

Henry May Stankard 15/2/1979

6-10 p.c. pay offer produces more groans

CIVIL servants and members of the disciplined services have been given pay rises ranging from 6 to 10.5 per cent.

And the Government is proposing a scheme to provide housing for virtually all civil servants.

But the pay rise has not been well received by the three major civil servant associations and representatives said yesterday they will fire back another proposal to the Government.

Members of the disciplined services also said they were unhappy.

The pay increases announced yesterday ranged from 10.5 per cent for the lowest paid staff to about six per cent for officials in the directorate scale.

Disciplined forces such as police, firemen and prison staff will receive comparable increases.

The increases also apply to subvented organisations in line with arrangements for the past two years.

The award will be back-dated to April 1 and will be paid at the end of next month.

The housing proposal, which is not part of the pay rise package, was given to the three major staff associations about two weeks ago.

The announcement of the pay rise came soon after the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council gave the greenlight at a meeting held shortly after yesterday's Legco meeting.

The increases had been approved by the Executive Council on Tuesday.

The total cost of the increases is estimated to be about \$350 million for the current financial year, according to Acting Secretary for Civil Service, Selwyn Alleyne.

He said at a press conference the approval followed a detailed review of pay movements in the private sector for the year ending April, 1 1979, conducted by the Pay Investigation Unit and after discussions with the three major staff associations.

Mr Alleyne said that the revision was in accordance with the Government's policy of adjusting civil service salaries in line with the evidence of pay movements in the private sector.

DEPRECIATION

But it apparently did not satisfy leaders of the three staff associations who said later the pay proposals did not take into account of the depreciation of the Hongkong dollar in recent months.

The three staff associations - the Chinese Civil Servants' Association, the Senior Non-Expatriates Association and the Expatriate Officers Association - had jointly asked the Government during last week's meeting to consider an extra 10 per cent compensation for the dollar devaluation.

Mr Alleyne said yesterday that if the pay movements in the private sector had taken the dollar depreciation into account, the new scale offered civil servants would have included it.

Mr Alleyne said the Government was prepared to meet the associations again and would consider carefully any proposal made. He said a further pay adjustment "could happen."

But he ruled out any dialogue with the Civil Servants General Union which has threatened a go-slow from July 30.

He said the union had no legitimate status.

The union has so far failed to get any support from the three staff associations.