

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)091

Question Serial No.

0915

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 Lands Department is responsible for managing government land to ensure that it is not illegally occupied. Please advise this Council of:

- (a) the total amount, total area and total asset value of unleased land over the territory currently held by the Government; and also a breakdown showing the total amounts, total areas and total asset values of government land subject and not subject to regular inspections and enforcement operations;
- (b) the establishment and salary cost of the staff responsible for conducting inspections and taking enforcement operations against illegal occupation of government land;
- (c) the manpower and salary cost required for conducting inspections and taking law enforcement operations thoroughly;
- (d) a breakdown showing the number of operations and expenditures incurred in taking law enforcement operations against illegal occupation of government land in each of the past five years;
- (e) the reasons for being unable to safeguard government land from being illegally occupied; and
- (f) any measures which can be taken to avoid adverse possession of government land that has been illegally occupied for nearly 60 years because no actions were taken by the Administration.

Asked by: Hon. LAU Sau-shing, Patrick

Reply:

(a) There are around 31 860 hectares of unleased or unallocated land in Hong Kong. Inspections are made from time to time by staff of District Lands Offices (DLOs) to ensure the land is not illegally occupied. The frequency of the inspections depends on the risk of their illegal occupation. Lands Department (Lands D) does not carry out assessment of the value of unleased/unallocated government land unless and until there is a practical need for it such as when the land is made available for development.

(b)&(c) Under the present establishment, about 130 Land Executives, Estate Officers and Land Inspectors are deployed to conduct inspections and take enforcement operations against illegal occupation of government land. The annual staff cost is about \$57 million. In view of other priorities of the Department, it is not practical to conduct inspections of all government land at specified intervals. Lands D would strategically protect those unleased land which are vulnerable to illegal occupation by fencing and more regular patrols.

(d) The breakdown is shown as follows :

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of operations</u>	<u>Expenditure incurred (\$)</u>
2001-02	2 120	6.6 million
2002-03	2 024	8.0 million
2003-04	2 919	7.7 million
2004-05	2 917	8.7 million
2005-06	4 071	9.2 million

(e) As explained in (b) and (c) above, Lands D makes optimum use of its resources by pursuing a strategic approach in containing illegal occupation of government land. To completely safeguard government land from illegal occupation would require round-the-clock guarding or surveillance of all unallocated/unleased government land, which will incur enormous manpower and expenditure.

(f) Lands D will strengthen land control action to prevent illegal occupation of unleased/unallocated government land and legal enforcement actions will be taken against occupiers of government land as soon as any such illegal occupation has been detected. Under certain circumstances, the DLOs may regularise the occupation of unleased government land through the issue of short-term tenancies to the occupiers concerned.

Signature _____

Name in block
letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 11 March 2006