Foster children get more pocket money

FOSTER children have been given a 30.25% increase in their pocket money in the Budget. The new rates range from 45c a week for those under five years of age, to $2.90 for those 14 or older.

The Minister of Social Welfare, Mr Gair, said other new rates are: 5-8 years, $1.05; 9-11 years, $1.45; 12-13 years, $1.95.

The weekly incidentals allowance paid to foster parents has been increased by 30.8%, giving new rates of $1.35 for a child under 10 and $2.70 for one over 10.

The travelling allowances paid to family home foster parents were increased by 34.3% to $270 a year for motor vehicles and $400 a year for travelling.

Mr Gair said the Government was reviewing all aspects of family home operations, including the assistance available to family home foster parents.

The Department of Social Welfare is also convening a working party to look at the board rates and allowances paid to private foster parents.

JOB FOR AMATEUR: An amateur diver will search for the fishing vessel Ruptured Duck, which lies on the seabed somewhere off Banks Peninsula, after sinking, uninsured, in February 1979. The official assignee, Mr I. A. Hansen, said yesterday the terms of the salvage rights, which had been successfully tendered for by an amateur diver, were confidential.

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NURSING PLANS: The Government has approved the formation of a nursing manpower planning committee, the Minister of Health, Mr Gair, said yesterday. Nine working parties will outline the role of the nurse in the major clinical areas — psychiatric nursing, critical care, long-term care, medical nursing, surgical nursing, child health, community health, psychopadic nursing, and midwifery.

LINK DISCOUNTED: Scientists at the Wairakei geothermal power station said earthquakes and the amount of carbon dioxide coming out of the bores were definitely not connected. The station's geothermal co-ordinator, DSIR scientist Mr Tony Mahon, said he checked 13 years of steam and seismograph records and found that gas levels have been remarkably constant, contrary to a report in an Electricity Division newsletter.

CHILD SAFETY: A new standard for child-restraining devices used in motor vehicles is expected to approved by the Standards Assoc shortly. The association prod draft for comment earlier but has been watching clo ments of a simil

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Childhood cancer clues

LONDON, Monday. — A British research group has found important clues about the cause of childhood cancer — the most common causes of death in children apart from accidents.

The team's research shows that mothers of children who suffer from childhood cancer are more likely to have taken drugs during pregnancy.

About 1250 children aged up to 15 develop cancer every year. About half of these suffer from leukaemia.

Others have brain tumours or cancer of the kidney or adrenal gland. Some have other, rarer, cancers.

About 250 of the cancers may be caused by mothers taking drugs in pregnancy.

The research group based in Birmingham, has laboriously collected information on every child who died of cancer in England, Scotland and Wales since the early 1950s.

The data for 1972-77 show that mothers of the periods 2707 child cancer fatalities were more likely to have used sleeping tablets, tranquilizer of antibiotic drugs during their pregnancies than mothers of healthy children.

It seems likely that certain sedative drugs may play a direct role in causing the cancers, which sometimes show up soon after birth and sometimes not for years. — NZPA—AAP.