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# A four-horse race nobody wants to call

IT will take a brave political pundit to predict the outcome of the battle for the New Territories South constituency next month.

None of the four candidates has majority support in what must be the election's most geographically and politically divided constituency.

Support for the four hopefuls, incumbent legislator Dr Richard Lai Sung-lung, Mr David Yeung Fuk-kwong — both of Tsuen Wan District Board — Sai Kung District Board chairman William Wan Hon-cheung and Islands District Board chairman Daniel Lam Wai-keung, is so evenly divided that the eventual winner will most likely be the number two or three choice of voters.

Part of the reason is that New Territories South is the territory's largest electoral college comprising about 70 district board members from Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Sai Kung, and Islands.



And none of the candidates has enough appeal to cross sectarian lines.

Neither the conservatives nor the liberals in the industrial towns of Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing have been able to break into the rural bases of Sai Kung and Islands districts.

Likewise those districts' rural leaders have been shunned in the two newly emerging industrial towns.

Intense rivalry between the liberal Dr Lai and conservative Mr Yeung is expected to split the votes of Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing.

Dr Lai, a member of the liberal Association for De-

**The contest for the New Territories South seat is so evenly balanced between four candidates that the eventual winner could well be a compromise candidate who lacks a clear majority. JOHN TANG reports.**

mocracy and People's Livelihood, is understood to have about 18 liberal votes in Kwai Tsing and Tsuen Wan.

His liberal stance, however, may cost him the vote of the conservative businessmen in the two industrial districts who backed him in 1985.

Those votes are expected to be picked up by Mr Yeung, a vice-president of the conservative Progressive Hong-kong Society (PHS) who is trying to unseat Dr Lai for a second time.

Doing their best to ensure he does are fellow PHS member and Executive and Legislative councillor Miss Maria Tam Wai-chu and influential Kwai Tsing industrialist, Mr James Tien.

Meanwhile, Mr Wan and Mr Lam claim to have the

full support of their respective boards.

Put all this together and it's a four-horse race that no one wants to call.

As a district board member of Tsuen Wan put it, the voting is likely to be a show of geographical sentiments, political stances, as well as personal respect for individual candidates.

"The different political and geographical affiliations are so mixed that they cancel each other out, grinding each other to nothing," said one district board member.

Supporters of both Dr Lai and Mr Yeung are so keen not to let the other win that they could cancel each other out in the first round of voting. And that would give either Mr Wan or Mr Lam the break they need.