

A beautiful valley that cannot be replaced

I WOULD like to applaud John Parker for his letter of October 15 in the *South China Morning Post*, referring to the use of a part of the country park at Shalotong as a golf course.

It is nice to know that I am not alone in being appalled by the idea. I concur with everything he says and trust that the Government will for once pay more than lip-service to the importance of the environment.

It is obviously true that this project will bring in revenue to the developers (a lot of cash), a few villagers (not so much cash) and the Government (how much might be interesting?), but at the loss of a beautiful valley that cannot be replaced.

The fact that it is one of the few areas in the New Territories not

blighted by piecemeal development, Spanish villas and containers, makes it crucial that we keep it this way. Hongkong is not so poor that we need to sell it off to allow a few rich individuals to play golf.

Shortly after John Parker's letter was published, events had moved on, with the reported delay in the Hongkong sewerage system. It now seems unlikely that this scheme will be in place by 1998 and by then many of our present leaders will be gone. Of those who remain, some Hongkongers will be enriched by the *laissez-faire* attitudes which allow the destruction of Hongkong in return for ready cash. The rest of us will be living in a polluted concrete jungle surrounded by sewage.

Perhaps the Government

should just stop pretending to be interested in the environment. They could cancel all environmental protection bodies with their studies and schemes and use the money saved for health services. We will need extra health services to counter infections picked up in the sea, diseases exacerbated by polluted air and stress caused by the lives we lead. And maybe there will be little need for the new airport. Will there be any tourists?

One final point. I see no reason why there cannot be a reversal of any decision about Shalotong, as it seems to be easy to reverse other plans, or to delay them indefinitely. Perhaps that could protect us from this appalling idea to destroy a beautiful valley.

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