

(8 March 1990)

# \$2.5 m earmarked for hospital job

By IRIS LEE

A GENEROUS \$2.5 million pay package is being offered to the successful candidate who takes possession of the new Hospital Authority's top post, which includes an exceptional 15 per cent bonus when the 2½-year contract is finished.

The bonus, worth \$375,000 in cash, is seen as a bid to attract top-notch candidates for the newly-created position of chief development officer.

The successful candidate will form part of a three-man management team that will run the long-awaited Hospital Authority, which has been plagued by delays and red tape.

It is understood that one of the posts could go to retired civil servant and current secretary-general of the provisional Hospital Authority, Mr John Chambers, who has expressed an interest.

The possibility of Mr

Chambers getting one of the posts could send ripples of discontent through the medical and civil services, which may see it as an attempt to protect retired senior expatriates and anti-localisation.

The other two management posts come with equally attractive salary packages and would pay up to \$2 million for similar contracts, putting them on a par with only the most senior Government officials.

The Government has been criticised in the past for its apparent "jobs for the boys" policy, where retired civil servants have been given attractive posts in quasi-official bodies.

Mr Chambers retired from Government in 1988 and was appointed secretary-general of the provisional Hospital Authority, a post he holds today.

Mr Chambers hinted that he would apply for one of the posts and, if successful,

would almost certainly report to the authority's provisional chairman, Sir Sze-yuen Chung.

Sir Sze-yuen is expected to be asked to stay on as chairman when the authority is made a statutory body.

Last night, Mr Chambers declined to comment on the new posts.

"The private sector doesn't give out details of the salaries of its top people," he said.

The authority, which was supposed to be set up next month, has been delayed by complications over the terms under which doctors and nurses will be compensated for coming under its jurisdiction.

A package is set to go to the Executive Council for approval soon and will be tabled in the Legislative Council in early April.

The move comes as the Executive Council prepares to decide on the future status

of the 23,000 Government doctors and nurses.

The Hospital Authority will offer a pay and benefits package, which is intended to bridge the gap between Government medical staff and their poorer counterparts in the subvented sector.

Government staff will have the option to continue as civil servants or accept the authority's terms, but there is some controversy over the compensation they should receive for making the switch.

It is estimated the package could cost up to \$4 billion if it eliminated their posts under the Civil Service Branch, which will not be responsible for staff on Hospital Authority terms.

Delays in the Hospital Authority package are having a knock-on effect for Government-run Radio Television Hongkong (RTHK) which has had to withhold details of its own pay-out package for almost 800 staff members.

RTHK could be forced to pay up to \$96 million for new staff terms and conditions when it becomes independent later this year.

Director of broadcasting, Miss Cheung Man-ye, said the administration had been working hard to explain the deal with staff.

"We want the decision to be acceptable to both the Government and our staff, as we hope to settle the status of RTHK early and to make sure the ultimate objective to turn it into a public corporation will not be affected," said Miss Cheung.

RTHK will miss its April 1 deadline for having a new 10-member board of governors in place and may have to wait another year due to disagreements over the new terms.

Executive Councillor and vice-chancellor of Hongkong University, Dr Wang Gung-wu, yesterday was expected to become the first chairman of RTHK's board of governors.

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