

# 1991-95 Legco will go down in history books

By Wing Lam

THE 1991-1995 Legislative Council will long be remembered for having adopted several important measures during its four-year term.

History was made on four fronts — directly elected members; allowing legislators to elect the Legco president who presides over the meetings; the introduction of the governor's question time; and the hearing of the Alex Tsui case.

It was the first time Legco had directly elected members, who represented 18 geographical constituencies. The number of official members was reduced from 10 to three.

Legco's panel meetings were opened to the public for first time.

It was a historic moment when a non-official member — but not the governor — could be president of the Legislative Council.

The measure allowing legislators to elect the Legco president was proposed in Governor Patten's policy address and implemented in February, 1993.

Former deputy president Sir John Swaine became its first elected president.

The governor's question time was introduced into Legco in 1992. The measure also was proposed by the governor and welcomed by most legislators.

A special sitting for question time is now held about once a month.

The first question time was held on 7 October 1992, with 23 legislators asking questions.

Mr Patten not only set up question time but also took part in a live television forum.

The previous 27 governors believed it was not right to leave themselves open to attack from all sides for the viewer's entertainment.

But Mr Patten braved the exposure.

After giving his policy address to Legco on 7 October 1992, the governor appeared on TV the next day to face a panel of 14, with commentary from two academics.

Two public forums were also held in the City Hall.

In the case of the sacking of former deputy operations director of Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Alex Tsui Ka-kit in 1994, the security panel invoked the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance to ask ICAC Commissioner Bertrand de Speville and Alex Tsui to attend hearings and give evidence about the sacking.

The historic inquiry was held in April, 1994.

The Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance had not previously been used by legislators.