

S. L. W. P.

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A bag of half-truths and distorted views on architects

I REFER to the letter headlined "Putting the case of unqualified architect in perspective" from Mr Benjamin Fu, Principal Information Officer of the Public Works Department (SCM Post, March 10) in response to my letter signed "Architect" (SCM Post, February 22). But what a bag of half-truths and distorted perspectives.

No one has ever asserted that "all or many architects currently employed in Hongkong may lack proper qualifications." However, I know some people who call themselves "architects" and are not qualified professional architects.

It is also a fact that anyone in Hongkong can call himself an architect regardless of qualification or experience. And I invite the PWD, if it can, to dispute this fact.

That not "all or many architects currently employed in Hongkong lack proper qualifications" is beside the point. I would indeed be very shocked if the ICAC was set up because it was believed that all or many civil servants and residents of Hongkong are corrupt.

The PWD is also misleading us by stating categorically that "in Hongkong, no architect — or engineer or surveyor — can practise and be responsible for the construction of buildings unless his name has been entered into the Authorised Persons' Register kept by the Building Authority." This is not true.

First, anyone can practise as an architect

in Hongkong whether his name has been entered in the "Authorised Persons' Register" or not.

Second, not all building works are required to be the responsibility of an "Authorised Person." In fact, most of the buildings you see in the New Territories, to take an example, are not designed or supervised by an "Authorised Person."

Third, I find it ridiculous that an engineer or surveyor, albeit qualified in his own field of expertise, could be entrusted by the law to act as a qualified architect by virtue of inclusion in a register of "authorised persons."

If an analogy of the Government's present ridiculous policy on architects can be drawn on the legal and medical professions, it is the same as accepting that anyone can call himself a lawyer or a doctor and give legal and medical advice so long as only "authorised persons" appearing on registers appear before the court and operate on patients in Government hospitals.

I invite the Institute of Architects to explain to the public its proposals for an Architect's Ordinance and its implications, and then for further public discussions. The half-truths and distorted views in the PWD spokesman's letter clearly indicates that the Government has something it wishes to avoid discussing.

RICK TSUI HIN-FAI