

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

Head: 42 – Electrical and Mechanical Services Subhead:
Department

Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The estimated expenditure for this programme in 2008-09 will increase by 23.4% as compared to the revised estimate for 2007-08, mainly due to the creation of five posts and the transfer of the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate (HKRI) to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). In this regard, would the Government advise on –

- (a) the reasons for transferring the HKRI to EMSD and the total expenditure involved; and
- (b) details of the work of the five new posts to be created, whether they are permanent posts and total annual expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) As approved by the Finance Committee on 11 January 2008, the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate (HKRI) was transferred from Transport Branch (TB) of the Transport and Housing Bureau to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and renamed as the Railways Branch on 1 February 2008, with a view to enhancing Government's regulatory role and functions regarding railway safety.

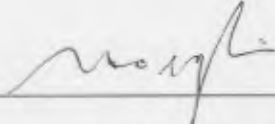
Transferring the HKRI to EMSD will enhance the flexibility of the Department in deploying relevant expertise for overseeing railway safety, facilitate the nurturing of expertise and experience of the Railways Branch and render in-house professional support to the Railways Branch, and allow the regulatory work of railway safety to be monitored and supervised by senior officers of the professional grade of the Department.

The transfer is cost neutral: the increased total staff cost, in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value, of about \$6 million in EMSD is offset by the corresponding reduction of the provision in TB.

- (b) The following five permanent posts will be created in 2008-09, at a total staff cost of about \$3 million in terms of notional annual mid-point salary value –
- (i) one Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Senior Electronics Engineer for the Railways Branch;
 - (ii) one Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Electronics Engineer/Assistant Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Assistant Electronics Engineer for the Railways Branch;
 - (iii) one Electrical and Mechanical Engineer/Assistant Electrical and Mechanical Engineer for the Gas and General Legislation Branch; and
 - (iv) two Mechanical Inspectors for the Gas and General Legislation Branch.

The two posts in (i) and (ii) are to be created in the Railways Branch to assist in developing and implementing additional safety monitoring measures, to strengthen networking with overseas railway regulators and railway organizations, and to monitor and conduct audits in relation to the safety-related activities in respect of the merger of the MTR and Kowloon-Canton Railway systems.

The three posts in (iii) and (iv) are to be created in the Gas and General Legislation Branch for the enhancement of regulatory control under the Lifts and Escalators (Safety) Ordinance, including contractors registration, codes of practice updating and incident investigation.

Signature  _____
Name in block letters HO KWONG WAI
Post Title Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services
Date 26 March 2008