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Anti-drug chief backs fines /

By FRANK CHOI

The battle against drug trafficking had to strike at the profits, the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Gordon Mortimer, said yesterday.

He agreed with the principle behind a recommendation in the recently-published triad report that drug traffickers had to pay back to the community what they had taken through other people's suffering.

The report suggested that convicted drug traffickers — many of them triad members — should automatically owe the Crown \$40,000 for every month of their sentence.

Mr Mortimer told reporters after officiating at the opening of the Tsun Wan anti-narcotics carnival that the penalty was not severe compared to the maximum penalty for trafficking, life imprisonment.

Asked whether the proposed penalty was fair to all traffickers, Mr Mortimer said it was because the proposal was aimed at the masterminds rather than small traffickers.

As for the rest of the report, Mr Mortimer said he would not comment on it as he was familiar only with the part involving drug trafficking.

He said people must persevere with

efforts to combat drug abuse because it remains one of the territory's major social problems.

"The prevention of drug abuse cannot be the sole responsibility of the Government. The whole community must play its part," he added.

Mr Mortimer explained that the anti-drug message had to be driven home at all levels.

"As long as the problem remains, there will be a danger that Tsun Wan and its residents, and especially the younger ones, will be affected or at risk," he said.

He noted that since 1973 the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) had been organising district campaigns, which involved district leaders and residents in organising local events and activities.

In doing so, the community had acquired a greater understanding of the drug abuse problem.

Mr Mortimer said not all drug abusers were undergoing treatment even though various forms were readily available.

"The primary objectives of the anti-narcotics campaign for 1986-87 were to inform them of the voluntary treatment and rehabilitation facilities available and to encourage them to come forward for

treatment," he said.

The chairman of the Tsun Wan District Board, Mr Chau How-chen, said that drug abuse was not a serious problem in Tsun Wan but authorities nevertheless wanted the public to be vigilant.

The music carnival was organised to complement the anti-narcotics slogan, "Drugs will ruin your whole life," he said.

The event was organised by ACAN, Radio Television Hongkong, Tsun Wan District Board and Tsun Wan District Office. It marked the beginning of intensive anti-narcotics preventive education and publicity programmes for 1986-87.

Other district campaigns will be launched in Eastern, Kun Tong, Yau-mati and Mongkok.

The Tsun Wan carnival, held at the Sha Tsui Road playground, included anti-narcotics displays, a demonstration by the anti-narcotics dog unit of the Customs and Excise Department, games stalls, a giant inflatable elephant for children and a concert produced and broadcast live by RTHK.

An assistant director of broadcasting, Mr Simon Lun, and the district officer for Tsun Wan, Mr Angus Miu, were among the guests.