

Akers-Jones joins attack on reforms

By **DOREEN CHEUNG,**
CATHERINE CHAN
and **LOUIS NG**

FORMER chief secretary Sir David Akers-Jones yesterday joined the growing chorus of opposition to Governor Mr Chris Patten's political reforms.

Sir David, the Housing Authority chairman and a member of the advisory council of influential business lobby group the Business and Professionals Federation, was critical of Mr Patten's plans in an interview published today in the *Wah Kiu Yat Po*.

He said Mr Patten's proposals were different to what Basic Law drafters and members of the consultative committee had in mind.

Sir David also warned against the consequences of divergence of the political system before and after 1997.

"I think the important thing for Hongkong is a smooth transition and convergence with the Basic Law," he said. "To contemplate a change of Government in 1997 and to drop the concept of through train will be serious."

"Let's calm down, look at this carefully and calmly

and go back to the Basic Law."

Meanwhile, China is expected to step up its campaign against Mr Patten's democratisation plans by warning legislators that they will lose their council seats in 1997 if they support his constitutional package.

The National People's Congress Standing Committee will today discuss the reform plans and is expected to issue a statement that the Governor's proposals are in breach of the Basic Law.

The statement is also expected to include the warning that legislators would lose their Legco seats.

While liberal legislators said the warning would not change their stand, others said it was too early for China to take such a move.

United Democrat legislator Mr Cheung Man-kwong criticised the Standing Committee warning.

"To ask legislators to vote against what the people want, by saying those who vote otherwise will get off the through train, is tantamount to mould us into a rubber-stamp," he said.

Miss Emily Lau Wahing said: "If I can be intimidated, I should have resigned. Let them do it.

Let's show them our real colours. This shows how disgraceful they are."

Mr Jimmy McGregor, from the Hongkong Democratic Foundation, said: "I am ashamed to change in the face of that bullying."

He said that in the past few years, China resorted to bullying tactics rather than normal diplomacy in the event of disputes and that was deplorable.

In other developments, legislator Mr Chim Pui-chung submitted an amendment to a motion put to Omelco which was sponsored by Miss Christine Loh Kung-wai.

Miss Loh's finalised version reads: "This council urges the British and Hongkong governments to adopt the principles of openness, fairness and acceptability to the people of Hongkong when engaging in future dialogue with the Chinese Government on the political development of Hongkong."

In Mr Chim's amendment, he added to the end of the motion "that such political development should also be based on the possibility of convergence with the future political structure and smooth transition of Hongkong".