

1,400 support work to rule

By LULU YU

AT LEAST two postal unions with a combined membership of 1,400 will work to rule on Friday unless the Government gives way, Mr Michael Siu, president of the Union of Postal Employees (UPE), said yesterday.

A spokesman for the Postmaster-General's Office said contingency plans had been drawn up but he could not predict the impact of the action.

Mr Siu said his 1,300-strong union had decided on Monday to adopt industrial action regardless of what ac-

tion the next largest postal union, the Hongkong Postal Workers' Union (PWU), took.

Mr Kwok Chai-ping, president of the Superintendents of Post Association, said his 100-member union would most likely support the UPE if it called for a work to rule.

Both the UPE and the PWU are scheduled to meet the Civil Service Branch at the Government Secretariat today, although at different times.

"Due to our differences, the two unions will be talking to the Government

separately," said Mr Siu.

"Our positions are miles apart. We'll go ahead with what we think is right and the PWU can do whatever they like."

Mr Ho Kam-ching, chairman of the 1,100-strong PWU, said after a meeting with Post Office officials yesterday that talks were continuing and no decision would be reached until after a members' meeting tomorrow night.

Eight representatives of the PWU and the postal division of the Chinese Civil Servants Association yesterday met for two hours with the

Postmaster-General, Mr Hugh Ardley, and his deputy, Mr Paul Wong.

Mr Ardley said in a statement the Post Office was sympathetic with the postmen's request for a long service increment and he would urge the Civil Service Branch to reconsider the proposal.

He added, however, it was unlikely the department would find any need for the creation of a senior postman rank.

Mr Ho said he was not satisfied with the talks yesterday but was prepared to take

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negotiations to a higher Government level.

Postmen are seeking the creation of a senior postman rank, greater salary increments for those with long service and a cut in the working week from 48 to 44 hours a week.

There are, however, differences between the four unions seeking the changes and Mr Siu confirmed yesterday the UPE would stop making appeals to other unions to follow their action.

Mr Sui said if the talks today failed his union's postmen would stop performing extra duties.