

20 Oct - 1988

Alliance in bid to monopolise board

By Kris Chan

INDEPENDENT and pro-Taiwan unions have joined forces to field four candidates for Saturday's labour advisory board elections.

The alliance will almost guarantee each of their representatives a seat on the advisory body, as it is tipped to command the support of at least 120 unions.

Feeling threatened by the coalition, pro-China unions are battling for the one remaining seat on the board.

The LAB is a non-statutory body that advises the Government on labour matters.

The election on Saturday at Queen Elizabeth School is to select five worker representatives to the board on a one-union one-vote basis for a new two-year term starting next year.

Nine unionists are standing for the election.

Of them, two are incumbent members — Ms Li Fung-ying of the Hongkong and Kowloon Electronics Industry Employees' General Union and Mr Chan Yun-che of the Hongkong and Kowloon Motor Car Drivers' General Union.

The electronics union is an affiliate of the Federation of Hongkong and Kowloon Labour Unions while the drivers union is a member of the pro-Taiwan Hongkong and Kowloon Trades Union Council (TUC).

It is understood that the federation and the TUC had sought agreement with two other candidates for mutual support in the election.

They are Mr William Mong Wai-ming of the Labour Inspectors' Association (LIA) and Mr Lee Cheuk-yan of the Clothing Industry Workers' General Union (CIWGU).

The LIA is an affiliate of the Federation of Civil Service Unions while the clothing union is a close associate of a radical labour group, the Christian Industrial Committee (CIC).

Sources said the groups command the support of about 120 unions, which represents almost half of the 260 eligible votes in the election and should be sufficient to elect the four candidates.

It is understood that the four groups deliberately left one seat open to be filled by a candidate from the pro-China labour camp, Miss Lam Shuk-ye.

Miss Lam was nominated by the Hongkong and Kowloon Metal Industry Workers' General Union, an affiliate of the pro-Beijing Hongkong Federation of Trade Unions (FTU), of which Miss Lam is a vice-chairman.

The alliance had prevented the pro-Beijing camp from supporting candidates to oust Mr Lee and Mr Mong.

It is learnt that the radical Mr

Lee is disliked by the FTU.

Mr Lee's close association with the CIC is also said to have upset the FTU.

CIC director Mr Lau Chin-shek had a dispute with the FTU over the formation of a Joint Conference of Labour Organisations on the Basic Law three years ago.

There had been speculation earlier that the FTU might support two candidates — Mr Peter Mok Ka-wing of the Hongkong Civil Servants' General Union or Mr Cheung Pak-chi of the Cable and Wireless Staff Association. Mr Cheung is also a Basic Law Consultative Committee member.

Both are said to be liked by the FTU.

The FTU had supported Mr Mok's predecessor, Mr Anthony Luk Tung-chin, for the LAB election five years ago.

But the FTU's chairman, Mr Cheng Yiu-tong, said the union was not backing anyone in the coming election.

He said the FTU felt threatened by the alliance and it might have trouble getting its representative elected to the board.

The other two candidates standing for Saturday's election are Mr Ho Kwok-kin of the Hongkong Medicine Workers' General Union and Mr Mark Li Kin-yin of the Hongkong Social Workers' General Union.