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All labour Bills are held in abeyance

THE Executive Council will put aside all drafting of Bills concerning labour matters until the consultation procedure improves.

Draft legislation being held up includes proposals to increase severance payments and to relax the eligibility of those receiving them.

This was learned that Exco members came to the decision because of problems faced in consultation procedures in view of employers' recent strong opposition to the Employment Amendment Bill.

Some employers' associations, in giving their opinions, said the government had failed to consult organisations concerned before the Bill was read.

They pointed out that employer representatives in the Labour Advisory

Board (LAB) could not fully reflect all viewpoints.

One garments and textiles association official said the employer representatives in LAB did not represent any particular association. They were in the committee as individuals.

Since discussions at LAB sessions are kept confidential, this leads to a communication gap between the members and the employers' associations.

Meanwhile, the second and third reading of the Employment (Amendment) Bill 1983 in the Legislative Council will be deferred to October. The decision was made on the recommendation of nominated Legislative Council members.

The adjournment will give more time to the Ad Hoc Group of Unoffi-

cials examining the Bill to continue discussions with the government and to study various representations on the Bill received by Umelco.

The ad hoc group met on four occasions last month including having two meetings with the Secretary for Education and Manpower, and the Commissioner for Labour.

Members of the group are Mr Peter C. Wong, who is the convener, the Rev Patrick McGovern, Mr Wong Lam, Mr Allen Lee, Mr Stephen Cheong, Mrs Selina Chow, Miss Maria Tam and Dr Henrietta Ip.

Since the Bill was gazetted on July 8, Umelco has received six representations from members of the public, labour organisations and manufacturers.