

S.C.M.P.

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Advisory body may be boosted

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Membership of the Basic Law Consultative Committee may be increased by about 20 per cent, from the original 150 seats to 180.

A decision on the increased number will be finalised at a meeting on November 23, but some drafting committee members have already indicated their support for the increase to 180.

A member of the sub-committee overseeing the formation of the consultative committee, the Rev Peter Kwong, said yesterday that he thought 180 was a likely figure.

Of the extra seats, about seven might be given to drafting committee members, he said. These seats would be allocated through nominations among the 25 drafting committee members.

The six-member sub-committee has already conducted a survey polling the 25 drafting committee members on how many seats should be increased. Members responded to a number of choices given in the questionnaire.

Mr Kwong refused to disclose the results of the survey.

It is understood that the drafting committee faces a dilemma over which of the 181 people nominated by 20 sectors under the non-specified organisations should be allocated the limited 41 seats.

Meanwhile drafting committee "invitations" for members to sit on the consultative committee closed yesterday.

According to original lineup of the 150-strong committee, 49 will be invited by the drafting committee.

In another development, chairman of the Federation of Civil Service Unions (FCSU), Mr Wong Wai-hung, is to send a long statement to the 25 drafting committee members and the 120 union members of the Joint Conference of Labour Groups tomorrow explaining its walkout.

All the 20 civil service unions of the FCSU have pulled out from the 145-strong joint conference because of alleged discrimination by the leftwing unions against another outspoken unionist, the director of the Christian Industrial Committee, Mr Lau Chin-shek.

● The first draft of the Basic Law should be announced early in 1987 to ensure the continuity of Hongkong's political system, a political group leader said yesterday.

The part of the Basic Law concerning the territory's political system should be made public to Hongkong people early that year, one year before the schedule set by Beijing, the chairman of Meeting Point, Mr Lau Nai-keung, said last night.

Speaking to members of the Lions Club of New Territories he said the release of the document and its consultation would ensure that the Basic Law will be compatible with the political reform in Hongkong.