

## 500 classes to go in cutbacks

BY CAROLINE HUGHES

**N**EARLY 500 classes will be cut in the next three years from primary and secondary schools through increased class sizes, Director of Education Li Yuet-ting said yesterday.

Some 197 teachers would be made redundant by the scheme but high levels of natural wastage in the pro-

fession would mean no teachers were sacked, Mr Li said. The plan would save \$284.2 million.

Mr Li said that after the three years, the Education Department would reduce the numbers of students in each class back to 39 in 1995-6 and 38 in 1996-7.

The Education Department has been asked to save \$406 million in the next three years. The other \$122 million

will be saved by combining classes that are below capacity.

But Mr Li said students would not have to switch schools. He said the situation in schools was not as bad as had been painted.

"The average number of students per class at primary level is now only 36," he said.

A protest at class size rises is planned tomorrow at the Legislative Council building.