

Basic Law Committee

Advisers may be asked in to plug the gaps

3-16

HK STANDARD 28 NOV 85

OFFICIALS in "sensitive" posts may be invited to join the Basic Law Consultative Committee as advisers. This is now under active consideration by the conveners who hope to plug some gaps left by the final selection of nominees to the committee.

The conveners had originally planned to allot two seats to people in law and order agencies. These representatives would have been drawn from the ranks of retired senior administrators of the police, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Customs and Excise.

But the six-man team charged with putting the committee together failed to contact such people. No invitations were sent out.

Other "gaps" may be filled in by people from the Executive Council. There are no representatives from the Exco although there are eight from the Legislative Council and several senior officials in the 180-man Consultative Committee.

Sources said some members of the drafting committee also thought that more attempts should be made to invite these people to play an advisory role.

They felt that though it might not be appropriate that they be enlisted as full members, it could be possible to take them on as "advisers" or "consultants" in order to avoid embarrassment as some of them may regard it as membership in a Chinese government body.

The drafting of the Basic Law is regarded as an internal matter of the Chinese government, according to the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Basic Law scheduled for completion by 1990 will be Hongkong's constitution after sovereignty over the territory reverts to the mainland in 1997.

But the Chinese government has already made it clear that it will fully take into account the views of the people of Hongkong in drafting the important document.

Sources said the six-member group had already approached certain people with a view to inviting them to join the Consultative Committee and they had expressed their willingness to do so. But certain other factors, such as the sensitivity of their jobs, had compelled them to turn down the offer.

With Monday night's announcement of the final composition of the committee, the conveners are now moving fast to set up a standing committee.

Members have been asked to nominate 10 people among themselves for a standing committee to carry out the routine work with the help of a secretariat and an administrative staff.

The standing committee will have 15 to 19 members who will form the hard core in directing the consultative work.

Members of the Consultative Committee will meet next Friday to elect the standing committee.

Meanwhile, the conveners will hold a press conference this afternoon at the new premises in Central to brief the media on arrangements for reporting the Consultative Committee meetings in future.