

# A mixed bag of suggestions

THE Chinese Press this week generally commented on the lighter side of local news following both the Ching Ming festival and Easter. These include suggestions to improve the Hunghom railway station facilities, government housing policy and the establishment of a new complaint and liaison office at police headquarters.

Wah Kiu Yat Po said, "The inadequacy of the facilities at Hunghom railway station could be easily seen during the Ching Ming festival when there was an unusually large number of people visiting the New Territories.

"We are no expert on the structure of the railway station, but still there are shortcomings that we are able to point out. To start with, the main entrance is not large enough to cope with the massive flow of people going in or out of the building. Overcrowding of passengers in the ticket platform resulted in unnecessary chaos. If the main entrance could simply be enlarged, the problem of passenger traffic will be easily solved.

"Neither are there sufficient sign posts to direct passengers to both the ticket office and the platforms. This again is a source of chaos and is causing undue delays," the paper said.

Wah Kiu Yat Po went on to say that all sign posts should be written in simple Chinese, or even better, drawn in pictorial signs. "The point is, it cannot be denied that some of the passengers are still illiterate. Therefore we should make these sign posts as simple as possible."

The paper also suggested there should be an increase of ordinance staff. "At the moment, there are not enough of these people especially when the train is on the move. Accidents and pick-pocketing are still potential hazards."

In its conclusion, Wah Kiu Yat Po said, "We understand this re-organisation, even if it is started immediately, is going to take a long time. Nevertheless, we hope the railway authorities would take our suggestions into account."

Hongkong Times also gave its suggestions to the government's plan to sell part of the public housing estates to families with comparatively more stable income.

"This is a very good idea and is an important element in maintaining the stability of society. After more than 20 years of prosperity, despite occasional recessions it can be said that the time is ripe for Hongkong to launch a major housing programme aiming to provide every family with their own house."

Nonetheless the paper pointed out the difficulties. "According to the government plan, it needs 15 acres of land and a \$100 million revolving fund so as to provide 5,000 units annually. Just this alone is going to represent a terrific challenge."

On the financial side, the paper suggested co-operation with private enterprises. "Provided there is a certain amount of profit and attractive conditions, we do not see it as difficult to bring forward the necessary investment groups and estate agents.

"One problem, however, is the future price of these housing units. With this initially pegged at \$120,000, it is perhaps a little too high for the intended buyers. If we put this down to \$70,000 or \$80,000 and make the first instalment at 20 per cent, all the buyer has to pay is \$700 monthly. In our opinion, the latter is comparatively more suitable to the average middle to low income group."

Contrary to common suggestion by Chinese papers immediately after the plan was disclosed in the Budget proposal, Hongkong Times said, "We do not agree to a high-pressure policy from the authorities to make those with stable income purchase these housing units. If this project is in itself attractive, there will automatically be a lot of applicants and their present flats at the public housing estates can be readily reserved to those in need of such facilities."

In another comment, Hongkong Times said, "We welcome the Government's move to establish this new complaint and liaison department at police headquarters.

"Hongkong is such a small island packed up with people. The maintenance of law and order is not an easy job and some misunderstanding between the public and the police is unavoidable. We acknowledge that the police has done a lot to improve this relationship, but still there is room for improvement.

"Simply to set up a department to receive complaints is, after all, a passive action. We, therefore, hope that those concerned will take up other more active measures. Not only will the relationship between the two be improved then, public esteem on the Royal Hongkong Police Force will also be raised."

*Govt - public opinion*