

CHAPTER 4 : INCREMENTAL JUMPS AND LONG SERVICE INCREMENTS

4.1 This chapter gives an account of proposals submitted to us concerning incremental jumps and long service increments for the disciplined services.

4.2 Although something similar had existed in the past, incremental jumps for the disciplined services were introduced in 1988 as a result of the Rennie Committee recommendations -

- (a) to help overcome recruitment and early wastage problems in the basic recruitment ranks in the Police Force, Correctional Services (main stream), Customs and Excise, Fire Services and Immigration Departments, an incremental jump is granted to all officers in the basic recruitment ranks who have completed their first year of service; and
- (b) to help overcome retention problems and retain experienced officers who have qualified for promotion, a second incremental jump is granted to Police Constables, Firemen, Ambulancemen and Assistant Officers II who have completed five years' service or more and have successfully passed their respective qualifying examination for promotion.

4.3 Long service increments were first introduced in 1959 for the lowest ranks in the disciplined services to recognise the fact that a proportion of these officers would be unlikely to be able to rise to a higher rank. The increments are granted as a form of reward to long-serving, capable and loyal officers who remain at the first level of the rank and file in the Police Force and the Correctional Services, Customs and Excise, Fire Services and Immigration Departments; one increment is awarded to officers who complete 18 years of service and a second increment after their 25th year of service.

Incremental Jumps for Senior Firemen (Control)

4.4 In May, 1989, the Director of Fire Services submitted a proposal to us seeking an incremental jump for Senior Firemen (Control) after they have completed their first year of service and a second incremental jump after they have passed the qualifying examination for promotion and completed five years' service or more. In support of his proposal, the Director pointed out that Senior Fireman (Control) is the recruitment rank for the Control stream in the Fire Services Department and there were serious retention problems and a high wastage rate in this stream.

4.5 We noted that the Rennie Committee recommendation to grant incremental jumps to the rank and file applied only to entry ranks and, in the case of the Fire Services Department, applied specifically to Firemen and Ambulancemen. The Rennie Committee did not propose incremental jumps for the Control stream because its entry rank is one rank higher than for the other entry streams in the Department. We were satisfied that this was appropriate.

4.6 We were also informed that despite a slightly higher wastage rate, the Department has, in fact, never experienced recruitment problems in the Control stream and has been able to fill nearly all its vacancies from in-service appointments.

4.7 We advised the Governor in September, 1989 that the Director's proposal should not be supported. The Director of Fire Services was informed of our advice to the Governor later the same month.

**Incremental Jump for
Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit)**

4.8 In June, 1989, the Commissioner of Correctional Services submitted a proposal to us to introduce an incremental jump for Assistant Officers II in the Refugee Unit who have completed five years' service. In support of his proposal, the Commissioner pointed out that -

- (a) his request was in line with the spirit of the Rennie Committee recommendations concerning incremental jumps;
- (b) there is no functional difference in the duties and responsibilities of Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) and Assistant Officers II (Correctional Services) working in Vietnamese Boat People (VBP) centres;
- (c) the wastage rate of Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) was high; and
- (d) the lack of promotion opportunities together with reduced fringe benefits when compared with the Assistant Officers II (Correctional Services) had greatly eroded the morale of Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) and granting a second incremental jump after five years' service would help improve the morale of the staff concerned.

4.9 The criterion set down by the Rennie Committee for the granting of a second incremental jump to officers in basic recruitment ranks is the passing of a qualifying

examination and completion of at least five years' service. We were satisfied that Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) were ineligible for a second incremental jump since they are not required to pass any qualifying examination for promotion.

4.10 We noted that Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) are recruited specifically to work in VBP centres and that they carry out only one of the types of duties undertaken by Assistant Officers II (Correctional Services). Although both streams of staff perform essentially the same duties when working in VBP centres, the responsibilities of Assistant Officers II (Correctional Services) are more demanding; this is reflected by both the type and length of training they receive. We were satisfied, therefore, that there is a functional difference in the duties and responsibilities of these two streams of staff.

4.11 We examined the information provided by the Commissioner concerning the wastage rate of Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) between 1 April, 1985 and 31 December, 1989. Of those staff who had transferred to other grades in the civil service, over 62% entered ranks with lower starting and maximum salaries. This suggested that the staff concerned left their jobs for reasons other than salary. Increasing pay by granting a second incremental jump would not, therefore, help solve the staff wastage problem. We considered that, since these officers are appointed on temporary terms in the first place, it is reasonable to assume that they do not look on their appointment in the Department as a long-term career. We concluded, therefore, that granting a second incremental jump after the fifth year would not have any significant effect on staff retention.



Briefing by the Commissioner of Correctional Services and his staff during a visit to the Whitehead Vietnamese Boat People Detention Centre in February, 1990.

4.12 We advised the Governor in April, 1990 that the Commissioner's proposal should not be supported. However, we were sympathetic to his problem of retaining Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) and considered that the long-term solution lay in absorbing them into the main stream. We advised the Governor that the Administration should explore with the Commissioner whether -

- (a) Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) who have completed two years of satisfactory service and who have been selected on the basis of their good performance, should be given the option to transfer to the main stream, subject to the satisfactory completion of the usual recruitment formalities;
- (b) those who opt to remain as Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) should stay in the Refugee Unit and continue to be ineligible for the five-year incremental jump and promotion;
- (c) for those who opt to transfer to the main stream, arrangements should be made for them to attend the six-month basic training, preferably within a prescribed period or in accordance with a phased programme; and
- (d) Assistant Officers II (Refugee Unit) who have accepted transfer to the main stream and have been trained should be eligible for the five-year incremental jump and promotion in the normal manner, subject to having successfully completed the promotion examination.

4.13 The Commissioner of Correctional Services was informed of our advice to the Governor in May, 1990.

Incremental Jumps and Long Service Increments for Instructors (Correctional Services)

4.14 In August, 1989, the Commissioner of Correctional Services submitted a request to us to grant Instructors (Correctional Services) incremental jumps after they have completed one and five years' of service and long service increments after 18 and 25 years' service. In support of his request, the Commissioner emphasised the recruitment and retention difficulties, lack of promotion prospects, the morale problems within his Department and parity with other entry ranks in the rest of the disciplined services.

4.15 From statistics provided by the Commissioner, we noted that as at 1 March, 1990, the number of vacancies (excluding leave reserve posts) in the rank concerned was five, which was less than four percent of the approved

establishment of 143. On the whole, we considered that the staffing situation in the Instructor (Correctional Services) grade could not be regarded as unsatisfactory and the request for granting incremental jumps on grounds of recruitment and wastage could not be justified.

4.16 We noted that most of the serving officers had less than ten years' service, and none had served in the grade for more than 16 years. We also noted that Instructors (Correctional Services) are aware at the time of their appointment that their grade is a one-rank grade and, therefore, concluded that the complaint about promotion prospects could not be substantiated. In any event, we considered it inappropriate to grant incremental jumps to resolve morale problems.

4.17 Since incremental jumps and long service increments are awarded for specific reasons and are not generally available to all recruitment ranks in the disciplined services, they cannot be claimed as a matter of right. We were, therefore, satisfied that the Instructors (Correctional Services) were not being treated unfairly.

4.18 We advised the Governor in May, 1990 that the Commissioner's request should not be supported. The Commissioner was informed of our advice to the Governor in June, 1990.

**Incremental Jump for
Assistant Commission Against Corruption Officers and
Commission Against Corruption Investigators**

4.19 In September, 1990, the Commissioner, ICAC, submitted a proposal to us to introduce an incremental jump for Assistant Commission Against Corruption Officers (ACACOs) and Commission Against Corruption Investigators (CACIs) on completion of their first year of service.

4.20 In support of his proposal, the Commissioner referred to the close relationship between Police pay and ICAC pay. He pointed out that because of the job requirements of the ICAC grades, only mature, better educated candidates with good proficiency in English and previous working experience are considered suitable for appointment. He said that a candidate with the same qualifications who joined the ICAC as an ACACO or CACI would enter at a lower salary than if he/she joined the Police Force as a Police Constable. The Commissioner also referred to the retention and wastage problems and considered that an incentive, in the form of an incremental jump after the first year of service, would enhance the attractiveness of these two grades, ease the problems of retention and wastage and, because the value of the Post Allowance had been eroded since it was established in 1974, would also compensate new recruits for the segregation they

experience in their social life.

4.21 From statistics provided by the ICAC, we noted that the ICAC had been able to be more selective and could recruit candidates with more than the minimum qualifications. We concluded that the existing pay scales do not appear to present any difficulty for the ICAC to attract candidates with suitable academic qualifications for what are essentially rank and file posts.

4.22 We compared the pay scales of the ACACO and CACI ranks with those for Police Constable and Sergeant ranks. Taking into account the length of the pay scales and the size of the increments, we concluded that the pay scales of the ACACO and CACI ranks do not compare unfavourably with those for Police Constable and Sergeant ranks.

4.23 We also noted that the ICAC Post Allowance was introduced in 1974 to encourage recruitment and retention, when the ICAC was an isolated, new and controversial organisation. The situation has changed since then; the general public now look upon anti-corruption with more understanding and the ICAC is well-established and no longer an isolated organisation. In addition, the ICAC pay scale already incorporates an element to reflect social segregation and it would be inconsistent to attempt to bolster the Post Allowance by introducing an incremental jump in the pay scale.

4.24 We considered that a higher than average turnover in the ICAC is not unexpected due to its practice of employing staff on agreement terms. We noted that about one third of those leaving the ICAC did so on completion of their agreement. Despite this level of wastage, we noted that the ICAC did not have any difficulty in attracting suitable replacements.

4.25 We advised the Governor in April, 1991 that the Commissioner's request should not be supported. The Commissioner was informed of our advice to the Governor in May, 1991.