

regarding sick leave in the civil service, i.e. that sick leave not exceeding two working days could be taken without producing a medical certificate should also be applied to the FSD where such certificates are required for shorter periods.

Morale

8.88 We did not receive many explicit statements on morale as such. However, it was made clear in all the submissions which we received that the problem of recruitment was of great concern, particularly in view of the present under-establishment of the department and its increasing workload and responsibilities, and that this situation could be improved through an increase in pay that recognised the increased complexity and volume of FSD's work since the situation was last reviewed in 1979.

8.89 Finally, we would like to emphasise that none of the submissions suggested that any stream in FSD would not fulfil its responsibilities to save lives and protect property. All submissions reflect a pride in the ability and the efficiency of the department and staff in coping with developments over the past decade and their capacity to provide a wide diversity of emergency services to Hong Kong.

III. Correctional Services Department (CSD)

Pay

8.90 We received a substantial number of submissions representing that pay levels were too low but, other than to suggest that pay levels should equal those of the police, none that made any specific proposal for change, on the basis, we were told, that most CSD staff would expect to be treated no better or worse than the other disciplined services. However, in addition to the view that the pay levels set in 1979 had not adequately recognised the special factors that affect the work and lives of correctional services staff, we were made very much aware of a general concern that the present remuneration did not adequately compensate staff for the increased workload since 1978-79. This was attributable in part to successive influxes of Vietnamese refugees and also to the very great development of industrial training, educational and rehabilitation programmes and aftercare services. Other factors stressed in a number of submissions were the dangers, pressures and discomfort which staff have to face in the execution of their duties; and the disruption caused by work requirements to social and family life. (These three aspects are dealt with separately in following sections.)

8.91 Almost all submissions we received that touched on pay matters focussed largely on the disparities which exist among the disciplined services and expressed dissatisfaction with the present differentials. The submissions which took a broader view of pay disparity argued that either the differentials should either be removed or at the very least,

narrowed if staff are not to be demoralised. Part of the reasoning behind this argument is that "no single department within Government should claim importance over others as each would have its own unique qualities and functions to play"; individual views tended to refer principally to disparity in pay with the police.

8.92 We have no wish to detail here all the various references which submissions made to the police. However, the following points were put to us forcefully in a number of submissions and cannot be excluded from this account. First, it was felt that if police pay was to be substantially increased because of increased responsibilities as a result of taking over Army duties, then a similar case could be made for CSD staff who have had to manage additional numbers of illegal immigrants and Vietnamese refugees without increased pay. Second, there was concern that a separate pay scale for the police would lead to increased pay, widen the already allegedly unfair differential, and lead to demoralisation of CSD staff. Third, it was argued that CSD is, like the police, an essential part of the criminal justice system and that while each service may have its own unique features, each has a responsibility and an indispensable role in the maintenance of the system.

8.93 We were made aware of staff disappointment at the pay awards made to CSD staff by the Standing Commission in 1979. One submission pointed out that Superintendents and Chief Officers in CSD were on higher scale points than the equivalent police ranks (Superintendent and Chief Inspector) before the Standing Commission's 1979 review, but that the review had placed them on the same scale points. We were told that the present entry salary point for the Correctional Services Officer rank was the third highest on the Disciplined Services Pay Scale, after the police and fire services, even though the same educational qualifications were required. Moreover, the maximum salary point of the rank is five DPS(0) points lower than counterpart ranks in the police and fire services.

8.94 We were told that the disparity in pay made it difficult to attract recruits of the standard required and there was a general feeling that suitable applicants' first choices would be the police because of higher pay. It was also put to us that the difference in pay was affecting staff retention: statistics for the Officer rank showed a trend of increasing wastage together with a growing number of transfers to the police, from nine in 1985 to 18 in the first four months of 1988. We were also told that the stresses and frustrations of the working environment, coupled with the disparity of pay with counterparts in the other disciplined services, led some staff to apply for transfer to less stressful jobs in other Government departments.

8.95 We also received a submission which analysed the work and responsibilities of a Senior Superintendent of Correctional Services (DPS(0) 34-37 equivalent to MPS 48-51). CSD's large custodial institutions are commanded by Senior Superintendents, and we were given a detailed picture of the responsibilities and the complexity of the job. The post-holder is, to begin with, the manager of around 400-500 staff, the great majority in the disciplined service, with a proportion of civilians. He is also responsible for the security, welfare and safe custody of some 1,000 prisoners and all their attendant problems. Some examples of his work are to handle prisoners' complaints; to adjudicate on disciplinary reports on staff and prisoners, making sure that Prison Rules have not been contravened; maintain close monitoring of procedures and operations to prevent corruption possibilities; and ensure the safety of staff and prisoners. The submission compared the duties and responsibilities of a Senior Superintendent to that of a school Principal I (remunerated at the MPS equivalent) who has about 1,000 pupils under his charge, and suggested that the pressures on a Senior Superintendent looking after 1,000 law-breakers and recidivists exceeded those of a Principal I.

8.96 The submission concluded that a Senior Superintendent's salary scale was not commensurate with the complexity and degree of responsibility entrusted to him, and the present salary was not attractive to ambitious staff. It was argued that the maximum point of the scale should be revised upward to a mid-point between D1 and DPS(0) point 37.

8.97 The view was put to us that while the pay trend/level survey approach had merit insofar as posts are comparable between the public and private sectors (e.g. some general and professional grades were thought to be comparable in job nature, functions and grade structures with some private sector jobs), and there were no comparable posts in the private sector comparable to posts in correctional services. Accordingly, it was argued that the pay trend/level survey approach did not provide a reliable basis for the Government to determine realistic adjustments to pay scales for the disciplined services. The submission concluded that because the services provided by the disciplined services were unique, their pay and conditions of service should be dealt with in a similarly unique way by separate machinery. The submission proposed a separate, continuing commission to review the pay and conditions of service of the disciplined services on a regular and realistic basis. It also proposed that the commission should be assisted by a consultative body comprising management and staff representatives. Another submission proposed the setting up of a Disciplined Services Consultative Council (DSCC) which would treat all disciplined services as one entity. It was put to us that the police had their own voice in the civil service consultative machinery through the Police Force Council while the other services did not have such a direct channel of opinion: we were told that for this reason staff from the other disciplined services had been working on a proposal for a DSCC since early 1986. We were also given the

view that apart from the need for a DSCC, the present machinery of the Standing Commission should be retained and was a satisfactory arrangement.

8.98 Our attention was also drawn to the limited promotion prospects in the department for staff at Officer rank. It was suggested that since the penal population has remained steady the number of higher posts was unlikely to increase. Moreover, we were told that more senior members of the Officer rank tended to do work that was comparable to that of the next higher rank, the Principal Officer. It was argued therefore, that a through salary scale, similar to that for police inspectors and their fire services counterparts, should be introduced. We understood that this request was first raised in 1979 with the Standing Commission and more recently with the Secretary for the Civil Service but without success.

Remote station working

8.99 The majority of submissions mentioned, in a variety of ways but all with marked concern, the problems associated with remote station working. This is a matter that requires close examination, and we shall set out the facts and arguments here as carefully as we can. 10 of the CSD's institutions are classified as remote stations (i.e. institutions on Lantau and Hei Ling Chau and at Cape Collinson). In all, 1,695 CSD staff (26% of the total number of staff) work in these remote stations and most are required to live near the institutions. In addition four or five more institutions, not officially classified as remote, require a lot of time to reach from the urban areas by infrequent public transport. Virtually every experienced CSD officer has had more than one posting to a remote station, and the submissions show how disruptive these postings usually are to social and family life, not only from the effect of moving from an urban location to the relative isolation of an outlying island, but also in transfers between remote institutions.

8.100 The greatest concern was expressed about the disruption that was caused to families by postings to remote stations. We were told that a survey showed that the time which an officer spent with his family dropped from an average of 35 hours to 15 hours a week after he was posted to a remote station. The same survey also showed that of the officers posted to remote stations, 73.4% experienced an emotional distance from their families; 45% had marital problems; and 55.6% had experienced difficulties in relating to and bringing up their children.

8.101 We were given a number of unconnected, personal examples that bore out, sometimes in stark terms, if not the statistical accuracy of the survey, then the validity of the problems it sought to examine. We were told of the very

serious disruption to spouses' lives as a result of remote station postings. In view of the travelling time involved from home to work, a number of spouses had to give up their jobs with a resulting drop in family income. Many working wives with young children had to give up their jobs in order to have time to take their children from a remote station to and from the school in which they were established in Hong Kong Island. Previously they might have been able to combine such responsibilities with their normal working routines or to draw upon assistance from family or friends. Complex and very time-consuming journeys were required by bus and ferry. We were told that some spouses continued working, renting accommodation (once again incurring financial loss) in the urban area and visiting their husbands at weekends. Numerous submissions told us that those spouses who moved and maintained their jobs suffered from strain. A typical submission told us of a wife who had to leave for work in the morning but could not return until 8 pm, exhausted by the travelling. This wife's disgruntlement at the situation caused by her husband's posting was having a damaging effect on their relationship.

8.102 The alternative of continuing for family reasons to live in the urban areas or the New Territories was chosen by some officers, but this meant that they had to spend a considerable amount of time and energy in travelling to work. For example, we were told that an officer working on an afternoon shift would have to leave home at around 8 or 9 am to catch the 10:30 am ferry (depending on where he lived). As he was required to be available on stand-by at the institution overnight even after he is off shift (this point is detailed below) and then (on normal shift rotation) to work the morning shift he would not leave Lantau until 2:45 pm the next day arriving home at around 6 pm. Something like four hours travelling time one way may not be typical but from the various submissions we received, we do not believe it to be exceptional either.

8.103 Many of the submissions told us of the travelling difficulties faced by officers' wives and children either in getting to school, work or for shopping and the strains involved. But services were poor and ferries infrequent and the volume of visitors on Sundays and public holidays made travelling even more difficult. Prisons are deliberately sited in isolated locations and we were told of a number of examples where wives had to take bus journeys of up to half an hour and then face another 15-20 minutes walk home in the dark.

8.104 Practically all submissions complained that schooling for officers' children in the outlying areas was inadequate. Uninterrupted schooling for children was difficult because of periodic staff transfers between institutions. This constant change affected the children's education and many had lost the opportunity to attend better schools. Children attending school in the urban area were accompanied by wives of staff who waited for them and usually returned home in the evening tired

with household chores still to do. Some officers with small children had rented accommodation in town for their wives and children because of travelling difficulties and the lack of good schools. One officer told us that he was able to see his wife and children only once every two weeks because he was on-call on alternate weekends at his remote station post.

8.105 Many submissions also mentioned that officers felt cut off from friends and social life in general. In the survey referred to above, 78.5% of the officers studied reported a change in their social lives. Many felt isolated and out of touch with the outside world, alienated from the normal community, and deprived of normal recreation and entertainment facilities.

Conditions of service

8.106 Many of the representations we received on conditions of service items such as quarters and education were raised in the context of remote station working. However, some general issues on housing were raised with us that we should describe.

8.107 A number of submissions explained that for operational reasons, staff are provided with quarters next to the institutions. While we received little comment on the standards of quarters as such, we were told that such close proximity has two effects on families. First, the families are at some risk, particularly if there is an escape or a fire; and families are also disturbed by the noise of the institutions' activities such as alarm bells and drills. Second, being brought up so close to a prison environment cannot be particularly good for children. A number of officers expressed concern that because of the close proximity, some children would imitate the prisoners or be affected by an awareness of them and their activities. We were told that some chose not to live permanently in quarters but had to live there regularly when doing second shift duty which required overnight duty.

8.108 One further problem was indicated to us. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules No. Part 1 50(3) stipulates that the head of an institution should live next to it. As a result, all heads of institutions are provided with an operational quarter for their residence. Heads of institutions in CSD are either Senior Superintendents or Superintendents. As a result of this requirement, unlike their colleagues in the rest of the civil service at equivalent rank they are entitled to but are debarred from the housing entitlement of Non-Departmental Quarters (NDQ) or Private Tenancy Allowance (PTA). Moreover, operational quarters for Senior Superintendents are of CD grade which is at the lower end of such officers' actual entitlements.

Development of the department's work

8.109 Many of the submissions took pains to explain the development of the CSD's work over the past decade and its essential role as a component in Hong Kong's criminal justice system. Statistics show that the prison population has remained steady at around 8,500 despite the general increase in the local population, and it was said this was partly the result of the efficient operation of CSD which helps to act as a deterrent to crime. One submission stressed that an efficient and highly disciplined correctional service was necessary to keep criminals in fear of the law and prevent them from having the run of the prisons. A number of submissions described how reforms since the serious prison riots at Stanley in 1973 have contributed to the achievement and maintenance of this objective.

8.110 A number of submissions detailed how the CSD has evolved from an essentially custodial prisons department to a correctional service which not only contains prisoners in a safe and humane manner and manages prisons in the established, conventional sense, but also provides a wide variety of counselling, treatment and rehabilitation programmes that were expanded or introduced since the late 1970s, including drug addiction, behavioural adjustment, vocational training, suicide prevention, and reintegration. Particular emphasis were put on specialist psychological services; prison industries (whose annual output has grown in value from \$15.7 million in 1977 to \$160.8 million in 1987); and aftercare services to young offenders. We have been informed of the balance that has to be skilfully maintained between custodial discipline and the officer/inmate relationships that help in the rehabilitation of prisoners, and the continuous efforts required of the department and its staff to sustain these apparently conflicting roles. We were told that the change of title from "Prisons Department" to the present name in 1982 was made to emphasise the change in approach and the expanded services provided by the department, and that the department believed the message had been successfully put over.

8.111 We were made aware of the CSD's heavy and continuing involvement in the work required to cope with the various influxes of Vietnamese refugees since 1978 and illegal immigrants (including ex-China Vietnamese illegal immigrants), and the steps which CSD has had to take to implement major Government policy decisions on Vietnamese refugees.

Work problems faced by staff

8.112 A number of submissions repeated the observation made by the Standing Commission in 1979 that the duties of the then Prisons Department were "tedious, depressing and disruptive to normal family life" and also added that danger and stress (covered below) were also important factors in the nature of CSD work.