

## **\$6m given out in severance awards**

Employees who lost their jobs because of last year's economic recession received more than \$6 million in severance pay yesterday, according to a statement released by the Labour Department's Labour Relations Service (LRS).

In accordance with the Employment Ordinance, employers paid \$6,213,272 to 5,778 retrenched employees.

"Had it not been for the timely enactment of the severance pay legislation which came into effect in August, the retrenchment would have resulted in many serious disputes and inflicted hardship on retrenched employees and their families," said the Chief Labour Officer (Labour Relations), Mr Tsui Tim-fook.

The sum represents almost half of the \$13 million employers paid to workers last

year after labour-management disputes were settled by the LRS. This is an increase of \$3 million over 1974.

The remainder was paid as arrears of wages, payment in lieu of notice, statutory holiday pay, bonuses and other miscellaneous payments.

Commenting on the statistics, Mr Tsui said employers and employees of all trades and industries affected by worldwide economic difficulties had weathered the long and trying period courageously.

"It was also a year of tremendous involvement and considerable success for the Labour Relations Service," he added.

The service handled 43,695 enquiries and consultations last year — an increase of 35 per cent from 1974.

Despite the recession, 17,600 man-days were lost in 17 stoppages, compared with 10,708 working days lost in 22 stoppages during 1974 and 56,691 days in 54 stoppages in 1973.

Of the 6,585 disputes handled by the LRS, 60 per cent were settled with the help of the service.

In addition, the LRS investigated 218 major complaints about contraventions of provisions of the Employment Ordinance concerning statutory holidays, rest days and improper deductions from wages.

## **Police seize fireworks**

Police seized more than 300 lbs of fireworks in two raids made in the New Territories yesterday.

Shortly before 11 am, police from Tsun Wan raided a store in Sham Tseng New Village and seized 180 lbs of fireworks. A 40-year-old man was arrested.

Earlier, police from Shataukok seized 128 lbs of fireworks at a hill site above Fung Hang Village. No one was arrested.