

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**IN THE SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF
HONG KONG WHICH OPENED 1ST OCTOBER 1970
IN THE
NINETEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER
Thursday, 1st October 1970
The Council met at half past Two o'clock**

[MR PRESIDENT in the Chair]

PRESENT

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR (*PRESIDENT*)
SIR DAVID CLIVE CROSBIE TRENCH, GCMG, MC
THE HONOURABLE THE COLONIAL SECRETARY
SIR HUGH NORMAN-WALKER, KCMG, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR DENYS TUDOR EMIL ROBERTS, CBE, QC, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS (*Acting*)
MR DENIS CAMPBELL BRAY, JP
THE HONOURABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY
SIR JOHN JAMES COWPERTHWAITHE, KBE, CMG, JP
THE HONOURABLE ROBERT MARSHALL HETHERINGTON, DFC, JP
COMMISSIONER OF LABOUR
THE HONOURABLE DAVID RICHARD WATSON ALEXANDER, MBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE JOHN CANNING, JP
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
DR THE HONOURABLE GERALD HUGH CHOA, JP
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
THE HONOURABLE PAUL TSUI KA-CHEUNG, OBE, JP
COMMISSIONER FOR RESETTLEMENT
THE HONOURABLE JACK CATER, MBE, JP
DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
THE HONOURABLE RICHARD CHARLES CLARKE, ISO, JP
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (*Acting*)
THE HONOURABLE KAN YUET-KEUNG, CBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE WOO PAK-CHUEN, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE SZETO WAI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE WILFRED WONG SIEN-BING, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE ELLEN LI SHU-PUI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE WILSON WANG TZE-SAM, JP
DR THE HONOURABLE CHUNG SZE-YUEN, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LEE QUO-WEI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE OSWALD VICTOR CHEUNG, QC, JP

THE HONOURABLE GERALD MORDAUNT BROOME SALMON, JP
THE HONOURABLE ANN TSE-KAI, OBE, JP
THE HONOURABLE LO KWEE-SEONG, JP

ABSENT

THE HONOURABLE DONALD COLLIN CUMYN LUDDINGTON, JP
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, NEW TERRITORIES
THE HONOURABLE HERBERT JOHN CHARLES BROWNE, JP

IN ATTENDANCE

THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MR RODERICK JOHN FRAMPTON

PROCLAMATION

Proclamation read *pursuant to Standing Order No 6(1)*.

OATH

MR JACK CATER made the Oath of Allegiance and assumed his seat as a Member of the Council.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—May I welcome Mr CATER to this Council.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—Honourable Members of the Legislative Council. It is once again my pleasant duty to welcome you to this first meeting of our new session, and to express the hope that it will prove to be as fruitful as the session which has just closed. During the very busy year past, Council passed no fewer than ninety bills, a record for any one period of twelve months. Among those which required the closest attention were the Security of Tenure (Domestic Premises) Ordinance, the Rent Increases (Domestic Premises) Ordinance, the Import and Export Ordinance, the Multi-Storey Buildings (Owners Incorporation) Ordinance and the Marriage Reform Ordinance, as well as a significant amount of important labour legislation. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity of conveying my very warm appreciation of the services honourable Members have rendered over the past twelve months, not only in this Council but also in the Finance Committee, and the Establishment Sub-Committee and the Public Works Sub-Committee, as also in the numerous other bodies which take up so much of honourable Members' time and attention.

I was particularly glad that it became possible during the year to strengthen the UMELCO office and provide honourable Members with more suitable premises. I appreciate that there has as yet scarcely been sufficient time to assess the results but I was happy to learn that they seem promising. I would be glad to hear of any further assistance that honourable Members may need either in the administration of the UMELCO office or in furthering its work.

Once again I am glad to be able to refer to Hong Kong's increasing prosperity and rising domestic export figures. The final figures for 1969 were nearly 25% above those of 1968, and this momentum has been maintained; the latest available figures showing a 22.6% increase over those for the same period last year. This result has been achieved in spite of increasing competition from lower wage producers, but on the other hand has certainly benefited from general inflationary trends in our main markets. The United States of America continues to be our most important market and textiles our biggest industry. Increasingly, however, Hong Kong's production is being diversified and is moving into new markets and more sophisticated and better quality products of many kinds. The continuing boom has affected every stratum of society. In broad general terms, wages have gone up by some 63% since 1964, while prices, as measured by the modified consumer price index, have risen by some 23%. In other words, and having due regard to the caution with which all such figures have to be treated, the increase in the real wages of the majority of the working population over the last six years has probably been of the order of some 30%; and, of course, a steady improvement of this kind in general living standards is one of our major aims.

On the other hand, there are a number of darker clouds on the horizon. Inflationary tendencies abroad may give us some immediate advantage but bring longer term adverse effects. Efforts to correct them may induce a degree of recession in our export markets and this can lead to the kind of protectionist pressures which we see operating today, for example in the United States of America.

Again, Britain's application to join the EEC, if successful, must have some adverse consequences for our export trade, which we are unlikely to be able to escape entirely even if arrangements can be made to mitigate them to some extent.

The UNCTAD Generalized Preference Scheme in favour of developing countries, at present under negotiation, is another uncertain factor. We do not know at present whether or not, or to what extent, Hong Kong may be a beneficiary. If Hong Kong is included this would replace in part the loss of Commonwealth Preference on Britain's entry into the EEC; but if Hong Kong were excluded, that loss would be aggravated.

[MR PRESIDENT]

We must face these problems, but we must also remember that Hong Kong has weathered many such storms before, and I have every confidence that we will weather these also, to the extent that they in fact materialize.

During this debate last year, honourable Members expressed a very understandable concern about an increasing tendency towards acts of criminal violence; a concern which we all share. It is a problem of modern times and one which has to be faced in urban environments everywhere. In the first half of this year, this tendency towards criminal violence appeared to be becoming more widespread, even if the total figures for serious reported crime were not very significantly greater than in 1969. But what was most disturbing was an increase in sexual assaults and in the prevalence of the habit of carrying weapons—chiefly knives, sharpened files and other cutting weapons—as well as a growing and very unpleasant tendency towards a greater readiness by young criminals to use them hastily, needlessly and viciously. Another disturbing development was an increase in the number of robberies carried out by more than two persons, and a marked increase in the number of affrays between gangs of youths; all this in spite of the fact that Police detection rates for most categories of serious crime reported to them continued—and continues—to be very high by any standards.

What to do about this remains a problem; and the recently published United Nations study into the reasons for crime unfortunately seems to have brought us no help, except perhaps in a negative way. For this study apparently concluded, as indeed many have suspected, that crime could not really be ascribed just to poverty, overcrowding, or any of the other causes which have confidently been given as reasons for crime in the past. Indeed, although I have so far only seen brief reports of the study, this authoritative survey appears to have concluded that good social conditions can be no less conducive than bad to the breeding of crime.

Now quite obviously it would be unthinkable to accept this as any reason for failing to strive after better social conditions, and I believe myself that the only sure conclusion to be drawn from this survey is that to try to improve social conditions alone is not enough. Social improvement, it seems, must be coupled with firm control, dissuasion, re-direction of young energies and deterrence. This, of course, is a task for parents, teachers, youth organizations and Government alike.

Certainly recent Police attempts to forestall criminal activity do seem to have had some effect. Apart from the seizure of quite significant quantities of offensive weapons, the number of robberies and gang fights has been substantially reduced, at least for the time being. This Police initiative has had clear public support, and the Police will

one way or another be continuing these active efforts to forestall violence before it occurs, within of course their existing powers. It would be wrong to be unduly optimistic as to the long term results, but there is no lack of resolution here, I must assure honourable Members, either on the part of the Commissioner or members of the Force. Everything possible will be done to improve the ability of the Force to combat crime; by enlargement of the Police Training School; by providing new police stations; by establishing a new CID Training School; and by making more use of scientific techniques. But the beat policeman remains the heart of the Force, and public understanding of his limitations and his difficulties, and public co-operation, all of which I once again ask for, remain essential to him if he is to provide the public with the protection which is rightly expected.

Finally, I suggest that it is essential to remember that anti-social behaviour is the proclivity of a small minority only. There has never been a generation of young people so ready, in the main, to act responsibly and with such concern for others as this present generation of young people. Just because a few have gone astray, we must not withhold the admiration and the respect all of us who have had any contact with them feel for the great majority of them.

Of all events during our last session, the Festival of Hong Kong was perhaps the most colourful. The public responded to the organizers' efforts to provide a week of relaxation and entertainment in a way which left no doubt about the success of the Festival: a success which reflected much credit on the organizers and on the various associations and committees which were concerned. But it has to be recognized that a successful Festival involves many people in much time and effort; and, even, that both organizers and public can have a bit too much of a good thing. It was concluded therefore that the next Festival should not be held until 1971; and Sir Cho-yiu KWAN has once again very nobly agreed to act as Chairman of the Steering Committee for the next Festival. I am sure that it will be as great a success as the last one was.

Another major effort during the past year was our participation in the World Exposition at Osaka, an investment of some \$8.6 million which we hope will bring us long-term returns in general goodwill and interest. We can certainly reasonably claim to have attracted as much immediate interest as we could possibly have hoped for with the simple but elegant design of our pavilion, with its famous sails, and by the effective displays in it; not to mention the very talented young people from Hong Kong who provided such splendid entertainment there.

I have only touched on a few obvious highlights of the past year but there has been much progress in many fields, and many important decisions taken to which I find it quite impossible to do adequate justice in a short space of time. In the latter category, however, honourable

[MR PRESIDENT]

Members will recall that it has been decided to extend the airport runway at a cost, now, of about \$150 million, and that a number of other major improvements there are also in hand. The Boeing 747s are now arriving and departing smoothly, and no doubt we can expect more of them soon.

Arrangements have been arrived at for the provision of three berths for container ships, and construction should start soon. The crossharbour tunnel is making satisfactory progress, as is the work on the complex of roads and flyovers associated with it. Other road improvements, such as in particular the flyovers designed to ease congestion in the neighbourhood of Kai Tak, have also on the whole made very good progress.

The programme of work for providing public open space for recreation has also proceeded well. There are now 1,370 acres of such space, or nearly three times as much as 10 years ago, containing over 1,000 major amenities such as bathing beaches, swimming pools, public gardens, children's playgrounds, running tracks, games pitches and courts of various kinds. Particularly noteworthy recent additions have been the Morse Park open-air theatre and the Kowloon Park.

Over the next few months, three new district swimming pools will become available in Kowloon and another six pools, including two in the New Territories, are in the Public Works programme. The next few months will see more beaches developed or improved, and work completed or well underway on a number of sizable parks and playgrounds, including a 14-acre sports ground at Aberdeen, an improved sports ground at King's Park, and a prototype multi-purpose games hall at San Po Kong. Let us hope these facilities may help us in due course to add to the laurels gained by our bowlers at the Commonwealth Games.

The Urban Council has also been able to expand its programme of popular entertainment and its cultural activities generally. Indeed, it has been a very busy year for the Urban Council, and not the least of their concerns being the difficult task of improving the control over hawkers; a task in which firm policies and a determination to apply them evenly are of the first importance.

Once again a programme of summer activities and community service projects for young people was organized on a very large scale, and I have been most impressed by the excellent work done by the many groups and individuals who have arranged these activities. I have been particularly struck by the manner in which young people of 17, 18 or so have turned out in considerable numbers to organize and supervise the activities of the younger children: it has really been very heartening to watch them at work.

Earlier this year, following a rapid return of rents to earlier levels, this Council devoted a great deal of attention to new legislation designed to control rent increases and to provide security of tenure in the majority of post-war domestic premises. This legislation came into force in June, and I am glad to say that it has been generally well received and seems to be working quite well. It is interesting to note that the flow of applications for rent increases since June has dropped appreciably, from 1,600 a week in early June down to about 600 in early September.

These controls do nothing however to rectify the underlying causes of rising rent, which spring from the supply and demand position in accommodation of all types. It is accordingly, I think, reassuring to note a very marked increase in building activity in recent months. For all types of domestic accommodation, including both private development and publicly-financed housing schemes, some 7,000 units were completed in the first half of 1969, and some 10,000 in the first half of 1970—which is a 40% increase. For flatted factory space, the increase has been dramatic; about 470,000 square feet having been completed in the first half of 1969 and about 1.7 million square feet in the first half of 1970—an increase by a factor of about $3\frac{1}{2}$.

Which leads me to a word now on publicly aided housing, a matter of perennial concern. It is a remarkable fact that more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ million people or over 40% of the population of Hong Kong are presently living in publicly financed housing. It is very probable, indeed, that by 1975 half the population will be so accommodated even if, as does seem possible, the time may be approaching when some fresh limitations should be set to Government activity in the housing field. In any case the time has certainly come to think in future in terms of better standards of public housing, of quality rather than quantity chiefly, and of making better provision for ancillary facilities such as schools, restaurants, welfare premises and markets in what are now almost solidly residential areas. In our anxiety to house as many as possible, we may have too much overlooked these needs. I would hope also that it will be possible to introduce better management methods into the resettlement estates, and to reduce some of the anti-social practices that are rather too prevalent in them.

In the field of public health and medical services, we can first be grateful that we have again had a year free of major epidemics: while steady progress has been made in implementing our 10-year medical development plan. Some 1,200 additional hospital beds will become available by the end of 1971. Most of the major schemes in this plan will be completed by the end of 1974, including such projects as the new 1,300-bed general hospital at Lai Chi Kok, a 1,300-bed mental hospital also at Lai Chi Kok, and the 300-bed United Christian hospital.

[MR PRESIDENT]

I should here mention also that the situation as regards doctors has much improved, the shortage having been considerably reduced.

I shall have more to say later on educational matters, but in the field of higher education there has continued to be progress in the development of our two universities. Approval has been given to the financial arrangements for their next quadrennium in which the number of students will be increased from 4,900 in the academic year 1969-70 to 6,000 in the final year of the quadrennium, that is, 1973-74. Good progress has been made also with the very complex task of moving The Chinese University of Hong Kong to Sha Tin, as in fact we can all see for ourselves.

The Polytechnic Planning Committee has also made progress, although much remains to be done. It will be recalled that the aim here is to cater for about 4,000 full time and 20,000 part time students by about 1974: but in the meanwhile, the new Technical Institute buildings at Morrison Hill have recently been completed and the first full school year in its new premises has just begun. This institute will provide institutional training facilities for craftsmen and lower-grade technicians. We are now looking into proposals made by the Industrial Training Advisory Committee that Government should build more institutes of this kind. These institutes, being designed to meet the needs of industry and commerce, do not fall within the usual pattern of Government and Government-aided education and it has therefore been necessary to consider very carefully the implications of accepting this type of training as a Government commitment.

And now, at this point, and before I mention other contemplated developments during this coming session, I would like to say a word about the manner in which our various plans for social improvement are beginning to succeed in the task of re-ordering some of our basic social services. Something of a new pattern is emerging; but the width of its scope, and the interlocking nature of its various parts, are such that the significance of this whole move forward may have rather escaped attention.

Before we go further, however, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the historical background to social policy here, and of the fundamental change in the nature of this society which has taken place over the last 20 years, or perhaps say since about 1953 or thereabouts. Prior to this, the true Hong Kong community was a very small one, and Hong Kong was less of a community than a temporary abode for the vast majority of those here. The population was highly mobile, coming here to make a living and return to their homes in due course; shuttling frequently between their homes elsewhere and employment here in the

meanwhile. Under these conditions, social policy inevitably tended to concentrate on the provision of social services for the few who could be considered permanent residents. The fundamental change which then occurred was that the population, rapidly swelling in numbers, also became much more static: and the numbers of those who could be considered long-term residents vastly increased. Hong Kong started to change its character, and, from about 1953 on, social policy had to recognize this change by undertaking the provision of social services for vastly increased numbers: the numbers having been increased not only by the need to extend them to those longer-term residents who had not previously been fully thought of as a permanent part of the community, but also to many hundreds of thousands of new entrants and their families.

The concept of social policy being applicable to all here therefore had its origins only in about 1953, and what has been done to meet this new challenge has been done in the short space of only about 17 years. We have had large numbers to contend with, without time for the long, slow build-up of social institutions that other countries have enjoyed: and moreover we have had to deal in the main with a population suffering the difficulties of the transition from life in a rural, self-sufficient society, with its own traditional forms of protection for those in poor circumstances, to an urbanized, industrial society in which assistance in need has to be sought from society itself.

Apart from the obvious fact that our society had first to become sufficiently productive and prosperous to be able, without damage to its economy or unduly holding back its growth, to afford the continuing provision of full-scale social services for that part of the whole population which was unable to make adequate provision from its own resources, a whole infrastructure of basic services has had to be provided before we could progress further. Housing, schools, hospitals and so on in adequate numbers have to be built and staffed before their facilities can be made available. In recent years, our overriding problem has been to make this basic provision in the face of a suddenly expanding population; but once available in something approaching adequate quantity, then the difficulties of families caught in an environment which they are not fully equipped to master can be progressively tackled, not by any one single palliative measure but by a variety of interdependent forms of assistance.

We are now a long way towards—and no society ever wholly achieves—a situation in which the necessary basic services are quite readily available to all. Medical services at a good standard can be provided genuinely and totally free to those who cannot afford even the very small charges set. Housing at low rentals, in spite of the very large quantity provided, is still in insufficient supply, but it is increasing. Plenty of work is available for those willing and equipped to do it;

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and, as I have already mentioned, real wages are rising. The background situation is therefore now by no means unsatisfactory, and the necessary basic facilities are, in short, becoming much more readily available.

How then do we proceed to help those families who have not been able to hold their own in this new environment? Their first need, of course, is to be able to earn an adequate livelihood. This requires education, which in turn requires, in so far as the children are concerned, that they be enabled to attend school without having to help their parents augment an inadequate family income in one way or another. Lack of education, leading to low family income, leading to children kept from school constitutes something of a circular problem, and this circle has to be broken. The situation requires that the next generation be launched on a new course, since unfortunately it is not easy to do this always for adults. The first step, which we have nearly achieved, is to be in a position to offer six years of aided primary education to all, at rates which all can afford. The very small primary school fee asked for up to now has for some years been remittable in the case of the needy, and the primary school fee should not therefore have been a bar to a primary education for any child. We intend however to make sure of the matter by suggesting to honourable Members in due course that we do away with the existing primary school fee entirely in the generality of Government and aided primary schools after this coming Lunar New Year.

Having eliminated whatever residual bar to a primary education the primary school fee may have been, the more complicated problems of eliminating whatever other grounds exist for not sending children to primary school can be tackled. One that I have already mentioned has been the need for children to assist in one way or another with the augmentation of family income. The revised public assistance scheme, now getting under way, comes in here. Grants under this should help in some cases to reduce the need to make children earn rather than go to school.

There is also the problem of the care of small children while parents are away at work, and the temptation to keep elder children away from school to look after the younger ones. While our now very large commitment to education proper does not permit us as yet to aid kindergartens and day nurseries generally to any very great extent, we do nonetheless have an agreed programme for increasing the number of subsidized nursery places and we can and are assisting non-profit organizations interested in running nurseries to a limited degree by helping them to find premises and to train staff. Here again public assistance should help the neediest parents here also by relieving them of some of their other financial problems.

But none of these measures solve the problem of parents who wilfully and unnecessarily neglect to send their child to primary school. To introduce a law enforcing compulsory primary education is a very great temptation, and could easily be done: but we all know that such a law could not be sufficiently effectively enforced. Legislation of this kind would be very unpleasantly close to mere window-dressing, and window-dressing legislation is something that we have always sought to avoid.

Nevertheless, the problem of the irresponsible parent remains. I am sure that there are comparatively few such here; but they do exist, and must not be allowed to make their children suffer for their own folly. We are therefore now examining what I might call an intermediate solution on lines somewhat different from the more usual compulsory education laws. Subject of course to further study, we hope to be able to suggest that where cases come to notice, from whatever source, of parents who appear to be unnecessarily withholding their children from primary school, the family's circumstances will be investigated and arrangements made for the child to attend school for such period and in such a manner as best suits the family's circumstances. Should the parents prove unwilling to accept such arrangements, the Courts would be empowered to make an order enforcing them, subject of course to the Court being satisfied that these arrangements were as good as could be devised in the interests of both the child and the family as a whole.

A flexible system on these lines should go far towards meeting the main need in a practical way, and will be all the easier to introduce with fee-free primary education and the support of a public assistance scheme to help the parents and the family generally.

As we consolidate our position at the primary school level in the ways I have ascribed, we are at the same time, as honourable Members are well aware, planning the provision of at least three years of aided post-primary education for all children.

Finally, I cannot here do more than merely mention that our programmes for assisting the mentally and physically disabled to support themselves as far as is possible are steadily expanding their scope. The facilities we have been able to provide in these fields have always been of very high quality; much higher quality than is perhaps generally recognized; but we have had a limited coverage. It is now quantitative expansion that is needed, without loss of quality.

What is missing in these plans for comprehensive social services are those elements which are elsewhere based on schemes of compulsory social insurance; old age pensions, sickness benefits, survivorship and so on; although all these contingencies can be alleviated to some degree by public assistance. Unfortunately, I still see no early prospect of

[MR PRESIDENT]

being able to introduce successfully the compulsory collection of contributions from the public at large or large sections of the public, in respect of future benefits, except perhaps in very limited fields. The opposition to anything of this kind in our circumstances would be too great, and moreover it is understandable. The experience of others elsewhere, very differently placed from ourselves, largely fails us here: and if we are to provide protection against the contingencies of old age, sickness and survivorship, we are going to have to strike out into new methods. The nature of any solutions which might be suitable here has so far not revealed itself to us. It would be helpful if those here with expertise in these matters could examine these remaining problems realistically, in the light of Hong Kong's practical circumstances, and suggest viable solutions, suitable to our peculiar position. Provided they are prepared to understand the need to be ready if necessary to forget all pre-conceived notions based on doctrine elsewhere, their advice and ideas would be most welcome.

Finally, on these topics, may I remind you that I started by saying that we could now see a new pattern of interlocking social services *beginning* to emerge. But it is only a beginning. During this session, I expect to see these plans go forward, but they are on such a large scale that we have a long way to go before they are in full operation. To take the educational task alone, it is seldom realized that about one-quarter of the whole population is undergoing courses of instruction of one kind or another. Of the remaining three-quarters, after eliminating pre-school children, housewives, the aged and so on, perhaps at a very rough guess half are economically active. This gives a very rough ratio of less than two economically active persons for every young person for whom instruction has to be provided. There may be places which, in the face of a similar adverse ratio, are succeeding in making the educational provision we are contemplating; but I do not think that there are many.

But money is not our only problem by any means. As I have so often said, progress depends on time, effort and money; and not on money alone. Sites, the provision of buildings and the recruitment and training of staff are all most formidable obstacles to all our programmes, and will all have to be overcome as we proceed. The move forward of which I speak is therefore necessarily a matter of short but significant and co-ordinated steps against the resistance of very large numbers.

And now to turn to some of the other developments I hope to see before this session ends, first briefly mentioning the progress we have made on the subjects I spoke about on this occasion last year and which had not come to a conclusion.

I am disappointed that it has not proved possible to bring our studies on changes in the Urban Council to a conclusion by now, but the fact is that consideration of improvements to the Council's financial arrangements has had to be very much more detailed and complex than we had hoped. Perhaps I should simply say at this stage that the changes which we have in mind relate primarily to the composition of the Council, as well as to its financial arrangements, and not so much to changes in function as to closer definition of these functions. Within these limits, however, I believe that what we have in mind will, if it finds approval, deserve to be recognized as a significant and worthwhile advance in the history of the Urban Council.

It is regrettable that in certain aspects of life in Hong Kong which are entirely or largely within our own control, we not only seem indifferent to serious problems but positively make matters worse by careless, undisciplined habits and lack of concern for the common good. One such is the problem of dirt, litter and pollution. One's own possible contribution to tidiness always seems so small and insignificant as scarcely to justify the little effort required to mend one's ways. But take four million people all taking the same anti-social attitude and you have a major and indeed a threatening problem which concerns us all. Tidiness and public cleanliness is largely a matter of habit: but cleanly habits will not be inculcated merely by sporadic campaigns and a few posters. I feel we need something of a sustained and co-ordinated effort in this field, attacking the problem from all fronts. I should be glad to lend what support I can to the Urban Council if that Council feels able to initiate some major move in the field, which is basically within its responsibility: although other bodies are of course very much concerned.

The Committee on Air Pollution has been most helpful in determining just what our problems now are, and are likely to be in the future. It is of course reassuring to learn that, except in one particular area, there is as yet no severe air pollution problem at present. Nevertheless much needs to be done to retain control of the situation, and one fact has to be faced squarely from the start—clean air is, unfortunately, an expensive commodity now-a-days; and if we want it we shall have to pay the cost of it, often individually.

I have every expectation also that the two Committees we have set up on the use of the countryside will come forward with concrete proposals which we can quickly start to put into effect, during the coming year. I am forced to remark here, however, that the greater use of the countryside for recreational purpose is not always consistent with environmental preservation or the avoidance of pollution; and we will need to be careful to try and facilitate the one without damaging effects on the other.

[MR PRESIDENT]

Another area in which we hope to see steady improvement in the coming year is labour-management relations. This is not to say that Hong Kong has a bad record in industrial disputes. Man-days lost have remained fairly consistently at a very low level, and the common sense of labour and management in resolving their differences reasonably and quickly has been an important factor in Hong Kong's economic development. Nevertheless there is always room for improvement, although there are no quick remedies in this field—indeed, countries with advanced systems of settling labour/management disputes often seem to suffer the most from them. In the end, it must always rest with the two parties to reach agreement, but it has been and remains the policy of Government to encourage them to do so in all possible ways, primarily through the Labour Relations Service of the Labour Department. This Service has played an active part in fostering the establishment of effective systems of communications between labour and management, and over 220 places of employment now practise joint consultation with 300 more showing interest.

Experience in these matters shows very clearly that many disputes could be avoided if the rights and responsibilities of workers were clearly set out in writing, and I hope that both employers and employees will make use of a recently prepared guide on the preparation of handbooks giving employees detailed information on these subjects.

The Labour Relations Service continues to conciliate successfully in about three-quarters of the cases reported to it, and most of the unresolved disputes are settled by the Courts. Consideration of the proposal to establish labour courts about which I spoke last year has proceeded, and if it proves possible to work out a satisfactory scheme, and it looks now that it will be, then the first such court might be established in 1971.

1971 will also see a Colony-wide Population and Housing Census, to be immediately followed by a Census of Manufacturing Establishments, the first of its kind here. This Census will seek to obtain information on, among other things, the types of product manufactured, the number of employees, the value of annual sales, and the types of machinery installed. The Census will probably serve as a foundation for a full Census of Industrial Production, tentatively planned for 1973 and designed to coincide with United Nations programmes of enquiry into industrial statistics that year.

No review such as this of current developments in Hong Kong could be complete without a comment on our Public Service. The major recent development has been the introduction of the equal pay scheme which came into effect on 1st April 1969 and will be completed

in its seven phases by 1st April 1975. There is no doubt that equal pay has brought a number of problems in its train, but I hope that the forthcoming Salaries Commission will help us to resolve these problems.

Finally, I should like to pay a personal tribute to the Public Service as a whole. Civil Servants are an easy target for criticism but the reputation of the Hong Kong Civil Service nevertheless stands high and its achievements compare very favourably with those of any Public Services anywhere else. I should like to take this opportunity of assuring the Service generally that the work they do in shouldering their increasingly onerous responsibilities, and the long hours that many officers willingly impose upon themselves, are fully appreciated.

I think that all I have said today adds up to grounds not only for quiet optimism, particularly in the commercial and industrial field, but also for concern that we should not fail to grapple with the many major problems and shortcomings that still have to be resolved. I am sure that our merchants and industrialists will continue to display the same energy and enterprise that has done so much in the past to raise our community's living standards, and that our working force will continue to back them up with those virtues of hardwork and adaptability for which they have won such a high reputation. Let us hope that the same qualities of energy, determination and imagination are displayed by the community as a whole in its efforts to achieve a better quality of life. It is to this end that the efforts of the administration are directed; and whilst experience shows that there are no short cuts, no easy ways of achieving dramatic successes, nevertheless experience shows also that dramatic results are by no means beyond our reach if we can harness the formidable resources and abilities of this community towards worthwhile ends. I look forward to seeing such an impetus towards a better quality of life for all during the coming year, the final year of my Commission as Governor, and I am confident that this honourable Council will play a significant, positive and central part in all that is to be achieved.

Honourable Members, I wish you all success in your deliberations during the new Session which we inaugurate today.

ADJOURNMENT

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT:—Now in accordance with Standing Order 6(4) I will adjourn Council until 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 7th October 1970.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes past Three o'clock.

