

Socso may extend rehab programme

PORT DICKSON: The "Return to Work" rehabilitation programme by the Social Security Organisation (Socso), which currently covers permanently disabled workers suffering neck and back injuries, may be extended to cover workers with loss of limbs.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said: "Although it may not help these workers to regain 100% productivity capacity, at least it could help them function more effectively."

The move was part of Socso's long-term measures to offer better services and protection for injured workers, he told reporters after presenting Socso benefits to injured contributors here yesterday.

Twenty centres had been set up, with the co-operation of the private sector, under the rehabilitation programme to help injured workers return to work.

However, said Dr Fong, there had been only a few takers since the programme started in February and this could be due to the workers' fear of losing their invalidity pension.

"There is a general perception that once they are rehabilitated, they would lose their pension scheme.

"As such, many injured workers have refused to come forward to seek treatment at these centres.

"We would like to assure them that Socso would assess

their condition after the completion of their rehabilitation programme.

"If they cannot perform like they previously did, they would continue to enjoy the pension scheme," he said.

On another matter, Dr Fong said Socso has set up an advisory committee with district offices nationwide, which also comprised community leaders, the police, hospital staff and employers, to get more information on "intricate cases" so that compensations could be made fast.

He said Socso had already expedited claims in special cases, such as funeral expenses and serious injuries, where payments would be made within three days.



UNDER GUARD: A policeman watching over the 13 foreign fishermen who were brought to the Sibul wharf on Friday night after they were fished out from the sea by local trawlers.