

S. C. W. P.

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# 21 tipped for law body

By K.C. TSANG

It is now almost certain that as many as 21 well-known Hongkong people will be appointed to the Basic Law drafting committee, which is expected to hold its first meeting during the first week of next month.

A leak carried in a leftwing newspaper, Wen Wei Po, yesterday gave 10 names, which include the chairman of World-Wide Shipping, Sir Yue-kong Pao, business tycoons Mr Henry Fok, Mr Li Ka-shing and Mr T.K. Ann, the vice-chancellor of the University of Hongkong, Dr Rayson Huang, and the vice-chancellor of the Chinese University, Dr Ma Lin.

Others include the Anglican Bishop of Hongkong and Macau, the Rt Rev Peter Kwong, the publisher of the leftwing Ta Kung Pao, Mr Fei Yi-min, Mr Martin Lee, QC, and a leftwing union leader, Mr Tam Yiu-chung.

The Wen Wei report quoting an official said certain members of Umelco will also take part in an individual capacity.

The SCM Post learned yesterday that an Appeal Court judge, Mr Justice Li, is among the missing names on the full list which the Wen Wei report described as "initial."

For those holding public offices, it is believed clearance from the Government will be necessary.

All those contacted by the SCM Post yesterday on their possibly joining the committee were non-committal.

However, it is interesting

to note that practically all those who appear on the Wen Wei list have at one time or another paid visits to China during the past few months.

With the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress scheduled to convene in two days time, it is difficult to envisage how major changes to the list can be done.

There were reports earlier that the chairman would be a man of very "high standing" in China while three of the vice-chairman posts would go to people from Hongkong.

One well-placed official suggested that those that appear most likely to fill these posts are Mr Henry Fok, Mr Fei, Sir Yue-kong and Mr Ann.

While at least another 12 names have yet to come, those disclosed so far reflect China's intention to appoint people from a cross-section of the community, with emphasis on those who are among leading members of the community.

A commentary in Wen Wei Po yesterday said the committee's Hongkong members represent the elite of the community and are major representatives of the so-called "Guangdong gang," "Fujian gang" and "Shanghai gang."

One interesting point raised by observers yesterday is that the name of a representative from the Catholic mission in Hongkong is not among the 10 disclosed in the Wen Wei report.

One official close to Chi-

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# 21 HK residents may be on Basic Law team

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nese thinking told the SCM Post yesterday that it was not possible to include representatives of all the six major religious missions in Hongkong.

However, the official would not confirm or deny whether a representative from the Catholic mission would be on the list of names not yet disclosed.

A reliable official in the Catholic mission confirmed yesterday there had been "some discussions" between them and officials of the New China News Agency.

"We did discuss the pros and cons for the mission to field a candidate for the Basic Law drafting committee," the official said.

As far as things stand today, the official confirmed, there is no one from the mis-

sion to serve on the committee.

One problem being faced by the Catholic mission is the consideration for possible complications when an official representative of the mission joins the committee.

The complications may arise out of the vast worldwide connections of the mission.

In the event that all things are sorted out in a proper manner, it would still be unlikely that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hongkong, the Most Rev John Baptist Wu, would take a seat on the committee.

"It has got to be one of the bishop's representatives," the official said.

Barring last minute changes, it seems the only channel left for the Catholic mission to be represented and

to put in a voice is the consultative committee to be set up later.

On the role of Sir Yue-kong, observers believe that a man of his standing should be a plus for the drafting committee.

Sir Yue-kong was in China last month, where he was met, by practically all the top leaders, including Mr Hu Yaobang and Mr Deng Xiaoping.

It seems now clear that his role on the drafting committee was a subject of discussions at some stage during his latest China trip.

For the role of educationists, the strategy is to include both vice-chancellors of the two universities.

However, an interesting question being raised is whether on Dr Rayson Huang's retirement in a year's time, his replacement at the university would be asked to join the committee while Dr Huang continues serving on it.

The appointment of Mr Ann and Mr Fei does give a balanced look in that while Mr Ann is a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Mr Fei is a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Some of the names disclosed yesterday, such as those of Mr Lee and Mr Ann, have been subjects of speculation for some time.

Other names — although not on the list yesterday — that have popped up among knowledgeable officials include Miss Liu Yiu-chu and an Unofficial member of the Executive and Legislative Councils, Miss Maria Tam.

The full list of the drafting committee will not be announced until towards the end of the meeting of the NPC Standing Committee, which starts tomorrow for 10 days.

What will be left now is the work to organise a consultative committee which is said to include about 100 people.

This committee will run parallel with the Basic Law drafting committee, with both responsible to the Legal Affairs Commission of the NPC, which will give the final approval on the Basic Law.

Earlier, the deputy head of the Hongkong and Macau Affairs Office, Mr Li Hau, told reporters the drafting of the Basic Law should be completed by 1990.

# Lee 'would take committee post'

Prominent barrister Mr Martin Lee, QC, said yesterday he would accept an appointment to the Basic Law drafting committee should it come his way.

But he had not heard about any such appointment, he said yesterday before leaving for Beijing with a delegation of 11 lawyers.

The team's 10-day visit is at the invitation of the Chinese Minister of Justice, Mr Zhou Yu.

Mr Lee will be in Beijing for most of the 11th plenary session of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress, which opens tomorrow.

Announcement of the Basic Law drafting committee composition is believed to be scheduled for June 17 or 18, the last two days of the meeting.

Mr Justice Li, however, said he has "personal reservations" about appointing judges to the drafting committee.

He said he believes the role of a judge is "the interpretation of law rather than the drafting of law."

But he said it would be "a good thing" if some Hongkong lawyers are appointed.

The SCM Post has learned that Mr Justice Li will be

named as a member of the committee.

"Personally I have heard nothing about this," he said.

Asked if he would take up the appointment, Mr Justice Li said: "As I am a judge appointed by Her Majesty's Government, of course I have to seek guidance and direction before making any decision."

He said this would be very different from appointment to the Joint Liaison Group or the Lands Commission.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the office of Dr Rayson Huang, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hongkong, said: "He has nothing to say as nothing is official at the moment."

Asked to comment on the report that the Right Reverend Peter Kwong is to be appointed to the committee, Anglican church officials said the Bishop's office has not been approached.

Mr Fei Yi-ming, publisher of the Ta Kung Pao newspaper, said before leaving for Beijing on Wednesday that Hongkong people should put their hearts at ease.

Mr Fei, who is a member of the NPC Standing Committee, said there will be quite a number of Hongkong people on the drafting committee.