

1995 legislators may not get through-train

BY FLORA WONG

If legislators elected in 1995 are forced to disembark from the "through-train" in 1997, they should also be banned from the election following, a pro-Beijing group leader says.

Speaking after the City Forum yesterday, Tsang Yok-sing, chairman of the Pro-Beijing Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hongkong, said members of the 1995 legislature could be dismissed from the council in 1997 if they failed to comply with stipulations under the Basic Law.

Under the Basic Law, only legislators who "uphold the Basic Law", "pledge allegiance to the Hongkong Special Administrative Region" and are "confirmed" by the Preparatory Committee could become members of the first Legislative Council under the Special Administrative Region government - that is, ride on the through-train.

"If someone has to disembark because he or she is not qualified, he or she cannot run in the election again," he said.

Tsang, a newly appointed Hongkong affairs adviser to Beijing, said it was reasonable for those who did not uphold Basic Law, such as those who

advocated Hongkong's independence, to be banned from the Legislative Council.

Tsang's remarks were made after suggestions that legislators dismissed from the council in 1997 could be re-elected.

His views were immediately criticised by another liberal leader, who said the proposed ban contravened the Bill of Rights.

"If those who have to disembark from the through train cannot run in the election again, it is against the Bill of Rights," United Democrat legislator Yeung Sum said.

He said it was the political right of everyone to vote and to stand for election under the Bill of Rights.

Yeung said he believed that the rights of voters would be cast into doubt if elected legislators could be thrown out of the Legislative Council by a handful of Preparatory Committee members in 1997.

Chairman of the Liberal Party preparatory committee, Allen Lee, said yesterday he would write to China to clarify the definition of "upholding the Basic Law" and to ask what the conditions for "confirmation" from the Preparatory Committee were.

Speakers at the forum urged the Chinese and British governments to agree on a through-train legislature in the upcoming talks.