

## Academic calls for poll change

By Vivian Tse

PROFESSOR Ian Scott of the University of Hong Kong yesterday criticised functional constituency elections - where legislators are returned to the law-making body - as inappropriate for Hong Kong.

Prof Scott told a seminar on political developments that the functional constituency elections would result in further constitutional problems damaging what little credibility and legitimacy the Basic Law possessed.

He said professionals and managers comprised 11.95 per cent of Hong Kong's workforce but had 85.7 per cent of functional constituency seats.

Under this elite-oriented system, there were problems with corruption, manipulation, nominations, and the identification of the electorate with memberships in organisations.

Prof Scott's criticism at

the Hongkong Democratic Foundation-organised seminar was dismissed by Secretary for Constitutional Affairs Michael Suen.

Mr Suen said qualification of functional constituencies would be modified for the Legislative Council election in 1995.

He said the existence of functional constituencies in the Legislative Council election system had been stipulated by the Basic Law and therefore would not be eliminated for some years after 1997.

The Electoral Reform Society in Britain has recommended a two-year qualifying period for an organisation to become eligible to vote in a functional constituency.

Mr Suen said this prescription was being seriously considered by the Government and was likely to be introduced in the 1995 Legco election.