

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2004-05
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)076

Question Serial No.

1513

Head: 91 Lands Department

Subhead(No. & title):

Programme: (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer: Director of Lands

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: The Government has set the targets that upon its receipt of lease modification applications (non small house cases), it will issue letter of reply to application within three weeks and issue letter of offer of provisional basic terms within 24 weeks. In 2003, only 97% of the targets was met.

However, 235 posts will be deleted in 2004-05. In the circumstances, what measures will the Government take to ensure that 100% of the targets will be met?

Asked by: Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply:

The Department's ability to fully meet the performance targets for the year was affected by the poor property market sentiment in 2003. This was reflected in the lengthier negotiations over the terms of the lease modification. Moreover, the processing of lease modification applications is often very complex, involving liaison with a number of government departments. Progress is often affected by factors beyond the control of Lands Department.

Of the number of posts (i.e. 235) to be deleted in 2004-05, more than half (i.e. 129) are project-specific time-limited posts in the Task Force (Black Spots) Team and the Railway Development Section of the Department. These posts are not related to the work of processing lease modification cases. The remaining posts are mainly related to the second Voluntary Retirement Scheme and most of them are not directly related to the processing of lease modification applications. Hence, we envisage that the processing of lease modifications in 2004-05 will not be adversely affected by the aforementioned deletion of posts. Barring any factors beyond Lands Department's control, we will strive to meet our performance targets in the coming year.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 25 March 2004