

## Govt policy slammed

# 50-year wait for some on housing waiting list

SOME people on the waiting list for public housing may have to wait 40 to 50 years, according to Hongkong University lecturer Leung Wai-tung.

Miss Leung made the observation yesterday at the City Forum at Victoria Park.

About 200 people attended the forum which was allocated to the Government's housing programme.

Miss Leung said that in the financial year 1978/79, only 15 per cent of the new tenants of public housing units came from the waiting list.

Though this percentage rose to 39.2 per cent for the last financial year it

by

Leona Tse

was still far from satisfactory, she said, as it represented only about 11,000 households.

Miss Leung said if the current trend was continued, it could take 40 to 50 years to clear the waiting list.

A poll of those attending to forum showed that 158 people regarded the allocation policy as unfair, five people said it was fair while seven were uncommitted.

An hour earlier, at the start of the forum, 48 people had said the housing system was fair, 104 unfair and 18 were uncommitted.

The forum turned out to be a place for residents to express grievances. And

on the stage, most of the speakers criticised the Government's slow-pace efforts to improve the living conditions of more than 500,000 people.

One of the speakers, Lau Wai-yin, blamed the public housing mess on the Government's cutback of spending in 1973 when it claimed there was an economic depression and the slow down of last year when it blamed the "overheated economy".

Mr Lau, who is the chairman of the People's Council on Public Housing Policy, also blamed the Government's intention of making public housing financially independent.

Also at the forum was Dr Denny Huang, a member of Hongkong Housing Authority.

He said Hongkong has been getting richer and as such more money should have been spent for building more houses. Instead, the money has been put in Britain as "reserves", which he felt were unnecessary.

Dr Huang said instead of increasing the supply of public housing, the Legislative Council meeting held last October cut the supply from 45,000 to 35,000 units. Of these, 6,000 were for the Home Ownership Scheme.

He said the mixing up of the both types of public housing was done intentionally to misinform the public.

One of the audience said the housing units were being used to rehouse people who were living on land the Government wanted to resell at huge profits.

He said those living in Hakwaichung and Tinwan temporary housing estates were moved to housing estates only after a year because the land they occupied was good for redevelopment.

But those who have lived in Wangtauhom temporary housing estates for eight years had received no word of when they will be moved to high rise buildings before their recent petition.

He said the main reason was that the Government found that the site was not suitable for redevelopment.

Dr Huang said the explanation of why so large a portion of new public housing units were allocated to those affected by the development or redevelopment plans, according to the Government, was that after development the site could house more people.

But the man countered that it was to sell for profit.

Another speaker, Mr Shaw Lo-sui said the income from the sale of land eight years ago amounted to only \$2 billion, but was expected to exceed \$61 billion this year. By comparison was disappointed at the small amount of money being spent on public housing.