

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2004-05

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)122

Question Serial No.

1517

Head: 110 Territory Development Department Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Territory Development

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: For Personal Emoluments - Allowances under Subhead 000 Operational expenses, why is the revised estimate for this year 40% less than the actual expenditure of last year? However, at the same time, the administration estimated that the allowances would increase by 30% in this financial year. What is the reason for the fluctuation in the amount?

Asked by: Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply: The revised estimate for Allowances in 2003-04 is less than the actual expenditure because the Department has exercised very stringent control over expenditure on acting allowance and over-time allowance during the year. Allowances are only approved for situations where acting appointment or over-time work are strictly unavoidable. For officers who have undertaken overtime work, they are compensated with time-off in lieu of allowance as far as possible.

The 2004-05 draft estimate for Allowances is 30% higher than the 2003-04 revised estimate because it is anticipated that there would be an increase in short-term acting appointments incurring allowances, arising from vacancies which cannot be immediately filled upon departure of retiring officers. However, this is only a provision made and the Department will exercise the same stringent control over the payment of allowances in the course of the year.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ John S. V. CHAI

Post Title _____ Director of Territory Development

Date _____ 24 March 2004