

Address by the Governor,
Sir Edward Youde, GCMG, MBE,
at the opening of the 1983/84
Session of the Legislative
Council on 5 October 1983
(extract on Housing)

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(b) Housing

64. The housing programme remains a high priority, and rightly so since better housing is one of the main aspirations of the people of Hong Kong. Some 240,000 new dwellings have been added to our total housing stock in the last four years, including more than 111,000 new flats built by the private sector, three-quarters of them occupied by their owners. In 1982 alone, total public and private sector production was 67,000 flats, just below the record figure for 1981

(i) Public housing

65. In the public sector, Some 130,000 flats are at present under construction, and between now and the end of this decade over 300,000 flats will be produced for rent or sale. We should by then be able to provide decent homes for most if not all of those families who are now eligible for public housing.

66. The problems of those families living in the oldest resettlement blocks have not been ignored. The redevelopment of the first resettlement estate, Shek Kip Mei, will be completed during 1984. Other old estates, such as Chai Wan, have already been largely transformed into modern estates. In 1975, half a million people were living in Mark I and Mark II blocks. Some 300,000 of them have since benefitted from the redevelopment and improvement programmes for those estates.

/ These ...

These programmes are to be stepped up, so that by 1990 we plan to have redeveloped or substantially improved all the remaining Mark I and Mark II estates.

67. The Housing Authority has made a substantial contribution to the programme for care of the elderly. Eight hundred public housing flats a year are now reserved specifically for the elderly, and this ensures that no eligible applicant over the age of 60 should need to wait for more than two years for public housing. Every new estate also now incorporates a hostel for the elderly managed by one of the voluntary agencies.

(ii) Home ownership

68. Since the Home Ownership Scheme started in 1978 some 27,000 flats have been sold to families who would otherwise have been unable to buy their own homes. The popularity of the scheme is shown by the fact that every sale has been heavily over-subscribed. To meet this demand the Housing Authority decided that in 1984-85 an additional 5,000 flats will be offered for sale. The basic design of the flats now being built by the Housing Authority makes them suitable for either rent or for sale, so that, as circumstances demand, the balance between the proportions of public sector housing offered for rent and for sale can easily be adjusted.

(iii) Hong Kong Housing Society

69. The Housing Society continues to play a valuable role complementary to that of the Housing Authority in the provision of low-cost housing for rent and for sale. During last year the Society's largest estate was completed at Jat Min Chuen in Sha Tin, bringing to almost 30,000 the number of flats managed by the Society. The Society is also involved in urban renewal, such as the recently completed Western Garden Urban Improvement Scheme, and in the rural housing scheme at Sai Kung, which should be completed in 1985.

/(iv) Squatters ...

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70. Our ambitious housing programmes should result in a steady reduction in the numbers who live in unsatisfactory temporary accommodation. Over 34,000 families have been rehoused from squatter huts during the last four years. The latest census survey indicates that some 100,000 families still live in temporary huts. Our plans envisage that about half of these families will be rehoused over the next five years. During the same period, a new programme to improve safety, sanitation and environmental conditions in squatter areas should benefit most of the remaining families.

/73. Despite ...