

S. L. M. P.

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# Appointed members have upper hand

The appointed members of the Urban Council have always had the upper hand over the elected members who are helplessly at their mercy, Dr Denny Huang said.

Calling it a "disgraceful situation indeed," Dr Huang said the appointed members should not be blamed for having taken advantage of a totally disorganised elected camp.

"It was fortunate that most, if not all, jobs undertaken by appointed members are well done, particularly in recreation and cultural affairs, where they seem to have shown the greatest interest," he said.

In a statement which he said would offend some of his elected colleagues, Dr Huang criticised the performance of some elected members.

"Not only do we have political groups, each very conscious of its group interests, but also we have five independents who are more often than not far apart in their views," he said.

Dr Huang said that in the past three years, fewer than 10 meetings were held at which the maximum attendance was six and one of the political group leaders had never turned up even once.

Dr Huang outlined the weaknesses of the elected camp:

- The appointed members are financially much better off than the elected and can manage to spend more time on council affairs.

- Not enough elected members take their promises to electors seriously enough.

- The Government's decision to appoint elected Urban Councillors without consulting elected members to serve on the Legislative Council is a tricky manoeuvre to disrupt the possible unity of the elected members.

He expressed the hope that all elected members would put the interests of the public over and above personal or party interests in order to compete with the appointed members in serving the public.

He also wished that the Government would honour its promise made years ago to increase gradually the number of elected seats while reducing the appointed ones.

On another topic, Dr Huang said that the only sensible way of protecting the interests of the general public is to protect against the "monstrous act" of the Government's new rates assessment policy - and that the Urban Council must not be dragged into this struggle.

He described the assessment as "crazy" and the Government's intention to charge new rates as "robbery."

## Tomorrow's speakers

Twelve councillors will speak when the annual conventional debate resumes tomorrow.

They are Miss Cecilia Yeung, Mr Tsin Sai-nin, Mr Edmund Chow, Mr Ambrose Choi, Dr P. C. Wong, Mr F. K. Hu, Mr Wong Shiu-cheuck, Mr Shum Choi-sang, Mrs Grace Ho, Mr Henry Luk, Mr Kim Y. S. Cham, and Mr Roger Lobo.

"Even if it were time for a re-assessment, I can hardly imagine any clear-minded person agreeing that in a short three years rateable values have jumped an average of 80 per cent," he said.

"If the Government could justify its intention in collecting extra large sums in revenue, why did it not think of raising the ceiling for company tax and personal income tax, which would affect only those with substantial earnings?"

He said he was indeed distressed to hear his elected colleagues' suggestions for a reduction in the Urban Council's share of the rates.

"The root of the whole issue is a totally unreasonable new assessment and this council is merely an innocent beneficiary of a daylight robbery," he said.