

'100,000 HK DROPOUTS' CLAIM SHOCKS EDUCATIONISTS

Balloon
anniversary

SIR Denys Roberts, the acting Governor, will tomorrow launch a balloon, piloted by Captain Green, to commemorate the first balloon ascent 190 years ago.

TOP level educationists said last night they were greatly disturbed by the Hongkong Christian Council claim that nearly 100,000 children in the 12 to 14 age group were not receiving secondary education.

A spokesman for the Education Action Group said the Government should implement the White Paper on Education immediately even if it meant higher taxation on the rich or the use of our reserve funds.

Hongkong University lecturer Mrs Harieta Yapp said the social implications of the Christian Council's revelations were grave.

The Hongkong Christian Council said in its statement there must be nine years of education for all.

It said: "The Government must take up its responsibility in providing education for all those who presently have none."

It also said it was opposed to Education Director Ken Topley's suggestion of increasing the size of classes and said teachers with 40 students already found it difficult to meet their needs.

"Forty-five students in a class would certainly mean a reduction in the quality of education."

The spokesman for the Education Action Group said they had been pressing the

Government for nine years education for all.

"We feel the money problem may be overcome by reshifting the priority with regard to other public services.

"We could borrow money from the Asian Development Bank as do other projects, introduce higher taxation on the rich, or even use our reserves.

"We agree with floating classes and the extended day method as they do not decrease the quality of education and is actually practised in advanced countries," she said.

The spokesman said they had communicated with 80 other education groups in order to organise a joint effort to press the Government for better education.

Mrs Harieta Yapp made the following recommendations to overcome the education problem.

- OPEN evening schools in the existing schools;
- PART-time day release — apprenticeship in factories

and firms during day time, with no or nominal pay;

○ FULL-time three-year evening school with strong vocational bias;

○ EMPLOY form five graduates as part-time teachers.

'Figure absolutely wrong' says education dept

ENROLMENT figures show that 10 percent of children in the 12-14 age group are not at school, a spokesman for the Education Department said today when asked to comment on newspaper reports on the claim made by the HK Christian Council that nearly 100,000 children in this age bracket are without education.

The spokesman pointed out that in March 1975 the number of children in this age group attending full time primary and secondary schools stood at 290,102 and another 9,391 were attending night schools.

The estimated population in the 12-14 age group is 331,000.

"This shows that some 33,500 children of this age group are not in school. Therefore the statement that 100,000 children aged 12-14 are without education is absolutely wrong and the statement that 100,000 young people are not receiving secondary education is decidedly misleading," the spokesman said.