

20 July 1988

Battle lines drawn up for a two-man tussle

HONGKONG Island East constituency — the bloodiest battlefield in the last Legislative Council election — promises to be as willing although only two candidates are confirmed.

The lines are being drawn in what will probably turn out to be a tussle between two serving councillors.

Mr Desmond Lee, winner of the last contest, will be fighting a "no punches pulled" battle against Mr Chan Ying-lun, a councillor first appointed by the late Governor, Sir Edward Youde.

Six candidates took part in the previous fray, making it the most hotly contested in the 12 electoral college constituencies. The Island East constituency comprises members of the Eastern and Wan Chai district boards.

A number of candidates from the two boards have virtually decided to watch what is anticipated to be a fierce battle between Mr Chan and Mr Lee. Both come from the Eastern District Board.

Mr Lee has won the support of liberal camp members of the two boards while Mr Chan, believed to be backed by political heavyweight Mr Allen Lee, has secured support from the conservatives and moderates.

The Hongkong Affairs Society decided to support Mr Lee, a non-member, because of his past Legco performances in which he reflected public opinions on major issues.

The society's support is at the expense of vice-president Mr Man Sai-cheong, who is believed to have keen interest in the seat.

The arrangement is the result of a political compromise among the liberal groups.

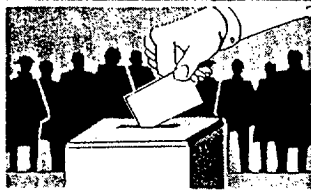
This was admitted by the society's president, Mr Ho Chun-yan, who said the democratic camp should avoid internal conflicts.

Mr Man, also an Urban Councillor, declined to comment except to confirm that he was not contesting the election.

"We have to consider that Mr Lee has paid the price for pursuing the democratic course and has offended many people", Mr Ho said.

Mr Lee, who has an "outspoken and radical" image at the Legco, is also backed by the Hongkong Association for

LEGCO ELECTION '88



Behind The Scenes

Democracy and People's Livelihood and the Hongkong Civic Association.

"I think my track record in Legco will speak for myself", Mr Lee said confidently.

Mr Lee, though tightlipped on his chances, is believed to have lobbied support from the friends and new board members he fielded in the March District Board elections.

Although Wan Chai board members seem unable to field a candidate capable of winning, it has been agreed their votes are crucial in the game.

Mr Lee is said to be actively lobbying support in Wan Chai. An influential kaifong leader, Mr Lee Kon, whose two sons were elected to the Wan Chai District Board in March, is helping Mr Lee.

A conservative count shows Mr Lee could secure at least 16 votes from the boards.

Despite the support for Mr Lee, some members believe Mr Chan Yin-lun has an edge.

In an interview with *The Standard*, Mr Chan said he received a favourable response from the Eastern board as well as members in Wan Chai.

Mr Chan believes his moderate and hardworking image is well received and his style acceptable to other members.

"I am not desperate for the job and I am prepared to lose," said Mr Chan.

He will not formally start lobbying until the end of this legislative session.

Although Mr Chan has never surprised his colleagues with bold speeches, he is seen as responsible.

Some members also consider his background as an appointed member will be an asset.

"Mr Chan seems to be more acceptable in view of his stable character," a board member said.

The battle for two seats in the Hongkong Island East and West constituencies will be a tough and close affair. In the second of the previews on September's Legislative Council elections, **ESME LAU** reports on the pre-polls lobbying. Tomorrow we will feature the contest in East Kowloon

"He gets firm support from appointed members of his board, with whom he has been working closely for years", said another member.

The reduced candidate list in the contest demonstrates a growing sense of sophistication among liberals who will weigh "political support" they could rally before throwing their hats into the ring.

Three losers in the last election — Wan Chai board members Mrs Peggy Lam and Dr Albert Cheung, and Eastern board member Mr Chum Ting-bong, said they were unlikely to join the race.

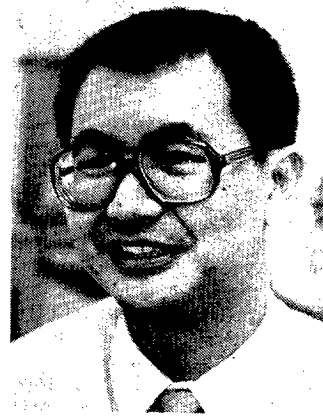
Mrs Peggy Lam, who broke down in tears after losing in the last contest, said she would rather support talented candidates since the chances of winning were slim. Mrs Lam has attributed her failure to the huge difference in number of seats between the two boards.

Eastern has 33 votes while Wan Chai 15. The number of seats in the Wan Chai board is further reduced by one after the death of its appointed member, Mr Lo Wai-man.

Wan Chai board member Mr Lester Kwok, also tipped to have interest in Legco work and with the support of Legco heavyweight Miss Maria Tam, said through his secretary that he had no plan to join the election yet.

Dr Albert Cheung, who once said he would join every election, has decided to stay away this time for fear of not getting enough votes — one-eighth of the cast votes — which would result in the forfeiture of his \$4,000 deposit.

In the Eastern board, Mr Chum said he would prefer to save his resources for 1991 when district-based direct elections to the legislature will be held for the first time. But he did not rule out the possibility of joining the race at the last minute.



■ Mr Desmond Lee ... bid to win second time



■ Mr Chan Ying-lun ... no punches pulled



■ Mrs Peggy Lam ... won't be in race



■ Mr Allen Lee ... support for Mr Chan