

## Anxious time for local Canadian passport holders

By Greg Heakes

THOUSANDS of Hong Kong people with Canadian passports face losing them under new calls for Ottawa to ban dual citizenship.

Already beset by new tax disclosure laws, those who had hoped to use their passports as a possible escape route could now find that door closed.

In the run-up to tomorrow's election, some candidates have used the dual citizenship issue to try to win votes.

China already does not recognise dual citizenship.

The ruling Liberal government says it has no plans to alter the rules, but some Chinese election candidates have accused it of holding secret talks.

"Dual citizenship is one of the main election issues for Chinese Canadians," said Donald Lee, a Vancouver city councillor.

"Hong Kong people are concerned. If Hong Kong is not stable then they want to be able to stay away, and if Hong Kong is prosperous they want to have the opportunity to go back. I can sympathise with Hong Kong people."

About 400,000 Canadians hold dual citizenship, which has been in effect for 20 years.

Three years ago a federal government report, *A Sense of Belonging*, proposed abolishing dual citizenship.

Alvin Lee, executive director of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, believed it would survive.

"I don't think the recommendation would have much support," Mr Lee said.

He said Hong Kong-born Canadian passport holders were going to have to declare their citizenship to Beijing soon.

Olivia Lee, vice-chairman of the Chinese Canadian Association in Hong Kong, said there would be no immediate changes anyway.

"It takes at least two years to go through the government process before it becomes law," Ms Lee said.

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