

\$8 million sought for plan to localise counsel

By S. Y. YUE

LEGISLATORS will be asked for \$8 million to pay for the latest attempt to speed up localisation in the Legal Department.

Councillors will be briefed on Thursday before they consider the request.

A major part of the proposal is to extend the Development Posts Scheme to create up to six supernumerary principal Crown counsel posts (two ranks below the Attorney-General) to groom more serving local officers for the top as soon as possible.

Under the proposal, deputy principal Crown counsel with potential can be appointed to act one rank higher in order to give them more experience.

The proposal was made after the Government said it would allow overseas officers to apply to renew their contracts on local terms.

The Legal Department is concerned that some overseas officers will thus occupy posts which might otherwise be filled by local officers.

Article 101 of the Basic Law requires some senior

posts, such as that of Attorney-General, to be filled by Chinese citizens with no right of abode elsewhere.

Under the latest localisation attempt, the quota for the existing Development Posts Scheme will be increased by two to 20.

The scheme was implemented in June 1991 to provide a maximum of 18 posts for local senior Crown counsel so they could compete for deputy principal Crown counsel posts after a two-year training course.

It aims to accelerate the localisation rate at the directorate level from the current 18.9 per cent.

The \$8 million package of proposals also aims to speed up localisation at the non-directorate level.

After reviewing the Double Ladder Scheme, which has been in place since 1988, the Legal Department has suggested extending it for three years.

The scheme allows earlier promotion for local Crown counsel who would not otherwise be considered.