

CHAPTER 7

OTHER ISSUES

Further Review of Civil Service Consultative Machinery

7.1 It has been submitted to us that the civil service consultative machinery should be reviewed regularly for improvement in the light of changing circumstances. This essentially accords with our view in Report No. 4. As a standing commission, we are committed to conducting regular reviews on matters within our Terms of Reference. We believe that any consultative machinery must necessarily evolve with the changing circumstances of Hong Kong and the changing needs of the civil service. We shall therefore be making further recommendations on this subject from time to time.

Collective Bargaining to Replace Consultation

7.2 A small number of respondents have proposed that the present consultative process should be replaced by some form of collective bargaining between the Government and civil servants. This is a radical change to a system which has been working very well as evidenced by the overall harmonious relationship between the Government and civil servants. Whether such a change is conducive to maintaining this relationship, to the stability of the civil service, and to the benefit of Hong Kong, bearing in mind the political climate in the lead-up to 1997, is very much doubted.

7.3 We are conscious of the fact that the unionization rate of civil servants, and indeed of employees in Hong Kong is very low when compared with countries where collective bargaining is in practice. A system working well in other countries is not necessarily applicable to Hong Kong, which has its unique social and economic environment. In the light of these considerations, we do not support the proposal.