

S.R. M.P.

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\$10,000 District Board election campaign limit

By **AGNES CHEN**

The Government has decided to set \$10,000 as the maximum for each District Board candidate's election expenses.

But the amount is still subject to the approval of the Executive Council, the Assistant Director (District Administration), Mr Anthony Woo, said yesterday.

Mr Woo said it is a "decision within the Government" to set \$10,000 as the limit for the election expenses of each

candidate, but this will be submitted to the Executive Council for approval next month.

"The candidates' activities are controlled by the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Ordinance, which empowers the Executive Council to lay down the maximum amount for the election expenses," he said.

After election, each candidate is to submit his account to the Returning Officer, who will check for offences, Mr Woo said.

Candidates will be disqualified if they are found to have committed an offence.

Meanwhile, the Secretary for Information, Mr Alan Scott, speaking on district administration at a lunch meeting of the Rotary Club of Kowloon North yesterday, said the recent public airing of views by members of the Wong Tai Sin District Board, "is a very healthy sign."

"This is exactly what the scheme is all about — sensible, legitimate pressure being put on Government departments to improve services, to get things right; and if what people want can't be done immediately, or may have to be done differently for good reasons, to explain this satisfactorily at district level," he said.

Referring to the common belief that politics is about power and that without it, politics is not attractive to people of ability, Mr Scott said:

"This may be true at national level, but local politics I think, is about pride and local identification much more than it is about power.

"I believe that the districts of Hongkong have these feelings, perhaps rather latent at present, just as much as any other country."

Mr Scott said he believed the Government's impetus towards developing participation at the district level "has met with a very encouraging initial response."

The number of residents who have completed voters' registration forms — more than 200,000 in the New Territories and 80,000 in the urban areas — has confounded critics that Hongkong people would not be interested in taking part in the management of their affairs, he said.

"The actual decision to register, to fill out the form and send it in is, of course, a decision taken by each individual."

"And it is clear from the tremendous response at this stage that a substantial proportion of the public has decided that it is something of real interest, something to get involved in," Mr Scott said.

He added that although the registration represents only about 30 per cent of the potential electorate in the NT, "it compares well with the turnout for local elections in many other countries."