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181 named for 41 seats on Basic Law panel

RESPONSE on the nominations from non-specified groups has been enthusiastic with 181 people named for the 41 seats allocated in this category to the Basic Law Consultative Committee.

Nominations were received from all sectors in the non-specified groups except aviation and athletics.

As spelt out in the constitution of the consultative committee, if nominations were not made to fill the seat, the preparatory committee would fill the seat through invitation.

Excessive nominations came from 15 sectors with the medical and education sectors drawing the highest.

Announcing the result of the nominations, the chairman of the drafting committee's six member

group, Dr Rayson Huang, told a news conference that it would be up to these groups to come together to work out an appropriate list.

He said a letter would be sent, notifying them that the final list would have to be handed to the six-member panel before November 6.

Dr Huang said the six-member group would not be involved in the discussion, but they would help if a request was made.

But in any case, he did not see that there would be any problem for these groups to come to a consensus as to which names should be finally submitted.

Dr Huang said the 181 names submitted came from 212 letters as some groups nominated the same people.

And this figure excludes seven nominations which were determined by the six-member group as being not eligible due to late submission or being an unregistered body.

As for the 60 seats allocated to the 35 specified groups, 57 names have been submitted. The Law Society which will nominate three people, has to extend the nomination period to allow a ballot to take place on Wednesday.

Dr Huang described the nominations as the "greatest consultation" ever to have happened in Hongkong, and he was happy to see the warm response.

Dr Huang said about the row in the labour union joint conference, which resulted in the withdrawal of Mr Lau

Chin-shek and some other groups, that it was not the committee's responsibility to study how each group or organisation made their nominations.

He said he respected the decision of the joint conference and that of Mr Lau.

"Our job is to contact each group to submit their nominations. It is not our duty to judge the impartiality of the nominations. They are registered bodies and this is their internal affair," Dr Huang said.

When asked whether the joint conference still had the same representation after some unions had pulled out, another member of the six-member group, Dr Raymond Wu, said it was impossible to keep any joint conference under control and to keep it from

making any kind of changes.

And he said the consultative committee, though aimed at getting people from a wide spectrum to sit on it, did not mean that every profession or union would be represented.

Meanwhile, Dr Huang said he understood that there were more than 100 odd people who wished to sit on the consultative committee. He stressed that those not on the advisory group would have other channels to reflect their views on the Basic Law.

Referring to the student group, which has ruled that anyone nominated could serve for only one year, Dr Huang said if anyone resigned, only the Standing Committee could decide how to fill the vacant seat.