

(Summary Translation)

To : Clerk to the Bills Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat

11 March 1999

Legislative Councillors in Hong Kong should serve on a voluntary basis

We opine that it is wrong for the Government to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on remunerating Members of the Legislative Council (LegCo) annually in return for confrontation from LegCo Members. Some LegCo Members even met with overseas politicians to pursue personal fame and gain, ignoring “people’s livelihood” and “social stability” which are most essential to citizens in Hong Kong. This is indeed detrimental to the well-being of the people of Hong Kong. Therefore, we propose that remuneration and allowance for LegCo Members should cease and that LegCo Members be replaced by volunteers through a selection exercise or by appointment. Taking an overview of the following circumstances, it is possible to identify volunteers to serve on LegCo.

In Hong Kong, there are hundreds of thousands of registered societies, including associations of the various trades, academic institutes, religious bodies, women’s associations, mutual-aid committees, clansmen associations, rural committees, village assemblies for over 700 villages, etc. Each of them has their own chairman, president or representatives who are mostly returned by very competitive, democratic elections. Some are returned by elections under the arrangement and supervision of officials from the Home Affairs Department (HAD). Moreover, representatives of the HAD and other government officials have also attended the regular meetings of some of these associations. All the executive members of these associations serve on a voluntary basis, devoting efforts to and providing financial support for Their associations. While they do not receive any remuneration from the Government, They actively participate in the work of their associations with the sole objective of genuinely serving the community and making contribution to the society, which they perceive as a honourable thing to do.

Given that leaders of these associations are elected by fellow members of the respective associations, they are generally more representative of the people’s opinions. In this connection, if they are appointed to the LegCo in proper order, They can serve and strive for the well-being of a greater number of people. Certainly, they will be more than happy to assume this role and will see it as a more honourable task to undertake.

Suggestions

1. Certain criteria should be set for the selection and appointment of volunteers with representativeness to be LegCo Members.
2. Initially, a certain proportion of the seats (e.g. 20 seats) in LegCo may be allocated to volunteers on a trial basis, gradually moving towards the goal of having all Members serving on a voluntary basis. (This is, in fact, an indirect democratic election which is nonetheless more economical in terms of human and financial resources, and also more representative compared with direct election.)
3. LegCo Members should serve for a term of three years and may only be reelected for one subsequent term, i.e. they may serve for a maximum of six years.
4. Upon the expiry of the term of office, every LegCo Members who served on a voluntary basis should be awarded a certificate of merit by the Government for commendation.

Expected Result

1. The result will certainly be promising because the volunteers will surely endeavour to serve the people of Hong Kong by all means.
2. The public will certainly welcome voluntary legislators for they represent a genuine return of wealth to the public (given that a saving in public money by hundreds of millions of dollars can be achieved each year).
3. The society will certainly be more stable, harmonious and affluent than it used to be.

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