

CHAPTER 2

PROCEDURE

2.1 We aimed to obtain a wide and representative cross-section of views from both management and staff, including major staff associations. To begin with, we issued a Consultative Document on Civil Service Consultative Machinery in January 1987 to all departments and requested that it be brought to the attention of all staff associations and individual staff. At a later stage, the Secretary for the Civil Service was also asked for the Administration's views on the subject as an employer. The Consultative Document (a copy of which is at Appendix III) provided information on the operation of the existing civil service consultative machinery and invited departmental management and staff to give their views on how the existing system could be further improved.

2.2 Addressees were originally invited to forward their comments to us by 30 April 1987. This deadline was, however, extended to 30 June 1987 at the request of some interested parties who felt that they needed more time to consider the content of the document.

2.3 A total of 107 written submissions were received by the Commission, including one each from the Staff Side of the Senior Civil Service Council, the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council and the Police Force Council, as well as 71 from other staff associations, 25 from departmental management, and 8 from individual officers. A list of staff associations/groups who have submitted written representations is at Appendix IV(A) and a separate list in respect of departmental management is at Appendix IV(B).

2.4 We first considered employing a consultant to advise on the matters raised in the responses. However, after long and careful deliberations, we concluded that the proposal to employ a consultant was not feasible as no outside independent body or person possessed an adequate depth of knowledge of the present system so as to be sufficiently competent to advise on how changes should be made. Also it is more than likely that any theoretical model devised by the consultant would be based on systems which, whilst suitable for other administrations, might not be appropriate to Hong Kong's own particular circumstances.

2.5 We therefore decided that the most appropriate means of reviewing this subject would be to form a committee under the Standing Commission to look into the matter in depth. The Committee on Civil Service Consultative Machinery, with its Terms of Reference and composition set out at Appendix II, was established in March 1988. The Committee tackled its task by first establishing a priority of issues and then considered each in turn according to their relative urgency. Its recommendations on each issue were then considered by the full Commission before we made our recommendations.

2.6 In the course of its deliberations, the Committee arranged to meet representatives of a number of major staff associations to enable the latter to explain more fully their views on the relevant subjects. A list of these associations is at Appendix V.

2.7 We have also taken account of the Administration's views as an employer in our review.