



HONG KONG GOVERNMENT

INFORMATION SERVICES

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN SUPPLEMENT

Monday, June 26, 1972

INAUGURATION OF 24TH TERM OF HEUNG YEE KUK

The following is the full text of the speech made by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose at the above ceremony:

"I am very happy to take part in the Inauguration Ceremony of the 20th Term of the Heung Yee Kuk. Since my visit to the Kuk last December, I have had a chance to visit several districts, and to meet some local Rural Committee Chairman and to see for myself what is happening in the New Territories.

"I welcome this opportunity to meet all of you once again and, and I emphasize this, to reiterate my interest in New Territories affairs.

"First of all, I would like to offer my sympathy to all those in the New Territories who have suffered in the recent rains. They are very much all in our thoughts. I know any thing that government can do to alleviate their suffering will be done. But today I do not want to look back to the recent disaster but forward to the future problems in the New Territories as a whole.

"In your speech, Mr. Chan, you mentioned the importance of equal emphasis for rural and urban areas. I would like to assure you that your government now accepts the principle that so far as is practicable services should be spread evenly throughout the whole of Hong Kong.

/ "As I see

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"As I see it the New Territories are composed of three parts with quite different characteristics. Firstly, there are the new towns that have been built, such as Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung, and those which will be built, such as Tuen Mun and Shatin. Next there are the large areas of low-lying land, once rice fields, now mixed agriculture but often with their conglomeration of huts, makeshift dwellings and small scale industry which have proliferated in recent years. Finally there is the undeveloped country-side such as the Sai Kung and Sha Tau Kok peninsulas, the magnificent area around Tai Mo Shan, Shing Mun and Tai Lam Chung, and, of course, the island of Lantau.

"When anyone talks of the New Territories it is my experience that they are seldom thinking of all three of these parts.

"With regard to the new towns, our object is that in future they should be built as complete units, self-sufficient as to places of employment and housing and also as to medical, educational and other services, and with the amenities and environment that will make them agreeable places to live in and will attract inhabitants from the over-densely populated parts of Hong Kong, particularly, I hope, young couples. Together with the necessary communications system - which is a prerequisite. These are the conditions which will ensure the most rapid growth and the greatest contentment. The principles of building new towns are well understood by planners in Hong Kong, as the world over, and it is simply a question of applying them here within the resources available.

"Then there is the question of the rural sprawl over the low-lying land, often engulfing old-established villages, with its attendant problem of inadequate water, lighting and sanitation and of pollution - in short of rural

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slums. This strikes me as perhaps the most difficult problem of the New Territories because in each individual case it is a question of degree as to what is tolerable and what is not. Here we must listen carefully to the advice of the Heung Yee Kuk; but I am sure that Small Government Housing Estates of which seven have already been approved in principle for the New Territories, will play a considerable part in ameliorating this problem, as will also the concept of New Villages now being investigated, for instance, in the Tai Po District. I should like to assure the Kuk that we recognise this as a problem which must not be ignored.

"Finally there are the mountains, beaches and the truly rural areas. These are becoming less and less areas of the traditional and picturesque village life based on the cultivation of rice. The inhabitants have largely left them for more remunerative work in Hong Kong or the United Kingdom. But they are more and more becoming areas of week-end recreation. For my part I unreservedly welcome this new development and I hope I have the support of the Kuk in this.

"This function of the New Territories will grow with the steady rise of living standards and increase in leisure time of the urban population. I suggest that for these areas our object must be firstly to ensure that they are accessible to holiday-makers and secondly, that people unaccustomed to the countryside do not destroy it through ignorance, or through lack of the necessary installations and supervision. Provided these conditions are met, and the recreational use of these areas develops in an orderly way, I believe that, thirdly, these areas could form the basis for a useful ancillary of the growing tourist industry of Hong Kong; if Government provided the necessary communications, as I think it must do in any case.

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"You, Mr. Chan and the two Vice-Chairmen are to be congratulated on your re-election with such strong support. I am also glad to learn that the work of the Kuk is to be spread among 14 sub-committees dealing with subjects ranging from education and health to urban services and tourism. I very much welcome this specialisation and assure you that your Government looks forward to benefiting from the advice they will give.

"I have read with interest an account of the Kuk's discussions with the District Commissioner on small house development and hope to consult Executive Council shortly on amendments to those legal and policy provisions which may call for revision, as Mr. Chan has suggested.

"The next two years will be exciting and challenging ones for the New Territories. I am confident that with the joint resolution of the 20th Term of the Heung Yee Kuk and your Government they will be years of stability and prosperity."

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