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25 trade unions urge governor on sick leave Bill

ABOUT 50 people yesterday petitioned the governor to pass the Sick Leave Bill.

The petitioners were members of the Joint Committee For Passage of the Sick Leave Bill, which comprises 25 labour unions, student bodies and community groups.

The governor, Sir Edward Youde is on vacation in Britain.

The joint committee demanded in the petition that the Sick Leave Bill be passed as soon as Legco resumes next month.

A spokesman for the joint committee said the Bill had been fully discussed by the public for over a year now, and there is no reason at all for further delay.

Legco debate on the Bill was originally scheduled for the end of July. But after strong lobbying by employer groups, it was put off until October.

The Bill seeks to extend sick leave entitlement for manual workers from one to four days a month, and the accumulated sick leave for the entire year to 120 days from the present 36.

Also, the Bill calls for

workers earning less than \$7,500 a month to receive two thirds of their pay while on sick leave for more than three days.

The spokesman for the joint committee noted that while the Bill represents quite an advance in labour welfare, it is still inadequate.

The joint committee suggested in the petition:

Workers should receive full salary instead of two thirds pay while on sick leave.

Workers should be given salary for sick leave of fewer than three days.

Employers who fire their employees while the latter are on sick leave should be severely punished.

The spokesman added that unless a social security scheme is implemented, any amendment to existing labour legislation will only be a patch-up job.

Representatives of the joint committee will meet with nominated Legco member Mr Peter C. Wong on Wednesday.

The joint committee also plans to issue pamphlets to brief workers on the Sick Leave Bill issue.