

Idiom by Lon Yan

不務正業

bu2 wu4 zheng4 ye4

Urgent and serious matters waiting to be processed by the Legislative Council continued to get bogged down as some lawmakers happily carried on with their game of filibustering.

The last finance committee of the session last eight hours, seven of which were spent on filibustering. As a result, just over 10 percent of the many funding requests totaling HK\$73 billion were considered and approved.

Many projects concerning the welfare of the people, including expansion of the Tung Chung new town, have to wait until after lawmakers come back from the summer break.

It was pointed out that over half of the committee's time in the last session was spent on filibustering.

Filibustering does serve political purposes, up to a point. But when the tactic is used in every meeting for years, it only

serves to annoy, and disrupt. No wonder a commentator criticized the councilors for "mindlessly paralyzing" the operation of the administration, and pointed out that what they have been doing is "不務正業" (*bu2 wu4 zheng4 ye4*).

"不" (*bu2*) is "no," "not," "務" (*wu4*) "to be engaged in," "affair," "business," "正" (*zheng4*) "main," "correct," "right" and "業" (*ye4*) "a business," "profession," "trade," "work." Literally, "不務正業" (*bu2 wu4 zheng4 ye4*) is "not to engage in the correct business," "not to do the right work."

The idiom means "to goof around," "to be derelict in duty and run irrelevant business," "not to do honest work," "not to live by honest labor."

It also means "to ignore one's proper occupation," "not to attend to one's proper duties," "be unmindful of one's work."

Terms containing the character "業" (*ye4*) include:

事業 (*shi4 ye4*) – a career; an enterprise

職業 (*zhi2 ye4*) – an occupation; a vocation; a profession

業餘 (*ye4 yu2*) – an amateur

失業 (*shi1 ye4*) – to be out of work