

S. C. M. P.

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40,000 support call for improved school services

By WALTER CHEUNG

The Professional Teachers' Union yesterday presented a trump card to Umelco in its campaign to improve Hongkong's pre-primary services — as many as 40,000 teachers' signatures.

Their petition was accepted by four Unofficials of the Legislative Council who joined the three duty roster Umelco members.

The four Unofficials — Mrs Selina Chow, Dr Henrietta Ip, Mrs Pauline Ng and Mrs Rita Fan — are all members of Umelco's education and manpower panel.

The three duty members were Miss Maria Tam, who sits on both the Executive and Legislative Councils, Dr Ho Kam-fai and Mr Cheung Yan-lung.

The petitioners were head-

ed by the union's president, Mr Szeto Wah, who led 20 representatives.

The signatures were collected following a recent survey conducted by the union which revealed inadequacies in kindergarten and nursery education.

The four areas of improvement supported by the signatories are:

- The formulation of an improved pay-scale for kindergarten teachers and nursery workers.

- The speedy establishment of a college of education to train kindergarten and nursery teachers and workers.

- Government subsidy of kindergartens.

- Centralising the control of kindergartens and nurseries by the Education Department.

The representatives told the Umelco members that the

salaries of kindergarten teachers are very low.

More than half of the teachers covered in the survey were receiving a monthly salary of less than \$1,400.

The petitioners said the Government should lose no time in establishing an improved salary structure for kindergarten teachers.

They also expressed concern over a recent announcement by a Government official that a college of education for kindergarten teachers and nursery workers, scheduled to open in September, had been delayed.

Meanwhile, after the meeting, six of the Umelco members, excluding Mrs. Chow, met six workers' representatives who called on the Government to set up a cash assistance scheme for industrial accident victims and their families.

A spokesman, Mr Lee

Cheuk-yan, said people entitled to compensation often had to endure hardship because cash aid normally is not paid for one year after an accident.

Mr Lee said the scheme they proposed should be modelled on the Traffic Accident Victims' Assistance Scheme and the Criminal and Law Enforcement Compensation Scheme — regardless of victims' financial standing.

Mr Lee suggested the source of the fund should be insurance companies, with the money being returned to the companies after victims had received their compensation.

The group will present their views to officials of the Social Welfare Department next month.

A senior official of the department said there were no plans to set up such a scheme.