

Accident victims want better compensation

VICTIMS of industrial accidents, in a petition handed to Umelco yesterday, called on the government to improve terms of compensation for injuries suffered at work and also for payments to families of deceased workers.

They also criticised the inadequacies of the employees' Compensation Amendment Bill announced last month, saying it did not solve their problems.

The 25 petitioners, including accident victims and dependants of deceased workers, presented their grievances to the councillors on behalf of the Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims.

They were received by six councillors: Dr Harry Fang, Andrew So, Dr Ho Kam-fai, Selina Chow, Cheung Yan-lung and Wong Lam.

Their proposals call for a higher rate of compensation, improved procedures, the setting up of a central funding system and also measures to safeguard the future employment of accident victims.

They also submitted a report of a survey conducted on the problems of victims which covered about 85 members of the association.

The workers suggested that the maximum compensation for death and permanent paralysis should be raised to \$300,000 — equivalent to 10 years'

wages at a monthly salary of \$2,500 — for workers below 40.

The present rate is \$168,000 or seven years' wages.

The other two age groups — from 40 to 56 and those above — should be compensated at a rate of eight and six years' wages, respectively.

Workers given six months leave should be allowed full pay while those exceeding this period should be given two-thirds of their wages, the proposals urged.

There should also be an industrial accidents tribunal which will be able to finish processing accident cases within a month, instead of having workers to go through legal procedures in

the District Court, as at present.

They said the government should also set up a central fund for industrial accident victims to settle advance payment claims for irresponsible employers and as an emergency fund for needy families.

Concerning employment, the workers urged the government to hire more handicapped people to set an example for the private sector.

Steps should also be taken to improve government's employment service, set up training centres and look into appropriate jobs suitable for them.

The association also objected to the two-tier system as proposed in the amendment Bill consisting of an ordinary assessment board and a special assessment board.

They said an assessment board and an appeal committee should be set up and both should include workers and union members.

The workers also proposed that, in order to simplify procedures in claiming compensation, employers should, under the arrangements of the Labour Department, sign an agreement seven days after the injuries are assessed.

Attitude has to be changed

A WORKER's association yesterday urged all workers to unite and cooperate in solving their problems in face of the economic recession.

The Young Christian Workers said workers should change their attitude of remaining silent about their grievances. Instead, they should voice their opinions through mass media.

The association made these comments after a

survey on workers and found that they were underpaid and had no job security.

Many of them had to work overtime or part time to supplement their income.

And as more factories closed, the workers dared not make complaints about their employers for fear of losing their jobs.

"The young workers may be lucky enough to find new jobs but how

about the elderly who are not yet qualified to get old age allowances?"

The association made three proposals to the government:

- To set up an overall social security system.

- To assist the ailing factories to create more jobs.

- To review labour laws particularly on severance pay to plug the loopholes.