

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)033

(Question Serial No. 1385)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Railway Development
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Highways Department (HyD) points out in the Estimate that based on the latest assessment by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) is targeted for commissioning in end 2017. In this connection, please provide the following information:

- (a) According to the information provided to the HyD by the MTRCL, when the XRL commences commissioning in end 2017, will it operate as originally planned when construction began in 2010 or on the basis of the later plan under which it will be partially opened?
- (b) The implementation of the arrangements for “co-location” of immigration and customs facilities of the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (co-location arrangements) may affect the construction progress of the West Kowloon Terminus (WKT) of the XRL. Does the Government have any timetable or deadline for the implementation of the co-location arrangements? What is the current progress of the negotiation on the co-location arrangements?
- (c) In case co-location cannot be implemented, does the Government have any substitute option to prevent the XRL from becoming a mere “express through train”?

Asked by: Hon FAN Kwok-wai, Gary (Member Question No. 34)

Reply:

- (a) The original plan for the XRL project was that ten out of 15 tracks would be open for service in the WKT at the time of commissioning. The remaining five tracks would be provided as demand builds up probably several years later. The current plan of the MTRCL to commission the XRL in 2017 follows this arrangement. The “partial opening scenario” proposed by the MTRCL in 2013, which involved the opening of six out of 15 tracks only on Day 1, was never accepted by the Government.

- (b) & (c) The concept of co-location arrangements for the boundary control facilities at the WKT of the XRL is to enable Mainland officers to enforce the Mainland's immigration and clearance procedures and the related Mainland laws at the station. Led by the Secretary for Justice, the Transport and Housing Bureau and the relevant policy bureaux and departments are actively studying these and other issues, and discussing them with the Mainland authorities. As the work is complex, it takes time to deliberate and examine the related issues. The relevant work is still continuing. Our goal is to strive to implement the co-location arrangements at the WKT when the XRL is commissioned by the end of 2017.

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