

Appendix E

3 October 1991

His Excellency Sir David Wilson, G.C.M.G.,  
Governor of Hong Kong.

Your Excellency,

Proposed New Grade of Launch Master

We have been invited by the Administration to advise, under Clause I(b) of our Terms of Reference, on the proposed structure and pay scales of the new grade of Launch Master.

Background

2. During the 1989 Salary Structure Review, the Director of Marine submitted a proposal to restructure the two existing grades of Sailor and Launch Mechanic into a new grade of Launch Master. The justifications for the proposal were that as the government launches were being modernised, there was a reducing need to maintain two separate grades. Also the merger would provide flexibility in the deployment of the launch crew. As more time would be required to work out the structure of the new grade and to train up the staff, the Director of Marine proposed, as a first step, to merge the Oiler and Sailor ranks into a new rank of Launch Assistant.

3. We supported the merger of the two grades in principle (paragraph 8.22 of Report No. 26). We also endorsed the creation of a new rank of Launch Assistant to be paid on new MPS 4-6 in recognition of its wider scope of responsibilities.

4. Although our recommendations in Report No. 26 have been accepted by the Government, the new Launch Assistant rank has not yet been created. Instead, the Administration has been considering the ranking and salary structure of the proposed new grade of Launch Master as a whole and has developed the proposals set out in the paragraphs below.

The Administration's Proposals

5. The Administration proposes the following structure and pay scales for the new Launch Master grade :-

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<u>Proposed New Launch Master Grade</u>		<u>Existing Sailor/Launch Mechanic Grades</u>	
<u>Proposed Rank</u>	<u>Proposed Pay Scale</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Pay Scale</u>
Launch Assistant	MPS 4 - 7	Sailor Oiler	MPS 3 - 5 MPS 3 - 5
Launch Master	MPS 8 - 13	Coxswain Launch Mechanic	MPS 6 - 10 MPS 6 - 9
Senior Launch Master	MPS 13 - 16	Sr. Coxswain Sr. Launch Mechanic	MPS 11 - 14 MPS 10 - 13
Launch Crew Supervisor	MPS 17 - 20	Boatswain Supervisor (Engine Crews)	MPS 15 - 18 MPS 15 - 18

These proposals have regard to :-

- (a) the enhanced duties and responsibilities shouldered by members of the new grade;
- (b) the need to meet certification requirements in two disciplines, namely navigation and engineering, for advancement through the ranks; and
- (c) the envisaged increase in productivity and consequential savings.

As to the proposed pay scales for the first two ranks, the additional justifications are set out below.

Launch Assistant

6. Apart from the enhanced duties and responsibilities to perform both engine room and deck duties, the Administration proposes that the Launch Assistants should also take over some technical duties currently performed by Launch Mechanics, thus further reducing staff requirement at the Launch Master level. As this factor was not taken into account when the pay scale of new MPS 4 - 6 was proposed in the 1989 Salary Structure Review, the Administration proposes extending the maximum from MPS 6 to MPS 7.

Launch Master

7. The proposal for a pay scale of MPS 8-13 for the Launch Master rank takes account of :

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- (a) the responsibilities of the Launch Master rank closely resemble those of its senior rank in that both the Launch Master and the Senior Launch Master are the "master" of a vessel; the only difference being the size of the vessel. As the "master" of a vessel, both are personally accountable for the safety of the vessel and its crew and passengers;
- (b) the drastic reduction in the number of promotion posts at this level; and
- (c) the necessity to provide an incentive for staff to obtain dual qualifications early in order for the restructuring exercise to be implemented.

The Commission's Observations

8. We note that the present proposal of merging two grades into one which will require the staff to meet the certification requirements and perform the duties of two disciplines is a unique one.

9. We also note that upon full implementation of the restructuring proposal, there will be a reduction of 108 posts, amounting to savings in the order of \$5.3m per annum in staff costs. However, the problem of redundancy will not arise as natural wastage and increasing demand for launch services will absorb surplus staff arising from the restructuring.

10. We have been given to understand that serving officers in the existing grades will be provided with suitable training to meet the certification requirements in the two disciplines of navigation and engineering. Furthermore, we have been assured by the Administration that the certification requirements are adequate and in line with statutory requirements.

11. We have observed that there will be a deterioration of promotion prospects for the first and second tiers of the new grade. Although it is not normal practice to take into account promotion prospects in determining pay levels, deterioration of promotion prospects due to restructuring should be given special consideration.

12. As for the Launch Assistant rank, we note that apart from absorbing the duties of the other discipline at the same level, the staff will be required to perform some of the technical duties currently undertaken by Launch Mechanics.

13. We also note that in the case of the Launch Master rank, apart from absorbing the duties and responsibilities of two current grades, members of the new rank will have to operate without the assistance of a counterpart at the same level. Apart from an increase in the scope of responsibility, members of this rank also assume the role of the "master" of a vessel.

The Commission's Recommendations

14. Having regard to the uniqueness of the restructuring proposal, the job weight and the scope of duties and responsibilities for each rank in the new grade, the deterioration of promotion prospects in some ranks, and the savings that can be achieved in the restructuring exercise, we support the Administration's proposal for the creation of a new grade of Launch Master in Group I of the Technician, Supervisory and Related Grades. The structure and pay scales for the new grade should be as follows :

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Proposed Pay Scale (MPS)</u>
Launch Assistant	4 - 7
Launch Master	8 - 13
Senior Launch Master	13 - 16
Launch Crew Supervisor	17 - 20

15. If our recommendations are accepted, we propose that they should be implemented from a current date.

We have the honour to be  
Your Excellency's obedient servants,

(Sidney Gordon)  
Chairman  
For and on behalf of  
Members of the Standing Commission