

# \$100,000 bill for five MPs

The first three of five Members of Parliament whose visits will cost Hongkong \$100,000 this year arrive on Saturday for a one-week official visit.

The three are all Conservatives - Mr David Howell (Surrey, Guildford), Mr Paul Channon (Southend West) and Mr John Nott (Cornwall, St Ives).

An official spokesman said about \$100,000 will be spent on the five MPs who will visit Hongkong this financial year as guests of the Government.

The three arriving on Saturday will be accompanied by their wives, but it is not known if the Government is paying for them as well.

During their stay, they will meet the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, Unofficial Members of the Legislative, Executive and Urban Councils, senior Government officials and the

Commissioner for the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Mr Jack Cater.

"Apart from visits to the New Territories' new towns, housing estates, factories and other establishments to learn of Hongkong's problems and developments, the visitors will also have plenty of free time to meet people and go to places they wish to see on their own," a Government spokesman said.

Labour parliamentarian, Mr Robert Parry, who is in Hongkong on a private visit, said yesterday he could only remember one of the three MPs attending Anglo-Hongkong Parliamentary Group meetings.

"I would be interested to find out how MPs are chosen for official visits at Hongkong Government expense," Mr Parry said.

"I have heard that invitations to MPs have to be vetted by the Hongkong Association. If the association doesn't approve of them, they don't get invited.

"I can't see much point in only inviting yes-men here."

Mr Parry also said he hopes to have an interview with Mr Cater, before returning to England.

He said he would like to discuss the performance of the ICAC since he last had a discussion with Mr Cater in Britain 18 months ago.

Mr Parry also said he would check to see what action has been taken about a group of off-duty police officers who allegedly insulted him in a Tsimshatsui restaurant.

He said he will return to England with mixed views about Hongkong's progress.

"My meeting with the Governor was very productive," he said. "He is aware of the problems facing Hongkong and was very frank and didn't try to hide them.

"I only hope his successor is as good."

He added: "I still feel very strongly about the question of social welfare here."