

8.6

SCMP 21/5/87

JUDICIAL BODY

140 whittled down to one

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More than 140 candidates were considered for the post. They included past and present Justices of Appeal and High Court judges, barristers who have practised in Hong Kong for at least 10 years and retired Chief Justices. All qualified under the Basic Law.

Soundings for possible candidates were taken from senior members of the Judiciary and the legal profession, the Chief Executive-designate's office said.

It is understood the Judicial Officers' Recommendation Commission reduced the pool of candidates by elimi-

nation to six. Mr Li was recommended unanimously.

The six included Court of Appeal judges Justice Henry Litton, Benjamin Liu Tsz-ming and Charles Ching. Reports said the remaining two were Robert Tang QC and Denis Chang Khan-lee QC.

It was understood some leading members of the legal profession, including Gladys Li Chi-hei QC, who were qualified for the post, declared no interest.

Pro-Beijing figures on the judicial body did not put forward any candidates, it is believed.

One of the two Preparatory Committee members, Chan Wing-kee, said both he

and fellow committee member Edgar Cheng Wai-kin remained independent in their role.

Their independence was queried by the Bar Association when they were appointed to the commission.

Mr Cheng and Mr Chan were also members of the Selection Committee which chose Tung Chee-hwa as chief executive.

Mr Chan said he was disappointed by criticism of his alleged lack of independence. "People should not see the appointment as a political decision," he said.

"We are prominent and impartial community figures. It was unfair to us."