

\$450m to be spent on developing the NT



Mr Akers-Jones

The Government is to spend about \$450 million on the New Territories in the current financial year, much of it on the development of new towns.

The Secretary for the New Territories, Mr David Akers-Jones, said that while expenditure had been cut down to necessities they were not "bare essentials" as such when compared to about \$100 million spent on the New Territories development projects in 1973-74.

Out of the \$450 million, Mr Akers-Jones said a total of \$111 million would be for new contracts to be let out mainly for the further expansion of the infrastructure of capital works which were needed before the housing estates of tomorrow could be built at Tsing Yi, Tsun Wan, Shatin and Tuen Mun.

The balance will be spent on contracts now running.

These include the remaining housing estates being built at Kwai Chung, Tuen Mun and Shatin - to provide homes for 150,000 - water supplies, roads and drainage works for areas of future development, a polyclinic, and a divisional police station.

During his speech, Mr Akers-Jones also disclosed that an investigation would be made into the further development of Taipo and other New Territories' towns.

The Housing Department, he said, was already designing the housing estate to be built at Taipo, in which to move the boat squatters of Yuen Tsau Tsai, just as soon as funds could be found.

He said this was an example and a reminder that plans for rural housing had not been forgotten.

Mr Akers-Jones said he was also concerned that sufficient secondary schools should be established, not only in the new towns but also conveniently throughout the New Territories.

In this respect, he said the Government was moving in the right direction with seven of the 13 secondary schools now being built being located in the New Territories.

They are at Taipo, Tuen Mun, Kwai Chung and Lantau. In addition, there are plans to build a secondary school in Sai Kung and another on Lantau.

Mr Akers-Jones also spoke on the Government's intentions to provide more recreational facilities in the New Territories.

Pointing out the demand by the public in this field, Mr Akers-Jones stated that between October and December last year, a total of more than 196,000 people visited Bride's Pool compared with 54,000 the year before.

He said it was against this background the Government was considering recreational development plans, particularly those for Lantau and Sai Kung.

On other major development projects in the New Territories, Mr Akers-Jones said it was a disappointment when the interested groups for the oil refinery and petro-chemical plant decided to withdraw from the project.

But, he added, there had been encouraging response by private interests in developing the Shatin seabed.