas, illegal parking, wastage of car parking spaces in industrial area at night, failure to meet the objectives of town planning and public dissatisfaction with the Government and so on;*
- (b) *in deciding on the operational hours of lorry parking meters, has consideration been given to the possible occurrence of the above problems and whether district boards have been consulted on this matter; and*
- (c) *are there plans to improve the situation?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Sir, Mr. POON's concern is that in certain industrial areas the operating times of goods vehicles parking meters are causing problems. We are aware of this and the Transport Department has indeed already identified areas where meter parking times should be adjusted to operate from 8 am to 8 pm. These proposals have been considered and endorsed by the relevant district boards and the conversion programme in the areas concerned will start in about one month's time.

MR. POON CHI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, when will the conversion programme be scheduled to be completed?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: This is being done in a phased programme. Sir. The first area to be done will be the Kwun Tong industrial area which is thought to be the most problematic in terms of parking problems for goods vehicles. This will be followed closely, I hope, by San Po Kong, Sham Shui Po, Tai Kok Tsui and Hong Kong Island districts. Once the programme gets going, that is, once the necessary conversion plates are available and the necessary signs have been made, it can be really be done quickly, hopefully, in a matter of weeks rather than months, Sir.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: *Sir, is something more being done to tightly control the parking of lorries in residential areas?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, Sir, the principal way of helping with that problem is to provide more both on-street and off-street parking for goods vehicles where there is a demand and indeed as a result of the recently completed study on the trucking industry (the economics in the operation of the trucking industry), a number of recommendations have been made and are being implemented to provide additional goods vehicle parking spaces. The other factor, of course, is more enforcement by the police in areas where goods vehicle parking is available.

### **2-2-1 system in post-secondary college**

4. MR. LEE YU-TAI asked: *Only one post-secondary college is currently operating the 2-2-1 system (two years of advanced level study followed by two years of post-advanced level vocational course, both subvented by Government, and a further year without Government subvention) as recommended in the White Paper on Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education of October 1978. Has Government assessed the success or otherwise of this system (e.g. with regard to student performance, progression, recognition of qualification and graduate employment), and are there any plans to have it reviewed in relation to the current situation of the tertiary education sector?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, as stated in the 1978 White Paper on the Development of Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education, the 2-2-1 system was designed to extend the range of opportunities for Form V leavers wishing to take a two-year course at the sixth form level and to continue thereafter for two further years on a course which will equip them with a professional or other vocational qualification. The scheme would thus enable the approved post-secondary colleges to contribute towards the Government's



targets for sixth form and tertiary education, in return for financial assistance which would ensure that reasonable standards were maintained. The extra year following the two-year post-Form V courses is optional and receives no financial assistance from the Government. At present only one of the two registered post-secondary colleges is operating under a 2-2-1 system; the other has elected to continue to offer a four-year diploma course.

The Government is satisfied that the system is contributing to the objectives envisaged in the 1978 White Paper. In the current academic year the college involved is providing some 420 sixth form places and 680 places at the higher diploma levels; this makes a small number of contribution towards the Government's targets for sixth form and tertiary education. The performance of the students at both these levels is satisfactory. This is evidenced by the fact that 81 per cent of its sixth form students obtained passes in two or more subjects in the A-level examination in 1985 and that 95 per cent of its higher diploma graduates either obtained employment or proceeded on further studies within four months after graduation according to graduate employment surveys conducted by the college in 1983 and 1984.

While these facts indicate that the 2-2-1 system is working as envisaged, the Government will of course continue to keep the situation under review, particularly as regards the college's ability to meet the community's needs for courses to supplement what the public sector is providing, and the extent to which financial assistance should be provided to enable the college to do so.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, does Government know that the college has employed many highly qualified staff and is currently using them for relatively low level work i.e. the first two years of advanced level studies? Should the college be allowed to drop the advanced level programme in favour of expansion of higher level work so as to make better use of the manpower resources available?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: *Sir, the Government is aware of the staffing situation at the college. The college in question like all other institutions is, of course, free to employ staff as it considers it needs. The question of dropping the sixth form two-year course is one that we are not at present considering because there is still a shortfall in the provision of sixth form places territory-wide. Therefore, the college still has a legitimate and viable part to play in our education system at that level.*

DR. TSE: *Sir, the Secretary for Education and Manpower's reply only addresses indirectly the assessment of the standard of the courses. Does the Government intend to carry out direct and independent academic and professional assessments of these courses?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: *Yes, Sir, the Government did in fact commission a study of the college in question in 1981 by the Council for*

National Academic Awards of the United Kingdom. That assessment made certain recommendations regarding various aspects of the college's operation and it is the Government's intention to conduct a further study of that institution in approximately two years' time.

MR. SZETO (in Cantonese): *Sir, the Government is currently reviewing the situation now. When will this review be completed and when will a decision be made?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, I presume we are talking about the situation in respect of this particular institution. As I have said in response to the last supplementary, we intend to invite the United Kingdom Council for National Academic Awards to conduct a further review of that institution in approximately two years' time. The results of that will be known shortly thereafter and the Government's position will be made clear.

### **School curriculum**

5. MR. JACKIE CHAN asked (in Cantonese): *In the light of the fact that quite a number of students may not fit into the present nine-year compulsory education system by virtue of their lack of interest or lack of abilities, would Government inform this Council whether there are plans for provision of special training for these students?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: As I said during the policy debate last year, the answer to the problems of such students lies in trying to ensure that there is sufficient variety and support in our education system to cater for their needs.

As regards variety, the review of the curriculum is a continuing process and forms the basic task of the Education Department's Curriculum Development Committee. The objective must be to encourage, wherever possible, the inclusion of more technical and practical subjects alongside the traditional academic ones. In recent years we have seen a move in this direction within standard secondary schools and we have also seen the development of prevocational schools which place a particular emphasis on subjects of this kind. The development of this approach is bound to be a gradual one, however, not simply because of the limitation of facilities within individual schools but also because of the value attached by many parents to attainment in academic subjects.

A wide range of supporting services is provided by the Education Department to help those students who find it difficult to cope with the normal curriculum because of limited ability, inadequate motivation or personality or behavioural problems. These include such measures as provision of remedial teaching and provision of advisory services to schools, children and parents.

In short, the Government is very much aware of the need, during the nine year of compulsory attendance at school, to provide an education which meets the needs of all our young people and not simply those of the more academically inclined. We shall continue to pursue this objective.

MR. JACKIE CHAN (in Cantonese): *Sir, the Secretary for Education and Manpower said that there were many supporting services to help the students. What are the achievements and the effect of the services provided?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the range of such services, as I indicated in my basic reply, is a very wide one and the assessment of each individual part of those services is not something that is conducted as a matter of routine. However, many of the services relate to physical disabilities on the part of children and if assessing their effectiveness means the extent to which the children can continue to learn despite their disabilities, then the Education Department is quite satisfied with the effectiveness of those courses. For the majority, however, the services are more of a remedial nature: classes provided specifically for children with learning difficulties. These are usually of short-term duration. The children go there when they need assistance in particular subjects and then return to the mainstream of the school. The turnover of children in these classes is an indication, I think, of the success with which they meet the objective set.

MR. HUI: *Sir, is there any provision by the Government for secondary school students who've found themselves unsuitable for academic type of school to change over to pre-vocational schools; if not, why?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: There is very limited provision indeed, Sir, for this. As again was stated in the basic reply, it is our intention to include an element of vocational and technical education in most schools. As regards the why, I am afraid I would have to let the hon. Member have a written answer on that point, Sir. (Annex I)

### **Allocation of secondary school places**

6. MR. SZETO asked (in Cantonese): *The Education Department has consulted major school councils and education sponsoring bodies in relation to its recommendations on changing the existing method of allocating secondary school places. Since this concerns a major change in the education system, will the Government inform this Council why it did not publish the recommendations and consult other sectors of the community, particularly principals and teachers of secondary/primary schools and parents of students?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, the formal review of the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System was launched in 1980 with the appointment of a working party comprising both officials and unofficials representing a wide range of educational interests. There was extensive consultation both by the working party itself and by the Education Department following the publication of the working party's report in 1981. Comments on the report were invited at that stage from members of the public, teachers, heads of schools, school sponsoring bodies and other organisations interested in the matter.

Further action was deferred on the advice of the Board of Education, however, because it was thought that the impending review of the education system by the panel of visitors might have a major bearing on the SSPA System and that it would be prudent to await the outcome of that review.

In the event, the Llewellyn report did not offer any specific comments on the SSPA System itself, though it made some general observations on 'sorting and sifting' in the education system. It was concluded therefore that there should be no further delay in pressing ahead with certain proposed modifications and improvements to the system, all of which reflect the feedback received from the extensive earlier consultation, and take into account experience with operation of the system over the last six years.

Accordingly, Sir, in August 1985, a discussion paper proposing a number of improvements to the SSPA system was submitted to the Board of Education. The board endorsed the proposals and agreed that the major schools councils and associations should be further consulted on the proposals and that the board should be informed of their views before proceeding further.

Copies of the discussion paper setting out the proposals were therefore circulated to 12 major schools councils and schools associations in August 1985 for their views. They were also sent, following a request by the Secondary School Places Allocation Central Committee, to the chairman of 25 SSPA district committees, who represent all the schools participating in the system.

These views are now being collated and will be submitted to the Board of Education for its further consideration.

MR. SZETO (in Cantonese): *The present system of allocating secondary school places is based on the nine-year education system. So, should we have a review of the nine-year education system first and based on the result of this review then consider further improvements?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: The question of reviewing the nine-years compulsory free education was raised both in the debate on your opening speech of the session and in one question subsequently. On each case the Secretary for Education and Manpower cautioned any review of the basic nine-year free and compulsory education system that we have here because of its close association with the legal age of employment and the need to avoid the situation whereby children are in between school and employment because of different legal requirements. It is not our intention at the present time to review the nine years' free and compulsory education system.

MR. YEUNG: *Sir, does the Government agree that for important education issues like the SSPA system, it is advisable in future not to exclude sponsoring bodies of schools especially the major ones which are responsible for the operation of most schools in Hong Kong from obtaining discussion papers for the purpose of submitting views on the issues?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, on the specific issue to which the question related the sponsoring bodies were in fact consulted in the initial stages when the first proposals were made public. The present round of consultation which is taking place is based on those earlier proposals as modified in the light of comments received. The bodies being approached are those which the Board of Education considered would be most appropriate on this occasion. However, as I said in the main part of the reply, it is our intention when all these responses have been collated to go back to the Board of Education who may very well wish to extend the range of consultation at that stage.

MR. LEE YU-TAI (in Cantonese): *Mr. Chairman, does the Education Department consider making public the existing proposal and the data collected from the consultative process?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: I would presume, Sir, this would be a matter that the Board of Education would address itself to when it is in receipt of all that information.

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *Chairman, is there a Chinese translation of the proposal from the Education Department? If not, why not? And are we restricting the target of consultation if we don't have a Chinese translation?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: I must presume, Sir, in my lack of any information to the contrary, that a Chinese version was indeed produced at the time and circulated.

### **Water quality in Yung Shue Au**

7. DR. HO asked: *Will Government make a statement on the suitability of the waters in Yung Shue Au, Sai Kung, as a fish-culture zone and say what help the Government proposes to offer to the affected fish-farmers?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Sir, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department has, since 1982, periodically analysed water samples from the Yung Shue Au fish culture zone and the results in terms of salinity, oxygen and nutrients show that the water quality there is acceptable for fish culture. However, some 38 tonnes of fish were reported to have died in this zone in December 1985. Preliminary examination has shown that gill damage caused by parasitic infection was involved. It is thought that dietary imbalance, a sudden temperature drop and exceptionally stagnant tidal conditions were factors contributing to the mortality. Further investigation is in progress and, meanwhile, the fish farmers have been permitted to return temporarily to Yim Tin Tsai East, where many of them used to farm before they move to Yung Shue Au. No further assistance for these fish-farmers—other than the usual extension services—is planned at this stage.

DR. HO: *Sir, in view of the water and tidal conditions in Yung Shue Au, will the Government propose to designate new fish culture zones to resettle the affected fish farmers, and in designating new zones will the fish farmers be consulted as to location, water quality and transport problems?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Sir, I can assure Dr. Ho that in the event that the further investigations to which I referred show that Yung Shue Au is definitely unsuitable, consideration will be given to designating a more suitable area and that the fish farmers involved will be consulted on whatever is proposed.

### Street lighting in squatter areas

8. DR. LAM asked (in Cantonese): *Will Government inform this Council the total number of street lights erected in squatter areas since the Housing Department's Squatter Area Improvement Division was set up, and the amount of electricity charges paid for these street lights?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING: Sir, the provision of street lighting is one of the major types of projects carried out under the Squatter Area Improvements Programme to improve basic services in squatter areas. Since the introduction of the programme in April 1983, 590 street lights have been installed in 21 squatter areas at a cost of some \$4 million. Up to the end of December 1985, electricity charges paid for these lights have amounted to \$142,000; this works out approximately at \$240 per street light per annum.

DR. LAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, since the power bill makes up a very small percentage of the total cost of the installation of these street lights why is it that the Government has double standards when dealing with the installation of street lights i.e. the Government is only willing to pay for the charges for street lights erected through the squatter area improvement programmes but in respect of street lights erected by district boards in order to improve the conditions in squatter areas, their charges would have to be borne by members of the public? Secondly, will the Government consider altering the present improvement schemes for squatter areas to make them more flexible and to make them suitable to the individual needs of various squatter areas, especially with regard to street lights?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING: Sir, in my view the question of discrimination does not arise. Rather it is the ambit of the votes under which funds are provided for street lighting. For the squatter areas improvement programme, capital costs are met from the Government's Capital Work Reserve Fund whereas electricity charges and maintenance cost are met by the Housing Department from one of its recurrent subheads. On the other hand, my understanding is that funds for district boards provided under the Environmental Improvement and Community Involvement Projects vote cannot be used for recurrent items of expenditure. A practical solution to this problem would be for the Housing Department to take over the street lighting installed by district boards. In this respect, the Housing Department has initiated discussions with the City and New Territories Administration and Finance Branch. Once details have been worked out, district boards will be consulted. In response to Mr. LAM'S second point, there is scope for the Housing Department to accelerate its programme to

point, there is scope for the Housing Department to accelerate its programme to meet requests for street lighting from district boards and indeed if such proposals are made, the Housing Department will be happy to consider them.

MR. POON CHI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, residents living in squatter areas are people with low income and workers, and the living conditions are inferior to those in private buildings or public housing estates. They certainly need the attention and assistance of the relevant departments so I hope the Government will consider very seriously to foot the power bills regardless of whether the Government is going to pay the bill or the district board?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING: Sir, as I have indicated the practical solution would be for the Housing Department to take over the street lighting and if the district boards agreed, the Housing Department will certainly do so and be prepared to meet recurrent costs.

### **Postings in Civil Service**

9. DR. TSE asked: *In view of the increasing complexity of decisions involving public and community affairs and of the extensive consultation processes to which Government is committed before reaching such decisions, will Government now review its policy on the frequency of rotation of posts of Government officials so as to allow the officials enough time in their posts to follow through with their assignments and be responsible for the decisions they make before they are transferred to other posts?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, general grade officers such as Administrative Officers and Executive Officers are subject to transfer from time to time. This is necessary in order to give these officers a range of experience for their career developments. Experience has shown that it is in the public interest for officers destined for very senior appointments to have accumulated a wide knowledge of the Government in the course of their careers. Hence, changes in duties are necessary.

The Administration is, however, fully conscious of the fact that frequent moves of personnel is disruptive both to the departments affected as well as their contacts in both the public and private sector. With this in mind, the policy is generally to leave experienced middle-ranking officers in post for a period of between two and a half to three years. Indeed, more senior officers generally stay with a department or branch for considerably longer periods. On occasion, however, the duration is reluctantly reduced due to operational and other unforeseen reasons.



DR. TSE: *Sir, in view of the increased activities of the Civil Service in recent years, would the Government consider now the option of streaming its staff deployment and development?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Streaming is used, Sir, where appropriate but as I said in my main reply, experience has shown that it is in the public interest for officers destined for various senior appointments to have accumulated a wide knowledge of Government in the course of their careers. Of course there are notable exceptions, I think; I spent myself twenty years in the New Territories. *(Laughter)*

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, does the Chief Secretary intend to reshuffle the senior officers as frequently as his predecessor? (Laughter)*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Insofar as the exigencies of the service demand, Sir.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, will the Government review the current closed system of reserving senior positions for internal promotion and consider some degree of open recruitment so as to further upgrade the quality of the Civil Service?*

CHIEF SECRETARY: Well, there is certain amount of transferring from within the service from specialist departments to more generalist posts and so far as open recruitment of course is concerned there are again notable exceptions and I may perhaps look at the Financial Secretary on my left here as a notable exception.

## STATEMENT

### **The Prince Philip Dental Hospital Hong Kong—Report by the Board of Governors for the period 1 April 1984-31 March 1985**

MISS DUNN: Sir, tabled today is a report on the activities of The Prince Philip Dental Hospital together with a statement of accounts for the financial year from 1 April 1984 to 31 March 1985.

The year under review marked an important milestone in the development of the hospital. It saw for the first time a full complement of students with the 1980 intake entering its fifth year. Subsequently 68 graduates were awarded the Bachelor of Dental Surgery Degree of the University of Hong Kong and became the first locally trained qualified dentists to serve the community.

I am also able to report with great pleasure and pride that the United Kingdom General Dental Council has given recognition to our degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery. This of course gives our degree the international accreditation it fully deserves and reflects the very high standards of our facilities, our teaching staff and our students.

With the production of our first graduates, the faculty has commenced formal postgraduate courses. The first candidates for the masters degrees programme have already been enrolled. Research programmes on the dental health of the local community are also well underway.

Sir, the panel of external examiners who assessed our first BDS examinations were so impressed that they were moved to make such comments as 'Sincere congratulations are due to the Faculty of Dentistry for the very high standards that are to be found at The Prince Philip Dental Hospital and for the maturity, poise, understanding and skill displayed by the final year students'. Another examiner stated, 'These first students in Hong Kong were exceptionally good ... the candidates' knowledge of the subjects covered was, to say the least, impressive'. Yet another said 'The clinical facilities and the general standard of The Prince Philip Dental Hospital were outstanding and match or surpass anything ... experienced elsewhere'.

We have undoubtedly in The Prince Philip Dental Hospital an institution of which we can be proud. We owe much to the dedication of the faculty and the Board of Governors to whom I should like to express my grateful thanks. I am sure that Hong Kong will make the best possible use of our talented young graduates.

## **Government Business**

### **First Reading of Bills**

#### **RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985**

#### **FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1985**

#### **HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985**

*Bills read the First time and ordered to be set down for Second Reading pursuant to Standing Order 41(3).*

### **Second Reading of Bills**

#### **RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985**

FINANCIAL SECRETARY moved the Second Reading of: 'A Bill to amend the Rating Ordinance'.

He said: Sir, the Rating (Amendment) Bill now before Members proposes changes in the method of calculating rates payable to the Urban Council and provides for Regional Council rates.

Rates payable to the Urban Council are currently calculated by applying the Urban Council rates percentage to the rateable value of tenements in the urban area. Reductions in the total amount of rates payable as a result of rate relief, water concessions and refunds are borne entirely by general rates, including reductions attributable to Urban Council rates. In accordance with the Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements with the council, the Government also pays the council annual grants to cover the first year cost of salary adjustments. The reason for this is that the Government is unable to give the council sufficient notice of the extent of such adjustments for the council to make provision for them in its Budget.

There are two obvious disadvantages in these arrangements—

- (a) First, the Urban Council rates percentage does not reflect the resource requirements of the council, as part of these requirements are met by the general taxpayer rather than the Urban Council ratepayer. The value of this contribution by the general taxpayer is estimated to be \$150 million in 1986-87, or the equivalent of an increase of 0.3-0.5 per cent in the council rates percentage; and
- (b) Second, the council does not share with the Government the annual increase in rate yield during a period of rate relief as the incidence of relief lessens. This increase in yield would help to meet the council's need for additional revenue from year to year as a result of normal growth and inflation.

Subject to the agreement of this Council I therefore proposed, and the Urban Council has agreed, that their rate should in future bear its share of reductions in the total amount of rates payable, and that the council should include a sum for additional commitments within its Budgets, thus removing the need for the Government to make annual salary grants. Similar arrangements will also apply to the Regional Council.

Clause 5 of the Bill gives effect to the new payment method by providing that with effect from 1 April 1986 the Urban Council and the Regional Council be paid rates actually collected on their behalf. This means that net rates actually collected in their respective areas as defined in the District Board Ordinance will be shared between the councils and the Government in accordance with their respective rates percentages.

Under existing arrangements, arrears and refunds of rates revenue received or paid after 1 April 1986 in respect of periods before that date should be borne entirely by general rates. These receipts and payments are estimated to amount to \$120 million in 1986-87 and 1987-88. In view of the large number of transactions involved it is proposed for administrative simplicity that they be

shared between the Government and the two councils in accordance with the new payment arrangements. This will result in an estimated net amount of \$50 million in the form of rates revenue being paid in the next two years to the two councils which would otherwise have accrued to Government. Similar transitional arrangements will apply after future adjustments in the rates percentages.

To complete the picture, I will now explain the rates percentages which I will later be proposing to meet the reasonable financial needs of the two councils in 1986-87 and 1987-88. You will appreciate that a resolution prescribing them can only be moved in this Council after the Bill has been enacted.

The Urban Council's loss of revenue as a result of the withdrawal of the salary grant and their rate bearing its share of reductions in total rates payable is estimated to be \$150 million in 1986-87. I propose that this loss be made up by an increase in the Urban Council rates percentage of 0.5 per cent offset by a reduction of the same amount in the general rates percentage in the Urban Council area. This will ensure that the new payment arrangements do not result in an increase in the total rates payable by ratepayers.

The Urban Council has sought a further increase in rates revenue to meet normal growth and inflation, indicating that their requirements are for total rates revenue of \$1,690 million in 1986-87 and \$1,772 million in 1987-88. After close examination I propose that the percentage prescribed for Urban Council rates should be increased by a further 0.5 per cent in order to provide the Council with yields of this order. This will result in a total rates percentage in the Urban Council area of 6 per cent, made up of Urban Council rates of 3.5 per cent and general rates of 2.5 per cent. This is an increase of 0.5 per cent on the existing total rates percentage of 5.5 per cent, which is made up of Urban Council rates of 2.5 per cent and general rates of 3 per cent. These proposals are made with the agreement of the council. The proposed rates percentages are projected to provide the council with an increase in total revenue of 15 per cent in 1986-87 over the council's revised estimates for 1985-86, after taking into account the council's revised deficit for the current year, and a further growth of 9.9 per cent in 1987-88. Members are fully aware, I believe, of the council's budgetary difficulties and its achievements.

I turn now to the Provisional Regional Council. It has estimated the new Regional Council's financial requirements as \$744 million in 1986-87 and as \$880 million in 1987-88, after taking into account revenue from fees and charges. The projected yield from the current New Territories rates of 5.5 per cent of \$746 million and \$827 million in these two years is clearly insufficient to meet these requirements. I therefore propose that the rates percentage in the Regional Council area also be increased by 0.5 per cent to 6 per cent and that the Regional Council should receive all revenue from the increased rates percentage. This proposal has their agreement. It is a felicitous outcome that the rates percentage should be the same in both council areas. If the proposed

increase in the rates percentage is approved, the Regional Council is expected to have surpluses of \$42 million in 1986-87 and \$10 million in 1987-88. These are insufficient to meet the need for financial reserves estimated to be \$143 million in 1986-87 rising to \$166 million in 1987-88. I therefore also propose that the Government should, subject to Finance Committee approval, make a one-off setting up grant to the Regional Council of \$100 million in 1986-87.

Mr. CHEUNG Yan-lung has sought in this Council an understanding that the Government will share the burden of capital works expenditure until the Regional Council is in a position to take it over itself. The Government has agreed to complete at its expense all those capital works projects falling within the council's area of responsibility, which are commenced by 31 March 1988. The position thereafter will have to be reviewed during the course of 1987-88. In the meantime, I can assure Mr. CHEUNG that the Regional Council's financial needs will continue to be considered by Government with sympathy.

The proposed increase of 0.5 per cent in the total rates percentage in both the Urban Council and the Regional Council areas is not expected to cause hardship to ratepayers. We have conducted a careful study of what is involved. Public housing tenants will on average face increases of \$1.70 to \$6.40 per month in 1987-88 i.e. there will be no increase in 1986-87. For ratepayers of small domestic units with a net area of less than 100 square metres, the average increase will be about \$10 and \$13 per month in 1986-87 and 1987-88 respectively. For large domestic units of over 100 square metres, the average increase will be about \$56 per month for the two years.

I now turn to other minor amendments proposed in the Bill.

Clause 7 exempts from assessment to rates tenements owned and occupied by the Regional Council for public purposes, in the same manner as is already provided for in the case of the Urban Council.

Clause 9 extends the authority to sign agreements to alter valuation lists and notices of decision to Rating and Valuation Surveyors. This will require an increase in the number of officers in the Rating Division so authorised from 20 to 80. It is necessary in order to cope with the large number of proposals from ratepayers particularly in a revaluation year.

Clause 10 provides that rates payable may be rounded down to the nearest dollar and the balance carried forward to payment for the next quarter. This will facilitate payment of rates in cash and is in line with the practice adopted by the Water Authority and most public utilities.

I would like to conclude, Sir, by thanking both councils and in particular both chairmen for their helpful and responsible approach to Finance Branch's tender loving care.

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.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### **FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1985**

ATTORNEY GENERAL moved the Second Reading of:—'A bill to amend the Fire Services Ordinance'.

He said:—Sir, I move that the Fire Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1985 be read the Second time.

This Bill has three objectives.

*First*, the Bill seeks to empower the Governor or the Director of Fire Services to order any officer or member of the Fire Services Department to compensate the Government for any loss or damage to Government property which that individual may have caused. At present, it may only be ordered as a form of punishment where an officer or member has been found guilty of an offence against discipline. The amount of compensation that may be ordered is to be limited to one month's salary. Payment of compensation may be ordered only where the loss or damage is a direct result of the neglect or fault of the person concerned. The Bill will bring the Fire Services Ordinance into line with the Police Force Ordinance to make it possible to order compensation to be paid in addition to or instead of a punishment.

As presently drafted, clause 6 of the Bill provides a statutory right of appeal against any compensation order, whether made by the Governor or the Director. However, Sir, since the Bill was gazetted it has been pointed out that the provision of a statutory right of appeal against an order of the Governor would be inappropriate. Accordingly I shall be moving an amendment in Committee to delete this provision.

*Second*, in recognition of the contribution that civilians make as members of the Fire Services, the Bill seeks to extend to them the benefits of the Fire Services Department Welfare Fund which include club facilities, hardship grants to officers and families, loans for welfare purposes, and social activities.

*Third*, the Bill seeks to amend the Seventh Schedule of the Fire Services Ordinance as a consequence of recent changes in the civilian establishment.

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.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985**

SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY moved the Second Reading of: 'A Bill to amend the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Ordinance'.

He said: Sir, I move that the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (Amendment) Bill 1985 be read the Second time.

The primary purpose of this Bill is to provide for representation of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, on the Trade Development Council.

When the TDC was created in 1966 provision was included for the appropriate representation on its council of the relevant major organisations concerned with Hong Kong's external trade and its overseas image. The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, being then almost wholly concerned with imports from China did not seek such representation at that time.

In recent years this position has altered materially, not only with the Joint Declaration on the question of Hong Kong, but especially with the spectacular growth of Hong Kong's two-way trade with China and the re-emergence of our entrepot trade. Accordingly, a new dimension to the activities of the TDC has been created, including its plans to open an office in Beijing this year. Thus, with the inclusion of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong, as a functional constituency of this Council under the Legislative Council (Electoral Provisions) Ordinance 1985, the Government proposed, and the TDC unanimously agreed, that the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce should be represented on the TDC in the same way as the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries and the Chinese Manufacturers' Association. The Bill before Council provides for this.

The opportunity is also taken to extend the TDC's power to delegate their authority to the Executive Director, or to a committee, to appoint staff up to the level of senior manager: appointments of directorate staff must still come before the full council. Of course, the council need not make any delegation unless it wishes to, and even where a power has been delegated the council may choose to exercise that power direct in any appropriate case.

The other changes are to bring a provision in the principal Ordinance into line with nomenclature in the Hong Kong Association of Banks Ordinance (Chapter 364), and for the quorum for meetings, and the number of members who may together require the convening of a meeting, to reflect the enlarged membership of the Trade Development Council.

Sir, I move the debate on this motion be now adjourned.

*Motion made. That the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill be adjourned.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### **Unofficial Member's Motion**

#### **The White Paper on the Draft Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order 1986**

MISS LYDIA DUNN moved the following motion: This Council requests the Hong Kong Government to convey to the British Government the deep concern expressed in this Council about the erosion of the rights of Hong Kong British Dependent Territories Citizens and to urge upon the British Government the implementation of the detailed proposals contained in the letter dated the 3 January 1986 addressed by the Unofficial Members of this Council to Members of the British Parliament and tabled in this Council today.

She said: Sir, I move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

This motion reflects the anxieties expressed in this Council on the matter of the White Paper on the Draft Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order 1986.

The substance of Unofficial Members' views is by now well known both here in Hong Kong and in Westminster. I have sent a letter to all Members of both Houses of Parliament, which include of course all Members of the British Government, expressing our detailed views. For the record I am tabling a copy of this letter.

Today I wish to make only two points. The first is that the views of the Unofficial Members on this matter are unanimous.

Unanimity among Members in historic times of an entirely appointed Council was the rule rather than the exception. Unanimity among Members of an entirely elected body is rare. In our Council I am glad to say that unanimity is neither so rare as to be astonishing nor so common as to be unremarkable. On really important issues that affect fundamentally the lives of Hong Kong people we are able to reach agreement among a diverse gathering of representatives of the people.

On the matter of nationality we are unanimous. Our views have received comprehensive support in the community since they were published. It would be irresponsible for the British Government to ignore them.

The second point I wish to make is that the action we ask to be taken is action that can be taken by the British Government alone and if it is not taken responsibility will rest solely with the British Government.



This is nothing to do with the Joint Declaration. No prolonged negotiations with foreign governments are required. The decisions and administrative steps that we want taken are for the British Government to take. They affect the rights and privileges enjoyed by British nationals. But simply we ask the British Government:

- (a) to allow British nationals holding British National (Overseas) passports to visit Britain freely and to make this right clear in the passports;
- (b) to make full British citizens those British nationals who are of non-Chinese descent; and
- (c) to make full British citizens those few remaining British nationals in Hong Kong who fought for the defence of British territory.

We consider that these modest requests are the very least the people of Hong Kong can expect to see satisfied after nearly a century and a half of British rule. They are totally within the gift of the British Government. The Hong Kong Government has a duty, as this motion makes clear, to convey to the British Government the strength of feeling both in this Council and among the people of Hong Kong. It will do their authority in this community no good if it falls on deaf ears. We can only ask in this way because we are not represented in Parliament. If our requests are rejected, it will add to the profound resentment felt by many of Britain's most loyal subjects who will believe their interest have been betrayed and it will be seen by people around the world as a mean and unworthy denial of the just claims of Britain's most vulnerable and deserving nationals.

Sir, I beg to move.

CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir, in her letter to Members of both Houses of Parliament written on behalf of all the Unofficial Members, and in what she has said this afternoon in moving this motion, Miss DUNN has conveyed the strong and unanimous feelings of the Unofficial Members of this Council and the people of Hong Kong on three issues concerning the draft Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order 1986.

The Administration fully understands the thrust of the arguments advanced in support of these issues and the depth of feeling surrounding them. The Official Members of this Council this afternoon will therefore support the motion. I can also assure Members that the concern they have expressed will be conveyed to Her Majesty's Government. Nevertheless, Sir, as I am sure Members will recognise, the issues themselves raise a number of difficult questions of principle for Her Majesty's Government, and these will require further detailed consideration.

Sir, I support the motion.

MISS DUNN: Sir, my colleagues and I are glad that Official Members will vote for this motion so that it will have the unanimous support of the whole of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. We welcome the assurance that our representations will be given serious and detailed consideration by Her Majesty's Government. I am sure that Members will wish to have a report on the progress of this deliberation. We hope this will be possible at the next meeting. Whatever the difficulties, I am sure that where there is a will, there is a way. Nothing that we ask is impossible. It all lies in the gift of the British Government.

*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 pm on 15 January 1986.

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes to Four o'clock.*

*Note:* The short titles of motion/bills listed in the Hansard Report have been translated into Chinese for information and guidance only; they do not have authoritative effect in Chinese.

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## WRITTEN ANSWER

### Annex I

#### **Written answer by Secretary for Education and Manpower to Mr. HUI Yin-fat's supplementary question to Question 5.**

The position is that it is possible in principle for a child to transfer from one type of school to another, although there are certain difficulties in practice. Availability of places may be one, but this should not be insuperable in individual cases. Assuming that a place can be found, a child transferring from a grammar school, for example, may have difficulty in adapting to a different curriculum if he or she has not acquired the basic skills and knowledge in the non-academic subjects. There is also the fact that coverage of the basic academic subjects is not greatly different in grammar and technical schools, so that similar problems may be encountered after the transfer.

A child who transfers may not therefore be very much better off and may indeed suffer from the additional problems arising from disruption and the need to come to terms with a new curriculum.

For these reasons, a change of school is usually regarded as a last resort. Where children are found to be unable to cope with their work, the first concern is to ascertain what the reasons for this are. This enables help to be given, as appropriate, through a range of remedial and advisory services, including placement in resource teaching centres and adjustment units.

In short, therefore, transfer between different types of school is possible, but this would be advisable only after very careful assessment of a particular child's situation and careful consideration of all the means available to assist him or her.