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Big jump in complaints against CMB services, says TCU

THERE has been a substantial increase in the number of complaints against China Motor Bus (CMB), says the Transport Complaints Unit's (TCU) quarterly report published yesterday.

This was the first time that CMB had inspired more complaints than the Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) company, according to the report.

A spokesman for CMB said that the company had noted an increase in complaints in the first quarter this year, and had introduced countermeasures. The report says that complaints about CMB services increased sharply

in March, with those against staff consistently high.

Altogether 112 complaints were made against CMB services in March, compared to 58 the previous month.

The number of complaints against KMB dropped from 153 last October to 93 in March this year, the report says in comparison.

This was a slight increase on the 78 complaints received by KMB in February.

But, the report cautions, it must be borne in mind that the total number of passengers carried by CMB is only

about 32 per cent of that carried by KMB.

"It is apparent that the travelling public is getting more dissatisfied with CMB services," the report says.

In an effort to improve services CMB introduced a performance bonus scheme for drivers. The system, started in March has since reduced complaints by 30 per cent, the CMB spokesman said.

Under the scheme, each driver will receive a bonus of \$8 for each working day, unless there are any complaints against him or he is late for work.

All complaints against drivers will

be investigated, and if substantiated, the driver will be penalised in proportion to the seriousness of the offence, he continued.

The report stresses that public transport services still continue to attract a high proportion of complaints. Out of a total of 1,257 complaints received 670 related to public transport services.

Of these complaints 448 were against the bus companies, a further 61 involved the Yau Ma Tei ferry, whereas taxis accounted for 46 of the complaints and maxicabs 40.

Complaints against road congestion also rose from 163 to 194.

The installation of traffic lights at Repulse Bay road resulted in 20 complaints in five days, following the "unexpected congestion" at this spot, the report adds.

However, the situation was resolved as soon as the complaints were brought to the attention of traffic engineers, it claims.

The report says that one of the hottest issues covered by the media in the quarter was that related to the proposed increase in the Cross-Harbour Tunnel toll charge.

The general consensus in the press reports was that an increase in toll

charges would not serve to reduce the volume of traffic using the tunnel, but would only result in the tunnel company making more profit, the TCU report notes.

The idea of a development fund for the construction of an additional crossing did not command much public support as it was regarded as another form of taxation on the motorists, the report says.

According to the report, the government was urged by the media to make a final decision on a second harbour crossing, as soon as possible.