

\$42b in 'lost' revenue

FAILURE to build the new airport will cost the territory's economy \$42 billion a year in lost visitor revenue by the year 2000.

The number of visitors should reach 10 million a year by the turn of the century, and if there were no new airport, Kai Tak could handle no more than 7.5 million visitors annually, even if it were expanded, says the Hongkong Hotels Association.

"The 10 million figure is not daydreaming. It is very possible, but we need a new airport," said executive director Mr Manuel Woo.

"If Hongkong is to continue its position as a financial, investment and trading cen-

tre, and if Hongkong is to continue to be the hottest destination for international visitors, it cannot manage without a new airport," he said.

The loss of 2.5 million potential visitors would stunt the development of the hotel trade, slow the growth of convention and exhibition activity – with some events being forced to go elsewhere – and dent the potential of the retail trade, say analysts.

Last year the six million visitors to the territory each spent, on average, \$6,400, according to the Hongkong Tourist Association.

Allowing for inflation that figure would rise to nearly \$17,000 per head by the year 2000.