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Added muscle ruled out

The Governor, Sir Edward Youde, has ruled out the possibility of giving district board members more muscle in the near future.

But he maintained that the public had already given them increased support by their vote in Thursday's elections.

"It is a great encouragement to the people who have just been elected that they have got a wider range of support than local representatives have had before."

Asked if district board members would be given more power in the near future, Sir Edward said: "I don't think their role will change in the near future."

"As they grow in experience their contribution will increase."

"What we need now is the development of their present rôle."

"This election is a great encouragement to us all to move on to the next stage."

Sir Edward was speaking after laying the foundation stone of a new \$70 million headquarters for the YMCA in Bridges Street, Wanchai.

This 21-storey building is expected to open in July. It will replace the old headquarters built in 1918, provide multi-purpose accommodation for youth activities and house 600 people.

Sir Edward said the present development of representative government in Hongkong had been "ambitious."

He said district boards were already very important organisations to which the Government will look to reflect public opinion in each district.

"Elected representatives will have quite a role in shaping Government policies in the future," he said.

The main challenge for newly-elected members, Sir Edward said, was to ensure that the feelings of the people in their own districts are fully reflected both to the public at large and to the Government.