

731 student teachers hand in job petition

REPRESENTATIVES of 731 student teachers threatened with unemployment after graduation this summer yesterday petitioned the Education Department.

In a letter addressed to the Education chief Kenneth Topley, they attacked the Government's decision to cut down Primary 1 classes

by 237 and to delay expanding secondary education.

They asked the Education Department to discuss with them on a solution to provide them teaching posts because the number of teachers needed will also be reduced in proportion to the number of classes to be cut.

Earlier, Mr Topley announced that about 300 existing teachers of government primary schools affected by the cut would be transferred to other departments.

Grade and salaries will not change, but the teachers will handle completely different jobs.

Yesterday president of Grantham College of Education Students' Union Cheung Sik-hong said the students of Hongkong's three teacher colleges are extremely worried about the future.

"We insist that one of the ways to solve the problem is to quickly develop secondary education so that more teachers would be employed.

"To provide job opportunity for teachers as well as improving educational standard of primary school, we suggested that the present student-teacher ratio of 10 classes of students to 11 teachers should be changed to 10 classes to 13 teachers," he said.

They also suggested that the present number of pupils in one class should be reduced.

The government's idea to start a third-year course for this year's graduates did not win much support from the teacher-trainees.

"The new course will only take in 112 graduates. A lot of students will be left out. We oppose the idea because it is no good to open the course just to alleviate the problem. The Government should clearly think over whether the course is necessary," he said.



EDUCATION Department officials (backs to camera) receive a deputation of student teachers seeking job protection.