

File 8

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80 bodies back Govt teachers

MORE than 80 organisations yesterday issued a joint statement in support of Government primary school teachers' fight against the policy on surplus teachers, the papers reported prominently today, most of them using the news either as their inside or back page lead.

The statement said the Government's decision would establish a dangerous precedent for other civil servants.

The Government should not shed its responsibility for providing public services and should not waste professional talent, the statement added.

It also criticised the Government's education policy and urged the Government to acknowledge the status of teachers' unions as a negotiating body, the papers reported.

At a Press conference yesterday, the President of the

Government School Non-Graduate Teachers Union, Mr. Leung Yim-tong, said if the Government failed to give them a satisfactory reply before the Union holds a general meeting on September 25, they would take further action.

Several papers yesterday reported that in a letter to the Government School Non-Graduate Teachers Union, the Secretary for Social Services, Mr. Eric Ho, said the Government was prepared to discuss the matter with the Union either within or outside the Education Department's Consultative Council.

The Union considered the letter "irrelevant" to their demands.

Editorially, the Hong Kong Daily News today thought that the teachers' demand for direct talks was "appropriate".

Wen Wei Po said in an editorial that the joint action of more than 80 organisations in support of the teachers was "unusual," and that this indicated the gradual move towards unity among people from different social classes.