

Hong Kong Standard

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A question of pay

I WAS at first quite interested in the Government's advertisement on December 18 inviting application for stenographers. However, after I have consulted one of my friends who is working in the Government as "Shorthand/Audio Typist" (Stenographer), I have to think twice before I take up this post even if I were offered the post.

As there are other girls who are interested in the post and might have handed in their applications, I would like to give them a clear picture of the conditions of service of the existing "Stenographers".

According to my friend, the Government has restructured the Secretarial Class (including Personal Secretaries, Shorthand/Audio Typists and Typists) on the 1st

April 1976. I know that these proposals are not acceptable to the majority of the present Shorthand /Audio Typists. They feel a grievance at erosion of their conditions of service as a result of the "restructuring". They thought the matter was still under negotiations but your advertisement shows Government's intentions are otherwise.

In the new proposals, SATs are retitled "Stenographers". The following is a comparison between SAT and Stenographer as to qualifications, salary etc:-

Qualifications	SAT passed 5 subjects in the Hongkong Certificate of Education	Stenographer passed 3 subjects in the Hongkong Certificate of
Qualification	SAT passed 5 subjects in the Hongkong Certificate of Education Examination Shorthand speed: 70 wpm Typing speed: 40 wpm	Stenographer passed 3 subjects in the Hongkong Certificate of Education Examination (English Chinese Language and Mathematics) Shorthand speed: 80 wpm. Typing speed: 50 wpm
Salary	\$920 - \$1,515	\$855 - \$1,735
Promotion Prospects	nil	nil
Incremental Credit	additional increments will be granted when passed shorthand or typing speeds in excess of 10 words over 70/40 wpm respectively	an additional increment will only be granted to a shorthand speed of 110 wpm and typing speed of 70 wpm

From the above, you can see that the proposed restructuring is overall, disadvantageous to the SAT grade. The entry qualification is lowered from five subjects to three subjects but the entry salary point is lowered by one salary point too. Besides, previously an intelligent SAT could reach the maximum point of \$1,515 within 2 years, obtaining extra increments when passing shorthand and typing speed tests. After the implementation of the restructuring of the Secretarial Class one can hardly reach the maximum point in seven years. Though I must point out that serving SATs can still enjoy the benefit of obtaining increments for each 10 words passed in shorthand and typing speed tests.

As to promotion prospects, it is nil both to SATs and Stenographers. However, there are advancements for SATs to Personal Secretary (whose new salary scale is \$1,850 - \$2,720), provided that they pass an in-service examination. Unfortunately, after the restructuring of the Secretarial Class, it is found that there are 100 odd redundant Personal Secretary posts in the Government, which indicates that there can be no Personal Secretary vacancies in the Government in the next few years.

In the new proposal, the Government has created a new post of Supervisor of Typing Services (salary scale: \$1,965 - \$3,150). This post is open to all Personal Secretaries, Shorthand/Audio Typists and Senior Typists who have 3 years' government service, shorthand and typing speeds of 90 and 50 wpm respectively. The Government claims that there are 70 vacancies in all. However, we must note that it is unlikely that the Government can form 70 pools (consisting of SATs and Typists) in one or two years' time. Thus, for the time being, 70 is only a figure for the paper whilst the reality is nearer half that. Furthermore, it would be obvious for the Government to prefer PSs (especially from the 100 odd redundant posts) to transfer to this new post. So, from the SATs' point of view, there is no direct promotion prospects nor advancement!!

If a girl reaches her maximum point of \$1,515 (\$1,735 soon) in her early twenties, she is most likely to get this same pay on the day she retires.

GRUMBLED