

// PERKS MUST BE SECOND TO GOVT'S

A GOVERNMENT order that provident fund contributions to their employees by subvented social welfare agencies should not exceed those paid for comparable government posts has run into strong opposition from the agencies.

This was disclosed in a special memorandum prepared by director of the Hongkong Council of Social Services Y.F. Hui, to its member agencies.

The memorandum was referring to the comments of the Director of Social Welfare on the draft of the new application forms for 1976/77 social welfare subvention.

The government's order also states that staff must not be employed by agencies on more advantageous conditions than those offered to government officers with comparable responsibilities.

"The council found this stipulation entirely unacceptable. The opinion was that the provident fund contribution should never be considered as part of the salary, because it is the only fringe benefit available to staff of some of the voluntary agencies," the memorandum said.

It was pointed out that staff members of those agencies which make a contribution towards a provident fund may not get any or the full amount of the employer's contribution if a staff member concerned leaves the organisation before serving a certain period of time.

"Ever with this provident fund, it is only one of the few and rare fringe benefits offered to employees of voluntary agencies and could never be compared with the extensive fringe benefits enjoyed by their

Agencies fight govt order on staff benefits

counterparts in the civil service," it said.

It is estimated that government fringe benefits such as housing and educational allowances, pension, and paid home passage have in some cases amounted to about 30 to 40 per cent of the salaries given to government staff.

The provident fund contribution given by agencies for their staff only amounts to about five per cent of their salary.

Out of the 80 member agencies of the Hongkong Council of Social Service, around 20 to 30 agencies have a provident fund

scheme of one kind or another for their staff.

It was learnt that all the member agencies have given their full support to the council in its negotiation with the Government on this issue and that the council director, has already submitted a lengthy report to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee detailing all their objections on the matter.

The advisory committee with the Director of Social Welfare, Thomas Lee, as chairman, is expected to make a decision concerning the contributions later this month.