

# 1997 ranks fifth as social concern

By WALTER CHEUNG

Despite the immense media publicity over the 1997 issue, people rate Hongkong's future as only the fifth most serious social problem, according to a recent Government-commissioned survey.

For the more than 2,000 respondents, the most serious social problem was law and order, followed by housing, cost of living/inflation, juvenile delinquency — and then Hongkong's future.

As a first-mentioned social problem, 26 per cent regarded law and order as most serious, 21 per cent housing and 10 per cent Hongkong's future.

However, among the higher socio-economic strata, especially the university educated and professional/trader/proprietor group, Hongkong's future was considered a much more important social problem.



Mr Ford

For example, in the professional/trader/proprietor group, it was viewed as a more serious problem than housing.

Twenty-four per cent of respondents in this group



Mr Tang

mentioned Hongkong's future first as the most serious social problem, compared with 14 per cent for housing.

"Obviously, the housing problem does not affect the life of these groups of people as much as it does people of lower socio-economic strata," the report, "Attitude Survey on Housing," said.

Among blue-collar unskilled workers, only six per cent first mentioned Hongkong's future as the most serious social problem.

Among those whose household income exceeded \$7,000, 18 per cent ranked Hongkong's future as the most serious social problem at first mention.

But only four per cent of those whose household income was \$3,500 first cited Hongkong's future as most serious.

The Director of Housing, Mr David Ford, said it came as no surprise to him that Hongkong's future was only rated the fifth most serious social problem.

He said people generally tend to be more concerned about things affecting their daily life than something "very much in the distance."

The managing director of Survey Research (HK) Ltd, Mr K.N. Tang, whose company was commissioned to conduct the survey, suggested that some of the respondents might distinguish between social problems and political problems and personal concerns.

The survey, which cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000, was commissioned by the Home Affairs Branch.

Its objective was to establish and quantify the public's attitudes towards housing issues and, in particular, towards a number of policy considerations concerning public housing allocation.

The first pilot study took place between March 12 and 13, 1984 and the second pilot between March 26 and 27, 1984.

The main field work was carried out between April 9 and May 15, 1984.

A total of 2,004 interviews were conducted with individuals aged between 16 and 65 in different geographical, demographic, economic and housing strata in Hongkong.

In order to make the data representative of the total Hongkong population within this age bracket, a multi-stage probability sampling technique was employed.

The questionnaire contained about 80 questions on public rental housing, the home ownership scheme, the waiting list, the squatter areas and temporary housing areas, and the channels of communication on housing matters.