

Airport should not take priority over educational needs

WE Hongkong people are now living in the last few years of the 20th century.

We have a wide range of products to choose from and they are constantly improving in quality. We see the same trend developing in many parts of the world.

There is no doubt that technology in Hongkong industries has shown a steady advance.

We find, for example, that computerised control systems are being widely adopted in some modern offices and some industries.

This not only helps people to function more efficiently at work, but also enables us to keep up with a fast-moving and rapidly changing world.

However, the knowledge which enables us to use so much modern and efficient equipment has been almost entirely acquired, not from local researchers, but from research done overseas, in countries such as Japan, Germany and the US.

So, does this mean that Hongkong researchers and professionals are inferior to those researchers in other nations? And does this mean that foreign people are more intelligent than us? I do not think this is so.

Take the London General Certificate of Education Advanced-Level Examina-

tion — which is conducted worldwide — as an example.

The results of Hongkong candidates, each year, are always near the top in comparison with other countries.

So, it is obvious that there are many highly intelligent Hongkong people and we are not inferior to anyone.

Given that is the case, where is the root of the problem?

One reason may be that we Hongkong people are not innovative or inventive enough.

Also, we do not have enough resources nor enough equipment in our tertiary institutes to teach our next generation of professionals.

Universities in Hongkong are famed for their students, then their teaching staff. Academic facilities come a poor third.

The order is reversed when looking at universities overseas.

Hongkong universities do not have enough up-to-date equipment for teaching purposes.

I am not trying to be critical of the universities, but I think this does go some way to explaining why new technology here is acquired second hand.

One problem connected with this is the construction of the new airport. The

costs of the airport have risen with inflation. The Government is building it on the basis of hoping that Hongkong's economy and its businesses will continue to prosper.

The cost implications are long-term, because the airport will take about 10 years to build.

Consequently the Government announced, several months ago, that annual grants to the three universities would be cut.

I think it is ridiculous that such cuts should be made, because financial constraints could, to some extent, retard the learning processes for students.

If they are provided with good equipment and facilities, they can acquire more knowledge.

One upshot of these cutbacks is that some young people will go overseas in order to further their studies and may not return.

As a previous correspondent wrote on October 28, "new technology is so important... Our technology is not advanced, however the situation can improve."

We should find ways to remedy the situation, so that we can all enjoy a better life.

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