

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**DEVB(PL)122****(Question Serial No. 2390)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (AU Choi-kai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 33):

In the aftermath of the building collapse on Ma Tau Wai Road, the Administration stepped up inspection of the safety condition of old buildings across the territory, resulting in a substantial increase in the workload of the staff of the Buildings Department, and some frontline staff members even went on strike some time ago to urge the Administration to increase its manpower. In this connection, will the Administration advise this Committee:

1. of the expenditure on enhancing the safety of old buildings in the past three years, broken down by nature such as inspection, maintenance and publicity; and
2. of the number of staff responsible for inspecting old buildings, broken down by district; and whether the Administration plans to increase its manpower in the next three years to cope with the mounting workload in relation to inspection of old buildings, resulting from the gradual aging of buildings in urban areas; if yes, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply:

The inspections of the safety conditions of existing private buildings in the whole territory, either in response to reports received from members of the public and other government departments or arising from large scale operations, are carried out by the existing manpower of 576 professional and technical staff in the two Existing Buildings Divisions, the Mandatory Building Inspection Division, and the Minor Works and Signboard Control Section of the Buildings Department (BD) as part of their overall duties to implement BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme. We are unable to provide a breakdown of the manpower or expenditure involved solely for inspection of the safety conditions of buildings. On the other hand, the Public Education and Publicity Unit of BD comprising four professional and technical staff who are civil service staff and two publicity assistants who are non-civil service contract staff, is responsible for the public education and publicity activities. The Information Unit of BD, comprising three Information Officer Grade staff, is also responsible for some of the publicity activities as part of their overall duties to handle media

and publicity matters.

In 2014-15, 193 new civil service posts, comprising 58 professional staff, 110 technical staff and 25 supporting staff, will be deployed to the two Existing Buildings Divisions, the Mandatory Building Inspection Division and the Corporate Services Division of BD. They will mainly be engaged for enhancing BD's various building safety and maintenance enforcement programmes such as the enforcement action against unauthorised building works (UBWs) and generally UBWs in sub-divided flats as well as the implementation of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme.