

\$600m set aside to develop new towns

Expenditure on the three towns of Shatin, Tsun Wan and Tuen Mun is gathering momentum and a programme to develop Taipo, Yuen Long, Lantau Island and Sai Kung is being drawn up, the Secretary for the New Territories, Mr David Akers-Jones, said.

Engineering reports on these other new towns and large villages were now coming in and the development programme would lead to individual projects being submitted for public works expenditure.

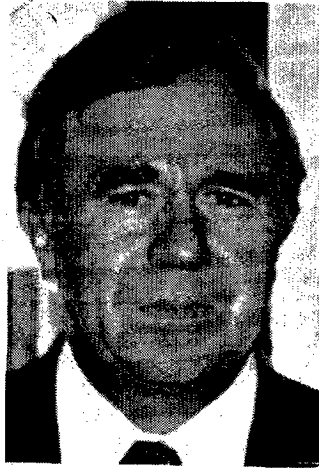
"Indeed some proposals for a reclamation at Taipo and roads and other works at Sai Kung will be put forward for urgent consideration during the next few months," he said.

Speaking during the resumed Budget debate, Mr Akers-Jones said that \$100 million was spent on new towns in 1973, \$260 million in 1974, \$450 million last year and \$600 million would be spent this year.

"But it is important that areas other than the new towns are not left behind," he added.

"In 1974 we were worried about the slow rate of industrial development at Tuen Mun," Mr Akers-Jones said, "but now it is tending to get ahead of the housing.

"There are at present 10 factories being built and more than 30 applications for the



Mr Akers-Jones

200,000 sq ft of the land not yet in the hands of industrial developers."

At Shatin, the first part of the industrial zone at Fo Tan, totalling 268,000 sq ft, has been sold. The remainder involved clearance of a cultivated and inhabited valley and would be a fairly lengthy process.

And Mr Akers-Jones described development at Tsun Wan as spectacular and breathtaking.

"Stand on the Tsing Yi bridge and look around at the container port which has doubled in size in a year, at the factories on Tsing Yi, the housing estates going up all around you, and you cannot

fail to be impressed with the magnitude of the effort and scale of development," he said.

"And here again, so numerous have been the applications for industrial land that I expect nearly a million square feet to be disposed of in Kwai Chung in the next 18 months."

Mr Akers-Jones referred to a statement made in the council in 1974 by the Director of Public Works about the impracticability of providing a water supply to all parts of the New Territories.

"He hoped to draw up proposals for a realistic programme of water supply development so as not to frustrate worthwhile development schemes," he said.

Since then, data has been collected on the extent of likely development throughout the New Territories.

"I believe the time has come when we must get on with some of these water extension schemes. Failure to do so is inhibiting development and preventing us from realising the full potential of the land resources available to us."

He said it was absurd that Sai Kung should be short of water "next door to our biggest reservoir," particularly as there was no doubt about the great interest and willingness to invest in Sai Kung being shown by private developers.