

S. K. M. P.

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40 unions may strike

About 40 civil service unions will meet tomorrow to decide whether to strike in support of the suspended dispensers.

The chairman of the 24,000-strong Hongkong Civil Servants General Union, Mr Anthony Luk, said yesterday this is one of several possibilities being considered.

If the union leaders do decide to strike, about 40,000 civil servants — one-third of the total — will be given the walk-out signal.

The unions will also consider holding a sit-in or joining the dispensers' projected suit against the Government, Mr Luk said.

"We don't like the Government's suspension of the dispensers at all. We unions are putting our heads together to fight it out."

Mr Luk said his union is not concerned about the re-grading the dispensers are clamouring for.

"The Government has no authority to suspend any civil servant and that is the issue."

"It's a question of union rights and bargaining powers."

The hat is also expected to go round at the meeting tomorrow to raise funds to back the suspended dispensers.

The unions will also look into a reported split within the ranks of the dispensers over whether they should return to normal duties.

The 230-strong Pharmaceutical Staff Association will consult its lawyer today about filing a writ in the High Court for "damages for breach of contract."

On Friday, 22 dispensers were suspended without pay for not doing the duties assigned to them.

The dispensers say the suspension is illegal.

The Government has



Mr Luk

closed five Sunday clinics as a result of the dispensers' work-to-rule.

And from today, seven of the 14 evening clinics will be closed.

A spokesman for the Medical and Health Department said yesterday figures of the number of out-patients visiting the three open clinics and casualty wards were not available.

But at the Violet Peel clinic, one attendant said the number of out-patients had doubled.

Many were turned away when the clinic ran out of numbered discs for seeing the doctor.

But this happens quite often.