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# 16 pc: we'll not settle for less, say civil servants

Clamour for a 16 per cent pay rise for civil servants in the new financial year grew louder yesterday with a petition to the Governor, Sir Edward Youde.

A group said to represent 80,000 civil servants and quasi-civil servants in subsidised organisations, vowed it would take further action if this year's pay rises fall short of demands.

They are adamant that their pay award should include a four per cent "catch up" factor from last year, which brings them on to a

collision course with the Government.

Last year, civil servants were given only a five per cent pay rise, four per cent less than the private sector, the unionists say.

The petition, handed to a Government House security officer in the absence of Sir Edward, followed a rally attended by more than 400 representatives of the Joint Committee for the 1984 Salary Review.

Coming from 74 member unions they voted to take their claims directly to Sir

Edward.

The chairman of the joint committee, Mr Szeto Wah, declined to specify what "further action" it would take if the Government did not heed its demands, saying that any action had to be endorsed by the committee's member unions.

The position adopted yesterday was:

● The joint committee rejects using the findings of the current pay trend survey as the basis of pay adjustments for civil servants and employees in the subsidised sector

for the 1984 financial year.

● Civil servants and employees in the subsidised sector should be given a 16 per cent pay rise next year — 12 per cent for inflation and four per cent owed from last year.

● Those in the lowest civil service salary bracket should receive a bigger percentage increase.

● Personal tax allowance should be raised according to the rate of inflation and husbands and wives should be given the choice of being taxed separately.

In his address to the rally,

Mr Szeto said that banks and other lending institutions had reported that some 42 per cent of their clients prior to the Lunar New Year had been civil servants.

This showed that civil servants were having financial problems as their purchasing power had dropped, he said.

Mr Szeto also criticised the Government for refusing to talk to the committee on pay adjustments on the grounds that employees of subsidised organisations were not employed by the Government.

The Government's reasoning, he said, was incorrect as pay scales in the subsidised sector followed those of the civil service and employees of subsidised organisations were paid by the Government.

They should thus be given a 16 per cent increase next year — 12 per cent to make up for inflation and four per cent to compensate for last year's "cut".

He said the 16 per cent figure was also justified by the fact that the workload of civil servants had become

heavier with the "freeze" in civil service growth last year.

Another committee leader, Mr Anthony Luk, described as "doubtful" the findings of the current pay trend survey, which reported that private sector employees were given pay rises ranging between 8.45 and 9.86 per cent last year.

Mr Luk alleged that the findings could have been "manipulated" as the survey was conducted by the Government's Pay Trend Survey Committee without staff representation.