

# 2,000 join rally to call for roof-top canopies

Two thousand people who suffer from roof-top heat in 28 public housing estates reiterated their demand for asbestos canopies yesterday.

This is the 15th time this month they have aired their discontent and the 40th time since August.

They demanded a meeting with the Housing Department between today and Saturday to solve the years-long problem.

Three officials of the department whom they invited



A moth alighted on Dr Ding's forehead but did not distract him in any way.

to the forum were absent yesterday.

The forum attracted large crowds in Victoria Park and banners were tied to trees. One read: "The Housing Department is very skilful in delaying the setting up of asbestos canopies."

A representative of the 2,000 tenants, Mr Wong Shu-hung, said asbestos canopies have been proved to be most effective in deflecting heat and the department should start setting up canopies as soon as possible.

Other means, such as leaving some top floor units empty and putting reflective paint on the roofs, are not as effective as canopies, Mr Wong said, and the department should not waste time in experimenting.

He said although the weather is much cooler now, residents have not forgotten their summer suffering.

One speaker at the forum, Dr L.K. Ding, suggested that as well as canopies, plants should be grown on roof-tops.

He had visited estates in Shek Kip Mei and Pak Tin.

A tenant told Dr Ding that he found some stains on a leather jacket one day as he took it out from the wardrobe.

The stains were not mould but the melted parts of the plastic clothes-hanger.

Dr Ding said it is beyond his imagination how people can endure living in such high temperatures.

As he spoke, a moth rested from the heat on his head and aroused roars of laughter.

Another speaker, an architect, said that reflective paint is quite effective when newly painted.

But after a period of time, the paint will change its constitution and instead of refracting heat, it will absorb it.

So it is only a temporary measure, he said.

He suggested the Housing Department set up canopies on roof-tops and use better insulators in new estates.

To utilise space, the Housing Department could co-operate with the Agriculture and Fisheries Department in growing vegetables on roof-tops.



Workers laying lightweight insulation on the roof of a block at Upper Pak Tin estate where re-roofing is in progress.

## Insulation work hot up

More than \$8.5 million has been spent in the past two years on roof insulation improvement work on 201 public housing blocks at 37 estates.

"The work mainly involves the use of heat insulation tiles and other special insulation materials," a spokesman for the Housing Authority said yesterday.

"Also, reflective paints have been used as an interim

measure on certain blocks.

"The number of blocks scheduled for insulation work up to mid-November this year has gone up substantially to 127, as against 74 last year.

"The area involved has also been increased from 69,677 square metres last year to 108,676 square metres this year," he said.

Meanwhile, the spokesman said that where re-roofing work was taking place, lightweight insulation screed and asbestos-cement roofing tiles were automatically added.

"Examples now in progress are one block at

Shek Pai Wan Estate, five at Upper Pak Tin Estate and eight at Tsz On, Tsz Lok, Tsz Oi and Tsz Ching Estates where the work will cost more than \$2.7 million," he said.

"We are continuing to look for other practical and economical alternatives to reduce the summer heat problem in some top-floor flats on old estate blocks.

"The effectiveness of several new materials is being tested on some blocks at Yue Wan and Hing Wah estates, such as foams which are sprayed on to the roof or under the roof tiles and lightweight insulation slabs laid on the roof."