

## Accountant says hold down taxes

THE man re-elected uncontested to represent accountants in the legislature, Mr Peter Wong Hong-yuen, has called on the Government not to raise taxes in the next Budget.

He is worried they might have to be raised in the next financial year to generate more income.

Mr Wong also suggested that the tobacco tax should not be lifted again next year, following a hefty 100 per cent increase earlier this year.

He said he was opposed to the introduction of an indirect sales tax in the near future as a means of broadening Hongkong's tax base.

"It is not the right time to introduce sales tax during periods of inflation," he said.

However, quoting overseas experience, Mr Wong said a sales tax could be adopted in the long-run.

"It must be recognised that very few people pay most of Hongkong's taxes and the welfare of the lower-paid is put in jeopardy if the yield drops," he said.

Mr Wong has been representing the 4,660 accountants in the assembly since 1988.

He is also the honorary treasurer of the Liberal Democratic Federation, headed by former legislator Mr Hu Fa-kuang.

Mr Wong said he was satisfied with the Government's recent anti-inflation measures, adding that employers and employees in the private sector should cooperate to combat inflation.

But he rated the Government's handling of the Bank of Credit and Commerce closure as its worst performance.

He said the Banking Advisory Committee, which comprises top bankers, should have reflected the general unease over the bank.

None of the major banks, he added, had lost any money.

"An internal review should be carried out over the early warning mechanism," said Mr Wong.

He noted that official supervision of the banks was adequate to protect depositors' interests in general.

BCC aside, he said the Government had performed poorly over civil service pension funding and democratisation.