

J.C.M.P.

26 Oct. 1984

Bid to redress DBs' balance

The Government should provide more positive incentives for employers who allow their workers to serve on district boards, Mr Carl Tong said.

This would help provide balance in a membership which at present is made up of a large number of businessmen.

Mr Tong said the 1982 election statistics showed that more than 50 per cent of elected members were in business. He understood most of those were either self-employed or in partnership.

The district boards had proved to be an excellent training ground for future leaders and he hoped that more people would take up the challenge and stand for election in March.

Mr Tong suggested that the Government considers giving some form of special tax allowance to those employers who support a staff member serving on a district board.

Similarly, he said, such an allowance might be considered for employees serving on the Urban, Legislative and Executive councils.

He said it was important

that Hongkong citizens were educated on the functions of government.

Mr Tong welcomed the news that Public Accounts Committee hearings would soon be held in public.

"This is a step in the right direction towards more open government," he said.

He believed that one of the "do nots" was unnecessary tampering with the tax system.

"For example, there are several provisions in the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance 1984 which I understand are causing widespread concern among the business and investing community," he said.

Firstly, he said, there was concern that the rate of tax on profits and salaries would be gradually increased and that the two per cent increase imposed last year on both these taxes was just for starters.

Secondly, the provisions which imposed restrictions on the treatment of interest payments and of including offshore interest income derived by non-financial institutions in the tax net had both alarmed businessmen and investors.