

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 4169)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety
Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (CHAN Fan)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Government states in the Programme that safety inspection and supervision of railway service provided by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) will be enhanced. Would the Government advise this Committee -

- (1) the number, relevant parts and results of the proactive investigations/inspections to the various electrical and mechanical systems of the MTRCL over the past two years; and
- (2) the details of enhancing the safety inspection and supervision as stated by the Government, and whether the Government will strengthen the relevant establishment in 2015-16 and what is the corresponding expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (Member Question No. 49)

Reply:

- (1) In 2013 and 2014, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) conducted 136 and 164 safety inspections/investigations respectively on various components and facilities of the MTR system, including trains, tracks, power supply equipment, signalling equipment and other railway equipment. The inspections/investigations did not reveal any systemic problem relating to operational safety of the MTR system.
- (2) The Railways Branch (RB) of the EMSD is responsible for monitoring the safety performance of the existing railway service and new railway projects. Since its establishment in February 2008 ^{Note}, the RB has been delivering its duties as the statutory regulatory authority on railway safety. Under the monitoring of the RB, the safety performance of railway service in Hong Kong has been maintained at an internationally-recognised high standard, and the number of railway incidents has also remained stable for the past few years. Nevertheless, in view of the expanding railway network, increasing patronage and train frequency, major improvement works of the existing railway system and the new railway projects, the RB will need to enhance safety inspection and supervision of railway service provided by the MTRCL

and the Corporation's implementation of new railway projects. The work plan of the RB includes:

- (i) to carry out safety vetting and on-site tests for new railway projects and major upgrading works of the existing railway system, to ensure that these new railway lines and facilities meet the relevant safety standards;
- (ii) to increase the number of safety inspections in the coming years in view of the increased train frequency and the expanded railway network; and
- (iii) to conduct supervisory audits for the established mechanisms of the MTRCL in respect of safety management and asset management, in order to monitor the safety performance of the MTRCL in a more comprehensive manner.

In 2015-16, the establishment of the EMSD for the monitoring and regulation of the safety performance of the existing railway service and new railway projects will be strengthened by addition of two directorate (subject to the approval of the Finance Committee), five professional and two technical staff. The estimated additional annual expenditure involved is about \$8.2 million. We are seeking funding approval for the creation of the two directorate posts according to established procedures. The Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport gave support to such proposal on 6 March 2015.

Note Before the establishment of the RB, monitoring of railway safety was undertaken by the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate under the Transport and Housing Bureau.

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