

S. K. M. P.

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Bid to secure kuk's promise

By DANIEL CHUNG

The chairman of the Provisional Regional Council, Mr Cheung Yan-lung, will question parts of the Regional Council Bill during its second reading in the Legislative Council on July 10.

Mr Cheung, who is also an Unofficial Legco member, said he would reflect some members' concern that the Bill has failed to state that three Heung Yee Kuk members will be among the 12 members appointed to the future council.

The Bill, which provides for the new council to come into effect in April, was published yesterday. It will be introduced in Legco on Wednesday for initial debate.

According to the kuk chairman, Mr Lau Wong-fat, the Government had promised that six seats would be set aside for kuk members — three ex-officio members being the chairman and two vice-chairmen, and three members appointed from the kuk.

Mr Lau, himself an ex-officio member of the Provisional Regional Council, said the Government's promise must be written down in the Bill otherwise it would not be legally binding.

"There is little we can do if the Government chooses not to keep its promise then," he said.

The Director of the Regional Services Department, Mr Tony Hammond, said the proposal made by Mr Lau during the last Provisional Regional Council meeting to amend the draft Bill in relation to the three appointed seats was not accepted by the Executive Council.

Mr Hammond said the Exco also turned down a proposal that Regional Council members be entitled to the same protections as those proposed for Legco members.

He said he did not know why the Exco turned down the proposals.

Meanwhile, Provisional Regional Council members endorsed a Bill which paves the way for the establishment of the Regional Council with elected members.

The Elections (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 1985 seeks to extend existing legislation to the Regional Council by making amendments to the Electoral Provisions Ordinance.

An amendment has been proposed to the District Boards Ordinance relating to the disqualification of appointed and ex-officio members.

The current grounds of disqualification arise from a connection with "a foreign country or a salaried functionary of a foreign Government" which the amendment proposes to change to "any place outside Hongkong or a

salaried functionary of a government of such place."

The explanatory memorandum says the amendment is to clarify existing grounds for disqualification.

Unsoundness of mind is added as a further ground.

The prohibition of candidates from standing for and accepting election to a district board and the Regional Council will be removed.

For the purpose of legislation, it is proposed to name the areas under the jurisdiction of the two councils the "Urban Council area" and the "Regional Council area".

The Bill also seeks to empower the Governor-in-Council to declare, by reference to districts, any area to be in the Urban Council or Regional Council area. There may be a review on this after the 1986 elections.