

H. K. Standard 27 June 1982

All-round applause for second polytechnic plan

THE government has decided to set up a second polytechnic to meet the soaring demand for technical education arising from rapid industrial development.

The new polytechnic will have a total initial capacity of 8,000 full-time and part-time students, which could be raised to cater for a maximum of 13,500 students if future demand warrants.

Industrialists' and educationalists' bodies, greeted the government announcement with delight, saying: "It's most timely to have another polytechnic to meet the pressing needs of our industries."

A government

spokesman said yesterday that a search for suitable sites to build the new institution was under way, and it was expected that a decision on its location would be made later this year.

The decision to build a second polytechnic was taken after the government studied the recommendations of the Committee to Review Post-secondary and Technical Education, and the advice of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee, the spokesman said.

The new polytechnic is scheduled for completion in the late 1980s, and will conduct both degree and non-degree courses.

A planning committee made up of members of the existing Hong Kong Polytechnic Council will be established in the interim to undertake preliminary planning. The council's chairman, Sir Sze-yuen Chung, will head the committee.

This is to enable the new polytechnic to benefit from the experience and expertise of the council.

Sir Sze-yuen told the Standard last night there were bound to be some differences between the existing and the new institutions.

First of all, he said, the new polytechnic would run some courses similar to those offered by the

Hong Kong Polytechnic which were not considered adequately provided for.

However, Sir Sze-yuen said the new institution would also offer some "completely new courses".

The planning committee would conduct research into what new courses were needed.

THE SITE

And one of the prime concerns is to make recommendations to the government on the site of the new institution.

Sir Sze-yuen had said earlier this year that the second polytechnic should not be located in a remote part of the New Territories. He believed that it should be within the existing populated areas and be on the main transport networks.

On speculation that the choice of sites for the second polytechnic had been narrowed down to a few, one of which was Maonshan, he declined to divulge any details.

However, he commented: "A polytechnic is not necessarily wasteful of land" and as illustration said one possibility was for the institution's buildings to be high-rise, making it feasible to locate it in a main population centre.

The New Territories site in Maonshan, in contrast, has plenty of room to build the polytechnic premises.

In addition, he suggested that the two polytechnics should be linked organisationally to encourage them to complement each other so that there was no wasteful competition.

Commenting on the second polytechnic, the Hong Kong Federation of

Industries' deputy director, T. W. Wong, said our industrial development would be hampered without parallel strides in the training of technologists.

"But it is necessary that surveys and research are constantly conducted to find out the actual needs of the industries, so that courses designed at the second polytechnic can cater to their needs," he said.

A leading industrialist, Francis Tien, who is also chairman of the Vocational Training Council, also supported the government's decision.

"It is most timely as a second polytechnic will meet the increasing

demands for technologists at higher levels in our industries," he said.

A spokesman for the Education Action Group, Anthony Ha, said there was sufficient evidence to support the setting up of a second polytechnic for Hongkong to encourage diversification in industry.

Mr Ha, who advocates the establishment of a third university, urged the government to seriously consider such an idea.

Tens of thousands were finishing school each year and aspiring for tertiary education. But as there were too few university places here, he said many were forced to go overseas to study.