

GENERAL

66. We have the following further comments to make.

Representations

67. We have been impressed by the number and extent of the representations which we have received which, including those on individual grade matters, total well over 700. Many of the representations show that very careful thought has been given to the issues involved and they have provided valuable information and suggestions. We believe we have identified and studied the salient points raised by everyone and if we do not mention specifically a number of the proposals made this does not mean that they have not been considered.

68. What is clear from our study of the representations, is that to resolve the problems of all civil servants to their satisfaction is impossible. A quotation from a report of the Commission on Top Salaries in the United Kingdom, seems relevant in this context : "We are more than ever inclined to feel that the more we explore the problem, the less obvious is the solution. The facts can point the way towards judgement, but they cannot do more".

69. Among the representations received a number referred to matters outside our terms of reference; for example requests for additional staff, for improved equipment, for the re-organisation of work, for improved working environment and so on. Civil servants making these representations are advised to refer such matters to their Head of Department.

Housing

70. Many of the representations which we have received are concerned with housing or housing allowance. We are aware, however, that this matter is under urgent review by Government and we have therefore deferred our consideration of this issue pending the outcome of the Government's review.

Retitling

71. Another issue which seems to be of concern to a large number of civil servants is the title of their post. In many cases it is simply that the existing title is regarded as unsuitable or as not adequately reflecting the duties of the post but in some cases the change of title sought appears to be a first step towards justifying a higher salary scale. We do not believe that the Commission should become involved in the detail of titles, for example whether a post should carry the term "assistant" or "aide". This is a matter best

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left to Departments concerned in consultation with the Civil Service Branch, always providing, of course, titles are not introduced which give the impression that civil servants have qualifications beyond those which they actually hold. We do believe however, that there are far too many titles and that a study should be undertaken to see to what extent their number can be reduced. Ideally, we should like to see the introduction of more general titles, as is the case with Administrative Officer, Executive Officer etc., to cover a range of posts requiring the same qualifications and the job content of which is broadly comparable.

Equal Rights

72. We were asked by the representatives of a number of female civil servants to recommend the extension of the present principle of equal pay for men and women to include fringe benefits. At present there are certain benefits granted to married men which are not available to married women. We sympathise with this request, but it raises a very important issue and we have not had time to assess fully the problem and the repercussions which could result from the acceptance of total equality in the grant of fringe benefits. We therefore propose to consider this major issue in detail when we review conditions of service.