

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

Head : 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question :

- (a) Can the Administration state the reason(s) why the estimates for the item "Buildings and Building Works" in 2005-06 will decrease? The Administration will put more efforts in removing unauthorised building works, but the allocations for the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme has not been increased correspondingly. Can the Administration state the reason why?
- (b) The Buildings Department will instigate more prosecutions against unauthorised building works from 1,644 in 2004 to 3,000 in 2005-06. Can the Administration tell us how many of them are there in the New Territories and out of which how many are relating to village small houses? Apart from those reported, in what ways does the Administration make inspection and verification of unauthorised building works? If the work is being dealt with by outsourcing, what is the cost in handling each case?
- (c) Regarding the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2005-06 of the Buildings Department, the Administration will carry out blitz clearance of unauthorised building works on the external walls of 1,000 targeted buildings, and select 700 single-staircase buildings for clearance of illegal rooftop structures. Can the Administration tell us how many of the above two types of unauthorised building works are there in Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories respectively? Of those in the New Territories, how many of them are relating to village small houses?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply :

- (a) The decrease in the estimated provision for the item "Buildings and Building Works" in 2005-06 as compared with the revised estimate for this item in 2004-05 is mainly due to :

- (i) the full-year effect of the 2005 civil service pay cut and deletion of three permanent posts;
- (ii) the reduced staff requirements after completion of the inspection of drainage defects in private buildings; and
- (iii) the reduced payment for consultancy studies which commenced in previous years.

The Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme (CBSILS) was set up with a commitment of \$700 million. Building owners may borrow from the CBSILS on a voluntary basis. Given the revolving nature of the CBSILS which means that building owners borrowing from the Government are obliged to repay and that there is still adequate balance in the loan fund, there would be no need to seek additional funding for the loan scheme at this stage.

- (b) In 2005, we will instigate more prosecutions on a territory-wide basis against building owners who do not comply with removal orders. We do not keep information on the number of prosecution cases by geographical location.

Apart from responding to reports on UBWs from the public, BD conducts “blitz” operations to identify and clear external unauthorised works on 1,000 buildings each year. We have outsourced to private consulting firms the tasks of inspection, preparation of inspection reports, and preparation of compliance reports. The average cost for the outsourced firm to handle one building was about \$18,000.

- (c) In 2005, we will select 1,000 buildings for blitz operations and about 700 single-staircase buildings for removal of illegal rooftop structures throughout the territory. We do not keep information on the number of buildings targeted for these operations by geographical location.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Marco WU

Director of Buildings

6 April 2005