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26 July, 1978.

A lesson in management

About 120 members of the Mutual Aid Committees and owners' corporations in Eastern yesterday attended a seminar on building management.

At the three-hour meeting, organised by the City District Office (Eastern), flat-owners and tenants were given a clearer notion of the role of MACs and owners' corporations in building management.

The ordinance governing relations between landlords and tenants was also explained to them.

During the meeting, representatives from the Labour Department explained the labour relations regarding the employment of caretakers.

A Senior Chinese Language Officer, Mr Wong Ki-lim, also instructed the participants in how to keep correspondence and issue advisories to tenants of a building.

The acting City District Officer (Eastern), Mr William Chan, said his office has paid more attention to building management over the past years because of the different types of buildings in Eastern.

He said of the more than 1,500 private and Government buildings in the area,

nearly 384 have management organisations - 123 owners' corporations and 261 Mutual Aid Committees.

He pointed out that an owners' corporation is the sole legitimate body to manage a building whereas a MAC is only a temporary organisation without any legal power.

About care-taking charges, he told the participants that each has to shoulder a certain proportion of the total expenses.

But in some buildings, he said, an emergency fund can be collected from each flat-owner and tenant for urgent use, such as repairing lifts.

Also, tenants can be asked to pay an extra monthly sum to the care-taking sub-committee which, after being accumulated over a number of years, can be used to repaint the building or for other purposes.

A senior rating and valuation surveyor, Mr C. L. Li, told the landlords that it is a criminal offence if they fail to give tenants rent receipts.

"A landlord may be liable to a maximum fine of \$2,000 if he commits such an offence," he added.

He said there are only five conditions under which a flat-owner can take back his flat:

- Parents and children aged over 18 of the landlord want it for personal accommodation.

- For redevelopment.

- Tenants fail to pay regular rents or comply with conditions listed in lease.

- Undue interference rendered by tenants.

- The tenant sub-lets the flat without the consent of the landlord or legal authority.