

\$1.5m payment 'a one-off case'

THE Omelco Secretariat assured legislators yesterday that a \$1.5 million "golden handshake" offered to the outgoing Assistant Secretary General of Omelco's London office, Mr Alastair Lang, was a "one-off and exceptional case".

The assurance was given by the Omelco secretariat secretary-general, Mrs Shelley Lau Lee Lai-kuen, before the Legislative Council's Finance Committee approved a request to increase the

Government's financial commitment to the three-member London office by \$1.7 million to \$13 million.

According to Mr Lang's three-year contract, he qualifies for a 25 per cent contract gratuity and a special allowance equivalent to 10 per cent of his salary on completion of the term on March 31.

On stepping down, Mr Lang is to receive about \$1.5 million, including the *ex gratia* payment of \$572,000,

the contract gratuity and the special allowance.

Mrs Lau said Mr Lang wanted to leave the office because of health problems.

She added that after discussion in the Omelco personnel committee, members decided to give him an *ex gratia* payment which was equivalent to his basic salary from August 18, the date he would leave, to the end of next March, when his contract expired.