

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**Wednesday, 22 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-LUN, C.B.E., J.P.

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

THE HONOURABLE ERIC PETER HO, C.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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 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 YING-LUN

THE HONOURABLE MRS. RITA FAN HSU LAI-TAI

THE HONOURABLE MRS. PAULINE NG CHOW MAY-LIN

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

THE HONOURABLE JAMES NEIL HENDERSON, O.B.E., J.P.

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER

THE HONOURABLE KIM CHAM YAU-SUM, J.P.

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.
DR. THE HONOURABLE CHIU HIN-KWONG
THE HONOURABLE CHUNG PUI-LAM
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 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 HAIDER HATIM TYEBJEE BARMA, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR HOUSING (*Acting*)
THE HONOURABLE JOHN RAWLING TODD, C.V.O., O.B.E., J.P.
SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS (*Acting*)

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE JOHN JOSEPH SWAINE, O.B.E., Q.C., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CHEONG KAM-CHUEN, O.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE PETER POON WING-CHEUNG, M.B.E., J.P.
THE HONOURABLE THOMAS CLYDESDALE
THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, M.B.E., J.P.

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR. LAW KAM-SANG

Papers

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

<i>Subject</i>	<i>L.N. No.</i>
Subsidiary Legislation:	
Matrimonial Causes Ordinance.	
Matrimonial Causes (Amendment) Rules 1986	6
Securities Ordinance.	
Securities (Specification of Approved Assets, Liquid Assets and Ranking Liabilities) Notice 1986.....	7
Securities Ordinance.	
Securities (Stock Exchange Listing) Rules 1986	8
Securities Ordinance.	
Securities (Stock Exchange Listing) (Amendment) Rules 1986	9

Sessional Papers 1985-86:

- No. 32—Correctional Services Department Welfare Fund—Income and Expenditure Account with Balance Sheet and Certificate of the Director of Audit for the year ending 31 March 1985.
- No. 33—Urban Council—Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ending 31 March 1987.
- No. 34—Hong Kong Trade Development Council—Annual Report and Accounts 1984-85.

Oral answers to questions**Employment for dental graduates**

1. MR. LEE YU-TAI asked: *Will the Administration inform this Council of the job situation of the first batch of locally trained dental surgery graduates, and how is the enrolment programme of the dental school adjusted in relation to the projected demand for dental surgeons in the next few years?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Sir, the first batch of dental graduates from the University of Hong Kong finished their studies early in 1985. According to a survey conducted by the Appointments Service of the university, by May 1985 all of the first 59 graduates had found employment either in the private sector, the Government service, or the University Dental Faculty.

The annual intake into the dental school was reduced from 76 to 60 in 1984, largely because the wastage rate proved to be lower than expected. No further adjustment is proposed for the present but the situation will be closely monitored, and consideration will be given to reducing the intake if this appears to be appropriate.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, would Government consider application of more stringent conditions on the registration of dentists who are trained outside Hong Kong so as to give better career opportunities to locally trained dental surgery graduates?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, this is one possible way of dealing with the problem if and when it arises but I would not like to anticipate the views of the Dental Council in considering this possibility.*

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, has the Administration got any programme for the promotion of dental health to the public?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, the 1973-74 White Paper on Medical Services considered the question of whether there should be a general dental service in Hong Kong on a scale comparable to the medical services provided by the Government and concluded that this would be an extremely costly development which was beyond the Government's ability to finance at that time. The position, Sir, I think, is still very similar to what it was in 1974.*

DR. LAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, I have two questions. First of all, is the cost of training 76 dental students any different from training 60? Secondly, since we have more and more dental graduates can the Government consider revising its policy on this matter so that patients in subvented hospitals may also receive appropriate dental treatment, like the patients in Government hospitals?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, I don't have any exact figures about the costs of training this smaller number but I am almost certain that it would be somewhat more expensive to train a smaller number simply because the number of staff in the hospital could not be reduced proportionately. As far as the second question is concerned I think in my first supplementary I said that the Government was not envisaging at this stage developing a public dental service and of course treatment in subvented hospitals would be part of such a public dental service.*

Waiting time at Lo Wu border crossing

2. MR. CHEONG-LEEN asked: *Since the estimated annual Lo Wu border crossing for passenger is estimated to increase from 14.4 million in 1984-85 to 20.2 million in 1985-86, what special arrangements can be made to reduce the waiting time at peak hours (which is currently one hour at peak time and one and a half hours*

during festival periods) bearing in mind that the situation is likely to worsen since the 1986-87 estimated figure would rise to 26 million, and such situation will not improve substantially until 1987 when the new terminal will be completed?

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the long waiting times at Lo Wu are due to a shortage of space on the one hand and a steep increase in the number of passengers on the other. There can be no dramatic improvement until the new terminal at Lo Wu has been completed and properly staffed. Meanwhile the Immigration Department is doing its best in difficult circumstances. During peak times and festival periods it adopts the following special arrangements to reduce the waiting time—

First, it deploys staff from other duties to Lo Wu to man 14 temporary clearance counters in addition to the 35 regular counters;

Second, re-entry permit holders who do not have to complete arrival and departure cards and therefore require less processing time than passengers travelling on other documents are segregated and directed to special counters for clearance;

Third, the control point operates from 3 am to 10.30 pm during the busiest periods; and

Fourth, an additional fourth through train from Kowloon to Canton and extra express trains to Lo Wu are run. Passengers travelling on all these trains are processed at Kowloon Station, thus helping to relieve the congestion at Lo Wu.

Sir, all these measures were adopted in the last festival period from 21 December 1985 to 2 January 1986 and proved to be reasonably effective. A survey of the passenger waiting time during that period showed that for 90 per cent of the time passengers had to wait for less than 30 minutes even though there were 23 per cent more passengers than at the same time last year.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: *Sir, can I have assurance that during festival periods in future this improved reduction of waiting time can be maintained especially in view of the very heavy build up that's expected over the next two years?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, I hope that those measures introduced in peak and festival periods will continue to meet the particular surge of demand on those occasions.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, is the Government contemplating the introduction of a departure tax at Lo Wo border in the same way as passenger taxes are levied at Hong Kong/Macau ferry and Kai Tak Airport?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am assured by my friend, the Financial Secretary, that there is no contemplation of a tax at all. If there are any appropriate charges that might properly be introduced that is another thing which may be under consideration.

Private vehicles inspections

3. MR. POON CHI-FAI asked (in Cantonese): *The scheme of private car inspection by designated car testing centres will be implemented by Government in January 1986. Will Government inform this Council whether consideration was given to the following when the scheme was designed:*

- (a) *how are some designated car testing centres prevented from secretly lowering the standards of inspection in order to attract more customers for the centres' own benefit;*
- (b) *how are those testing centres which are also agents, dealers or repairers of certain makes of vehicles prevented from practising favouritism by secretly lowering the passing standards of inspection for these vehicles;*
- (c) *is there a set of comprehensive procedure to prevent corruption by the testing centres or their staff;*
- (d) *is there a system of monitoring or re-examination by random sampling to prevent the occurrence of the above situation? If there is such a system of re-examination, has consideration been given to ways and means of reducing the inconvenience caused to car owners or their losses of money or time; and*
- (e) *if the situations in (a) or (b) above occur, what actions will be taken by Government? Will the licences of the testing centres be suspended and will the centres be prosecuted?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Sir, I can assure Mr. Poon that all the points he mentions in respect of the inspection of private cars by designated centres were carefully taken into account when devising the scheme.

To ensure an even standard of inspection at the designated centres, the Transport Department has drawn up a code of practice which by law the operators are required to follow. Each centre must nominate a Responsible Person, to be approved by the Commissioner for Transport, to supervise all vehicle inspections, which can only be done by similarly approved testers. The inspections must follow precisely the procedures laid down in a tester's manual issued by the Transport Department.

In addition, the Commissioner for Transport has established a monitoring unit to make random visits to the designated centres to check compliance with the code of practice and the tester's manual. It is not anticipated that inconvenience will be caused by these random checks to car owners, as re-tests will be done on the spot. Car owners who may be aggrieved by the work of any designated car testing centre may appeal to this monitoring unit, which acts as a further check against abuses by the centres.

As regards the prevention of corruption, I would stress that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has been consulted on all aspects of the scheme and, wherever practicable, preventive measures have been adopted. All designated car testing centres are required to display a notice warning their staff against the commission of offences under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance,

the Independent Commission Against Corruption Ordinance and the Corrupt and Illegal Practice Ordinance. Proprietors of the centres are also required to sign an unequivocal statement that their employees are not allowed to solicit or accept any advantage in connection with their work.

If serious abuses or malpractices are proved, the Commissioner for Transport may exercise his powers under section 88D of the Road Traffic Ordinance and revoke the designation granted. Furthermore, should any staff of any designated car testing centre be found to have acted in a corrupt manner, it is for the Commissioner Against Corruption to investigate and then as appropriate for the Commissioner for Transport to consider revoking the designation granted to the centre.

MR. POON CHI-FAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, has the Administration considered reviewing the entire testing programme at an appropriate time and if there are centres whose designation is revoked in future and if the resultant reduction in number of car testing centres affect adversely the testing of vehicles, will the Government take remedial measures?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, Sir, the Commissioner for Transport will certainly be reviewing the system once it has settled down a bit and I will be happy to report the outcome of such a review to Members should they wish this. If garages which are now designated should be struck off the list as it were I am quite hopeful that other garages would be able to take their place and that there would not be any adverse effects to the scheme, I hope.

MR. JACKIE CHAN (in Cantonese): *Sir, is the scheme just a temporary measure? As Mr. POON has indicated, there may be a lot of loopholes in the procedures which will mean that the Government's original aim will not be attained, so is the Administration prepared to set up public car testing centres in the place of privately owned ones?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Sir, we are of course operating under legislation enacted in this Council and the reason for testing private cars in private garages was that we have not been able to provide sufficient resources in terms of testing centres or qualified personnel within the Government to achieve our objective of policy which is to examine eventually all private cars annually. So this is a permanent scheme. I do not envisage it being temporary as I think it unlikely we should ever have the resources within the Government to carry out all inspections.

MR. MARTIN LEE: *Sir, does the Secretary for Transport contemplate sending cars under the names of its agents to be tested by these centres so as to see if the required standards are maintained?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, Sir, without giving away any operational secrets that is exactly what we are doing.

MRS. CHOW: *Sir, in the review that Government is to conduct will special attention or consideration be given to the dual role of these centres as testing centres as well as the supplier of maintenance service to cars?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, of course, there is something we are most conscious of. I am happy to say that to date although the scheme has not been going on very long there have not been complaints of this nature. This we will watch most carefully.

DR. LAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, the Secretary for Transport said that a monitoring unit has been set up by the Commissioner for Transport. How many members are there in the monitoring unit and is it funded by the Government or by car owners themselves?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: This monitoring unit is funded within existing resources in the Transport Department. It is not a very large unit. Qualified individuals go round and observe the testing procedures to see if they have been properly followed. On occasions they go round as though they were members of the public having their own cars tested.

Responsibility for monitoring camps and hostels

4. MR. HUI asked: *In connection with the transfer of responsibility for the operation of camps and hostels that is being discussed between Social Welfare Department and Municipal Services Branch, will Government inform this Council of the progress of the discussions and the timetable for completion of the transfer of responsibilities?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Sir, the transfer of responsibility for subventing and monitoring camps and hostels operated by voluntary agencies from the Social Welfare Department to the Municipal Services Branch (formerly the Recreation and Culture Department) was agreed in principle several years ago, but because of problems connected with the transfer of the necessary resources it has not yet proved possible to implement this decision. The present position is not satisfactory and I intend to take up this question with the department and the branch, in the hope of implementing the new arrangements during the next financial year.

MR. HUI: *Sir, no priority has been given to the development of this service since 1981 due to the transfer. Can the Government provide some measures of service improvement in the interim period?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: Sir, I will certainly discuss this with the Director of Social Welfare to see whether any interim improvements can be made.

MR. YEUNG: *Sir, in view of the fact that the transfer of responsibility was agreed in principle several years ago and it has been proved that there are still problems in implementing the agreed policy, can the Government state the reasons why such a decision which appears to be hasty and premature was made in this regard?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, the main reason for proposing the transfer to the Recreation and Culture Department was that the department was much better fitted by reason of its other activities to advise and administer a subvention system for recreational facilities such as camps and hostels.*

MRS. TAM: *Sir, will the Secretary for Health and Welfare inform this Council whether there are plans to implement this transfer of responsibility for the operation of camps and hostels in stages instead of doing it all by one step?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, it may have to be done in stages if we can't achieve a complete transfer as quickly as I would like.*

DR. HO: *Sir, what measure will Government take to ensure the standard of services in running these camps and hostels after the transfer?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, I have every confidence that the Municipal Services Branch have the expertise to ensure the standards are maintained.*

MR. ANDREW WONG: *Sir, will the Government confirm that the Municipal Services Branch will be scrapped or amalgamated with some other branches?*

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE: *Sir, I am afraid that it is rather outside my parish to give an answer to this question.*

Development of Hong Kong International Airport

5. MR. S. L. CHEN asked: *Will Government inform this Council whether it has any plans on the long-term development of the Hong Kong International Airport and whether there are plans to resite the present airport?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: *Sir, the Government is not actively planning for the construction of a replacement airport, but a possible need for it remains under consideration in the context of our long-term development strategy. Accordingly two possible sites are being safeguarded— at Chek Lap Kok and Deep Bay. More important, the Government does have plans for improving and extending the facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport. These plans include—*

- (a) a major extension of the passenger terminal building;
- (b) fly-overs between Prince Edward Road and the passenger terminal building;

- (c) improvements to the runway and taxiways;
- (d) extension of both passenger and cargo aircraft apron and parking areas; and
- (e) a major modernisation programme of equipping the air traffic control services with advanced electronics radar, display and radio navigation equipment, in order to optimise runway utilisation.

MR. S. L. CHEN: *Sir, will the planned improved facilities be capable of coping with the air traffic growth in the foreseeable future, say, in the next five to 10 years?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Current development plans, Sir, will meet unconstrained passenger demand at least until the mid-1990s. Beyond that minor improvements in capacity are envisaged before scheduling would need to be implemented to spread the demand more evenly over the day. Cargo facilities are planned to meet the projected demand up to the Year 2000.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, would the present location of the airport inhibit city development in the vicinity because of building restrictions under the flight path and sound pollution considerations?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: It is of course clear that the building of a replacement airport would in theory free a significant area of land for redevelopment and indeed will have other benefits. Unfortunately, the building of a new airport and all the related developments will entail a very heavy frontloading of expenditure which cannot be contemplated now when we are seeking to balance the Budget and carry out other important projects such as the public housing programme. It may be conceivable in the future. You may be interested to know that in 1982 the total cost postulated for a replacement airport at Chek Lap Kok, including the airport itself, bridges, roads, land resumption, and construction of a nearby town was \$37 billion. At 1986 prices, the bill would be considerably more. The Government has to make choices and determine priorities, and a replacement airport project, however desirable, is not presently anywhere near the top of the list, given the many other on-going demands on our financial resources.

MR. SOHMEN: *Sir, could the Financial Secretary advise what the time span would be to plan and construct a replacement airport?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Should the policy decision be taken to construct a replacement airport which is a wholly hypothetical question I imagine something of the order of 10 years.

Safety of electrical appliances and installation

6. MR. YEUNG asked: *In order to ensure the safety of electrical appliances and installation, will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *have all the agents of electrical appliances employed qualified electricians to take charge of the installation work;*
- (b) *how many accidents occurred during the past year as a result of unsafe electrical appliances and installation; and*
- (c) *what measures will Government take to reduce the occurrence of such accidents?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Sir, agents are not required under the existing legislation to employ qualified electricians to take charge of the electrical installation work. This does not necessarily mean that the electricians employed are not competent. It is rather a reflection of the fact that under the existing law there is no definition of qualified electricians or electrical workers.

There were, Sir, 46 such accidents reported to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department of which 19 were fatal. The majority of these accidents occurred on construction sites. There were also eight cases, including five fatal ones, in domestic premises. Of the eight cases three were directly caused by faults in the appliances and accessories used; while the remainder were caused by carelessness or by faulty connections.

A new electricity bill is now under preparation. If enacted, the proposed bill will enable regulations to be made to define the qualifications and experience required of electrical contractors and workers and how they will be registered and disciplined. Regulations will also be made to set down minimum safety requirements for the wiring of fixed installations in buildings. Minimum safety requirements for appliances, lighting fittings and accessories will also be specified in due course. In addition, Sir, the Government will continue and intensify its publicity programme to educate the public on the safe use of electrical appliances at home and at work.

MR. YEUNG: *Sir, why was the Electricity Bill not prepared at an earlier stage so that the relatively higher fatal accidental rate could be reduced accordingly, and how long will it take to complete the preparation of the new Electricity Bill?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: It is expected, Sir, to introduce the new Electricity Bill into this Council early in 1987. To the first part of the question, Sir, I think, it is a question of priorities and the time which was taken to get round to this with the pressure of the other routine work of the department. It is in fact a task of some daunting complexity and the original draft is of around some 600 pages, and it has been necessary to continue consultation with 14 outside organisations on the format of the Bill.

MISS DUNN: Sorry, Mr. YEUNG has asked my question.

MR. CHAM: *Sir, if the new Electricity Bill is going to define the qualifications of qualified persons, will Government ensure that sufficient supply of these qualified*

persons are available. If not, will sufficient training be given in the interest of the consumers?

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: There are, as I say, quite a number of very experienced electrical workers available and they are all also being trained at various technical institutes at the moment. The Bill will be tailored to meet the needs of the public and to ensure that those needs are met.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, what specific steps has Government taken to promote safety measures in the use of electrical appliances by way of public education?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: There are, Sir, a number of APIs at the moment which Members will have seen broadcast on television. A new domestic safety campaign called 'Safety in the Home' will be launched in the middle of 1986 and will include material on electrical safety.

Junior Police Call

7. MRS. CHOW asked: *Will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *what is the budgeted amount to be spent on the Junior Police Call movement in the year 1985-86;*
- (b) *what has been the growth in expenditure for activities under this movement in the last five years; and*
- (c) *how Government envisages the movement to develop in the future?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, the total amount to be spent in the current financial year on Junior Police Call will be some \$2.1 million. \$1.1 million will be spent on organising activities for Junior Police Call members and the rest on renting club houses and buying recreational and sports equipment.

The amount of money spent in 1981-82 was just over \$1 million. That is to say at the end of the current financial year, annual expenditure will have doubled over five years.

As regards the third part of Mrs. CHOW'S question, the Junior Police Call has three main objectives; first to provide recreation and entertainment to young people and to give them an alternative to playing in the streets and possibly falling into bad company; secondly, to teach members the basics of being good citizens and to encourage a good community spirit; and thirdly to encourage young people to look upon members of the police force as their friends and to build a bridge between the youth of Hong Kong and their police force.

In the future, the Junior Police Call movement will continue to pursue these objectives. Most of the Junior Police Call members come from the poorer sectors of our community and these will continue to be the sectors at which the

movement is mainly directed. By these means, the Junior Police Call will, I think, continue to bring about further improvement in the relationship between the police and the community.

MRS. CHOW: *How many Junior Police Call members are there presently?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Presently, there are 163 000 members.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: *Sir, in order to publicise the JPC as one of Hong Kong's most innovative movements to bring the police closer to the young people of Hong Kong and in order to keep this innovation going will the police consider having socials, discos, for example, in police stations and encourage young people to meet and know policemen better?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am sure that will be taken into account. It is a valuable suggestion but of course the activities of the Junior Police Call are very wide indeed. Literally thousands of activities are arranged by districts each year and not only the larger events such as the annual camp and the International Youth Year JPC Concert but activities include over 30 different types of sporting and recreational pursuits plus a large number of community service programmes; whether or not discos at police stations are among them I should have to make enquiries.

MRS. CHOW: *May I congratulate the Government for spending only \$15 per head on each member of the JPC but can the community's call to improve quality and quantity of services provided by the JPC to meet the three very worthwhile objectives mentioned in the Attorney General's reply be met with an increase in Budget if the need is established?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, to the first part of the question, the answer is 'yes'. Indeed, all congratulations from Mrs. CHOW are well received. So far as topping up so to speak the present allocation from the Government resources of \$2.1 million I'm told that in this financial year the JPC has in addition received donations worth some \$800,000, quite a substantial sum within that from the Jockey Club. So in different ways, the community is always free to donate and does donate to this very worthwhile cause.

MRS. TAM: *Will the Attorney General inform this Council of the number of cases in the last five years in which members of the JPC have directly or indirectly assisted the police successfully in the investigation of criminal cases?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, I do not have that figure with me and I should have to make enquiries and let Mrs. TAM know. (Annex I)

MR. HUI: *Sir, could we know about the dropouts of JPC members and in view of the large number of members involved, could we be informed how their programme, especially the programme quality, is being monitored?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Sir, so far as the dropout is concerned I do not think I can give any particular figure because once enrolled, there are of course members in the age group for which they are eligible that is to say from the age of nine through to 17. Many of those of course reaching their 17th birthday become leaders, some also stay on as associate members. Of that number I gave of something like 163 000 members, I'm informed that something like 23 000 members are regularly taking part in the many activities that are run: of course, different people at different times will be taking part. So far as monitoring the programme is concerned I believe that to be the case.

Control of asbestos materials

8. DR. HO asked: *Will Government make a statement on what measures it will propose to ban the use of asbestos-related materials in construction work in order to abate health hazards?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: A set of regulations, to be introduced under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, has been drafted. One of the objectives is to control the use of asbestos and any substance containing asbestos in industrial undertakings, including construction sites.

The regulations would ban the use of blue asbestos (crocidolite), brown asbestos (amosite) and any substance containing either of these minerals. Use of less dangerous asbestos materials would be closely controlled and the process of spraying with a substance containing any form of asbestos would be prohibited.

The regulations were made by the Commissioner for Labour yesterday and will be put to this Council subject to your agreement, Sir, shortly.

DR. HO: *As asbestos-related materials continue to be used in industrial and construction sites, may this Council be informed as to what measures Government will take:*

- (i) to educate the workers in handling such materials about health hazards; and*
- (ii) to ensure that the workers I emphasise workers comply with the regulations as mentioned in your answer?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, with regard firstly to education, as Dr. Ho Kam-fai knows, there is considerable effort put into this by the Industrial Safety Training Centre of the Labour Department and since 1984 they have conducted 21 training courses entitled 'Introduction Towards Occupation Health and Chemical Hazards' which were attended by a total of 686 persons. It has also conducted six specialist courses entitled 'Hazards in the Use of Asbestos and Its Control' which were attended by a total of 180 persons. These courses will continue to be organised in future and the dissemination of

the hazards of asbestos and precautions is also made through the tripartite Construction Industrial Safety Sub-Committee under the Labour Advisory Board.

MR. CHENG: *Sir, I am pleased to know that the use of spray asbestos will be prohibited by law. Would the Government be prepared to amend the Building Construction Regulations at the same time to ban the use of spray asbestos for fire protection of structural steel sections and would the Government also contemplate similar control on the use of glass-fibres materials?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, in some cases, that type of spray might be covered by these regulations. In cases where it is not, that is where it would be covered by the Building Regulations, I think it is a matter for the Secretary for Lands and Works who might perhaps be prepared to add to my answer.

MR. HO: *Sir, I am also concerned with the existing buildings where extensive asbestos-related materials have been used; therefore will the Government inform this Council of the number of such buildings involved and also are there any plans or measures to ensure the safety of persons who frequent buildings which contain such asbestos-related materials?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: Sir, with respect to the question, I am in some difficulty over this. The thrust of this question is dealing with the construction work and asbestos process. The question of buildings is in part subject to a question which I think is put down for answer next week. But in relation to the Buildings Ordinance and Building Regulations, this is a matter within the purview of the Secretary for Lands and Works.

DR. CHIU: *In view of the danger of the asbestos industry, will the Government consider compulsory yearly physical check-up for workers engaged in this industry?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: There is a provision for regular inspection in the proposed regulations.

MR. TAM (in Cantonese): *Sir, there are buildings where asbestos has been used. What is the extent of the health hazards and what will the Government do about them?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: In so far as workers are concerned, Sir, the hazards from asbestos in existing buildings arises largely when the building has to be demolished. The regulations also contain a requirement for contractors and proprietors to notify the Commissioner of Labour before such work starts. The Factory Inspector would then advise contractors on precautions and measures and keep the work under surveillance in accordance with the proposed regulations.

MR. LEE YU-TAI: *Sir, would the Government supply statistics on cases of asbestos poisoning if such figures are available?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: *Sir, asbestosis as it is called is a notifiable disease under the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance. So cases of asbestosis are compensatable but to date no cases have actually been reported to the board. So far as I have been able to ascertain, only four cases of asbestos-related diseases had been reported in recent years. I am quite conscious of course that may conceal a larger number but I think I should add that in the case of most workers in Hong Kong their contact with asbestos is occasional. There are very few processes here where it is continuous.*

MRS. NG (in Cantonese): *Same, question, Sir.*

DR. HO: *Sir, my supplementary consists of two parts but I don't think my second part has been answered which reads what measure Government will take to ensure that the workers, I emphasise the word workers, comply with the regulations as mentioned in your answer?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: *I must apologise to Dr. Ho Kam-fai I lost the second part of his question and replied to the first part. There will be provision in the regulations to ensure that workers comply where they are requested to do so by their employer.*

Escalator accidents

9. MR. CHUNG asked (in Cantonese): *In view of the recent cases of injuries brought upon small children involving escalators, will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) what controlling measures the Government has in regard to the construction, maintenance and repair of escalators;*
- (b) how many cases of accidents involving escalators which caused injuries to users have occurred during the past 12 months;*
- (c) what were the causes of such accidents; and*
- (d) what are the remedial measures to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS:

- (a) Sir, the construction of escalators is governed by the Building (Escalators) Regulations of the Buildings Ordinance while maintenance and repair are governed by the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance. Certificates for the operation of an escalator will be issued only if international standards governing the safe use of escalators are complied with.*

- (b) There is no statutory requirement to report escalator accidents and I can give details only of the eight cases investigated in the last year by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and of those included in regular reports made by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation.
- (c) (i) Of the eight cases, three involved adults, of which two were attributable to infirmity. The third involved a 60-year old woman who died of a heart attack while walking up an escalator which was stationary at the time. The other accidents, all involved small children and were mainly caused by inadequate adult supervision. One of these accidents was fatal when an 18 month old girl fell to her death through a gap between the escalator and the adjoining parapet wall. All the escalators concerned were found on subsequent inspection to be in safe working order.
- (ii) The MTRC with almost 400 escalators are much the largest operator of escalators in Hong Kong. The most recent figures available relate to the third quarter of 1985, the period following the opening of the Island Line. During that quarter, 104 passengers were involved in escalator related accidents of whom 10 required hospital treatment. The main cause of these accidents was people losing their balance when using the escalator. Again the escalators were in safe working condition at the time of the accidents. I should perhaps put that figures in perspective. I should add that during the period 127 million passengers travelled on the railway.
- (d) On the question of remedial measures, Sir, escalators are subject to regular inspection to ensure that they are in safe working order. All escalator owners and contractors have been advised that they should ensure that the gap between escalator balustrades and adjoining parapet walls should not be wider than 100 mm, about four inches.

MR. CHUNG (in Cantonese): *Sir, in view of the fact that there have been a number of cases of injuries, has the Government considered educating the public on how to use escalators safely, and are the regular inspections mentioned in paragraph (d) of the answer carried out by Government staff or by private contractors and how regular are they?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Sir, if I may answer the second part of the question first. The inspection is carried out twice a year and is done by registered escalator engineer, not by Government staff, who then submits the report to the Government. The regulations also require that all escalators are serviced monthly by a registered escalator contractor. I understand, in fact, the general practice is that they should be serviced once a week. If there are any accidents which are reported to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Government staff then inspect the escalator. In the case of the accidents on the MTRC, MTRC staff inspected the escalator at that time. On the question of publicity, Sir, Government has at the moment no plans or campaign to deal with escalator safety. I would perhaps like to take this opportunity to emphasise the need to parents particularly to supervise their children. I most certainly see,

and I am sure other Members see, all too often children playing on escalators and treating it as a toy rather than a means of communication.

MR. YEUNG: *Sir, what assurance can the Government give that the relevant advice on the width of the gap has been fully complied with and what action, if any, has been taken against operators of substandard escalators?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Sir, following the accident, all escalator contractors were asked to report any cases where the gap exceeded 100 mm, and the cases which were reported were drawn to the attention of the owners who have been asked to rectify that particular point. The escalators are being inspected to make sure that it has been done. At the same time, Sir, we are proposing to amend the Building Regulations to lay down the standard of 100 mm for gaps in the future.

Industrial bank

10. MR. NGAI asked (in Cantonese): *In view of the fact that as an industrial centre, Hong Kong still lacks a bank specialising in providing facilities to manufacturers, will the Government consider to set up an industrial bank with long-term facilities for capital investment to manufacturers?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Sir, this contentious issue has been raised several times in the Council in past years. Indeed a committee was set up by the Governor in 1959 to consider the need for an industrial development bank. It advised that no such need existed.

Nearly all Hong Kong's flourishing industrial sector has been created since 1949. The major source of funds has been bank loans. I am unaware of any evidence that industrialists with sound business propositions have been or are now unable to get appropriate loans. The banks indeed have always been very helpful, frequently lending money based on assessment of personal character rather than full collateral. Indeed, I know of many industrialists who have secured loans but who should not have.

Apart from the numerous deposit-taking companies and the possibility of securing offshore loans, there are now 143 highly competitive banks in Hong Kong and there is ample liquidity. The prime rate is lower than in the US, Canada or United Kingdom. The stock exchanges, leasing and the new development of venture capital funds indicate other possible alternative arrangements. I see no good reason to support Government involvement in a new form of venture banking which would require us to compete with the private sector. This would inevitably be both expensive for the tax payer and wholly opposed to long standing policy, which has demonstrably served Hong Kong well. It would incidentally be a disastrous venture for the Hang Lung or OT banks, which we seek to return to the private sector as soon as possible at the highest possible price.

MR. NGAI (in Cantonese): *Sir, I note the fact raised by the Financial Secretary concerning the setting up in 1959 by the Governor of a committee to look into the need for setting up an industrial development bank and the committee advised that no such need existed. But 30 years later, industry is still important to Hong Kong's economy. Will the Government consider reviewing the policy by examining similar schemes in other countries in order to encourage long-term industrial investment here?*

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: *Sir, if Mr. NGAI with his great experience can propose any scheme that has a sound commercial basis, I am sure that many bankers will be interested in coming to the party. The question was also raised in the Advisory Committee on Diversification and I draw Mr. NGAI'S attention to paragraph 340: 'It was agreed that through finance, the possible need for an industrial development bank should at least be reviewed from time to time.' It has been and the answer is still the same. The only real possible problem is long-term finance but I do not believe myself that an appropriate remedy is in effect Government subsidy. The fact must be faced that there are many industries in Hong Kong other than manufacturing industries. All would like to get their hands on loans bearing a non-commercial rate. The resulting burden would then fall on the taxpayer. I believe that the interests of Hong Kong are best served by low taxes and maximum encouragement of entrepreneurs. Differential subsidy is a very slippery slope.*

Boundary definition for land title purpose

11. MR. CHENG asked: *A number of legal disputes over land boundary and demarcation have arisen during the past years. What steps has Government taken to eliminate the deficiencies in Hong Kong's system of boundary definition for land title purposes, particularly in the New Territories? In this connection, is Government prepared to agree to the proposed Land Survey Bill and require professionally qualified land surveyors to be registered in the public interest?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: *Sir, to remedy the deficiencies in the present system of boundary definition for land title purposes, the Government is, in consultation with the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk and other interested organisations, considering the need for a Boundary Rectification Ordinance which would enable lease boundaries to be rectified or authenticated and land title disputes settled by simplified procedures. In parallel, the Government is examining the proposal for a Land Survey Ordinance which would enable qualified land surveyors in the private sector to undertake some of the work that would arise from the enactment of the proposed Boundary Rectification Ordinance.*

MR. CHENG: *Sir, according to the current Land Registration Ordinance, boundary descriptions for deposit in the land registry need not necessarily be in plan form*

and it goes without saying that the plan, if any, may be grossly inaccurate. May I ask whether the Government is prepared to improve the situation, by say, introducing a plan examination system?

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Sir, under the proposed Land Survey Ordinance, all plans for registration would have to be prepared by registered land surveyers and the examination of such plans would be an essential feature of the Ordinance.

MR. TAI: *Sir, can the Secretary for Lands and Works inform this Council whether there is a need to devise legislation to deal with boundary definition for land title purpose, and if so, when the bill can be presented to this Council for consideration?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: Yes, Sir, I think that there is a need for such a Bill and as I say, we are in the process at the moment of having preliminary consultations with the aim of producing such a Bill. This will take some time but I would hope that it could be introduced some time in the next session of this legislature.

MR. CHEUNG (in Cantonese): *Sir, could the Secretary for Lands and Works inform this Council whether there are any lost lots involved?*

SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS: It is a problem, Sir. We do have missing lots from time to time in the New Territories. I think they have to be dealt with on an individual basis, with the most pragmatic solution found for them.

Written answers to questions

Accidents involving bicycles

12. DR. LAM asked: *Will Government inform this Council of:*

- (a) the number of traffic accidents involving bicycles in the last two years;*
- (b) the number of prosecutions against cyclists arising from these accidents;*
- (c) the number of prosecutions against cyclists not involved in any traffic accidents; and*
- (d) the measures being taken to reduce accidents involving cyclists?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Sir, there were 820 traffic accidents involving bicycles in 1984 and 460 in the first nine months of 1985. Arising from these traffic accidents, 234 prosecutions were taken against cyclists in 1984 and 172 in the first nine months of 1985.

There were 3 808 prosecutions against cyclists not involved in traffic accidents in 1984 and 8 096 in the first nine months of 1985.

The Government considers that apart from the obvious deterrent effect of prosecutions, publicity, education and the provision of properly designed facilities for cyclists can further reduce the number of cycling accidents. In 1984-85, the cyclist was included as one of the target groups for road safety publicity. An 'announcement of public interest' on 'safe rules for cycling' was produced and regularly shown on television. A documentary on road safety was included in the 'Common Sense' series, and part of it was dedicated to accidents involving cyclists and the importance of safety. Posters on safety in cycling were displayed and leaflets distributed.

On the education front, safety in cycling is included in the secondary school road safety teaching kit, which is being widely used in schools. The revised Road Users' Code, which will be published later this year, will include a section giving guidance to cyclists.

On specialised facilities, cycle tracks and cycle parks are being provided. The objective is to segregate cyclists from motorists so as to reduce chance of accidents.

It is hoped that these extensive measures will prove effective.

Third university

13. MR. TAI asked: *With regard to the third university in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council of the following:*

- (a) *the steps which have been taken by the Government to implement the establishment of such institution; and*
- (b) *the proposed site for the new institution?*

SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER: The Government has consulted the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee on the possible academic profile and organisational aspects pertaining to the third university. Recommendations of the committee are being examined by the Administration. Proposals will very shortly be submitted to the Education Commission and the Executive Council for their advice. A planning committee would then be established to plan and oversee the implementation of this project.

At present, a number of suitable sites have been earmarked, all of which are in the New Territories. The planning committee will have, under its terms of reference, to make a recommendation on the choice of the most suitable site when the type and size of the new institution has been decided. The final selection of the site is not likely to be made for some time.

Control of storage of liquified petroleum gas

14. MR. LEE YU-TAI asked: *Would Government consider taking control measures on shops of LP gas companies in commercial/residential complexes since*

some of these shops may store excess quantities of LP gas which may pose danger to residents?

SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION: Sir, I can assure Members that the storage of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) for sale or other purposes is strictly controlled. LPG is classified under the Dangerous Goods (Classification) Regulations (Cap. 295) as 'dangerous goods' in category 2. Under the provisions of the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295) any person wishing to store quantities of LPG in excess of 50 kg (or 25 kg when in gas cartridges or lighter refills) has to apply to the Director of Fire Services for a licence to do so. Before issuing such a licence the Director ensures that adequate safety measures have been taken. He also specifies in the licence the maximum quantity of LPG that may be stored by the licensee.

LPG stores are inspected annually prior to the renewal of licences. In addition, the Fire Services Department undertakes area surveys from time to time subject to manpower availability, during which checks are made to ensure that persons storing LPG have valid licences and that quantities stored do not exceed permitted limits.

Persons ignoring the licensing requirement are subject to prosecution, with a maximum penalty of a fine of \$25,000 and six months' imprisonment. In 1985, there were 25 prosecutions for offences arising from the storage of LPG.

In 1985 there were only 22 fires (0.15 per cent of the total) where the cause of ignition was identified as LPG. Of these only three (0.02 per cent of the total) took place in shops. In 1984 the corresponding figures were 23 and nil. I hope these statistics will help reassure Members that the situation is well under control.

Diversification of export markets

15. MR. LEE YU-TAI asked: *What steps have been taken by the Government and subvented organisations (e.g. Trade Development Council) towards achieving diversification of markets for Hong Kong products, particularly in such regions as the Middle East, and Central and South America?*

SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY: Sir, to achieve diversification of markets for Hong Kong products, we need competitive industries on the one hand and active trade promotion on the other.

As regards promoting industrial development, the Government has been taking active measures to:

- (a) provide an efficient and adequate infrastructure;
- (b) provide a stable environment conducive to industrial investment;
- (c) ensure an adequate supply of trained manpower;

- (d) assist in the development and introduction of new technology; and
- (e) provide technical back-up services.

I covered these matters in my reply in this Council on 11 December 1985 to the debate on the Motion of Thanks for the Governor's address.

As regards trade promotion, the Government has entrusted this function to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, which is the statutory body set up to promote, assist and develop Hong Kong's overseas trade, especially exports.

Diversification of export markets for Hong Kong products has been an important promotional objective of the council. Its promotional strategy is to focus on those markets where the potential for increasing trade is greatest and its support can be of greatest value in complementing the business community's own marketing efforts. Priority is currently being given to developing the Japanese and Chinese markets.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, the council has over the last 12 years organised over 40 business groups to the area. In 1985-86, the council has scheduled two business groups to and received five incoming trade missions from this region. It will continue to encourage more Middle East businessmen to come to Hong Kong in the future.

As regards Central and South America, the council has a branch office in Panama, which is an important distribution centre for the region. This office liaises closely with importers in the region, keeps in contact with buyers throughout the year and maintains an up-to-date data bank to answer trade enquiries from Hong Kong manufacturers. It also participates and publicises Hong Kong among Central and South America buyers in major trade fairs in the region as well as in North America. Although market conditions in the region are still generally unfavourable, the council is ready to respond positively to any promotional opportunities which may arise in the future.

Sha Tin—Meisha Ferry Terminal

16. MR. ANDREW WONG asked: *Will Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *what is the utilisation rate of the Sha Tin—Meisha Ferry Terminal since it came into operation;*
- (b) *whether the utilisation rate justifies the continued existence of the terminal which involves the deployment of customs and immigration officials constituting a recurrent burden on the public purse;*
- (c) *if so, what steps does Government intend to take, e.g. negotiating with the Shenzhen authorities on the speeding up of the development of the Meisha resort area; and*
- (d) *if not, what alternative uses does Government intend to make of the existing facilities, e.g. strengthening links with outlying areas and islands on the eastern part of the New Territories?*

SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT: Sir, the information requested by Mr. WONG is as follows:

- (a) the average number of passengers using the Sha Tin—Meisha Ferry Terminal since it came into operation in August 1984 has been 2 100 per month in 1984 and 2 230 per month in 1985. A detailed breakdown is contained in the appendix. It will be noted that the Sha Tin—Meisha ferry service is not operated during the winter months;
- (b) the utilisation rate has so far not come up to expectation, and the facilities are at present under-utilised. The provision of the Sha Tin—Meisha ferry service was, however, part of the 1982 Agreement entered into with the Shenzhen Municipality to facilitate cross border communication;
- (c) developments in Shenzhen are a matter for the Chinese authorities. However it is known that a 300-room hotel in Xiao Meisha was due to open towards the end of 1985, a hotel in Da Meisha is being redeveloped, and plans for a second hotel there have been completed, with construction starting this year;
- (d) as regards the utilisation of the terminal facilities by Tolo Harbour and Tap Mun ferry services, this is something which can be considered if satisfactory ways can be found to separate passengers using external and internal services. Internal ferry services at present use the two ferry piers at nearby Ma Liu Shui which, although adequate in terms of capacity, are somewhat inconveniently located.

Appendix

Number of passengers using the Sha Tin—Meisha Ferry Terminal since August 1984

	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Aug 1984	1 049	1 175	2 224
Sep 1984	1 457	1 718	3 175
Oct 1984	1 144	1 646	2 790
Nov 1984	640	1 005	1 645
Dec 1984	265	407	672
Average monthly passenger throughput:			2 100

(Jan-May 1985 Service suspended during winter season.)

Jun 1985	694	1 056	1 750
Jul 1985	1 225	1 509	2 734
Aug 1985	1 437	1 560	2 997
Sep 1985	823	1 062	1 885
Oct 1985	892	895	1 787
Average monthly passenger throughput:			2 230

(Nov 1985-May 1986 Service suspended during winter season.)

Return of boat brides

17. MISS TAM asked: *In view of the Government's statement to the Council on 10 July 1985 that it will do what it can to ensure the early return of the 13 boat brides by asking the Chinese authorities to give them priority to enter Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council of:*

- (a) the whereabouts of each of these boat brides;*
- (b) the prospects for the return of these boat brides to Hong Kong;*
- (c) the length of time it will take for each of them to be returned here; and*
- (d) the whereabouts, prospects for return, and length of time required for the children who were removed with their mothers to return to Hong Kong?*

ATTORNEY GENERAL:

- (a) Sir, 13 boat brides returned voluntarily to China in August 1985 following the Government's rejection of their petition for permission to stay. A fourteenth boat bride was allowed to remain to give birth in Hong Kong but left for China in October 1985. Of these 14 boat brides, one has come back to Hong Kong on a one-way Chinese exit permit. Another one is now in Hong Kong on a two-way exit permit. The other 12 are believed to be in China. According to information they supplied to the Immigration Department before their departure, eight came from Zhongshan and four came from Zhuhai.
- (b) In accordance with existing policy, wives in China of Hong Kong residents may be admitted for settlement in Hong Kong only if the appropriate authorities in China issue them with one-way exit permits. As promised by the Secretary for Security in this Council on 10 July 1985, the Hong Kong Government made a formal request to the Chinese authorities via the New China News Agency, following their voluntary departure, arguing strongly for priority to be given to applications from the boat brides for one-way exit permits to return to Hong Kong. We are confident that their prospects for returning to Hong Kong in due course are good.
- (c) This is a matter for the appropriate authorities in China.
- (d) Of the children who have returned to China with their mothers, only three would need to obtain a one-way exit permit to return to Hong Kong for settlement. The other children have legal resident status in Hong Kong and could come back here at any time. According to information available to the Immigration Department, two came from Zhuhai and one came from Zhongshan. Their prospects for returning to Hong Kong are presumably the same as for their mothers.

Statement

Hong Kong Trade Development Council—Annual Report and Accounts 1984/85

MISS DUNN:

I Introduction

Sir, tabled today is the annual report of the Trade Development Council for the financial year from 1 April 1984 to 31 March 1985.

During the period under review, the international trading climate was generally favourable. Accordingly, emphasis was given to capitalising on the strong demand in our major markets, particularly the United States.

In parallel with this, TDC continued to pursue its on-going campaign in the Japanese market and continued to build up its role as a catalyst for Hong Kong's rapidly expanding business relationship with China.

II Overseas activities

In addition to day-to-day contacts with buyers and sellers by our network of 20 overseas offices, we organised over 60 overseas trade promotions. Some 1 300 Hong Kong companies participated in these events. The total amount of business negotiated and concluded on the spot during these promotions reached about HK\$1.5 billion. In addition, nearly 25 000 trade enquiries were processed as a result of these activities overseas.

In total, these activities spanned 27 countries around the world, including 16 promotions in the United States, 26 in Europe, and 11 in Japan.

III Local activities

Here, in Hong Kong during the year, in addition to the high profile events such as the women's sportswear show, we handled 190 inward missions from 34 countries, including 49 from China. Our trade enquiry service processed over 130 000 individual enquiries; and an extensive programme of export seminars, including major seminars on West Germany, Canadian and Japanese markets were conducted for local manufacturers and traders.

In support of our various promotional efforts, our Publicity Department distributed more than 1.6 million copies of all types of publications about Hong Kong products to buyers in 175 countries around the world.

IV Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

A major milestone event in Hong Kong's development as an international manufacturing and trade centre is the decision to build the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The business community has felt the need for such a facility for many years, but it was only after the Government passed responsibility for the project to the TDC in 1984—together with a land grant—that the idea has become a reality. Work is proceeding on schedule and completion is expected in 1988.

V Conclusion

In addition to the trade promotion activities, we have been working closely with the Government to address the growing threat of protectionism in our largest market.

The TDC is already financing three firms of lobbyists who are working for Hong Kong's interests in Washington. Although the well known Jenkins' Bill was vetoed by President REAGAN, protectionist sentiments remain strong in the

United States. We will continue to work in close co-operation with the Government and other trade organisations to safeguard and promote Hong Kong's interests.

Government Business

Second Reading of Bills

RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985

Resumption of debate on Second Reading (8 January 1986)

MR. CHEUNG: Sir, the Regional Council which will come into being on 1 April this year will be vested with statutory powers to perform a whole wide range of municipal services. If the Regional Council is to be able to function effectively and to provide the residents of the Regional Council area with all the municipal services and facilities they require, the council must be provided with sufficient revenue to cover the cost of its activities.

The Financial Secretary has referred to the estimated net financial requirements of the Regional Council for 1986-87 and 1987-88 as being \$744 million and \$880 million respectively. The Financial Secretary has also pointed out, and I want to emphasise, that these figures exclude expenditure on capital works which would normally be expected to be met by a financially autonomous municipal council such as the Regional Council. These involve sums estimated at about \$250 million per annum, on the basis of past trend of expenditure in respect of municipal projects undertaken in the Regional Council area.

The proposal, as contained in the Rating (Amendment) Bill 1986 before us, involves, *inter alia*, a small increase in the rates in the Regional Council area. Under the same proposal, the Regional Council will receive all the revenue arising from this increased rates percentage. Furthermore, Government has agreed to meet such expenditure for capital works for the two years 1986-87 and 1987-88 within the average level of spending in this area during recent years in respect of items recommended by the Regional Council to proceed within this period.

The main advantage of the above arrangement is that it enables the Regional Council to meet all its recurrent expenditure with a small increase in the rates. It is acceptable as an interim measure. The arrangement for 1988-89 and thereafter would clearly have to be made differently if large increases in the incidence of Regional Council rates to be avoided. Bearing in mind that the new towns in the Regional Council area are much more rapid growth areas than the rest of the territory, the pressure on the Regional Council to provide more municipal facilities and services will make a substantial demand on the financial resources available to the Regional Council. I therefore think that it would only

be prudent for Government to give advance consideration to this matter and to commence with a review of the interim arrangement at the beginning of 1987, at the latest.

Sir, with these remarks, I support the motion.

MISS TAM: Sir, in the financial year 1973-74 the Urban Council was granted its financial autonomy. The total expenditure for that year was \$210.87 million. In the financial year 1984-85 the total expenditure of the Urban Council increased to \$1,610.32 million. There is no doubt that the services provided by the Urban Council are expanding both in scope and volume and for the details. Members can refer to the booklet by the Urban Council entitled Focus on Finance and Achievements 1973-1985. Even without referring to this 16-page booklet, I trust members of the public who have participated in the Urban Council's cultural activities in its first Centenary Year in 1985 will agree that Hong Kong is no longer a cultural desert. And those of us who frequently have to drive or walk through different parts of the urban areas should notice the increased number of oases of sitting-out areas and planting areas which soften the landscape of this 'concrete jungle'.

I should add that the Urban Council is still tackling the old problem of hawker control and will have to tackle new problems such as billiard saloon licensing. But within the last three years the Urban Council has managed to provide expanding services with a reduction of its staff:

	<i>No. of Posts</i>	<i>Per cent reduced</i>
1.4.84	18 178	
1.4.85	17 874	1.67 per cent
1.12.85	17 274	3.40 per cent

None of these could have been achieved without the sound and skilful management of the Urban Council's finance under Mr. FORSGATE, that is the Chairman of the Finance Committee, and the deployment of staff under the Administrative Select Committee chaired by Dr. Kim CHAM, both working closely with the Chairman of the Urban Council.

I am happy to support the financial arrangements contained in the Bill before this Council. The withdrawal of the salary grant (about \$150 million) from the Urban Council by the Government will be offset by a 0.5 per cent increase in rates income from the Government's share of the general rate; and another 0.5 per cent increase in rate revenue will be given to the Urban Council to meet normal growth and inflation. This will free the Urban Council from financial difficulties for a few years to come and I have pleasure in supporting this Bill.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN: Sir, I have to prefix what I am going to say by making clear that the remarks by the hon. Maria TAM were not prompted by the Chairman of the Urban Council. In recent years, several big cities in the Western world have suffered crippling difficulties in balancing their budgets because of escalating

inflation, and the need to meet the rising aspirations of their urban dwellers. Some, as we know, have plunged hopelessly into the red, a recent example being Liverpool, which is now in a difficult financial situation.

To a much lesser extent the Urban Council, too, was facing a rather gloomy financial future. Under the existing financial arrangements between the Government and the Urban Council, the council was gradually but inexorably slipping into an ever increasing deficit position which in a few more years would have jeopardised the high standard of municipal services at present provided for the 4 million urban dwellers of Hong Kong.

To enable the council to continue with its long-term and meaningful task, the council and the Government set up a working party early last year to formulate a new financial package and furthermore devise practical amendments to the outdated Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements between the Government and the council which was drawn up in 1973.

With goodwill and commonsense on both sides, a new financial package has been drawn up which necessitates the proposed adjustments to the rates percentages in the Urban Council area to ensure that the council will have a balanced budget at least for the next few years.

Although the council will be in a better position as a result of the new financial arrangements, I must emphasise that Urban Councillors and the Urban Services Department will continue to be ever conscious of the need to economise.

Select committees will all be at great pains to scrutinise each and every project whether it be large or small, to ensure that the council's funds are wisely and productively spent in the creation of a better lifestyle for the people of Hong Kong.

The department has been the council's staunch ally in devising these economies, working steadily to achieve higher productivity and more value for money. The Urban Council is committed to this belt-tightening policy now and in the ensuing years.

I would furthermore assure the ratepayers of Hong Kong that the high standard of municipal services they have come to expect and taken for granted will be maintained.

As a result of the new financial package arrived at with the tight-fisted but understanding and progressive-minded Financial Secretary, the Urban Council will now be able to continue its capital works programme with anticipated cash expenditure of \$1.57 billion for the period 1985-86 to 1989-90 ...i.e. 1.5 times that which it has spent in the previous 12 years...to provide still more modern facilities for our city, and thus meet the rising aspirations of our dynamic community.

And I add, Sir, that many of these facilities in the Urban Council capital works programme are either territory wide or serve the whole of the urban areas

and that they cannot be built by certain district boards which are advisory organs in nature within their respective geographic families.

Taking all this into account, I support the Bill.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Sir, Miss TAM is most persuasive on the virtues of the Urban Council management. I agree with them. It is, nevertheless, an unfortunate fact of life faced by all governments that there is no theoretical limit to the ability of decent men and women to spend public funds on decent projects. The difficult approach to a sensitive Rating (Amendment) Bill has been much eased by the understanding of both councils in general and their chairmen in particular. I commend Mr. CHEONG-LEEN'S comment on the goodwill and common sense of both sides. I also assure Mr. CHEUNG Yan-lung that the Government is aware of possible problems blooming for the Regional Council in the late 1980s. Advance consideration and discussion will certainly be needed in 1987.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

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

Hong Kong Trade Development Council (Amendment) Bill 1985

Resumption of debate on Second Reading (8 January 1986)

MISS DUNN: Sir, I warmly support this Bill.

Since 1979, Hong Kong's bilateral trade with China has grown from HK\$17 billion to HK\$95 billion in 1984 and HK\$98 billion in the first 10 months of last year. China now ranks as Hong Kong's largest trading partner—bigger even than the United States. As a market for our domestic exports, China has risen from 37th place in 1978 to second place in 1984.

In assisting the Hong Kong trading community to realise the potential that this important market offers, the TDC must have access to authoritative information and expertise that is available on the practicalities of doing business with China.

The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce has this information and expertise, and the main provision in this Bill that it should be represented on the council is very timely indeed.

The well-established contacts and business relations which the Chinese General Chamber has with China and their intimate knowledge of trading channels in that market will be invaluable in the TDC's work.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second time.

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

Committee stage of Bills

Council went into Committee

RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985

Clauses 1 to 10 were agreed to.

HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985

Clauses 1 to 4 were agreed to.

Council then resumed.

Third Reading of Bills

The Attorney General reported that the

RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985 and the

HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1985

had passed through Committee without amendment, and moved the Third Reading of the Bills.

Question put on the Bills and agreed to.

Bills read the Third time and passed.

Adjournment and next sitting

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: In accordance with Standing Orders I now adjourn the Council until 2.30 pm on 29 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.

WRITTEN ANSWER**Annex I****Written answer by the Attorney General to Mrs. Rosanna TAM'S supplementary question to Question No. 7.**

I regret to advise you that the statistics requested are not available. The police do not keep separate figures for reports made by JPC members. However, between 1974 and 1983 a special 'hotline' set up for the use of JPC members received 1 216 crime reports which resulted in 163 arrests. I am informed that use of the special hotline was discontinued in 1983 as an economy measure. JPC members who wish to report crime are encouraged to do so through the regular police hotline: 5-277177.

I should add that the aims of the JPC are to promote healthy forms of recreation; to encourage civic awareness; and to build a bridge between the young people of Hong Kong and their police force. As part of their civic awareness training, JPC members are encouraged to report crime. They are not encouraged to seek out crime or criminals. No attempt is made to use the JPC as a pool of police informers.