

S.C.M.F.

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Administration changes needed now: councillors

Several Urban Councillors yesterday called for urgent reforms to the present system of administration to maintain prosperity and to prepare people for changes after 1997.

The reforms are needed in the district boards and the Urban and Legislative Councils, they said.

Mr Fung Kin-kee said the district boards have become bizarre democratic bodies which have no foundation and no force. They are merely consultative organisations, he said.

So the boards can effectively fulfil their role as decision-makers and watchdogs in district affairs, he proposed that:

- The Government should delegate decision-making at district level to the boards, putting the district management committees under them to carry out their decisions.

- Representatives from various Government departments should only attend district board meetings as observers.

- The number of elected members on district boards be gradually increased so that eventually all members are elected. The chairman should be an elected member chosen by members.

On reforms to the Legislative Council, Mr Fung suggested:

- The Legislative Council should reserve a number of seats for the elected chairmen of district boards.

- As a long-term plan, the Legislative Council should eventually have a majority of elected members.

On the Urban Council, Mr Fung said it should extend its jurisdiction to cover the New Territories and should also eventually have a majority of elected members.

His views were supported by Mr Pao Ping-wing, Mr Lee Chik-yuet and Mr Lam Chak-piu.

Mr Pao said all official members in the district boards who now enjoy voting rights should become non-voting members in the near future, ideally after the third election of the boards next year.

He said constituency committees, chaired by elected district board members and directly under the control of the boards, should be formed to replace the existing area committees.

This would enable district boards to reflect popular wishes and exercise supervision more effectively and directly.

On the Legislative Council, Mr Pao said more elected members of both the Urban Council and the district boards should be appointed

in the near future, ideally next year.

After next year, and not later than 1988, when elected district board chairmen have familiarised themselves with the running of the boards, four — one for each region of Hongkong Island, Kowloon, New Kowloon and the New Territories — should be elected for appointment to the Legislative Council.

He also said more Legislative Councillors who have also been members of either the Urban Council or the district boards should be appointed to the Executive Council.

Mr Lee suggested the Legislative and Executive Councils should be combined into a single body, with all the seats filled by members elected on universal franchise and given the supreme authority to formulate central policies and enact laws.