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S. A. M. P.

79 candidates vie for councils

A total of 79 candidates will compete in the Urban Council and Regional Council elections on March 6 as nomination of candidates closed yesterday.

With 27 seats at stake for the first ever territory-wide elections for the two councils - 15 for Urbco and 12 for Regco - keen competition is expected with an average of three candidates competing for a seat.

There are 40 candidates in the Urbco race and 39 in Regco. There were 41 candidates in the Urbco race in the 1983 election.

It will be the second constituency-based election for Regco which will officially be formed on April 1.

Two candidates - Mr Pao Ping-wing of Kowloon City East for Urbco and Mr Wong Man-tai of Kwai Chung West/Tsing Yi for Regco - can start celebrating as they

are unopposed. That leaves 39 candidates fighting for the remaining 11 Regco seats and 38 people for the 14 Urbco seats.

Among the candidates, there are five Basic Law Consultative Committee members. They are Mrs Elsie Tu, Mr Fung Kin-kee, Mr Man Sai-cheung, Mr Lee Wing-tat and Mr Peter C.K. Chan.

At least two candidates are said to have pro-China contacts and three with rightwing affiliations.

The list also shows more than 30 candidates are from pressure and political groups reflecting increasing interest in local politics.

Keen competition is expected for the Yuen Long constituency for Regco where six candidates are running for the single seat.

And a tough race is also expected in two other NT constituencies - Taiipo and Shatin East - both with five candidates.

Hongkong's election fever is to be revived with an important poll in a month's time. The Urban and Regional council elections - the last territory-wide direct election before the crucial 1987 review on political reforms - is being watched with great interest in the territory.

A total of 79 candidates are contesting the 27 seats for the two councils up for grabs, and a record-high number of more than 1.4 million electors will have the chance to select their councillors.

FRANK CHOI, MATTHEW LEUNG, DANIEL CHUNG and LULU YU report.

One outstanding feature for this election is that among the candidates, there are 36 district board members - 18 each from both urban and New Territories boards.

Twelve Urbco members are seeking re-election and three have decided to quit - Miss Maria Tam, Dr Denny Huang and Mr Augustine Chung.

Commenting on the large number of district board members in the contest, a Principal Assistant Secretary

competing for Urbco seats compared to the last election. But there has been an increase in the number of professionals, educators and social workers in the contest.

Although there were only seven women - five for Urbco and two for Regco - in the coming elections, the figure showed some improvement compared to 1983 when only three women took part.

The average age of candidates for this Urbco election is 42, compared to 44 in the previous one. More than 45 per cent of them are between 31-40.

The oldest candidate is incumbent Urbco member Mrs Elsie Tu, 72, while two candidates, Mr Chu Cheong-hay and Mr Tsang Kwong-yuen, are both 25.

The final total of registered electors is 1,441,540 - 443,363 New Territories residents and 998,177 Urban dwellers.

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