

# Bigger grants: Students' request under study

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**A** MEMORANDUM from Malaysian scholarship holders in Britain for increases in their grants is being considered by the Malaysian Government.

This was disclosed today by Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, who is here to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive committee on the Isle of Man from Monday to June 1.

Dr. Mahathir could not say immediately when a reply would be made because the grants, both the Federal

From NAJIB ABDUL RAHMAN: London, Friday

and State, would have to be discussed by the Federal and State governments.

In its memorandum, the Malaysian Students Council, whose members include about 2,000 scholarship holders, said the grants given in July 1973 should be reviewed, as the cost of living had risen by more than 25 per cent.

An undergraduate living in the London-Cambridge areas receives £75 (\$405) and a post graduate, £85 (\$459). Those living outside the

city receive £70 (\$378) and £80 (\$432) respectively.

As a first step in investigating costs to scholars living in London and the provinces, the Malaysian Students Department here has sent questionnaires to about 400 of them.

The intention said MSD Director Baharin Husain, was to find out how much a student needs to live quite comfortably.

It is asking for specific costs of a wide range of expenses from accommodation, food, transport, clothing, toiletries (how

much is spent on toothpaste or a bottle of hair cream?), stationery, entertainment and miscellaneous items.

But because they are considered as luxury items, the questionnaires ask nothing about the cost of hiring a TV set or TV licence fee, visits to pubs, phonograms records, electronic equipment and musical instruments.

On the other hand, private scholars claimed that the problem of "insufficient allowances has been inflated." A student said he could give comfortably from the £60 (\$324) he gets from home monthly. "It's just a matter of deciding how you want to live,"

ne said.

## Tightened belts

But from inquiries made, an undergraduate living in the London-Oxford and Cambridge areas needs to spend £40 (\$216) monthly for bed and breakfast, £30 (\$162) for lunch and dinner, at least £9 (\$48) for transport and £5 (\$27) each for entertainment, clothing and stationery.

A marketing student said: "We have tightened our belts as best as we were able to in the past two years, but there are indications that the cost of living will increase still further and we have to ask the Government for help."

**FOOTNOTE:** In Britain, the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced in the House of Commons on Tuesday that student grants in the country will be increased by 22 per cent from September.