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All in the land

# ALL-OUT STRIKE, WARN TEACHERS

'We shall  
fight  
against  
grading  
changes'

by  
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Staff Reporter

**DISGRUNTLED government teachers yesterday threatened to stage an all-out strike if the Government continues to disregard their pleas and grievances.**

They said they would try to seek public support in their fight against "unfair recommendations" by the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service.

In a report released last November, the commission recommended a series of changes on the grading of teachers, sparking off heated reactions from the teachers.

At a mass meeting hosted by the Professional Teachers' Union yesterday, the teachers voted to strike if accord is not reached.

However, they did not fix any date for the strike.

The union launched a similar strike in 1973 when they fought for better pay.

Union president Szeto Wah said the teachers were not at all happy with the changes of their grades.

"Instead of remedying the teachers' grades, the commission has made it even worse, undermining the cooperative spirit among teachers and weakening their morale," said the president.

"We would by all means try to negotiate with the Government, but if it does not listen to our views strike will be one of our alternatives," Mr Szeto said.

"However, our action must be supported by the masses," he said.

The final decision will be decided at a general meeting in March, Mr Szeto said.

Meanwhile, the union will seek public support and explain the controversial issues to them, he said.

Other issues include fighting the proposed bus fare increase, their campaign for a higher personal tax allowance, enhancing moral education and suppressing pornography, Mr Szeto said.

A drive will also be launched to seek a provident fund and housing allowance for teachers.

"More important still, we must strengthen the ties among ourselves," Mr Szeto said.

"The Government's strategy in tackling disputes is to undermine the unity within the unions. We should look at our predecessors and learn the lesson, and not be disintegrated," he said.

He cited the nurses' fight for better pay as an example and appealed to the members to be tolerant.

"Those of you who got promotion from the recommendations should be more lenient with your fellow teachers who grumble and mumble because they have got an unfair deal," he said.

The commission's proposal to simplify the salary level for university graduates by extending the maximum salary level for assistant education officers to one point (\$8,065 a month) has caused dissent, he said.