

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 8 October 1992

The Council met at half-past Two o'clock

PRESENT

THE PRESIDENT

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER FRANCIS PATTEN

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

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

THE CHIEF SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID ROBERT FORD, K.B.E., L.V.O., J.P.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

THE HONOURABLE NATHANIEL WILLIAM HAMISH MACLEOD, C.B.E., J.P.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE HONOURABLE JEREMY FELL MATHEWS, C.M.G., J.P.

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

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

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

THE HONOURABLE HUI YIN-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, Q.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE PANG CHUN-HOI, M.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE SZETO WAH

THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW WONG WANG-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD HO SING-TIN, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE RONALD JOSEPH ARCULLI, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN GILBERT BARROW, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS PEGGY LAM, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WAH-SUM, O.B.E., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LEONG CHE-HUNG, O.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES DAVID McGREGOR, O.B.E., I.S.O., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS ELSIE TU, C.B.E.

THE HONOURABLE PETER WONG HONG-YUEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT CHENG HOI-CHUEN

THE HONOURABLE MOSES CHENG MO-CHI

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

REV THE HONOURABLE FUNG CHI-WOOD

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL HO MUN-KA

DR THE HONOURABLE HUANG CHEN-YA

THE HONOURABLE SIMON IP SIK-ON, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LAM KUI-CHUN

DR THE HONOURABLE CONRAD LAM KUI-SHING

THE HONOURABLE LAU CHIN-SHEK

THE HONOURABLE MISS EMILY LAU WAI-HING

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

THE HONOURABLE GILBERT LEUNG KAM-HO

THE HONOURABLE ERIC LI KA-CHEUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING

THE HONOURABLE MAN SAI-CHEONG

THE HONOURABLE STEVEN POON KWOK-LIM

THE HONOURABLE HENRY TANG YING-YEN, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TIK CHI-YUEN

DR THE HONOURABLE SAMUEL WONG PING-WAI, M.B.E., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PHILIP WONG YU-HONG

DR THE HONOURABLE YEUNG SUM

THE HONOURABLE HOWARD YOUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN

DR THE HONOURABLE TANG SIU-TONG, J.P.

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE NGAI SHIU-KIT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, O.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MARVIN CHEUNG KIN-TUNG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE

THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY HA WING-HO, M.B.E., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR LAW KAM-SANG

THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, can I say first of all how grateful I am to the Council for making this session possible. I realize that we are, all of us, in uncharted waters, not least your President who is more used on these occasions to being down there rather than up here. But I do want to find a way in which we can have regular exchanges in which you can, on a regular basis, ask me questions about the policies and programme of the executive. But we may need to be a little charitable with one another and a little flexible, until we have worked out arrangements which are suitable all round.

I have absolutely no fixed prejudice or opinion about how we should conduct these sessions, except to say this, which I hope Honourable Members will not find too sanctimonious: I do hope that we can develop a style of dialogue which is not too confrontational. I think this should be a chance for explanation and an exchange of views rather than for partisan point-scoring. I do not pretend on this occasion to bring with me, as something to follow, the example of Westminster. We might do better to set our own standards and give a better example.

There is one other general point that I would like to make at the outset before putting myself in the hands of the Council. Some people have said to me in the last three months that the Legislative Council used to work in a very co-operative way and that that sort of co-operation between Members and between Members and the executive would be impossible now that a majority of the Legislative Council was elected. I must say that I do not believe for a moment that that should be the case. I think it is imperative that we demonstrate that a government which is accountable to a legislature like this is more likely rather than less likely to promote stability and prosperity and I am sure that we will be able to develop a way of exchanging views which enables us to work more closely together rather than to open up divisions between us. That is certainly going to be my approach to my relationship with this Council which will necessarily and properly be rather different from the relationship which my predecessors have had.

I am now in the Council's hands about how to answer questions on my Legislative Council address yesterday. I guess that we could do no better than take questions for an hour and a half in the order in which hands rise, and I will try to be fair. It is not prejudice and not sexism if I say that the first hand that rose was that of Miss Emily LAU.

MISS EMILY LAU: *Governor — I think I would address you as Governor rather than Mr President — in your agenda for Hong Kong your goal is formidably simple, that is, to safeguard Hong Kong's way of life. You outline four key principles which you say if we uphold them we shall secure a community whose freedoms and way of life will be protected. Governor, after reading these 43 pages, I fail to see a blueprint which will give us Hong Kong people the confidence that we will achieve this objective. Of course I am sure you know I am referring to the development of democracy at the very highest*

level in government, that is to say, the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, in respect of which your proposals have made us all very upset. And also on the protection of human rights, Governor, I could not find words to that effect in this agenda. I do not know whether they are dirty words to the Hong Kong Administration. You also mention three sets of laws that you will change, which I welcome: the Public Order Ordinance, the abolition of the death penalty, and a look at laws which may infringe press freedom. But what about other laws, Governor? So will you please tell us how you intend to construct a free and democratic future for the people of Hong Kong by laying very firm foundation in an area of democracy at the very high level to provide firm protection and safeguards for human rights?

THE GOVERNOR: I agree that it is probably better to address me as Governor rather than Mr President, particularly at this point in the American political calendar. Unlike Mr PEROT, I have not yet declared. I am sorry that in all 43 pages of my address, of the agenda that I sketched out, you failed to find anything which convinced you of my purpose and my conviction about the securing of Hong Kong's way of life before and after 1997. Let me, at the risk of repetition, say what I was trying to do.

I was trying to find a point of balance in the community. I notice that this morning some have described me as too cautious, cautious to a fault; others have described me — others who are not unknown for their rhetorical excesses from time to time — as being reckless. I do not necessarily believe it is always true that if you have opposite adjectives used about what you are doing you must be coming sensibly through the middle, but I do believe on this occasion that the balance I have put forward is just about right. As I understand the aspirations of people in Hong Kong, they do want more democracy. Every time they have had the opportunity of declaring their position that is what they have said. But I also think that they want more democracy which they believe will last and many of them, as I know from a phone-in programme that I took part in this morning, define that as democratic developments which are consistent with Hong Kong's mini constitution after 1997, that is, the Basic Law.

So what I attempted to do yesterday was this: to say, if it is China's position that there cannot be any increase in directly elected seats because that would contravene the Basic Law, then let us look at other things which would broaden democracy and which are entirely consistent with the Basic Law. I think that is a coherent package, I think that is a coherent set of proposals and one which I am prepared to defend in this Council, one which I am prepared to defend and argue for in Peking.

But let me make one very important point about proposals for taking democracy forward. There will come a point when this Council will have to give its decision, when this Council will have to make its own mind up on how we secure a democracy for the future, because I will have to come to this Council with legislation about 1994 and 1995 and this Council will have to face

difficult and demanding decisions, taking account of what is said in Peking, taking account of what is said in London, and taking account of what is said on the streets of Hong Kong. I think that the proposals I have put forward are reasonable and I hope that is the view of this Council and of the people of Hong Kong. I hope that is the view of Peking in due course, though maybe I will have some explaining and arguments to do first.

On human rights, I think that the Bill of Rights was an important development in our attempt to safeguard civil liberties. I think it was an important step forward taken by the Government under my predecessor, an important step forward to ensure the implementation of the Joint Declaration, and we have to take account of it in a number of areas of public policy, not least, as I said yesterday, in a number of Ordinances that have an effect on public order and freedom of speech, on both of which we are undertaking, as the Honourable Member will know, a review.

So while I respect the Honourable Member's position and know that it is, as ever, argued with elegance and fire, I very much hope that somewhere between her caution and others' recklessness, or the other way round, I will be judged to have got the point of balance right.

MR PETER WONG: Mr Governor, you have adopted a traditional and very successful formula, that government spending must follow and not outpace economic growth. This has been taken to mean that growth in government expenditure should not outstrip GDP growth. The five-year medium-term forecast already shows that government expenditure will be creeping up from about 17% of GDP to above 20%. Your proposals will add about 5% per year or roughly 1% extra of GDP growth. So, are you not breaking your own rules about the level of government expenditure?

THE GOVERNOR: No, I think if you look at the figures I announced yesterday you will see very clearly that our public expenditure programmes will grow by slightly less than the predicted rate of increase in GDP growth. Can I say a further word about the question of funding our programmes — the question of whether or not we have been extravagant — because it is an important one particularly for this Honourable Council which will have to look at our spending programmes in detail and which will have an opportunity on Saturday of discussing these matters with the three Secretaries principally concerned. Last year, I am advised, when the Financial Secretary put forward his Budget he was vigorously attacked for being far too conservative in his views on public finance. This year, after my proposals yesterday, there are some who are criticizing us for being too extravagant, though I happen to suspect within about 24 hours normal service will be resumed and once again we will be criticized for not spending quite enough on individual programmes. The truth is that nothing has changed between the Financial Secretary's Budget and what I said yesterday. Certainly nothing has changed in relation to our views on prudential

public expenditure. We are able to meet a number of the targets which I set out yesterday because of the use of the windfall which I described. The sounder the revenues, the greater the increase in revenue flows we are getting this year, which, had I not chosen in effect to capitalize it, would have meant that our surplus at the end of the year would have been not \$7.5 billion but at least \$13.5 billion. I think that \$7.5 billion is a perfectly adequate surplus for this community and, if finance ministers in Europe and North America could point to anything like that at the moment, they would be extremely pleased. I think the way we have used that surplus this year is extremely sensible. I want to make this point clear as well: nothing that we announced yesterday will have an effect on our forecast reserves and surpluses for the future. We will continue to run a substantial surplus. We will continue to run substantial reserves and we will need to do so in order to provide us with a cushion against any economic uncertainty in the years ahead. So we are financing our programmes prudently. There is no question of us needing to raise taxes in order to finance the programmes that I announced. What would be dangerous would be, as some Chinese officials have suggested we should do in relation to funding the airport, to use our reserves in 1997 to cut into those in order to finance the airport. That really would be dangerous and I am not going to do it.

DR LEONG CHE-HUNG: *Your address has concentrated on the development of the Legislative Council as a means of future constitutional development. Could you inform this Council what role, or change in role, if any, the future Executive Council will take? And similarly, since your arrival in Hong Kong you have not infrequently sought the views of political parties; yet in your address very little is mentioned of the ways you are going to stimulate or encourage plans to develop political parties in Hong Kong as a vehicle for promoting democracy.*

THE GOVERNOR: I am sure the Honourable Member will forgive me if I say that much of my more recent career has been spent in trying to develop political parties and I thought when I came to Hong Kong I might have escaped that. I do not think, as Governor of Hong Kong trying to stand above party politics, that I can involve myself in the attempt to develop institutional arrangements to give expression to individual or collective points of view; that after all is what a political party is. But what I do believe is that we should have as vigorous public debate as possible. I happen to think that politics is an honourable adventure rather than something one should apologize for being involved in. Many people find that they can pursue their political ideas as independents; others find that they want to share their political ideas, even accommodate some of their political ideas by working as part of a team or a party. I just hope that we can continue to see the vigorous political debate that has started in Hong Kong and that we can show the rest of the world and demonstrate to the community that it is perfectly possible to have vigorous public debate and good government, indeed, that good government is more likely where you have vigorous public debate. Where chief executives like me have to come and

explain their decisions to legislators, they are more likely to think about the decisions in the first place.

On the role of the Executive Council, the Executive Council will continue to have the role set out in the Royal Instructions and Letters Patent. It will help me make decisions about strategy and policy in Hong Kong and its Members will act as, I hope, wise and impartial advisers. But I must, perhaps, add this point: I do think that the Executive Council is probably most useful where it is able to contribute to strategic discussion and strategic decisions and does not get too involved in the minutiae of government. I suspect that that would be the judgment of many past as well as present Members of the Executive Council and it is certainly the way that I intend to try to guide the Executive Council in the future.

MR TIK CHI-YUEN (in Cantonese): *Mr Governor, Meeting Point welcome your proposals on democratic development in your Policy Address, although the proposals still fall short of our expectation. But we learnt yesterday that the Chinese side would not accept them. Are you confident that you can convince the Chinese side to accept your proposals in the forthcoming negotiations?*

THE GOVERNOR: Human history is full of examples of people who were convinced they could do things and then announced that, and then fell, alas, at the first attempt. So I cannot arrogantly express any such conviction. What I can express is a hope that I can demonstrate to our colleagues in Peking that the proposals I have put forward are good for the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong and, therefore, good for the relationship between Hong Kong and China. I can do that as vigorously as possible. What I dare say I can also say is: if not these proposals, then what? I do not make these proposals out of the blue. I do not make these proposals just because it is my initiative. I make these proposals because the Governor of Hong Kong and the Government of Hong Kong have to come forward with proposals about what to do about the Election Committee in 1995, have to come forward with proposals about functional constituencies in 1995, have to come forward with proposals about electoral arrangements for directly elected seats in 1995. I have to put forward proposals. If others think that I have got those proposals wrong, then they should say what proposals they would offer instead. It is very difficult to have a dialogue if what happens is that the Governor of Hong Kong comes forward with proposals, whether on this matter or on the airport, is then told that those proposals are not any good, returns to base and then is expected presumably to set off with further proposals to see if those are all right. And if there are members of the community, if there are members of this legislature, if there are people elsewhere who think that my proposals are wrong, then I think it is incumbent upon them to say where they would change them and what they would put in their place. That is the way we can have a rational, sensible exchange and dialogue and I am extremely keen to have a rational, sensible and open dialogue with officials in

Peking. It does need to be open; people in Hong Kong do need to know what we are discussing about their future.

MR LAU CHIN-SHEK (in Cantonese): *Mr Governor, in your Policy Address you mentioned that a substantial amount of resources is going to be injected into programmes on social welfare and those concerning people's livelihood. But how many are in fact new proposals, and to what extent the lower income group will be benefited? There is no mention in your speech of labour protection and industrial safety. You did promise to increase the spending on retraining of our workforce to the tune of \$300 million to offer retraining for more than 15 000 workers in the coming two to three years. However, are you aware that each year nearly 70 000 manufacturing workers are in need of changing jobs? By 1996, 85 000 workers whose educational level is below junior secondary will have difficulty in securing jobs because of supply and demand. It is obvious that your 15 000 places will be just a drop in the ocean. On the other hand, you wish to pursue the importation of labour. The scheme will thwart the efforts of those who have been retrained to land jobs, and make changing jobs difficult. Have you considered more practical ways to resolve local workers' problems in seeking employment and changing jobs, such as scrapping the labour importation scheme, allocating more funds to the retraining programme and requiring employers to give priority to retrained workers when it comes to employment?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think normal service has been resumed even more rapidly than I expected. Following Mr WONG's suggestion that maybe I was spending too much, the Honourable Member has made the point very vigorously that I am not spending enough. That is a political debate and discussion to which I am perhaps more accustomed than some others in which I have begun to take part. The Honourable Member asks which of our proposals are new and I think the best way I can respond is to say this: in both the White Paper on Social Welfare, for instance, and the Green Paper on Rehabilitation, we set out aspirations for social development in the community, but we set out those aspirations without necessarily making it clear that we were going to be able to pay in order to meet a number of those aspirations. What I was saying yesterday is those are the key aspirations. There are ones which the community is going to be able to afford and going to be able to afford without being — to coin a phrase — reckless in the way we run our public finances.

Another area which is new is the commitment that we have given on retraining. We are using \$300 million from the windfall this year to enhance the funds which are going into the existing scheme largely, as you know, as a result of the levy on those who employ imported labour. What our \$300 million will do is to increase the number who are retrained by 15 000. We already have those who are being retrained under existing arrangements, so that 15 000 is a new additional commitment. The Honourable Member is entirely right to say that a problem which we need to address adequately is the

encouragement to employers to use the skills of those who are retrained. That is imperative if we are going to be able to use our labour force in the best possible way during a period when it is bound to be under pressure. There are, I think, at the moment, 70 000 published vacancies and a level of unemployment which, in international terms, is extremely low. So retraining is a crucial element in removing supply side blockages, making our economy more efficient and, therefore, among other things, making it more competitive and dealing with inflation. I was very impressed by the retraining which I saw at the Vocational Training Centre in Kowloon, particularly if I may say so, the retraining of women who had been employed in the textile industry and were being retrained for computerized jobs in the printing industry. It was a very good example of how a good retraining scheme can give people additional skills which are required in an increasingly sophisticated economy. We have to work closely with employers and closely with the labour unions to make sure that we make the biggest possible impact with our retraining plans.

MRS MIRIAM LAU: Mr Governor, in recent years there is increasing community concern about the number of young people committing crimes in Hong Kong. There is no mention of this at all in your Policy Address. Has the Government got any proposals as to how this problem should be countered?

THE GOVERNOR: I think the Honourable Member raises an extremely important point, a point which is important not only in Hong Kong but in other communities as well. I think that it is, alas, observably the fact that, increasingly, crime is committed by younger people elsewhere and all too often we have seen the same thing — I know from looking at the figures — in Hong Kong as well. I hope that the proposals that we have made on education will at least help to deal with some of the problems that the Honourable Member has mentioned but I recognize that we have to look at ways in which not only education, not only the parental role but also our youth services and our social workers can contribute.

If I may say so, there is another way in which to contribute and in which the community is contributing in dealing with the problem and that is by trying to ensure that there is as good and co-operative a relationship between our excellent police force and young people. I went on what has for me been the hottest day of the summer to the police call camp and saw there probably the best example in the world of young people and the police enjoying themselves together, and young people learning a great deal in the process. So I hope through community initiatives like that, and in other ways, we can help to tackle the problem. But if the Honourable Member has any particular ideas which she would like us to follow through, I would be delighted to examine them.

MR JIMMY McGREGOR: *Governor, I would like to ask you a question about the airport — it is bound to come up. I think Hong Kong has tried very hard to meet the requirements of the Chinese authorities and several times major proposals have been put to the Hong Kong Government by the Chinese which have been accepted, broadly, by the Hong Kong Government which has then gone back to China and agreed basically but added some further points. At the moment we do not have any agreement on the airport from the Chinese authorities, which is absolutely essential to the further development of the Chek Lap Kok site. What I should like to ask is: if in the very bad situation where we do not have agreement within a particular length of time, what happens to the building progress on the airport? Do we reach a point in time where contracts have to be stopped, the workers have to be laid off, the contracts will have to be renegotiated or compensation demanded by people who already have contracts and so on? Do we reach a point in time where you as Governor and as Government cannot take the airport proposal further forward?*

THE GOVERNOR: We certainly reach a time when we would need to look fairly radically at the options in taking the project forward, for example, whether, rather than trying to do everything, we should agree to finance what we can ourselves between now and 1997 and then leave other matters to be completed by the SAR Government. If we were to arrive at that situation, then the Administration would have to come to this Council in order to have particular projects funded; so the role of the Council in any development or necessary shift in our policy would be absolutely crucial.

Perhaps I can make another couple of points. The first is that I do not think that any airport can ever have been debated and discussed as much as this one. If we had a dollar for every word that has been spilt on the financing of the airport we would have paid for it ten times over. I think that the people of Hong Kong are probably getting rather fed up with the continuing argument and debate since they know, as well as I know, as well as my colleagues in Peking know, that one day we will have a new airport. And I think, whatever people outside may think, we all know in Hong Kong that we will build, when we do, a new airport faster, more cost effectively and better than anybody else in the world would. That is the reality which makes some of the debate about financing rather more frustrating than it otherwise would be.

We cannot do more than our best to secure the completion of the airport in time. The first proposals we had for funding maximized the fact that Hong Kong, because of its record, is a spectacularly successful borrower. We then put forward proposals which maximize the proceeds that we are going to get from developments along the MTR. Now I am surprised if neither of those arrangements can prove satisfactory. I will continue to do my best to secure the best possible airport in the quickest possible time. I will keep this Council fully informed about the arrangements we make, about what happens in the negotiations, and about the available options, because, if we do have to decide to proceed in another way — we certainly will not abandon the project, we will

certainly seek to continue with it — but if we do have to look at it in another way, the role of this Council will be absolutely crucial because the Finance Committee will have to decide on the funding.

MR CHIM PUI-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *Thank you, Mr Governor. My question has long been awaited by many, because it is not going to be easy to answer! Mr Governor, I meticulously read your Policy Address three times yesterday. Concerning the constitutional package, you are in favour of directly elected members, but somewhat shun appointed members. But your appointment was made under the Letters Patent, does that run against the spirit of direct election? In paragraph 104 of the Policy Address, you criticized some people for treating the people of Hong Kong as heroic pawns in respect of the pace of democratization. With regard to the constitutional package, you are well aware that the Chinese authorities will disagree with the arrangements. Is that tantamount to treating the interests of the Hong Kong people as pawns, with yourself being the big gambler? I hope you can give a detailed analysis to the general public of Hong Kong on these two issues, because they are after all the pawns, and what remains unknown is only by whose hands they are going to be manoeuvred.*

THE GOVERNOR: There will of course come a time, fairly soon, where Hong Kong will have a chief executive who has emerged from a process of selection, if not election, and therefore I suppose I should regard myself as a Darwinian object, as part of a process of evolution, (*laughter*) and I hope that this particular part of the evolutionary process is not too shell-backed. Just as I think it is important that we move forward in relation to the chief executive, so I think it is important that we move forward in relation to, for example, the district boards about which I spoke yesterday, or municipal councils.

It is the Basic Law itself which of course points the way to the removal of appointed Members from this Council and to complete election by various formulae of the Members of this Legislative Council. And I am sure the Honourable Member would not wish me, in these circumstances, to question the Basic Law. What we have to do, though, is to find ways in which we can bridge some of the gaps that are left, which is what my proposals were attempting to do yesterday.

I did make those remarks about Hong Kong people not being regarded as heroic pawns by others. That is certainly my view and it is a view I will express vigorously to the outside world. My own judgment is that the proposals that I put forward, as I said earlier, represented the sort of consensus which has been emerging about future political development in Hong Kong. I assume that nobody would think that they could frighten people in Hong Kong out of reaching those sort of conclusions. If people in Hong Kong are to change their mind then I think that should be the process either way — either to go faster or slower — of rational and sensible discussion.

MRS SELINA CHOW: *Mr Governor, still on the subject of democratic reform, you said earlier that you would endeavour vigorously to persuade China that the proposals you have now put forward are compatible with the Basic Law so that, as far as possible, convergence could be achieved. In case you fail to convince China, do you intend to put those proposals to this Council without any prospect of convergence and would you conduct a referendum to let the Hong Kong people have their say so as to facilitate this Council to be guided by the people's choice?*

THE GOVERNOR: I hope the Council will forgive me if I do not answer too many hypothetical questions, even though those hypothetical questions go to the heart of what may well be the choices which the Council and the Governor will have to make in the next few months. The first advice that I ever had in politics was not to answer hypothetical questions and it is advice that I have been failing to follow to my cost ever since. But I would like to answer the Honourable Member in a slightly different way, which I hope meets at least her central point.

When I discuss these issues with the Council, when I have had a chance of hearing the views of the community, when I have had a chance of discussing these issues probably more than once with officials in Peking, I will have to reach my own conclusion about what is a sensible way forward. It may be that one of the elements, one of those involved in the debate, will not be entirely as happy as one would like, in which case, I will have to take that into account. And then, sooner rather than later, and certainly in my view by next spring, if we are to have all the arrangements in place by 1994 or 1995, I will have to come to this Council with my proposals and this Council will itself have to reach a conclusion about whether the Governor is right, or about whether the Governor's proposals should be amended. That is the reality. That is where the decisions will be taken. I can give a strong lead as the executive who leads this Government, but this Council is where legislation is passed. So, before anything final is done, it will be this Council with, I hope, my advice which will make the decision, and I hope this Council recognizes that and welcomes the role it will play as a representative of the whole community.

MR EDWARD HO: *Mr Governor, while a lot of people are worried about human rights and democratic development and so should they be, there are still a lot of people in Hong Kong who are worried about the shelter over their heads, at least decent shelter. I notice from your address, for instance, that you propose to tackle the middle income housing problem by providing the first site in 1993-94. As I am an architect, I know that normally it takes more than two years to produce the first home. So, I think your projection of having the first home by 1995-96 is a bit optimistic. As to your other proposal of buying flats from the private sector, I would have doubts whether, first of all, you would not increase the speculative aspect, the inflation of prices for housing. If you are not increasing land supply, then as late as June this year we are still short of*

about 60 hectares, just for public housing. So my question to you, Sir, is: How would you demonstrate to the people of Hong Kong that the Government is committed to provide more land and infrastructure to enable us to complete our long-term housing strategy as well as the middle income housing that we are seeking?

THE GOVERNOR: Perhaps I can deal with that question in three parts like Ceasar's Gaul. First of all, our infrastructure investment in Hong Kong over the next five years will be, as I recall, 44% higher than in the last five. We are talking about infrastructure investment of about \$78 billion and that goes, among other things, to prepare the way for new housing schemes.

Secondly, of course you are right to say that sandwich class housing, that particular and important problem, is only one aspect of overall housing policy. We will be spending over the next five years \$41 billion on housing. The Housing Authority and the Housing Society will between them be building about a 190 000 units of accommodation — flats — during that period. That will provide homes for about 650 000 people. It is a very big housing programme. Within that, largely because of the interest shown by a number of Members of this Legislative Council, we have tried to put forward proposals on the specific issue of sandwich class housing. What we have looked for is a longer-term scheme but because, as the Honourable Member says, it takes some time to get that up and running, we have also brought forward — or we are going to bring forward — proposals for interim measures for a shorter-term scheme and we are proposing, in effect, to try to trade land for flats which would otherwise be unoccupied or be hanging over the market. We will of course have to have arrangements if we can go forward with that, which ensure that it does not lead to speculation so that any trade of land for flats would have, in my judgment, to involve as well the property developer specifying a price in addition to accepting land.

The Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands will of course be available to answer questions on this issue from Honourable Members. But the Honourable Member will know that any arrangements will be dependent on an agreement with the Sino-British Land Commission. But I hope that, since they have been already informed about our thinking on this matter, they will not actually find that too difficult.

MR SIMON IP: *Mr Governor, it was music to my ears to hear you emphasize the importance of guaranteeing the rule of law. I think you mentioned it on no less than two occasions in your speech. Of course, the independence of the judiciary, independence of the legal profession, enforcement of laws democratically enacted, are fundamentally important, axiomatic, I would say. But, apart from that, do you have any further ideas as to how the rule of law in Hong Kong in the years ahead could be preserved and strengthened?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think that the answer is partly one of administration and partly one of attempting to ensure that a culture or an attitude of mind or an approach to the conduct of civil society is as deeply rooted as possible. Let me begin with the administration of justice and administrative issues. We do have matters to resolve together. We have, for example, to consider the question of the speed of justice, just as we have to consider questions of the localization of those who dispense wisdom from the bench. Those are both matters where I know the legal profession has put forward proposals and ideas which we have to consider. At the moment, one of those ideas is being considered by, I think, a joint committee chaired by a distinguished judge, that is, the proposal that we should try to introduce the equivalent in Hong Kong of the system of recorders which operates in England and Wales. I think that is a proposal which we should look at constructively. I think it would give us an opportunity, first of all, of giving more local lawyers a taste or an experience of sitting on the bench; secondly, it would actually help us to run one or two more courts at the same time as our other courts and, therefore, to speed up the number of people who were going through them. I think that it is extremely important to ensure that other institutions are strengthened as much as possible. It is imperative that the ICAC continues to have our full-hearted support. It is important that the police have our full-hearted support and the financial resources they need and the community expects them to have.

I find those issues easier to deal with and easier to articulate than the second matter that I raised, the inculcation of an attitude in our society. Who doubts that one of the reasons for Hong Kong's success is our acceptance of the rule of law? Our acceptance that no one is above the law — and that includes, as I said in my inaugural address, the Governor — has been a key ingredient in Hong Kong's success and we have to ensure that it remains the way in which we conduct our affairs. Other societies have different views of the rule of law. Some societies view the rule of law — or the law itself — as an artifact of the state, not a framework within which statecraft is practised. So, I think we have an important job to do in explaining to others what we mean by the rule of law and ensuring that others understand how crucial it is to the continuance of our stability, prosperity and way of life.

MR LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): *On the political development, everybody knows that new Members have been appointed to the Executive Council. Despite the fact that these Members are all outstanding professional, none of them, including you, Sir, is elected. How can you guarantee that your policies will have the support of the public and can be passed in the Legislative Council? Secondly, I am surprised to find in your proposed democratic development package that you are bent on retaining the ex-officio membership in respect of village representatives on district boards. In many rural districts, posts of village representatives only go to men and women have no role whatsoever to play. Is it appropriate to retain this kind of election in which women are treated with discrimination?*

THE GOVERNOR: On Mr LEE's first question, I am afraid that I cannot give any guarantee. I would be misleading the Honourable Member were I to do so but I very much hope that I can persuade this Council to support the main thrust of the administration's policies. The executive is accountable to this Council and I hope that in exercising that accountability, I can carry the Council with me. But policy in even a community which has a very strong executive lead is partly developed in the tension, in the dialogue between the executive and the legislature.

On the question of a continuing role for village representatives on district boards, I discussed it this morning with chairmen of district boards, including one or two who are Members of this Honourable Council. I think I am right in saying that there are in all 27 village representatives on, I think, nine of the district boards. We will obviously have future opportunities of debating this, particularly when it comes to considering the electoral arrangements for 1994. But I have to say, speaking for myself, that I think it is important to continue with the link between village representatives and/or villages and the district boards and I would be loath to move away from something which I think is widely appreciated and argued for in those district boards themselves. But I am already aware of the fact from the Honourable Member's body language that this is going to be an issue on which there is a good deal of debate in the future.

MR HUI YIN-FAT: *Sir, while we appreciate the additional provisions you promised for social welfare in the next few years, could you enlighten us with regard to the plans and projects which have been approved by the Government in the past but have hitherto not been implemented due to shortage of funds? For example, will the Government make available additional funding in the next financial year to cover these agreed projects? Also, Sir, the provision of quality welfare service depends heavily on the availability of trained manpower; will the Government allocate additional resources to train enough social workers for the implementation of social welfare plans for the next few years?*

THE GOVERNOR: I hope the Honourable Member, whose advocacy of the cause of social welfare is of course one of the reasons for the Government's response to the White Paper and the Green Paper, will excuse me if I say that my retrospective knowledge of what has not been done is less acute and well developed than my knowledge of what I hope to do. I do not think that it would be possible for me to give a guarantee that every project that we have not been able to fund in the past, we will be able to fund next year. I think were I to do that, Mr WONG and others, who take a proper prudent view of public finance, would have much to criticize me for. But what I can say is that the key targets, of which the Honourable Member is aware, in the Social Welfare White Paper and in the Rehabilitation Green Paper, will be met. Previously we had discussed those key targets or set them out as aspirations but in my view there is little point in public policy in setting out aspirations unless you can say how you are going to pay for them. The dollar on the table is what actually

makes the difference between an aspiration and reality and what we were doing yesterday is putting on the table dollars which this community can afford because of its own efforts, because of its own energies and because of its own entrepreneurial spirit.

On the Honourable Member's second question — and I was surprised that a question on the number of social workers came from him — I think I can say that we will be increasing the number of social workers. We need more social workers and I believe I am right to say that in the coming year, as a result of our plans, we will require between 300 or 400 extra social workers and I hope that they will recognize, when they find themselves in employment in a number of areas, what an important role the Honourable Member has played in advocating an expansion of the social work sector of Hong Kong.

MR MARTIN BARROW: Mr Governor, *I am delighted that you have endorsed the policy of minimum government interference and that Hong Kong should be the most business-friendly location in Asia. Would you not agree that there are strong arguments in favour of privatization as is being practised now by most of our neighbours in east Asia, and if so, will you be asking your officials to come up with specific proposals in this connection?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think that this community has as good a record as any anywhere in the world at using market mechanisms to secure public goods. Let me give the honourable gentleman an example with which he is more familiar than I am. Nowhere in the world has the concept of BOT in funding and running public projects been carried through as successfully as it has been in Hong Kong. Equally, there is hardly anywhere in the world which has public utilities and mass transportation systems which operate in such a financially advantageous way. It is interesting that the MTRC, for example, has one of the very best credit ratings in the world. I have never been in a community before where a railway company could come near to being able to make that sort of claim.

There are ways in which we can carry that process forward and continue privatization. I notice that the Housing Authority are keen to make another effort to encourage their tenants to become owners wherever possible. I welcome that and will support any measures that they bring forward. In other sectors, to some extent we are bound to discuss matters with China and Chinese officials and I hope that, whatever the occasional squalls or occasional arguments that we have in, I am sure, a friendly genial spirit, I am able to develop a relationship with officials in Peking which will enable me to persuade them that going further in privatization is not selling the SAR's family silver but ensuring that the SAR has a lot more family silver in order to make the community more successful. That will require some argument on our part. I do not think it is as appreciated as I would like it to be but I am absolutely certain that continuing privatization, continuing the use of market mechanisms

in the public sector, would be good for people in Hong Kong and good for the services which they require.

MR RONALD ARCULLI: *Mr Governor, you must not take my honourable friend Mr Edward HO too seriously when he says buying a thousand flats is going to push the price up. Those that I represent have asked me to put this to you: please, Sir, would you like some more? (laughter) But that having been said, you have mentioned some ills that need correcting and that we really should go for efficiency and higher productivity, and there has really been quite a lot of talk about that in the public sector over the past few years. How do you intend to ensure that the Government will do so and whether this might include either cutting down the size of the Civil Service, where inefficiencies exist, and if possible, to redeploy some of that surplus manpower into other areas within the Civil Service?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think that it is in the interests of the Civil Service, as it is in the interests of others in the public and private sector, to operate in as lean a fashion as possible. I do not think that that is other than a statement of the managerial truth. What I hope we can do is to operate our performance pledges and attempt to increase greater efficiency in the public service side by side. Let me give you an explanation of what I mean. I think that all civil services have been bad at pushing decisions down to the lowest possible level. I think, for example, that is one of the main differences between the public and the private sector. I think that if you are a manager at any level in the Civil Service, you should have more control over the resources that you manage. You should be able to make simple decisions about budgeting, about purchase, about your manpower, without having to double check, treble check, every decision you make about the purchase of a filing cabinet or about the repainting of offices. I think a more efficient government is one in which civil servants are able to take more decisions at every possible level.

And when civil servants are given the opportunity of managing their resources more successfully, they behave like managers everywhere else. They try to run their operation as competently and efficiently as possible. So I see the whole performance pledges exercise and the efficiency campaign which we have begun, running hand in hand, as enhancing the status of civil servants and enhancing the regard and respect in which the public service in Hong Kong is rightly held.

DR TANG SIU-TONG (in Cantonese): *The question I am going to ask involves a real issue, not a hypothetical one. The problem of inflation, which is a major worry in Hong Kong at present, has not been discussed in detail in your Policy Address. Mr Governor, what solutions do you have in combating inflation?*

THE GOVERNOR: Maiden questions are not supposed to be that difficult. Inflation in Hong Kong — and I do not want to sound too much like an economist — is largely a structural consequence of our circumstances, largely a consequence of the fact that we are growing very fast, but growing very fast with considerable restraints because of our geographical circumstances. We have problems of land supply; we have problems of labour supply, and those supply side problems at a time when we are expanding as rapidly as we are have helped to produce inflation.

We cannot use monetary policy in a conventional way to deal with it because of our absolutely necessary link with the US dollar. But let us be clear that if we were using monetary methods in a traditional way to try to deal with it, that would mean that we would not have as many people in jobs and we probably would not have as fast economic growth. So nobody should reckon that using monetary policy in a tougher way would be a cost-free option.

We might remember that there were — and I think I am remembering it accurately — a couple of decades when the Japanese Yen was linked to the US dollar, a period during which — again, as, I suspect, a consequence — Japanese inflation was invariably above United States inflation. At the end of that period I do not think many regarded the Japanese economy as being a weaker economy than the United States economy. What is imperative is that even though our domestic inflation, to which I want to return, has been increasing at a level which the community rightly regards with concern, we have not been suffering to the same extent when it comes to the goods that we export. The goods that we export, the goods that we market, have only been rising at about 1% a year in price which has meant that we have remained competitive, largely because we have been able to use Guangdong and other areas as a manufacturing base for our products. It has been a very important part of our competitive edge but we have also remained competitive by ruthlessly and relentlessly trying to make our processes more efficient and that is something for which the management in Hong Kong deserves a very substantial pat on the back.

The community — and I am sure those who recently elected the Honourable Member made this point to him again and again — is understandably concerned about the threat of double-digit inflation, and so am I. We have to tackle that in a number of sophisticated ways, for example, by what I was saying earlier on retraining and the labour supply, by helping, as I was saying earlier, to deal with some of the problems affecting some groups, particularly the sandwich class in housing, but others as well. Those are the ways in which we have to try to bring down inflation. We have to recognize that unless the wage increases we pay ourselves can be met out of increased productivity and efficiency that too will lead to greater inflation. So we need to be more efficient in order to hold down and reduce inflation. And of course, finally, we need to help those who live on fixed incomes, particularly public assistance payments, cope with inflation by ensuring that their public assistance payments are protected year after year against the ravages of inflation.

MRS PEGGY LAM (in Cantonese): *Mr Governor, you have discussed education in detail in the Policy Address, with particular reference to parents and quality education. The education system of Hong Kong has all along been criticized by members of the public and parents. The reason is educational policies are formulated by professionals. Have you considered inviting parents to take part in the formulation of educational policies in future?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think for too long, right across the world, parents have been regarded when it has come to the discussion of educational policy as a sort of optional extra. I think very often they have been regarded as not really having a say or a role in the discussion of the curriculum, in the discussion of education quality. So I do very much welcome the attempts which have been made in Hong Kong to get parents more involved in schools. I think that the Education Commission, under the chairmanship of a recent and very distinguished Member of this Council, has put forward proposals for involving parents more; for example, we have had a lot of discussion about the school management initiative and I think it is important to take that school management initiative forward. I think parent/teacher associations have a valuable role to play. What I think parents want is the assurance that basic standards of numeracy and literacy will not be affected by occasional educational fashions. Fortunately, I think Hong Kong has had the good sense to repel boarders when most of these educational fads have done so much damage in some other communities and some other countries. But it is imperative that we get the basics right in school, it is imperative that we do all that we can to give teachers more time in order to ensure that they can raise the quality of what they do in the classroom, it is imperative that we make sure that we have even better trained teachers and more graduate teachers on both of which we are working, and it is imperative that we find every possible way of involving parents more thoroughly in the management of schools and in the discussion of what happens in schools.

There is one additional point that I would like to make. I do think that we are going to have to think very hard in the community — and I hope this will not be regarded as a prejudiced observation on my part, speaking as somebody who is, alas, only vaguely bilingual and that not in Cantonese — to consider whether or not standards of English are as good as they need to be, given the commercial and economic pressures there will be on us in the next few years.

MR FRED LI (in Cantonese): *I would like to talk about public assistance. I notice from your address that under the Public Assistance Scheme, the basic rate of \$825 a month for a single adult will be increased by 15% to \$950 a month. However, do you know that the revised rate plus all other grants will give each recipient no more than \$2,000 a month? On average, each recipient will receive \$1,600 to \$1,700 a month. In view of Hong Kong's prosperity and high living cost, this figure is very ironical. May I have your views and that of the Government? Do you think that a comprehensive review should be conducted*

on the method of calculating public assistance? Since the basic rate is so low, it will still be far below the current level of living even if it is further increased by 20% to 30%. If no comprehensive review is carried out in this aspect, this "safety net" cannot provide any assistance at all for those who are really in need. I hope Mr Governor will give this question a serious response.

THE GOVERNOR: It is not in any way to belittle the importance of the point that the Honourable Member has made to say that, when at the outset of our discussions I said that I did not think that the Government would be regarded for long as having been extravagant yesterday, I did not realize that the criticisms would begin quite as rapidly as they have. The proposals that we make on public assistance, both the increase in scale rates, and the relaxation of the absence rule, are substantial steps forward in Hong Kong which will, I think, be very widely welcomed. But I know that there will always be those who, I am sure for very good reason, will say you should have gone further, you should have done more. Societies customarily make advances in social welfare because there are members of the community who develop that sort of case very often with eloquence and verve.

What one has to do always is to balance different interests and I do not think that we could have gone further than we announced yesterday without running the risk of the sort of financial imprudence against which I was earlier warned, or without cutting expenditure in other areas. For a family of four, as I said yesterday, the new rates plus rent and other additional grants will provide a monthly income of \$5,505. I would welcome any comparison that the Honourable Member made with the median income of a worker in manufacturing and his family. I think that comparison would show perhaps that the public assistance rate increases that I was suggesting were pretty reasonable, but I repeat that it is invariably the case that whatever advance one makes in social programmes, there will always understandably be those who say that is not enough, because they have a proper concern for the needs and requirements of the disadvantaged and the needy.

MR MARTIN LEE: *Mr President and/or Governor. The fact that you have not mentioned it in your speech yesterday does not mean that it will go away, whether by the Kai Tak airport or by the "Lady Maurine". I am referring to the Court of Final Appeal. You know that both the Bar Association here and the Bar Council of England and Wales and the majority of the Members of this Council have expressed the strong view that what has been agreed between the British and Chinese Governments over the establishment of a Court of Final Appeal in Hong Kong before 1997 is not consistent with the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law. Now, what are you going to do about that court? Are you going to wait until it comes back to us via the Chek Lap Kok airport?*

THE GOVERNOR: What I am going to do in the first place is to discuss the issue with my new Executive Council which does, of course, include, in addition to the Attorney General, two of the most distinguished lawyers in the community. What we will have collectively to decide is whether it is the view of this Council that we should not go ahead with the Court of Final Appeal because, in this Council's view, it does not meet requirements particularly in relation to the number of judges from other jurisdictions, or whether, with other developments on the legal front, we should go ahead with the legislation and the appointment of the court arguing that what is important is that it should have some experience of operating well before 1997. Those are going to be the options which the Council will have to consider. We cannot put off those decisions indefinitely, but I will — if the Honourable Member will allow — want first of all to discuss the matter with some of the learned Members of the Council and, of course, through them, with the wider legal community. It is a point of view, it is an argument which comes back to the proposition which Mr IP advanced earlier. The securing of the rule of law is the most important thing that all of us have to do before 1997.

I believe that I could answer, on this occasion, two more questions provided they are brief. But, all those who have not been answered today will, of course, get first billing on a future occasion.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *The Governor's Business Council mentioned in paragraph 8 in your address is to be led by you, which indicates its high status. Will such a Council become another Executive Council? The fact that the Council is composed entirely of members of the business community makes one worry that only interests of the business community will be protected and the interests of the grass-roots will be ignored. How would you dispel such worries?*

THE GOVERNOR: First of all, the Business Council which I have proposed is a non-statutory body. I hope that, when that is translated, it is not translated, as I think it was yesterday, as illegal. (*laughter*) Nobody on the Business Council will be remotely illegal. It will be a non-statutory body but — I say this very openly to the Honourable Member — I did feel the necessity of having a more open and regular channel of communication with the leaders of the business community. It is because, all that we set out to do, all our ambitions, are ultimately dependent on how well they do and how well our economy performs. So I thought it was important to have as much access as possible for them to Government House. I imagine the Council would probably meet six or seven times a year. It will look at broad, strategic issues but it will not be, like the Executive Council, a decision making body at the heart of government and I hope that nobody will confuse those roles. I am not sure that there is quite the dichotomy which the Honourable Member suggests between, as it were, the views of those who run businesses and those who work in businesses. One of the happiest features of social and economic life in Hong Kong is that some of

the divisiveness which has helped impoverish communities elsewhere on the factory floor and in the commercial sector has not existed here. I think that whatever the historical reasons for that, whether they are Marxist or not, we have not, fortunately, suffered from that social and economic tension. We have already, of course, a way of allowing the unions to feed their advice through an advisory body to the Commissioner for Labour. I discussed that with a delegation of trade union leaders recently, as I am sure the Honourable Member knows, and, not only do I hope that that channel of communication remains but I hope myself to see leaders of organized labour in Hong Kong regularly in the future. And I hope that leaders of labour, and those who work throughout Hong Kong, will have themselves welcomed the proposals for discussion that I have put forward on functional constituencies.

MR SZETO WAH (in Cantonese): *Mr President, you said yesterday that when you left Hong Kong by plane the last time in 1997, whether the plane took off at Chek Lap Kok would not affect people's opinion of you. What, in your opinion, are the things that will affect people's opinion of you most?*

THE GOVERNOR: I think two things: first of all whether they thought, when I left Hong Kong in 1997, that I had secured the implementation of the Joint Declaration thereafter. I think the Joint Declaration is a historic document, I think it is pretty much a unique document in human history, and I think that when I leave at the end of June in 1997 — travelling, I hope, overland back to the United Kingdom by my own through-train (*laughter*) — I very much hope that people will feel that I have discharged that obligation.

I hope they will feel, secondly, that I have done as important a job as there is, honourably and honestly.

DR SAMUEL WONG: *Governor, functional constituencies were created to ensure all important sectors of our economy should have a part to play in the legislative process. By proposing to expand the electoral base, you are in fact negating this rationale and overturning a practice which has stood the test of time. Is not your proposal contrary to the spirit of the Basic Law?*

THE GOVERNOR: No, I do not believe it is. I take it that the rationale for functional constituencies, which do not exist in every community but have obviously a role in our democratic development, is and was that people in their function as workers should have representation in this Legislative Council. I, if I am asked how to extend functional constituencies, cannot see any better way of doing it than by taking that argument to its reasonable, though not, in my judgment, absurd, logic. I am not sure why we can argue, for example, that somebody who goes out in a fishing boat every day is not performing a function which can usefully and properly be represented in this Council. I am not

entirely convinced — and I do not mean to single out bankers in this particular regard — but I do not entirely see why bankers should be represented but not people who work in the retail sector. The retail sector has a certain fame in Hong Kong. Why not people who work in the textile industry, who probably have more fame than anybody in terms of our international economic relations?

But I come back, Dr WONG, to a point which I began with. If there are those who do not regard my proposals as reasonable, as balanced, as sensible, let them put forward their own proposals. If there is a better way of defining the functions of the nine additional functional constituencies, what are they to be? Who else are we to represent? Are we to represent other chambers of commerce? Are we to represent textile workers but not those who work in agriculture or fisheries? How are we to do it? I think there is a powerful argument for ensuring that at this stage of our political development, Hong Kong has a legislature which is broadly representative. I take it that that was the argument for functional constituencies, I take it that that is the argument — I am being charitable — I take it that that was the argument which underpinned the role of functional constituencies in the Basic Law, and I am wholly within, in my view and, I hope, in the community's view, both the spirit and the letter of the Basic Law in what I have put forward.

I am much obliged to Honourable Members of this Council for giving me their attention today. I hope that the Council will be able to welcome me on future occasions; for example, I hope that as soon as possible after my return from Peking, I will be able to take questions from this Council. Conceivably by then we will have arrived at arrangements which enable me to spend an hour or two with the Council slightly nearer to Honourable Members.

Adjournment and next sitting

THE PRESIDENT: For the time being, in accordance with Standing Orders, I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 pm on Wednesday 14 October 1992.

Adjourned accordingly at four minutes past Four o'clock.

