

**FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT**

**OF THE**

**SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION**

**OF THE**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

February 12, 1999.

## FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION

### Review Of The Salary And Other Terms And Conditions Of Service Of The Office Of Secretary To Cabinet

The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago by letter dated July 14, 1998, conveyed his approval for a review of the salary and other terms and conditions of employment of the office of Secretary to Cabinet. By Legal Notice No.187 dated June 15, 1998, the office of Secretary to Cabinet was added to the Second Schedule of the Constitution (Prescribed Matters) Act, Chap. 1:02 and was thereby brought under the purview of the Salaries Review Commission.

2. In our deliberations on the appropriate remuneration package which should be attached to this office we examined the role this office plays within the context of the governance of Trinidad and Tobago. We also held discussions on this matter with the Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister (Cabinet) who has overall responsibility for administrative matters pertaining to Cabinet.

3. Trinidad and Tobago subscribes to the Cabinet system of government in which responsibility rests, subject to Parliament, on a Committee of Ministers as the final arbiter of all government policy. The Constitution provides at Section 75(i) for the establishment of a Cabinet for Trinidad and Tobago, comprising the Prime Minister and a number of Ministers, which has general direction and control of the Government and is collectively responsible to Parliament.

4. The Cabinet is serviced by the Cabinet Secretariat whose function is to ensure that the business of Cabinet is conducted in a timely and efficient manner and that proper collective consideration is facilitated. In this regard, the Secretariat is required to provide Cabinet and its Sub-Committees with all necessary documentation, to draw up the Agenda for their respective meetings and to compile and prepare decisions of Cabinet for communication to the relevant Ministries and Departments for necessary action.

#### The Role and Function of the Secretary to Cabinet

5. The Commission was informed that the Secretary to Cabinet is the most senior officer within the Secretariat and is expected to undertake the following duties and responsibilities: -

- (i) Preparing the Agenda for weekly Cabinet Meetings which involves the following:-
  - Reading all Notes for Cabinet to ensure that proposals are comprehensive, logically set out, consistent with government policy, in accordance with relevant statutes and, where applicable, implementable;
  - Liaising with Ministries/Departments in respect of their submissions where deficiencies are detected and providing guidance with respect to amendments;
  - Where necessary, directing that the comments of other Ministers whose portfolios may be affected, be sought;
- (ii) Compiling Notes in an appropriate order on the Agenda for the approval of the Prime Minister;
- (iii) Facilitating/servicing Cabinet Meetings;
- (iv) Vetting and signing of unconfirmed as well as confirmed Minutes for dispatching to Ministries and Departments;
- (v) Functioning as Secretary to the Parliamentary Questions Committee which requires:-
  - Ensuring that Ministries/Departments submit replies to the House of Representatives /Senate in a timely manner;
  - Attending meetings of the Committee;
- (vi) Implementing certain decisions of Cabinet such as the appointment of Committees and carrying out follow up work regarding the submission of Reports for the consideration of Cabinet and the issuance of Letters of Certification to international lending agencies;
- (vii) Managing the day to day operations of the Cabinet Secretariat and supervising staff of the Secretariat;

- (viii) Providing guidelines/advice to the Prime Minister, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and senior public officers on matters relating to the role of Cabinet as well as on certain areas of government policy and practice.
6. The Commission was advised that the Secretary to Cabinet also has certain obligations which are laid down in statutes. These statutes are: -

The Interpretations Act, Chap 3: 01; and

The Land Acquisition Act, Chap. 58: 01

Under the terms of the Interpretation Act where a function of the President is to be exercised in accordance with the advice of Cabinet, the Secretary to Cabinet is required to issue under his/her hand instruments which are under the Public Seal or the Seal of the President. The Land Acquisition Act also requires the Secretary to Cabinet to issue notices in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette of the President's intention to acquire lands and where necessary, to receive requests from interested parties that a proposed acquisition transaction be either completed or abandoned.

7. With regard to requisite knowledge and experience, we were advised that the office holder is required to have extensive knowledge of Cabinet and government procedures and policies as well as of relevant legislation. The minimum experience required for this office is eight years service in the Secretariat.

#### **Existing Terms and Conditions**

8. At present the Secretary to Cabinet is remunerated in salary range 61 in the Public Service Classification and Compensation Plans. The existing remuneration package is as follows: -

<u>Salary</u>	-	\$6,764 per month
<u>Cost of Living Allowance</u>	-	\$50 per month
<u>Transport Facilities</u>	-	(i) A maximum loan of \$75,000 currently at a rate of interest of 6% per annum repayable over a period of six (6) years to facilitate the purchase of either:-  (a) a locally assembled or imported motor vehicle with exemption from Motor Vehicle Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle

with an engine capacity of 1799cc and exemption from Value Added Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle costing \$75,000; or

- (b) a locally assembled vehicle using foreign parts or completely built-up foreign used vehicle with exemption to a maximum of \$7,196 from Special Registration Fee or Special Motor Vehicles Tax (whichever is applicable) and a maximum exemption of \$11,250 from Value Added Tax.
- (ii) A loan to cover the cost of Motor Vehicle Insurance premium.
- (iii) A maximum loan of \$10,000 at a rate of interest of 6% per annum to effect repairs to a motor vehicle.
- (iv) An Upkeep Allowance of \$750 per month.
- (v) A kilometric allowance at the rate of 72¢ per kilometre.

<u>Subsistence Allowance</u>	-	\$45 per day when travelling on official duty beyond a radius of 16 kilometres from official headquarters and \$51 when in Tobago.
<u>Vacation Leave</u>	-	1 – 10 years service – 28 working days per annum
	-	Over 10 years service – 35 working days per annum
<u>Pension/Gratuity</u>	-	Entitlement to pension benefits in accordance with the provisions of the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52.
<u>Other Benefits</u>	-	Eligible for Casual Leave, Sick Leave, Bereavement Leave and Maternity Leave/Paternity Leave, as appropriate, as now applicable in the Public Service.

## Recommendations

9. In formulating our recommendations we took into consideration the fact that the duties and responsibilities of this office are critical to the efficient conduct of the business of the State and demand a high level of sensitivity, accountability and accuracy on the part of the office holder. We looked also at the requirement that the office holder should have a working knowledge of government policies and procedures.

10. We recommend that the following remuneration package should be applicable to the office of Secretary to Cabinet:-

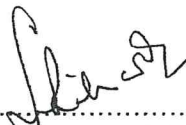
- Salary - \$8,900 per month.
- Transport Facilities - (i) A maximum loan of \$75,000 currently at a rate of interest of 6% per annum repayable over a period of six (6) years to facilitate the purchase of either:-
- (a) a locally assembled or imported motor vehicle with exemption from Motor Vehicle Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle with an engine capacity of 1799cc and exemption from Value Added Tax limited to the amount payable on a vehicle costing \$75,000; or
  - (b) a locally assembled vehicle using foreign parts or completely built-up foreign used vehicle with exemption to a maximum of \$7,196 from Special Registration Fee or Special Motor Vehicles Tax (whichever is applicable) and a maximum exemption of \$11,250 from Value Added Tax.
- (ii) A loan to cover the cost of Motor Vehicle Insurance premium.

- (iii) A maximum loan of \$10,000 at a rate of interest of 6% per annum to effect repairs to a motor vehicle.
  - (iv) A Commuted Travelling Allowance of \$900 per month.
- Subsistence Allowance - \$40 per day when travelling on official duty beyond a radius of 16 kilometres from official headquarters and when in Tobago, \$50 per day.
- Vacation Leave - 1 - 10 years service - 28 working days per annum  
Over 10 years service - 35 working days per annum
- Telephone - Telephone rental and other expenses related to official business to be met by the State.
- Medical Benefits - Entitlement without charge to pathological examination and physiological treatment and all incidental services at any hospital or other State institution or with approval, to be paid the cost of such treatment at any other institution in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Pension/Gratuity - Entitlement to pension benefits in accordance with the provisions of the Pensions Act, Chap. 23:52.

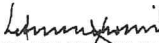
11. We also recommend that the effective date of implementation of the recommendations contained in this Report should be July 1, 1998.

12. Further, should there be acceptance of the recommendation contained in our Fifty-Second Report to the effect that the Top Managers in the Public Service grouping should be subdivided into Groups A, B and C, we recommend that the office of Secretary to Cabinet be placed in Group C. In that case, the revised salary would be such as results from the application of the percentage differential (i.e. 11%) between the salary recommended at paragraph 10 above and the existing salary of the office of Deputy Chief Personnel Officer. With respect to other terms and conditions, these should be similar to those applicable to the office of Secretary, Integrity Commission.

Dated this..... 12<sup>th</sup> .....day of February, 1999.



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Professor George M. Richards



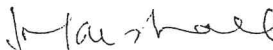
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Edward Collier



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Rowell Debysingh



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Keith Ortiz



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Joyce Marshall