

If it threatens to rain or your mother wishes to remarry, there is no way to stop them (天字下雨, 娘要嫁人!)

Hong Kong has suffered financial crisis, property market slump, keen competition from our giant neighbour-our big brother- (who has mastered capitalistic skills in their economic management and development) and rapid change of modern technology, (that has left us no choice but to jump on the bandwagon of modernizing our methods of work) after the handover. As ill luck would have it, they have all come at the same time, which really have caught us in the hop.

The recent huge financial budget deficit forecasted by our Financial Secretary is the handwriting on the wall. If the local economic situation does not improve in the future, we may one day be forced to resort to big tax increase in order to sustain the envious remuneration (comparably speaking) we are receiving after our huge monetary reserves are gone. If we really reach that far, the intense public antagonism against civil servants scenario is predictable without doubt.

The most influential leaders in the Civil Service come from the commercial world. They have made no bones to make public their stance that they are firm believers in market economy. Against this background, will they be so foolish as to cross their arms, doing nothing but watching the population of civil servants to continue to grow and, at the same time, live off the fat of the land like good old days when they are fully aware that the companies in the private sectors are vigorously doing something to cut cost in order to survive the changing circumstances?

In the past, when the local economic was booming and every one got his/her fair share of the economic pie, we had cards in our hands. No one at that time cared a damn even if we rewarded ourselves generously. Now, the table is turned against us, given the prolonged economic recession. Indeed, we will be accused of being behind times, if we stick to our guns stubbornly, without compromising.

To reduce the impact of the reforms to be launched, it seems that the best strategy open to us is to procrastinate as far as possible in order to save our own skin.

We should, first of all, draw the Task Force's attention to the fact that it has taken more than 10 years (some people say 15 years) for the Task Force's chosen sample countries to perfect their reforms, according to reliable information. If our reforms are to be launched hastily without

generate for his/her company, he/she will be dismissed immediately without second thought. The measurement is relatively easy there but not so in the civil service for reasons apparent.

Fawn culture may occasionally be found in some private companies. But, in the long term's speaking, it will be extinguished because company survival is first and foremost and the "real guy" will rise sooner or later. However, in the civil service, (I trust that many of you should know what has happened in this area). I don't want to elaborate on further.

If performance related basis reform is to be implemented, we should ask ourselves (1) whether our appraisal system is perfect and objective enough (2) whether our seniors are capable of holding scale even without fear and favour when weighing subordinates staff. I am worried that if performance related basis reform is to be carried out at the end of the day, only those who are keen on currying favour will be able to benefit and get rewards and annual increment. Some "real guys" will be dead men for sure.

Many veterans in the civil service may be slow in response to changes because they are accustomed to the old methods of doing things but they have contributed a great deal to the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong like other brilliant people in the private sector.

Hong Kong civil service is regarded as one of the best and most efficient in the world. Why? Because of the collective efforts of all civil servants, including the veterans, of course. To show respect to veterans and induce them to leave their posts so as to facilitate restructuring, streamlining and simplification processes without a hitch, we should consider instituting VRS so that they may have an alternative option open to them when considering whether they should go or stay.

From: [REDACTED]