



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, September 7, 1973

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ELIGIBILITY FOR LEGAL AID EXTENDED

More people will qualify for legal aid under the revised Legal Aid (Assessment of Contributions) Regulations, published in today's gazette.

Basically, the amended regulations extend the scope of legal aid for civil cases to a larger number of people not previously eligible.

Those whose disposable income do not exceed \$500 will pay a reduced rate of contribution, while people who own their flats will benefit by the increased allowance for the value of their dwellings.

Commenting on this aspect, the acting Director of Legal Aid, Mr. T.L. von Pokorny, said the personal allowance for an applicant's dwelling house would be doubled to \$40,000, after deducting the amount of any mortgage debt owing on the property.

For civil cases, he said, no contribution would be payable out of the first \$1,500 of a person's disposable capital, as against \$1,000 before. This would have the effect of reducing contributions payable by aided persons with a disposable capital of up to \$3,000. For example, before a person with \$3,000 disposable capital would pay a contribution of \$700, while the new rate would be \$600.

Mr. Pokorny said the limit on a person's monthly disposable income to qualify for exemption of contribution towards his legal costs had also been raised from \$200 to \$300.

/"This will

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"This will reduce the amount of contribution payable by any legally aided person who has a disposable monthly income not exceeding \$500," he explained.

Citing an example, Mr. Pokorny said that previously a person with a monthly disposable income of \$500 was required to pay (by instalment) a contribution of \$990 towards his legal costs.

"Under the new regulations he would have to pay a contribution of only \$840. Moreover, contributions are usually refunded either in whole or in part if the legally aided party wins his case and is awarded costs against the other party."

The new regulations also prescribe the contributions payable by legally aided persons who have a disposable income of over \$500 per month or a disposable income capital of more than \$3,000.

No rates of contribution were prescribed when the financial limits for eligibility for legal aid for civil cases were raised some 12 months ago from \$500 to \$700 per monthly disposable income, and disposable capital from \$3,000 to \$4,000.

New increased personal allowances are also prescribed for calculating the disposable income of an applicant.

Until now the personal allowance has been \$25 per dependent wholly maintained by an applicant, while there was no personal allowance in respect of the aided person himself.

/The new levels

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The new levels of allowance follow the public assistance scales of payment, as illustrated in the table below.

Allowance

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (a) applicant with no dependants | \$110 |
| (b) applicant with up to 3 dependants | \$ 90 each |
| (c) 4th, 5th and 6th dependants | \$ 70 each (in addition to allowance of \$90 each under (b)). |
| (d) 7th and additional dependants | \$ 55 each (in addition to allowance of \$70 each under (c) and allowance of \$90 each under (b)). |

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FIRST SECTION OF MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM TO BE BUILT IN ADVANCE

Work on the first section of the multi-million-dollar Mass Transit Railway system will begin shortly in the north-eastern part of Kowloon.

This section, which will be 200 metres in length, will run under Kwun Tong Road and link the future Choi Hung Station in the north and the Kowloon Bay Depot in the south.

A spokesman for the Public Works Department explained that the reason for building this section at this stage was to reduce inconvenience to the public later on.

The works, designed by Freeman Fox and Partners (Far East), will be carried out in conjunction with another major road project in the area -- the Kwun Tong Road Duplication Scheme.

This project involves the widening of a section of Kwun Tong Road, between the main entrance to R.A.F. Kai Tak and Choi Wan Road, from six to 12 lanes to ease the severe traffic congestion in the Kwun Tong and Choi Hung areas.

Also included in the project is the construction of an elevated road to link Kwun Tong Road with the future Wai Yip Street Extension.

This dual two-lane road forms an integral part of the planned road network in the Kowloon Bay Reclamation.

On completion, the flyover will carry Wai Yip Street Extension traffic over Kwun Tong Road, thus allowing traffic to flow freely in both directions.

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To enable pedestrians to cross the road safely, a footbridge will be built over Kwun Tong Road near Choi Shek Lane.

The whole project, costing more than \$21 million, is expected to begin towards the end of next month and will take about 26 months to complete.

Meanwhile another section of Kwun Tong Road is being widened as part of the work on the Choi Hung Interchange which is scheduled for completion in early 1975.

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TEMPORARY POOL CLOSURE

The swimming pool, diving pool and spectator stand of the Morrison Hill swimming pool complex will be closed to the public from 6 to 10 p.m. tomorrow (Saturday).

During this period the Hang Seng Bank will be holding a swimming gala for its staff.

On Sunday (September 9) the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union will be holding swimming competitions in the Morse Park swimming pool between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

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AGREEMENT ON LONG-TERM FINANCING OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING SCHOOLS

Fee Increases To Meet Running Costs

The government has reached agreement with the English Schools Foundation on the long-term financing arrangements to meet the cost of running English-speaking schools, a government spokesman said today.

The arrangements preserve similar fee levels in schools operated by the government and the Foundation.

"They also accord with the principle of parity of subsidy between schools for English-speaking and Chinese-speaking children as stated in the 1965 White Paper on Education and endorsed by the Select Committee appointed in November 1971 to look into the cost of running English-speaking schools," the spokesman pointed out.

These arrangements have been embodied in a Code of Aid for schools operated by the Foundation.

To meet running costs, the fees for the eight English-speaking schools will be increased from January 1, 1974, the spokesman said. The increases, however, are less than those proposed in May 1971

The new fees are \$2,530 a year for secondary and \$1,330 a year for primary schools. They will apply in both Government English-speaking schools and those run by the English Schools Foundation.

/The government

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The government schools concerned are King George V School, Glenealy Junior School, Kennedy Road Junior School, Kowloon Junior School, Peak School and Quarry Bay School.

The two schools run by the English Schools Foundation affected are Island School and Beacon Hill School.

Altogether about 5,000 pupils are involved.

The new fees represent increases over the present fee levels of 23.4 per cent and 15.7 per cent for secondary and primary schools respectively.

The present annual fees are \$2,050 and \$1,150 respectively. These were introduced temporarily from January 1, 1973 pending the determination of long-term financing arrangements for English-speaking schools.

The spokesman said: "These rates of increases are considered reasonable in the light of recent and anticipated increases in costs."

As a result of the fee increases, the government will at the same time make comparable adjustment of its local education allowances for government employees.

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EEC COMMISSIONER ARRIVING TOMORROW

Note to Editors: Sir Christopher Soames, Commissioner of the European Economic Community, will arrive tomorrow (Saturday) on his way to Tokyo to attend the GATT ministerial meeting.

During his three-day stopover, he will be the guest of the Acting Governor, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, at Government House.

Sir Christopher will be accompanied by six members of the Commission. They will be met on arrival by the Acting Governor; the acting Consul General of Belgium, Mr. Denis Banneel; the Consul-General of Thailand, Mr. Thalerngchai Chartprasert; and the Director of Protocol, Brigadier R.G. Lewthwaite.

The delegation will join two other members of the Commission, Mr. Michel Lehembre and Mr. Benedict Meynell, who arrived here earlier in the week.

During their stay here, the group will hold discussions with the Acting Governor and senior government officials at Government House.

They will also meet Hong Kong representatives of EEC countries and lunch with Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils.

Before flying to Tokyo on Monday (September 10), Sir Christopher will hold a press conference in the airport V.I.P. room at 3.20 p.m.

You are invited to have the conference covered.

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MID AUTUMN FESTIVAL PARTY FOR ELDERLY

A party to celebrate the coming Mid-Autumn Festival will be held on Sunday (September 9) for some 60 elderly people living in the Wanchai district.

The party will be held at the premises of the Epworth Village Community Centre's Hing Wah Division in Chai Wan.

It will include performances of a stage play and songs, games and the presentation of gifts to the guests. The party is being organised by the Wanchai Youth Social Service Team and sponsored by the Wanchai District Community Office of the Social Welfare Department.

Mr. Ko Kai-man, District Community Officer (Wanchai), said this is the first service project organised by the Wanchai Youth Social Service Team following the end of their summer programmes.

"In addition to providing recreational activities for the elderly people to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, this function is also intended to give young people a chance to meet the elderly so that they may gain a better understanding of their way of life and help promote more services for them," he said.

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Release time: 6.30 p.m.