

CHAPTER 4

COMMENTS ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR POSITION

4.1 The Consultants analysed data on private sector base salaries and total compensation in Chapter IV of their report by means of three charts which showed the Lower Quartile, Average and Upper Quartile positions.

4.2 Members of the Committee made the following comments :

4.2.1 Senior Civil Service Council

Individual evaluation results of all the jobs surveyed in both the civil service and private sector should be provided so that the Staff Side would be able to cross-check the validity of the results. Detailed breakdowns of the kinds and utilization of fringe benefits for each of the private companies in the survey should also be provided so as to enable a reasonable assessment to be made about the validity of the calculations. (These requests are set out in a letter dated 28 November 1986 to the Chairman, attached at ---- Annex G).

The Chairman confirmed that, in accordance with the agreed methodology and on the grounds of confidentiality, this information could not be provided. However, alternative details showing the dollar value of specific fringe benefits included in the remuneration packages of job holders who were subject to the survey in the private sector, would be made available to members (see paragraph 4.2.7 below).

4.2.2 Senior Non-Expatriate Officers Association

In response to the decision that information on job evaluation results could not be revealed, as indicated in paragraph 5.3.1(b) of the Standing Commission's Report No. 16, the Association expressed strong dissatisfaction. Without job evaluation results, it was natural for the Staff Side to remain sceptical of the entire process of job evaluation. Staff Side representatives might be able to point out obvious errors or to offer fresh ideas with such information.

4.2.3 Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association

The Association also requested the above information, vide their letter dated 1 December 1986 (at Annex H). It further suggested that this information should be released to members on a confidential basis so that members would not be allowed to disclose such information to the public under the Official Secrets Act. Since Staff Side representatives had not been satisfied with the survey sample of the civil service in the first place, it would be very difficult for them to verify the results of the survey if job evaluation results were further withheld. Such information should be provided in the form of the annual Fringe Benefit Survey Report compiled by the Pay Survey and Research Unit so that members could examine the Consultants' findings in greater detail. This proposal was supported by the Senior Non-Expatriate Officers Association and the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council.

The Chairman pointed out, in connection with the second sentence above, that many of the members of the Committee were not subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

Having clarified with the Commission Secretariat that no Pay Survey and Research Unit staff had been present at job interviews and evaluations for the private sector, the Association commented that it was even more sceptical about the private sector results.

4.2.4 Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

It was not a common practice to reveal job evaluation results.

4.2.5 Hong Kong Institute of Personnel Management

It was not a common practice to disclose job evaluation results in the private sector. Even if such results were disclosed, members would not be able to assimilate and interpret the information. Members should therefore have trust in the Consultants' findings.

4.2.6 Administration

The whole matter was a question of integrity on the part of the Consultants as to whether the evaluation of jobs had been carried out fairly.

#### 4.2.7 Consultants

Job evaluation results are different from the calculation of fringe benefits, in that job evaluation results are not meant to be changed on the basis of members' interpretations. The Consultants emphasized that all job interviews and evaluations had been carried out fairly and there was no question of the Consultants not having done their job properly. As regards the information on the provision of fringe benefits in the private sector, the Consultants agreed that limited information could be provided for members' perusal and a special session was arranged on 23 December 1986 for this purpose. Because of the confidential nature of this information, members would not be given a copy of the data and were requested to take notes. The Employers' Federation of Hong Kong considered that this arrangement was appropriate.

#### 4.2.8 Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council

The Council was of the view that information on job evaluation results in the civil service and fringe benefits in the private sector should not be withheld on grounds of confidentiality. The question of whether members would have the ability to assimilate or understand the information was irrelevant and this should not be taken as an excuse to deprive members of their rights or to exonerate them from their responsibilities. Since the Consultants would only provide limited information on fringe benefits in the private sector, the Council did not consider it helpful and had therefore decided not to attend another presentation. The Council considered that it would be more appropriate for the information to be provided in the form of the Fringe Benefit Survey Report produced by the Pay Survey and Research Unit.