

\$90m fund to help mentally handicapped

Handicapped

THE Government plans to set up a \$90 million fund known as the Queen Elizabeth Foundation for the mentally handicapped.

The Governor, Sir David Wilson, said the foundation, approved by the Queen, would be funded from the proceeds of the sale of royal visit gold coins, general revenue and contributions.

Complementing the Government's program in this area, the foundation will provide additional resources to improve the care, education and training of the mentally handicapped.

An Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower, Mrs Jennie Chok, said the Government planned to raise about \$90 million for the foundation which was expected to be established in a few months, depending on progress of the preparation works.

The branch's rehabilitation division and other departments involved are still working on details of the proposal which is expected to be fully revealed today by the Secretary for Health and Welfare, Mr John Chambers, and other senior officials.

The Government's move

was welcomed yesterday by Legislative Councillor, Mr Hui Yin-fat, who is also the director of the Hongkong Council of Social Services.

Mr Hui however said a fund of \$90 million was far from enough if the services were to be improved significantly. He was confident that more money could be raised with the sale of gold coins for charitable purposes.

Inadequacy of services in this area has been a long-standing problem that needed to be tackled as soon as possible, he said.

With more resources, Mr Hui thought other supplementary problems such as

the shortage in manpower could easily be resolved.

There are about 40 schools which cater for mentally handicapped children in Hongkong. The Education Department intends to solve the acute shortage of special school places for mentally ill children within five years by building and extending 17 special schools.

By 1991, the total number of special school places will rise from the present 7,300 to 8,700.

A conservative estimate puts the number of mentally ill in Hongkong at 200,000 — about four per cent of the population.

Pollution solutions

CONSULTANTS appointed to study pollution in East Kowloon, covering an area of 1,530 hectares from Kwun Tong to Kowloon City, will propose solutions to stop polluted water from flowing into the harbour by the end of next year.

The consultancy is part of the Government's \$10-billion plan for the next decade to control pollution.

The Pypun Group Consultants have already surveyed 13 storm drains polluted by domestic and industrial effluent.

Group managing director Mr Patrick Purnell-Edwards said yesterday that the results would be published in March.

Plans to eradicate some of the most polluted areas in East Kowloon, northwest New Territories and the Tolo Harbour catchment area are included in the Government's plans.

A scheme to clean up the heavily polluted Tolo Harbour began in April when the area was declared a water control zone and all existing discharges and disposals into the water had to be cleared with the Environmental Protection Department.

Role of senior civil servants to be reviewed

Civil service

THE role and responsibilities of senior officials will come under scrutiny from next month in a major civil service review similar to the one which created the present secretarial system 14 years ago.

Private consultants will complete a review of the du-

ties of branch secretaries and department heads in six months' time.

An international firm of management consultants has been engaged to help review the functions of secretaries and heads of departments as Hongkong has developed socially, economically and politically during the past 14 years.

The present civil service organisation, where depart-

ment heads carry out policies made by branch secretaries, was established following an independent review by private consultants in 1973.

The Deputy Chief Secretary, Mr John Chan, yesterday declined to name the firm being engaged.

He said, however, the firm would be one that the Government had engaged previously and that consul-

tancy costs would not exceed \$2 million.

Mr Chan said the private management experts would examine the workload of senior officials and whether areas of the bureaucracy overlapped.

Sir David said there had been a significant increase in the number and quality of people applying to be civil servants, with 3,000 candidates now vying for 354 posts.