

Henry Wong J. Cascard 30/7/1975

# 20,000 civil servants set for go-slow

A WIDE range of public services is expected to be hit today as more than 20,000 junior civil servants begin a one-week go-slow to press for more money.

Union leaders warned last night that virtually all government departments will be hit and vital services could be disrupted.

Delays in postal deliveries, fresh meat distribution, street-cleaning and pest control operations may be felt, the union leaders warned.

Court proceedings may also be disrupted if translators and interpreters take up the call to go slow.

But the head of the Hongkong Civil Service General Union,

Anthony Luk, said last night that the public will not be too severely hit.

"There will be some delays and inconvenience. Efficiency in government departments will be reduced. But our aim is not to inconvenience the public," Mr Luk said.

"We just want to give the Government a taste of what we can do."

Mr Luk said ambulancemen and firemen have also been asked to join in the go-slow but promised that "human life will not be put at risk."

"There are instructions that if lives and property are at risk discretion will be used."

Mr Luk claims his union has more than 20,000 members and expects all of them to take part in the go-slow.

"Most of our members are junior civil servants . . . clerks, slaughterhouse workers, postmen and garbage collectors," Mr Luk said.

"I expect all clerical services to be hit," he added.

The union chief warned that industrial action may be escalated by the end of next week, if government officials continue to refuse to negotiate on terms set by the union.

The union wants pay increases ranging from 14 to 18 per cent on a sliding scale favouring

lower-paid workers. Union leaders say they are unhappy with the recent pay rises which ranged from 6 to 10 per cent.

The union also wants official government recognition and membership of the Senior Civil Service Council - a body set up for negotiations between Government and civil service unions.

At present only Hongkong's three major civil service unions - the Chinese Civil Servants Association, Expatriate Officers Association and Senior Non-Expatriate Association - are represented in the council.

"We'll only negotiate with the Government if they agree to talk about higher wages and of-

ficially recognise our union," Mr Luk said.

The union yesterday turned down a government offer to negotiate "because they did not say they will talk about these two points", union officials said.

"We think all those who now do not get government subsidised housing should get bigger pay packets," Mr Luk said.

Civil Service Branch officials yesterday appeared undisturbed by the threatened go-slow today.

One official said he doubted if 20,000 civil servants would heed the call to take industrial action.

But there was no official statement from the Government yesterday on the go-slow plan.