

LIBERAL STUDIES (HONG KONG STUDIES) AS-LEVEL

8.30 am – 11.00 am (2½ hours)

This paper must be answered in English

1. This paper consists of **Section 1** and **Section 2**. Section 1 carries 75% of the module marks, and Section 2 carries 25%.
2. **Section 1** consists of three questions, *all* of which are to be answered. **Section 2** consists of four questions, of which candidates may attempt any *one*.
3. Each question is worth 25 marks : 18 marks are allocated for content and 7 marks for effective communication.
4. The maximum content marks are indicated in brackets at the end of each question and sub-question. They are a guide to the length of answer required, which may vary from one to several paragraphs.
5. Candidates are reminded that this subject emphasises the ability to present and support points of view in a clear, concise and logical manner, rather than the ability to recite facts.

SECTION 1

Answer *all* questions in this section.

1. Consider the following information :

Universal suffrage is only one of the many electoral methods. In fact, any political reforms and the related electoral method will subsequently involve the issue of power and interest distribution, and therefore have a direct impact on the arrangements of government revenue and expenditure. The interests of different sectors in society will inevitably be affected.

In order to take care of the interests of various sectors in society, the Basic Law, promulgated in 1990, has already outlined an electoral system for the legislature quite suitable for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's current situation. Under this system, the legislature is made up of seats of functional constituencies and geographical constituencies through direct elections, each of which shall take up half of the seats in 2004. Once the ratio is changed, balanced participation of various sectors will not be guaranteed. As a result, the original purpose of the system exists only in name. It will bring about drastic changes to the interests of various sectors in society.

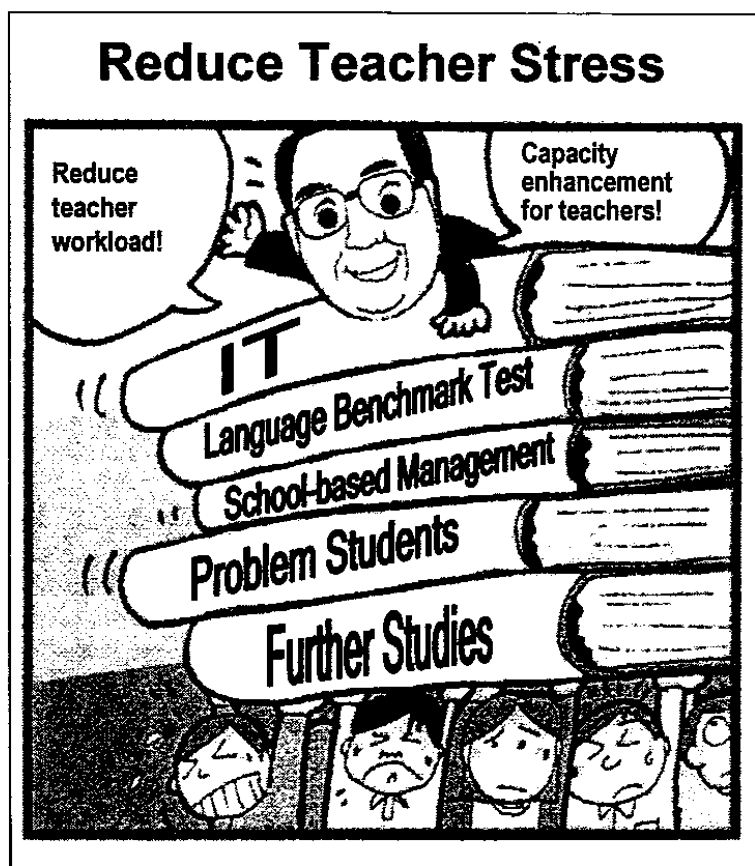
Peter Woo Kwong-ching

Source : *Singtao Daily*, 29 June 2002.

Based on the above information, identify and comment on the viewpoints of the author.

(6 marks + 12 marks)

2. Study the following cartoon :



(Adapted from a cartoon in *Mingpao Daily* on 11 September 2002.)

- (a) Identify the problems as reflected in the cartoon and discuss the causes. (9 marks)
- (b) In your opinion, what can be done to solve the problems identified? Explain. (9 marks)

3. Consider the following information :

In recent years, local senior government officials have been increasingly concerned about winning over the support of the media. The principal officials recently appointed under the accountability system pay more attention to their popularity in opinion polls than their Administrative Officer predecessors did. They are more concerned about how they are reported in the media, since their political careers hinge on this. In particular, several of these recently appointed principal officials are new to the government, and may not enjoy a good relationship with their subordinates. They may therefore have to make use of the media to promote their policies, thus leading to an increased reliance on support from the media.

Those principal officials who are eager to succeed, would not of course be so foolish as to buy off the media. Instead, they create political alliances with particular newspapers mostly through leaking information, so as to establish some opinion bases exclusively for themselves.

In Hong Kong, competition in the newspaper industry is keen. Newspapers are ever more desperate to secure exclusive news. Receiving favours from senior officials in the shape of access to information a day earlier than their competitors is therefore an invaluable gift in achieving this.

If readers think carefully, they can easily deduce that those inside stories must be provided by the people involved. Such people will not provide valuable and exclusive information without asking for something. This kind of trading, of course, is to be carried out in a subtle way. Thus, when a news story is recounted interestingly by reporters, a political message, especially regarding who is in the right or who is in the wrong, and who is to be blamed, is quietly instilled in readers' minds.

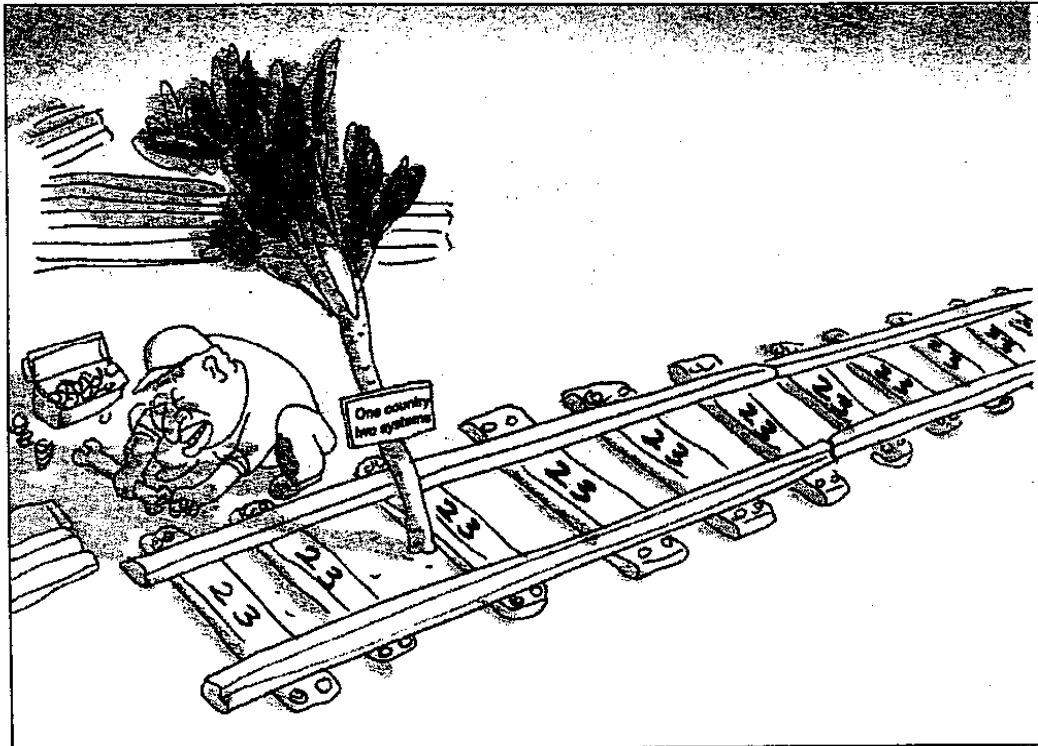
(Adapted from a commentary in *Mingpao Daily* on 23 September 2002.)

- (a) What is the relationship between the principal officials and the media as suggested by the author? Do you agree with the viewpoints of the author? Explain. (3 marks + 6 marks)
- (b) If the relationship between the principal officials and the media as depicted by the author is close to the truth, will it affect the media's function of monitoring the government? Explain. (9 marks)

SECTION 2

Answer *one* question from this section.

4. The cartoon below is about enacting laws by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in accordance with the Article 23 of the Basic Law :



Source : *Mingpao Daily*, 13 September 2002.

- (a) Identify and comment on the message which the cartoonist wished to communicate in the cartoon. (9 marks)
- (b) If you were the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, how would you explain to the public the reasons for enacting laws in accordance with the Article 23 of the Basic Law? (9 marks)

5. Consider the following information :

Eric Li urges scrapping of mother tongue teaching

The government is going to review the policy of teaching in mother tongue in secondary schools next year. Legislative Councillor Eric Li yesterday urged the government to formulate a new language policy as soon as possible and to abandon Cantonese as a medium of instruction.

Growing importance of Putonghua

He argued that those students who are seeking jobs should take a global view rather than confining themselves to the limited local job market. Students possessing English proficiency would become the only way forward for Hong Kong. Besides, proficiency in Putonghua is also important. The language policy was no longer just an educational problem, but a matter of the livelihood of the next generation. He therefore urged for the abandoning of Cantonese as a medium of instruction in schools.

Mainland English standard to catch up with Hong Kong

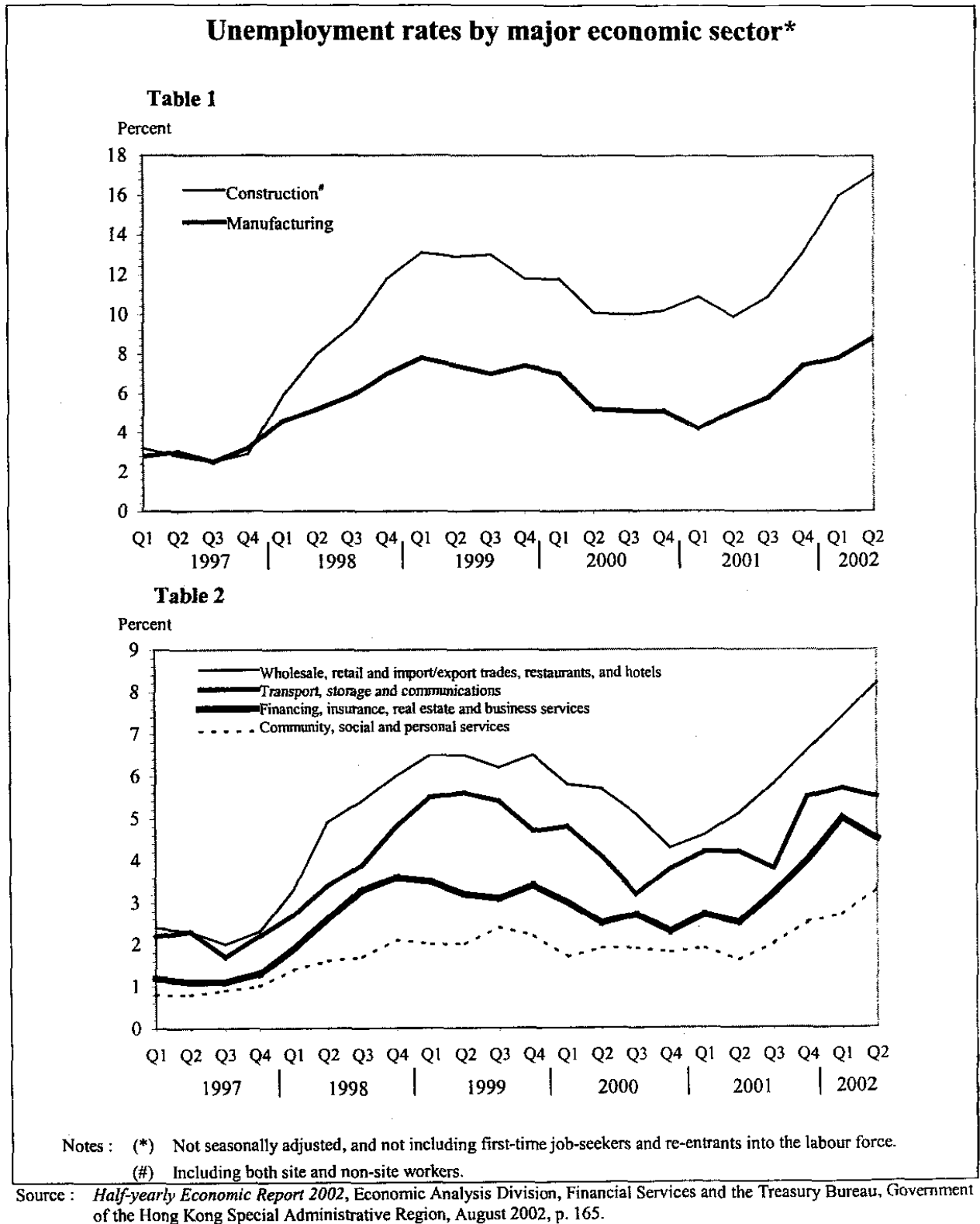
He further pointed out that if Hong Kong continues teaching in Cantonese, it will be difficult for young people to earn a living twenty years from now. He indicated that many provinces in the Mainland, including Guangdong, have already abandoned using a dialect as a medium of instruction. Unlike Hong Kong students, who have to learn Putonghua and English at the same time, young people in the Mainland can concentrate on learning English only. He estimated that the English standard of the young people in the Mainland will catch up with that of Hong Kong in twenty years.

At present, Hong Kong has over four hundred secondary schools, of which 114 are English secondary schools, while the others teach mainly in Cantonese.

(Adapted from a report in *Mingpao Daily* on 26 August 2002.)

- (a) Do you agree with Eric Li's viewpoint of abandoning teaching in mother tongue? Explain. (6 marks)
- (b) Illustrate with examples the importance of English, Putonghua and Cantonese in work and study. (12 marks)

6. Consider the following information :



- (a) Based on the above tables, describe the trend of unemployment rates of the major economic sectors in Hong Kong. (8 marks)
- (b) With reference to the above tables, comment on the structural change of Hong Kong's economy. (10 marks)

7. Consider the following information :

**EOC Welcomes High Court Ruling Prohibiting
Sex Discrimination in the
Secondary School Places Allocation System**

After the High Court had ruled that the Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPA) is unlawful, Ms Anna Wu, chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) said, 'The High Court ruling will establish a clear direction for all parties. Good governance and accountability now require the Government and the Education Department to act quickly and to minimise the confusion among students, parents, and schools. It is a matter of enormous public importance for the Government and the Education Department to rectify the system as a basic educational concern. Our students deserve an education system that is open, fair and non-discriminatory.'

Since 1978, the SSPA has been adopted by the Education Department. Under the system, secondary school places are allocated as follows : students are subject to firstly gender scaling, then to separate queues in banding for boys and girls, followed by fixed gender quotas in co-educational schools. In its formal investigation report issued in 1999, the EOC found that these arrangements consisted of discriminatory elements as individual boys and girls received less favourable treatment on the basis of sex.

The formal investigation into the SSPA was conducted in 1998 after the EOC received complaints from parents whose children were allocated to a lower band than their classmates of the opposite sex with lower academic achievements. To date, the EOC has received a total of 15 formal complaints. The EOC anticipated that unless the system is changed, more complaints will be lodged by parents against the Education Department and the individual schools concerned.

(Adapted from a press release issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission on 22 June 2001.)

- (a) Identify and comment on the viewpoints and positions of the parties involved in the SSPA controversy. (12 marks)
- (b) To what extent does the ruling of the High Court ensure that students will receive fair treatment in the school places allocation process? Explain. (6 marks)

END OF PAPER