

Address by

H.E.The Governor

Sir Murray MacLehose

G.B.E., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.

At the opening session

Of the Legislative Council

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(extract on Housing)

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Hong Kong Government Information Services

Housing

80 Then next there is housing. We must ensure that there is self-contained housing in a reasonable environment for all. The current programme was started between five and six years ago. All the laborious work of site acquisition, preparation, design and construction, is at last reaching fruition, and completions will rise from 18,000 flats this year to 45,000 next year and will be maintained between the 40,000 and 45,000

levels until 1985. That is to say housing each year for about a quarter of a million people. Construction is now proceeding on no less than 57 projects with a contract value of over \$2,200 million. These figures include the flats for purchase under the Home Ownership Scheme at present planned to average about 6,000 a year as from next year when 8,500 will be completed. In view of the popularity of the scheme, we must be alive to the possibility of varying the balance between the programmes for renting and sale in the light of public demand, and the design of new estates provides for this degree of flexibility.

81 Our approach to the level of public housing production towards which we have been working for so long, has coincided with a spurt in the construction of flats by private developers, many for the middle and low-middle income groups. Thirty thousand will be completed this year and probably as many next. This is a most welcome contribution. But members should be under no illusion about the size of the problem we face. This year we reckon the short-fall in self-contained living accommodation to be over 200,000 units. Allowing for about 300,000 more households by 1985, and assuming that the public housing programme is maintained at the level I have indicated, and that the private sector continues to make a substantial contribution, the short-fall should have been eliminated by 1985 and well before that the problem as we have known it will have been vastly reduced. However these figures make the traditional assumption that 60% of all one-person and two-person households will share accommodation with others. In view of the trend towards smaller households and the rising aspirations of our rapidly evolving society I doubt if that assumption will continue to hold true much longer. There is therefore a case for rolling forward the Housing Programme after 1985, albeit at a less dramatic level, and therefore for at least earmarking soon sites for such a programme.