

113,000 people out of work

THE unemployment rate for the quarter ending this February was 4.5 per cent or 113,000 people, according to government statistics released yesterday.

The underemployment rate was estimated at 2.6 per cent for the same period.

This was an increase of 0.6 percentage point on the number of jobless people compared with the September-October quarter (3.9 per cent).

The rise was of 1.4 percentage point compared with the quarter ending last February (3.1 per cent).

The Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Colin Greenfield, said the increases were "statistically significant".

The provisional estimate of the number of underemployed persons was 64,000 (2.6 per cent) for the quarter ending February 1983, compared with 46,000 (1.9 per cent) for the previous quarter.

Mr Greenfield explained that, consistent with the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation, persons who worked less than 35 hours a week were regarded as underemployed only if they were seeking more work or were not seeking more work because they believed more work was not available.

People such as part-time workers, who chose to work less than 35 hours a week and were not available for more work, were not underemployed.

Commenting on the figures, he said because the proportion of first-time job-seekers varied from month to month, the unemployment rates seasonally adjusted for the variations in first-time job-seekers should be used in making comparisons over time.

The unadjusted unemployment rate for the quarter ending February 1983 was 4.5 per cent.

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were obtained from a continuous general household survey conducted by the Census and Statistics department.

The survey covers a quarterly sample of about 15,000 households or 55,000 persons, selected to represent the land-based population in Hongkong.

Personal and labour force data were obtained in the survey by interviewing each individual member in the households sampled.