

21 June 1994

The Right Honourable Christopher Patten  
Governor of Hong Kong  
Government House  
Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

**Proposed Creation of New Rank of  
Assistant Cartographer in Cartographer Grade**

We have been invited by the Administration to advise, under clause 1(b) of our Terms of Reference, on the proposal to create a new rank of Assistant Cartographer in the Cartographer grade.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Cartographer grade in the Lands Department is a relatively small grade comprising seven posts of Cartographer (MPS 27 - 44) and two posts of Senior Cartographer (MPS 45 - 49). There is no "Assistant" rank for the grade. Cartographers are mainly responsible for providing policy input to, and technical advice on, the production of maps, plans and related illustrations.

3. The Cartographer grade is classified under Professional and Related Grades Group II. The "Assistant" rank in this qualification group serves as a training rank for fresh graduates to acquire the necessary qualifications and/or experience for advancement to the basic rank in the respective grades within the group. Since no degree course on cartography or related subjects was offered in any of our local education institutions until recently, the Cartographer grade does not as yet have an assistant rank.

4. Recruitment to the grade has all along been made at the Cartographer rank through in-service appointment of Principal Technical Officers (Cartographic) (MPS 30 - 37) who possess the relevant experience plus academic qualifications obtained overseas. Cartography is a very specialised profession and the limited supply of qualified candidates in the market has hampered direct recruitment to the Cartographer rank.

Appendix F (Cont'd)

**THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSALS**

5. A new degree course in Cartography and Land Surveying was introduced by the Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1991, whereupon the Government ceased sending serving Principal Technical Officers (Cartographic) to acquire the necessary qualification overseas. As the first batch of local graduates will come on stream this summer, the Administration proposes to create a new rank of Assistant Cartographer in the Cartographer grade with a pay scale of MPS 16 - 21 and an entry qualification of a degree in a cartographic subject, to provide an opportunity, not readily available in the private sector, for fresh graduates to acquire the three years' post-qualification experience necessary for their eventual appointment to the Cartographer rank. The Administration is of the view that through this arrangement, more adequate supply of qualified candidates will be secured to meet the future demand of the grade. The new Assistant Cartographer rank will form a combined establishment with the basic Cartographer rank, similar to the arrangement for other professional grades in the same group.

6. Upon the creation of the Assistant Cartographer rank, recruitment to the grade will normally be made at this level. Serving Principal Technical Officers in the Cartographic discipline who have acquired the necessary academic qualification before the creation of the new rank will, however, continue to be considered for appointment to the Cartographer rank on an exceptional basis. According to the Administration, the Principal Technical Officers in the Cartographic discipline expressed no unfavourable comment on the proposed arrangement, when consulted.

**COMMISSION'S VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. The Cartographer grade is a very small grade comprising at present two Senior Cartographers and seven Cartographers. As a general rule, we are not in favour of proliferation of ranks within small grades. In the case of the Cartographer grade, this is all the more so since we have been informed by the Administration that the combined establishment of the Cartographer and Assistant Cartographer ranks, when created, will have broadly the same number of posts currently available in the Cartographer rank. This has given rise to our earlier concern that the quality of the cartographic service may be lowered when Assistant Cartographers are recruited to fill the vacancies created by Cartographers leaving the service later in the year. We have, however, been assured by the Administration that the proposed combined establishment will not result in any diluting of the quality of the grade, it being the Director of Lands' intention to fill no more than 30% of the posts in the combined establishment by Assistant Cartographers at any point in time, so as to maintain the operational efficiency of the cartographic service.

Appendix F (Cont'd)

8. In addition, we note that with the coming on stream of local graduates in Cartography and Land Surveying this summer, there is a need to provide the necessary post-qualification training for them. Without this training, they cannot be appointed to the Cartographer rank. We also note that since opportunities for post-qualification training for these graduates are not readily available in the private sector, there is a need for such training to be provided by the Government; and the only way to do this is through the creation of a training rank of Assistant Cartographer.

9. In the light of the foregoing, we support, with one Member dissenting, the Administration's proposal to create a new training rank of Assistant Cartographer in the Cartographer grade. We consider the proposed entry qualification, ie, a degree in the relevant subject and the proposed pay scale of MPS 16-21 appropriate for the new rank.

**CONCLUSION**

10. In conclusion, we support the Administration's proposal to create a new rank of Assistant Cartographer with a pay scale of MPS 16 - 21 in the Cartographer grade.

Yours faithfully,

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