

~~\$563,000~~ ~~a year~~ for bed at BMH

DIRECTOR of Medical and Health, Dr Thong Kah-leong, said yesterday he did not know how the cost of a bed in the British Military Hospital is calculated when patients are transferred there by the government.

But the actual charges work out to be in the region of a staggering \$563,000 for a bed per year, he said.

This is in sharp contrast with the relatively cheaper cost of maintaining a bed in government general hospitals, which is about \$200,000 a year in 1983-84.

Dr Thong gave the figures in reply to questions by members of the Finance Committee on government expenditures for the new financial year and the annual cost of maintaining a bed in government hospitals, subvented hospitals and in the British Military Hospital.

It is noted that \$24 million will be given to the British Military Hospital in 1984-85 in respect of up to 80 beds at a cost of \$1,500 per bed per day. The consultation services are also charged at \$480 per out-patient attendance for ante-natal and post-natal cases; and \$596 per out-patient attendance for general cases.

This is a 10 per cent increase over the \$22.2 million for 1983-84.

Dr Thong told the committee that the average cost of hospital beds in government hospitals was calculated in accordance with the bases and standards outlined in the government's "Costing Manual".

"Thus, in accordance with these standards and bases, the annual cost of maintaining a bed in government general hospitals in 1983/84 has been approximately \$200,000," he said.

But for subvented hospitals, the same bases and standards could not be used, Dr Thong said.

Therefore, it is not possible to produce "meaningful" figures which are comparable to those provided in respect of the government hospitals.

"The cost of a bed in the British Military Hospital is not known as we are not aware of how this is calculated."

Based on the actual charges made by the British Military Hospital in respect of beds made available to government patients, the cost of a bed in the British Hospital is approximately \$563,000," he said.

The medical chief stressed that it would not be feasible to make a comparison of the cost of a bed in each of the three types of hospitals.