

S. C. M. P.

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Action urged on workers' neglect

By TIMOTHY JIM

The Labour Department was yesterday urged to start prosecuting workers who neglect safety regulations, in a bid to halt the spate of industrial accidents.

The plea came from the ~~Christian Association for Executives~~.

The group was credited for organising a large-scale seminar about five months ago on industrial safety before the issue caused public outcry.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, a spokes-

man for CAFE said prosecution of workers will help to deter labourers from further neglecting their own safety.

The spokesman said CAFE has spent six months investigating industrial accidents in Hongkong and felt that workers should also share part of the responsibility.

The spokesman also said that among the 3,397 prosecutions brought by the Labour Department over industrial neglect last year, not one was against a worker.

The association felt this could be one reason why the number of industrial acci-

dents continues to soar in Hongkong.

It also came up with a five-point recommendation.

- Increase the maximum penalty on general industrial neglect from the existing \$5,000 to \$10,000.

- Increase the maximum fines on building contractors from the existing \$10,000 to \$20,000.

- Amend legislation to give employers the right to sue employees who fail to comply to industrial safety regulations on their own premises.

- The Government should provide more funds to train a team of factory inspectors adequate for coping with the problem.

- Introduce compulsory courses for factory management on industrial safety regulations.

Meanwhile, the Reform Club yesterday called for action on industrial accidents.

The club blamed the Labour Department for "failing to see the regulations (already enacted) effectively carried out."

The club said it "realises that a large part of the fault lies in the fact that the Labour Department is not given enough staff by the Government adequately to enforce their own regulations."

The Reform Club also urged the Commissioner of Labour to stand firm on his request for more staff in the coming year, so that workers can be adequately protected.

TV way to learn about work laws

Workers will soon be able to learn about their rights and responsibilities the easy way — by watching a new series of television drama programmes.

The series is being produced by Radio Television Hongkong with the assistance of the Labour Department.

Episodes of the series will feature, among other things, workmen's legal entitlements, apprenticeship training, legal protection for women and young workers, industrial health, workmen's compensation and construction site safety.

A spokesman for the department said yesterday that

they were giving full support to the series.

"Quite a number of our divisions and units are assisting in one way or another, including the factory inspectorate, labour relations division and the workmen's compensation division.

"Help is being given in briefing RTHK producers on labour matters, in preparing the scripts and in location shooting.

"The series will make workers realise more fully their rights and responsibilities and at the same time provide entertainment."

The first episode is expected to be screened later this year.