

26 Feb. 1990

## 16,000 families set to go

NEARLY 17,000 families are poised to join the brain drain and make their home in Singapore.

In only six months since the city state announced plans to entice 25,000 Hongkongers to emigrate there, 16,691 applications for permanent residence have been approved.

The Singapore Home Affairs Minister, Mr Shanmugam Jayakumar, yesterday told parliament that the successful applicants were selected from the 20,038 people from Hongkong who had applied for permanent residence between July, 1989, and February 11, 1990.

Singapore suffers from a labour shortage and offered to admit up to 25,000 Hongkong families.

Of the successful applicants, 8,086 were professionals and the rest skilled workers and technicians, Mr Jayakumar said.

He said 588 people from the territory had already taken up residence in Singapore so far.

At the current rate, the 25,000 places could be exhausted within weeks.

Under the scheme, Hongkong residents given permission to relocate to Singapore have up to five years to make the move.

The Singaporean offer was made in the wake of the June 4 massacre in Beijing.

However, the Singapore Premier, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, has stressed that the immigrants will only be given residency rights and not full citizenship.