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Adviser bids Legco goodbye

By Cecilia So

AS the curtain draws on his Legislative Council career today, Johnathan Daw's 10-year stay will become history deeply etched on his heart.

Having served the council for a decade since 1985, the Legal Adviser has finally chosen to say "goodbye", although he enjoyed his work very much.

He joined the Legal Department in 1978 and was seconded to Legco as legal adviser in 1985.

He submitted his retirement application in January this year and his last appearance in the Legco will be today.

But the 46-year-old British legal expert is considering continuing his law practice

in the territory. "Nothing but sadness is all I feel," he told the *Hong Kong Standard* yesterday.

"I'll definitely miss the time I spent in the Legco," he asserted. His work as a legal adviser was "complex and tiring but stimulating".

He said he would never forget the electoral provision legislation in 1994, when he had to work for 12 hours a day for two weeks.

He still has some years to go before reaching retirement age, but decided to go because: "It's the right time for a monolingual lawyer to hand over his leadership to a bilingual lawyer."

"As the first local legal adviser, my successor Jimmy Ma Yiu-tim's bilingualism and knowledge of China's

constitutional law would definitely be an advantage," Mr Daw said.

"The handover of my job would only be a matter briefing him on outstanding points because he knows the dimension of our job very well," he said.

Mr Daw said the work with Legco had changed because members had become more assertive, as they saw themselves speaking for those who elected them, as well as the whole community.

He didn't see any uncertainty in the legal adviser's role following the probable dismantling of the current legislature at the handover.

"The role of a legal adviser is to serve the lawfully constituted legislature of Hong Kong," he said firmly.