

Sample 7 OCT 84

10,000 object to LRT plans

By OPHELIA SUEN

A controversial Government plan to turn the north-east New Territories into a light rail transit "monopoly zone" has come under fire from more than 10,000 Tuen Mun residents.

The residents of four Tuen Mun estates — Tai Hing, Butterfly, On Ting and Yau Oi — yesterday signed a petition objecting to any monopoly.

The petition will be forwarded to the Umelco office.

According to a spokesman for the Joint Committee on Tuen Mun Livelihood, the residents objected to the LRT being protected from competition.

"While we welcome the Government's decision to build the LRT, we deem it necessary for free competition to be maintained.

"It would also be wrong should residents be deprived of a free choice of other types of transport such as taxis or buses," he said.

While many residents did not object to the LRT's construction, he said some still favoured a bus system because of the difference in fares.

He said the residents indicated that they would prefer a Tuen Mun-Tsun Wan rail link to the LRT link from the new town to Yuen Long.

"We urge the Transport Department to consider the feasibility of this," he said.

He also urged the Government to disclose details of the LRT plan and called for open consultation with the people.

Meanwhile, more than 3,250 respondents to a recent survey also objected to any LRT monopoly plan.

The survey — to canvass opinions of about two per cent of Tuen Mun's estimated 250,000 population — was conducted between September 20 to October 5 by three pressure groups and two Tuen Mun district board members.

Almost 79 per cent of those interviewed said they should not be deprived of a free choice.

About 91 per cent said there should be Legislative Council control over future fare rises of the \$2 billion LRT project.

At present, both the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corp and the Mass Transit Railway Corp do not need Executive Council approval to raise charges.

— (Cont'd on Page 12, Col 5)

LRT plan under fire

(Cont'd from Page 1)

Disclosing the findings yesterday, one of the organisers of the survey, Mr Yim Tin-san of the Tuen Mun Planter Society, said residents deemed Government control of LRT fares vital so that charges would not be set too high as a result of regional transport monopoly.

Both the KCR and the Government had already indicated that LRT fares would be higher than comparable bus services.

Meanwhile, about 85 per cent of the respondents said a Tuen Mun-Tsun Wan rail link should have priority over the LRT link from the new town to Yuen Long.

Up to 79 per cent objected to the Transport Depart-

ment's saying that there is a less urgent need to build the Tsun Wan link.

Mr Yim said about 68 per cent of the respondents worked in Tsun Wan and its vicinity — indicative of a larger need for traffic to that direction.

Available statistics showed that only one out of six buses leaving Tuen Mun goes to Yuen Long with the other five going to Tsun Wan.

Mr Yim also said information on the LRT should be available to the public, while there should be open consultation by the Government.

The results of the survey will be submitted to the district board, the Transport Department, the KCR and the Tuen Mun District Office, he said.