

CHAPTER 3 : REVIEW OF PAY SCALES

3.1. This chapter gives an account of proposals submitted to us concerning pay scales of grades in the disciplined services. During the period under report, we have considered and given our advice on submissions concerning the appointment requirements and starting pay of Air Crewmen, the transfer of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade into a disciplined service grade and the revision of Junior Police Officers' pay scales. We have also advised on a proposal to revise the starting pay of Station Officers in the Fire Services Department.

3.2. As mentioned in our First Report (paragraph 3.52), following the separate pay structure review for the disciplined services carried out by the Rennie Committee in 1988, our considerations of, and advice on, the aftermath of the Rennie Committee recommendations in 1989 and 1990, our advice to the Governor on pay for the directorate officers in the disciplined services in February 1990; for the rank and file in September 1990; and for the Officer cadre in December 1990, we advised the Governor in December 1990 that there should be no more pay reviews for the disciplined services and that the cycle which began with the Rennie Committee should be brought to a close. We have followed this principle during the period covered by this report. Having said this, it does not mean that the pay for the disciplined services is frozen. The annual pay adjustment will continue to provide salary improvements to the civil service including the disciplined services. In addition, in situations where particular grades or groups of staff are affected by new circumstances to an extent that give rise to particular problems, we are prepared to conduct individual reviews as and when necessary.

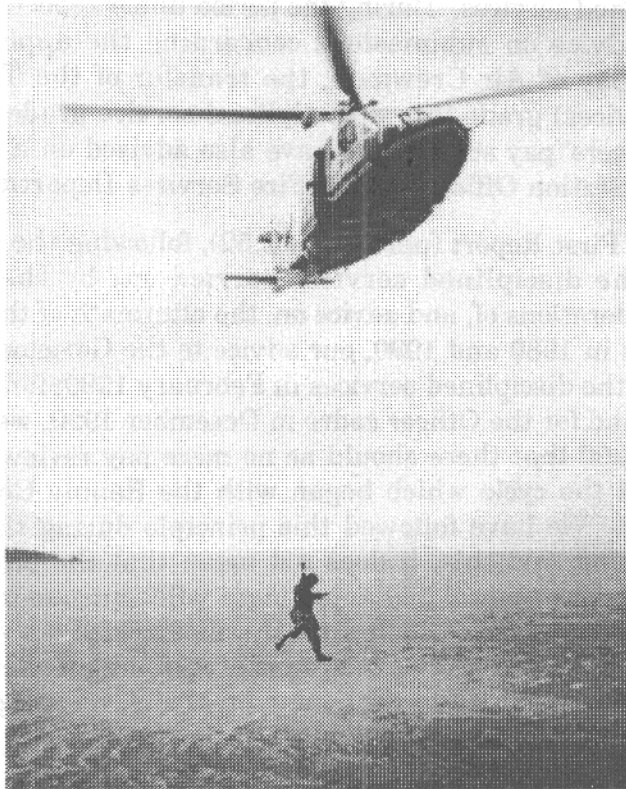
Appointment Requirements and Starting Pay of Air Crewmen in the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force

3.3. In May 1991, the Administration sought our advice on the proposals to remove the need for experience in operating aircraft or associated equipment from the appointment requirements of Air Crewmen in the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force (RHKAAF)* and to introduce an additional entry point at GDS(O)1 for Air Crewman recruits with a matriculation qualification.

3.4. We noted that Air Crewmen act as aircrew during emergency evacuation operations and passenger and cargo ferrying. They also act as sensor operators on internal security operations and search and surveillance missions operating communication and search and rescue equipment. They give instructions and information to helicopter pilots during take-off, landing and whilst engaged in rescue and load-carrying missions. During rescue missions, the more experienced crewman either operates the winch used for lifting survivors into the aircraft, or is lowered

* The RHKAAF was reorganised to become the Government Flying Service on 1 April 1993.

by other crewmen to pick up survivors or injured persons. On the ground, crewmen man the Operations Room, which is in constant radio contact with all airborne aircraft and maintain close liaison with government departments and military organisations for the arrangement of flying tasks and emergency operations.



*Government Flying Service
Air Crewmen carrying out
winching practice.*

3.5. The Air Crewman grade comprises two ranks with the pay scale of GDS(O)17-25 for the Senior Air Crewman rank; and that of GDS(R)9, 11 and GDS(O)1-16 for the Air Crewman rank. The entry requirements for the basic rank of Air Crewman are -

- (a) aged between 22 and 35 years;
- (b) five subjects, including English Language (Syllabus B), at Grade E or above in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education;
- (c) three years' experience in operating aircraft or associated equipment - although recruits without the three years' requisite experience are offered appointment at GDS(R)3;
- (d) good physique and good eye-sight;
- (e) knowledge of First Aid; and
- (f) fluent spoken English and Cantonese.

3.6. We were informed that Air Crewmen are required to pass a series of qualifying examinations (Categories B, C and D) in line with Royal Air Force standards and that they are awarded a two-increment jump on confirmation after passing the Category C examination and another two-increment jump after attainment of Category B rating.

3.7. We understood that the RHKAAF* had experienced recruitment problems with the rank of Air Crewman and, as a result, the Administration had carried out a review of the existing entry requirements with a view to resolving the problems.

3.8. The Administration's review revealed that, although basically there has been no change in the nature of work, the job content of Air Crewmen has become more complex as a result of the acquisition of new aircraft and equipment. Air Crewmen are now given more intensive and much wider training than their predecessors. Because of the more complex and demanding nature of their work, crewman recruits, in addition to an aptitude for the job, are required to have a better knowledge of science and mathematics, together with a high standard of English. Their training is conducted in English, and air communication is carried out in English, which is the international aviation language. They should have good physique and eye-sight and the ability to appraise a situation, respond and make quick sound decisions.

3.9. Having regard to the complexity and demanding nature of the work, the responsibility of Air Crewmen, the RHKAAF's* recruitment problem and the findings of the Administration's review, we were satisfied that the Administration's proposals to revise the appointment requirements and to introduce an additional entry pay point at GDS(O)1 for matriculant recruits were justified because -

- (a) matriculants are better equipped than School Certificate holders to take up the job and have greater potential for development. The normal academic requirement for the job should, therefore, be raised to matriculation. However, the existing starting pay was insufficient to attract matriculants to join the grade, or to retain them;
- (b) the entry point for Air Crewmen should be GDS(O)1, the same as that for Cadet Pilots, who have similar appointment requirements. This is considered equitable and would maintain pay relativities within the Force;
- (c) whilst the normal academic qualification for Air Crewmen should now be matriculation, the Force should be allowed to recruit from suitable School Certificate holders to supplement the pool of matriculants. An entry point for School Certificate holders at GDS(R)9 should be retained; and
- (d) the requirement for three years' working experience in operating aircraft was imposed at a time when the intention was to recruit experienced volunteer crewmen as permanent staff. It serves no useful purpose to continue such a requirement since there are no candidates with such relevant experience in the private sector.

3.10. We also supported the Administration's suggestions that the existing arrangement for awarding additional increments for passing the Crewman's qualifying examinations at Category C and B levels should be retained, that the normal civil service conversion rules should apply to serving Air Crewmen and that the new arrangements should take effect from a current date.

3.11. We advised the Governor in June 1991 that we supported the Administration's proposals. The Chief Staff Officer, RHKAAF* was informed of our advice to the Governor in July 1991.

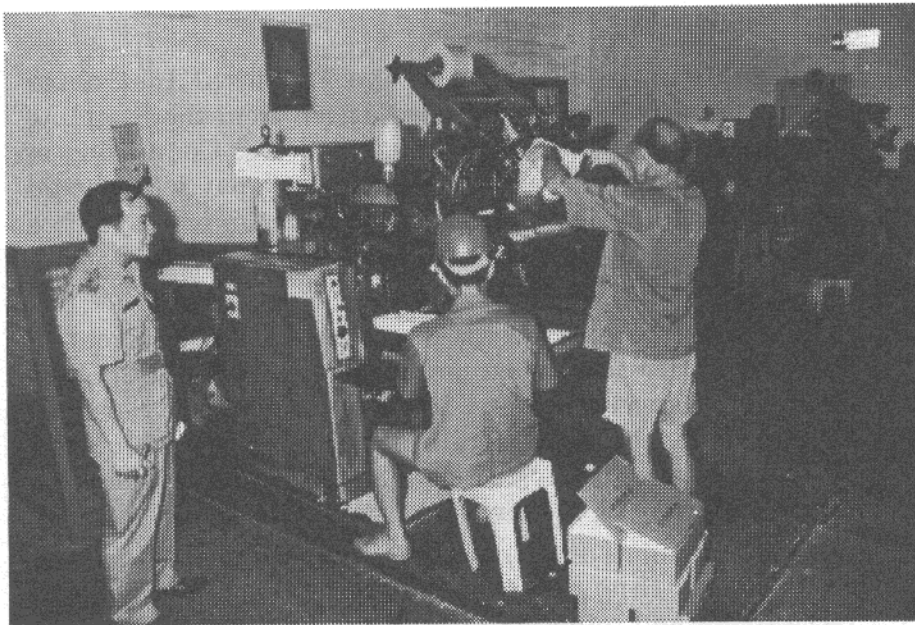
Transfer of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) Grade into a Disciplined Service Grade

3.12. In February 1991, the Commissioner of Correctional Services submitted a proposal to us to transfer the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade from a grade remunerated on the Master Pay Scale to a disciplined service grade remunerated on points 7-15 of the General Disciplined Services (Officer) Pay Scale.

3.13. In support of his proposal, the Commissioner stated that the duties and responsibilities of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade have changed progressively in line with the growth of the Correctional Services industries, and that as Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) are responsible for supervising industrial production in Correctional Services workshops, it is more than a teaching grade. He was also of the opinion that the responsibilities of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade bear some resemblance to those of the Industrial Officer (Correctional Services) grade. The Commissioner also pointed out that the pay level of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade was close to that of the Industrial Officer (Correctional Services) grade before the Rennie Review, and on this basis he considered that the previous relativity should be restored.

3.14. We carefully considered the Commissioner's arguments, the representations made by the Technical Instructors Branch (Correctional Services) of the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, and the Administration's views. We examined the duties and responsibilities of Correctional Services staff working in the Correctional Services workshops and noted that Industrial Officers (Correctional Services) are responsible for the overall management of a manufacturing unit, while Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) and Instructors (Correctional Services) are mainly involved in supervising the production process, maintaining productivity and quality, teaching vocational skills to inmates and supervising their work. The duties and responsibilities of these staff, therefore, differ significantly from those of the mainstream Correctional Services staff who are mainly responsible for the discipline, cleanliness and security of inmates.

3.15. We noted also that the nature of the work performed by the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) and Instructor (Correctional Services) grades is very similar, differing only in the magnitude and the level of responsibility. Instructors (Correctional Services) supervise smaller workshops engaged in routine



A Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) overseeing the operation of a printing workshop

production work requiring less complex equipment and tools, while Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) supervise larger workshops engaged in more difficult production work requiring more sophisticated machinery and equipment. Furthermore, in workshops where there are two or more instructing staff, the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) assumes the role of the officer-in-charge and supervises Instructors (Correctional Services); both grades are themselves supervised by Industrial Officers (Correctional Services). Job comparisons between the Industrial Officer (Correctional Services), the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services), and the Instructor (Correctional Services) grades also showed that, whilst there are differences in job complexity and level of responsibility, the nature of work, duties and responsibilities of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade are more akin to those of the Instructor (Correctional Services) grade. We, therefore, concluded that for the purpose of determining the new pay scale for the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade, it would be more appropriate to refer to the pay scale for the Instructor (Correctional Services) grade than to that for the Industrial Officer (Correctional Services) grade.

3.16. We noted that there is a supervisor-supervisee relationship between Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) and Instructors (Correctional Services), and that the starting point of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) pay scale was higher than the maximum of that for Instructors (Correctional Services) prior to the Rennie Committee recommendations. We concluded that the minimum pay for the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade should be set at GDS(O)5, which is above the maximum pay for the Instructors. We also concluded that the number of increments which Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) then enjoyed on the Master Pay Scale should be maintained. The new pay scale for the grade should, therefore, be GDS(O)5-13, and is set out at *Appendix F*.

3.17. We also considered that -

- (a) since the change of status of the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade had arisen from the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service's 1989 overall salary review, the new pay scale should be backdated to 1 October, 1989, the common effective date for salary changes arising from the Standing Commission's 1989 overall salary review;
- (b) in line with the existing rules governing the payment of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance (DSOA) to other disciplined service grades in the Correctional Services Department, the minimum number of hours which the Technical Instructor (Correctional Services) grade must work before they are eligible for DSOA should be 49 per week;
- (c) incremental jumps and long service increments should not be extended to this grade because it does not have any recruitment and retention difficulties; and
- (d) since the prescribed retirement age for non-directorate disciplined services grades is 55 and there might be some Technical Instructors (Correctional Services) who, for personal reasons, might prefer to work up to the age of 60 (the normal retirement age for non-disciplined services grades) or who had already opted to do so under the New Pension scheme, all serving officers should be given an option to remain on the Master Pay Scale and to retain that salary on a personal basis.

3.18. We advised the Governor along these lines in June 1991. The Commissioner of Correctional Services was informed of our advice to the Governor in August 1991.

Revision of Junior Police Officers' Pay Scales

3.19. In March 1992, the Administration appointed an Inter-departmental Study Group, comprising representatives from the Civil Service Branch, the Finance Branch, the Security Branch and the Police Force management, to identify the causes of recruitment and retention difficulties among Junior Police Officers (JPOs) and to recommend solutions.

3.20. In April 1992, the Administration sought our advice on the following proposals which were based on a package of recommendations produced by the Study Group -

- (a) to improve the benefits for families of officers killed on duty;
- (b) to introduce two additional incremental jumps in the pay scale for Police Constables; and
- (c) to revise the pay scales of the three ranks of JPO.

3.21. We were informed that since the beginning of 1989, both the establishment and strength of Junior Police Officers (JPOs) had declined due to a combination of recruitment and retention difficulties. Despite the pay increase effective from October 1990, the intake was consistently below target and recruitment efforts were largely negated by the high wastage among JPOs. As a result, the overall strength of JPOs as at 1 April 1992 was 800 less than three years ago. Over the same period, the Police had taken on additional responsibilities (e.g. those relating to border patrol, Anti-Smuggling Task Force, Vietnamese camps, opening of new police stations in new towns) without additional staff. There was therefore a reduced police presence on the streets. We noted that the situation had created grave public concern at a time of increased violent crimes, in particular armed robberies and cases involving the use of firearms by criminals.

3.22. As part of the package to tackle the recruitment and retention problems of JPOs, the Administration proposed to improve the benefits for families of officers killed on duty. The Administration proposed that dependants of officers killed on duty should be given the option to stay on in departmental quarters; that their children in receipt of local and overseas education allowances should continue to receive such benefits until they reach the age of 19; and that an ex-ratia allowance should be paid to dependant parents subject to the same ceiling of Employees' Compensation. We supported these proposals which we considered would help boost staff morale. We also agreed that these provisions should also apply to other civil servants killed on duty.

3.23. In the light of the Study Group's findings that wastage in the Police Constable rank occurred mainly within the first four years of service, and particularly in the first two years, the Administration proposed that two incremental jumps should be introduced, in addition to the two then existing (one after the first year of service and another after the fifth year), so that a Police Constable recruit would be awarded two incremental jumps after his first year of service, another one after his second year and a further one after his fifth year. In other words, there would be altogether four incremental jumps in the Police Constables' pay scale.

3.24. The Study Group considered the entry pay of Police Constables attractive and did not propose any change as it noted that the entry pay had been cited by many applicants as one of the main reasons for joining the Police Force and that there was no shortage of applications. The Study Group concluded that raising the entry salary would not reduce wastage in the first year as it would be normal for school leavers to try out a few jobs before settling down.

3.25. The Study Group noted that Police Constables enjoyed a 13.4% pay lead at the minimum point over their counterparts in the other disciplined services, but this lead was not maintained throughout their scale, and it was reduced to 7.9% at the maximum. The Study Group considered that the pay scale for Police Constables should be extended by two points to take account of the additional incremental jumps and to maintain throughout the pay scale the same differential over the other disciplined services. In the light of the Study Group's findings, the Administration proposed to extend the Police Constables' pay scale by two points at the maximum.

3.26. The Study Group considered that, in order to maintain internal relativity, the minimum and maximum pay for Sergeants should be raised by two points, and that the minimum and maximum pay for Station Sergeants should be raised by one point. The Administration accordingly proposed to raise the pay scale for Sergeants by two points at both the minimum and the maximum and to raise the pay scale for Station Sergeants by one point at both the minimum and the maximum.

3.27. In the course of examining the pay proposals for the three ranks of Junior Police Officers, we studied in detail the submissions made by the Police Force management and heard representations from the Junior Police Officers' Association at a special session. We noted the strength of their views on the issue which had attracted considerable public interest. At a separate informal session with the Staff Side representatives of the Disciplined Services Consultative Council, we also heard their views in respect of the proposed pay improvements for the Police Force. The Staff Side of the Disciplined Services Consultative Council subsequently made their position known to the public in an open letter.

3.28. Given on the one hand that the Administration had made out a special case to improve pay for Junior Police Officers on recruitment and retention grounds and bearing in mind on the other hand the Standing Committee's responsibility over the salaries and conditions of service of the other disciplined services, we had to put in a great deal of time and careful thought to the proposals placed before us. Against the background of a continual decline in police strength and an increase in police responsibilities and violent crimes, and having regard to the importance of a strong and motivated Police Force in maintaining law and order in Hong Kong, we agreed that pay improvements should be given to Junior Police Officers in order to address the recruitment and retention problems urgently as well as the public concern about the law and order situation.



Junior Police Officers responding to a tense situation in the street.

3.29. We concluded that the Administration's proposals, which were based upon established principles within the Civil Service, were both practical and fair. We supported these proposals but felt that they should be improved in two aspects -

- (a) a Police Constable recruit should receive one increment on passing out from the Police Training School; he should receive one incremental jump after completion of 12 months service; after a further 12 months he should receive a second incremental jump; and after the fifth year and on passing a promotion examination, he should receive a third incremental jump; and
- (b) special conversion arrangements should be adopted for Sergeants so that all would receive two increments.

The new pay scales for Junior Police Officers are set out at *Appendix G*.

3.30. We noted that to tackle the recruitment and retention problems of JPOs, the Study Group also produced a package of non-pay related recommendations, which included improvements in the recruitment process so as to reduce the lead time for appointment; remedial training for marginal candidates; better accommodation in the Police Training School; better personal guidance to Police Constable recruits; civilianisation of certain jobs then undertaken by Police officers; a review of the ratio of promotion posts; and provision of additional departmental quarters for married officers so as to reduce the waiting time for quarters from the then seven to eight years to three to four years by 1994-95. We supported these recommendations, in particular the one on civilianisation, which we considered should be implemented urgently. We also advised that the Police Force management should be committed to the civilianisation plans.

3.31. We made it clear that the proposed pay improvements for Junior Police Officers were exceptional as they arose out of recruitment and retention problems facing the Police Force as exacerbated by the public concern over the law and order situation. We also advised that in the event that a special case with similarly strong justifications could be made in the future in relation to any of the other disciplined services, we would be prepared to give due consideration.

3.32. We advised the Governor along the above lines in May 1992. The disciplined services were informed of our advice to the Governor later the same month.

Starting Pay for Station Officers

3.33. In November 1992, the Director of Fire Services submitted to us a review report prepared by his department on the recruitment of Station Officers. The report outlines the administrative measures that his department had taken to improve the recruitment of Station Officers. It recommends that the recruitment problem should be resolved by pay improvement as in the case of the Junior Police Officers (JPOs). It also proposes that the starting pay of Station Officers should be raised from GDS(O) 6 to GDS(O) 8.

3.34. We had examined a similar proposal from the Director in January 1992, but we concluded at that time that the recruitment situation of the Station Officer grade did not justify a pay review, and that such a review was inconsistent with our advice (following the 1990 pay review for the Rank and File and Officer cadres of the disciplined services) that there should be no more pay reviews in the foreseeable future. On that occasion we suggested that the Director should, jointly with the Administration, look into the possibility of implementing a number of administrative measures to improve the recruitment of the grade. These measures included a reduction in the lead time for recruitment; further relaxation of the entry requirements; offering contract terms to attract recruits; and mounting more vigorous recruitment campaigns.

3.35. In May 1992, we agreed, in the course of our deliberation on the Administration's proposals to revise the pay scales for JPOs on grounds of recruitment and retention difficulties, that the recruitment difficulties of Station Officer should also be reviewed.

3.36. While examining the recommendations of the review report, we noted that the Administration had over the years introduced measures to improve the recruitment of Station Officers. These included awarding up to two increments to new recruits with relevant experience since 1981; re-appointing former Fire Officers since 1985 and, more recently, reducing the length of their probationary period from one year to six months to enable them to join/re-join the Home Purchase Scheme sooner; relaxing the chest measurement/tests in 1990/91; obtaining the Director of Health's advice that the eyesight standard could be lowered in 1993; and approving the recruitment of female Station Officers with effect from April 1993.

3.37. We also noted that the Administration was of the view that the administrative measures initiated by the department had not been introduced for a long enough time to judge their effectiveness and that more could be done with regard to the implementation of administrative measures. For example, the level of difficulty of questions set for the Extended Interview should be reviewed, the five years service requirement for serving rank and file for in-service appointment as Station Officers should be relaxed, recruitment efforts should be focused on secondary school leavers rather than graduates with tertiary education, and a new recruitment centre should be set up in the New Territories or on Hong Kong Island, etc.

3.38. Having examined the contents and proposals of the review report, the representations made by the Fire Services management and staff representatives, and all other relevant factors, we did not consider the Director's proposal to increase the starting pay for Station Officer to be justified and we made the following observations -

- (a) the vacancy level of Fire Officers has reduced. There were 20 vacancies in the Fire Officer (Operational) grade as at 1 May 1993 and 12 as at 1 June 1993 (i.e. 3.1% and 1.9% respectively of its permanent establishment), compared with 52 vacancies (8.1% of the permanent establishment) a year

ago. The estimated shortfall taking into account wastage and new posts was 42 in June 1993, as compared with 67 a year ago. Statistics showed that the Officer cadre of the other disciplined services also had, to a greater or lesser extent, the vacancy and wastage problems;

- (b) some of the administrative measures have been implemented only recently, e.g. shortening of the probationary period for former Fire Officers and recruitment of female Station Officers while some had not been implemented or had only been partially implemented, e.g. relaxing the service requirement for in-service appointment, the Administration's request to consider lowering the eyesight standard and reviewing the level of difficulty of the tests/exercises for the Extended Interview. It was inappropriate to carry out a pay review while various administrative measures remained to be fully tried out;
- (c) the recruitment process which took 14-16 weeks was considered too long. The Administration and the department should jointly look into the process with a view to further shortening it. If practicable, conditional appointments (pending the outcome of examination or various checks) should be considered;
- (d) Station Officer new recruits are eligible for up to two increments if they have relevant working experience. This is a recruitment enhancement factor which the department may wish to consider publicising on suitable occasions to attract more applicants;
- (e) the rank of Station Officer forms a combined establishment with Senior Station Officer, which is the next higher rank. Because of this, Station Officers draw from a through pay scale of GDS(O)6-25, which compares favourably with that of GDS(O) 6-20 for equivalent ranks in the Customs and Excise and Correctional Services Departments. Station Officers also enjoy better promotion prospects as the combined establishment means no shortage of posts for promotion to Senior Station Officer level and Station Officers can normally expect to be promoted to the rank of Senior Station Officer in five years' time; and
- (f) the circumstances which led to the JPO pay rise in May 1992 were different from those faced by the Fire Services Department. The JPO pay improvement was justified by a unique combination of factors, i.e. a continual decline in police strength as against an increase in police responsibilities and violent crimes. The recruitment problem alone, which in fact was reducing, could not therefore justify a pay review for Station Officers.

3.39. We concluded that the Director's proposal to raise the starting pay for Station Officers should not be supported and that the department should, jointly with the Administration, continue to more vigorously consider and pursue administrative measures to improve the recruitment of Station Officers.

3.40. We advised the Governor along the above lines in July 1993. The Director of Fire Services was informed of our advice to the Governor in September 1993.