

Memorandum for Cabinet by the Minister of Finance and Customs

Complaints have been rampant for quite some time over the delays in the award of pensions generally, but particularly in the case of temporary employees. In regard to the latter steps have already been taken to ensure that the processes leading to the final computation of a pension are hastened up. In fact a meeting chaired by the Minister of Finance was held with the Crown Advocate General and representatives of Establishments and of the Treasury, arising out of which it was decided that Departments were to be circularised (and in fact this has been done) to the effect that recommendations and service and leave record sheets of employees eligible for appointment to the Pensionable Establishment were to reach the Establishments Office at least three months before the retirement date of employees attaining the age limit. Departments were also enjoined to submit pension and gratuity papers to the Treasury concurrently with the papers forwarded to Establishments, and were asked to ensure above all that service record sheets of all temporary employees were to be prepared well in advance to ensure that such record sheets were fully available by the time the pension and gratuity papers had to be sent in.

The process leading to the final approval of a pension is somewhat lengthy. In the first stage it involves unavoidable movements between the Department concerned, the Treasury, Establishments, Audit and finally the Ministry of Finance. In the second stage, the Minister of Finance after signing the relative pension papers passes them on for the Prime Minister's signature for eventual transmission to the Governor General for approval. Even this second stage, for obvious reasons, takes up some time.

In terms of the general and overriding provision contained in section 86(1) of the Constitution, the Governor General performs his functions in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet. In order to obviate all recommendations for the grant of a pension to be passed through Cabinet prior to submission to the Governor General, the previous administration delegated the Minister responsible for finance

to deal with all pension awards. Although reference to Cabinet of such matters was, therefore, avoided, yet the process of routing pension matters to the Governor General through the Prime Minister still continued. If this routing could likewise be avoided, a saving in time would be gained.

Ministers, therefore, are asked to confirm their authorisation for the Minister responsible for finance to deal on their behalf with all pension awards as well as to authorise the said Minister to pass on the relative recommendations direct to the Governor General for approval.