

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 11 (Written Reply)

Asked by: Hon IP Kwok-him

Date of meeting: 26 February 2003

Replied by: Secretary for Housing,
Planning and Lands

Question:

I notice that many advertisement signboards overhanging from buildings are huge in size and some of them even span the whole width of the street. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether erecting such large signboards over the streets constitutes an encroachment on government land; if so, of the details;
- (b) how the cases involving signboards assessed as encroaching on government land are to be dealt with under existing legislation; and whether and how the relevant authorities have dealt with such cases; and
- (c) whether it will consider imposing a charge on the owners of such signboards for the occupation of government land; if so, how the charge is calculated; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply :

President,

Signboards overhanging from buildings and protruding over the streets is a form of occupation of unleased land. The Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 28) provides that unleased land shall not be occupied except through a licence issued under this Ordinance.

Although the scope of Cap. 28 appears to be broad enough to cover signboards overhanging the streets and unleased land, any attempt to deal with these circumstances under this Ordinance will raise a lot of pertinent and complex issues. These include the intended coverage of our policy, the read across on other forms of occupation/use of Government land, the need for an administrative structure to enforce such a licensing scheme and the cost of compliance for the community. We will need to examine these issues thoroughly and to discuss with relevant bodies before consideration may be given to licensing signboards overhanging Government land under the Ordinance.

Advertising signboards protruding over the streets and unleased land have formed part of the Hong Kong streetscape for a very long time. The Administration has not, up to now, contemplated any plan to issue licences for signboards overhanging Government land under the Ordinance given the complex issues involved and other competing work priorities.