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J. R. M. P.

10 Nov 1979

Adopt a district, Unofficials urged ^{& C.D.O.}

The Director of Home Affairs, Mr J. C. C. Walden, has invited Unofficial members to become spokesmen for particular urban districts.

He extended the invitation while discussing steps the Government has taken to improve services to residents of urban districts, particularly Kun Tong.

"We recognise the enormous demands made upon the time of Unofficial members of this council.

"But we should be most grateful to any member who could find the time to adopt a particular urban district, assume an on-going interest in its problems and help residents to get their views across to the Government," he said.

"Unofficial members are in a favourable position to see to it that where community views and aspirations are reasonable there is an appropriate Government response."

Mr Walden was respond-

ing to questions by two Unofficials, the Rev Joyce Bennett and Mr Wong Lam, who said they are concerned about problems at the local level in urban areas.

Mr Walden noted the first steps to achieve the Government's aims have already been taken by the appointment on November 1 of a City District Commissioner to take charge of the Kun Tong District Office.

He, along with the current City District Officer and his staff, will be responsible for ensuring that Government efforts in Kun Tong are better co-ordinated and directed to the needs of the residents.

By the end of next month the promised new scheme of a District Management Committee, with representation from all Government departments providing services to Kun Tong, will also be set up, Mr Walden said.

The committee will decide

what additional steps should be taken to achieve better co-ordination.

Previously, close co-ordination in Kun Tong was only exercised between the City District Office and departments such as Social Welfare, Urban Services and police.

Under the new scheme, the Public Works Department and Housing Authority will also send representatives to the management committee.

"The overall objective is to make steady rather than spectacular progress towards more effective and responsive Government by measures that will lend themselves to adoption by other urban districts when the time is right to do so," he said.

"These proposals have the support of the departments concerned and I have no doubt at all that they will also receive the backing of the statutory bodies as well."

Mr Walden said the Government has no immediate intention of changing procedures for public consultation but will study the matter carefully.

He noted that the Government went to great lengths to solicit public opinion in the Sau Mau Ping and Lam Tin estates during a study last year of services and facilities there.

But he conceded that the Government should show greater initiative in eliciting public opinion.

Mr Walden also promised that the Government will keep a tight rein on the new committee's budgets and not allow excessive proliferation of staff in the "Kun Tong griffin."

He added that Mr Wong's support of the Kun Tong proposals is encouraging because "he is a man closely in touch with the life and thought of people at the district level."



Mr Walden