

Press release

LCQ11: Acting arrangement of government drivers

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Following is a question by the Hon Albert Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, in the Legislative Council today (March 11):

Question:

Recently, there were media reports that the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs had allowed a Motor Driver, who had served him for a number of years but was not qualified for driving saloon cars for directors of bureaux, to act up in a Chauffeur post, which is at the next higher rank, so that the driver could continue to provide chauffeur service to him. The driver concerned receives an acting allowance of over \$1,000 per month and has acted up in that post for as long as seven consecutive years. Under the existing regulations, acting appointments lasting or expected to last for longer than six months should be approved by the appropriate authority for substantive appointment, and the need for making acting arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. In addition, the Government Chauffeurs Union indicated that it had lodged complaints against the acting appointment for a number of times, but the Government had not taken heed of them. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) during the period when the driver was acting up in the Chauffeur post, whether the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau had made any request in writing or orally to the government department concerned for allowing the driver to continue to work in the post concerned; if so, of the details;

(2) why the driver was allowed to act up for as long as seven years; how many reviews of the acting arrangement had been conducted by the authority for substantive appointment during the period; and of the decision made in each review; and

(3) whether it has assessed if allowing the driver to act up on a long-term basis has hindered the promotion of other qualified drivers; if it has conducted such an assessment, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The following is the reply to the three-part question:

(1) As the driver in question was conversant with the relevant operational requirements and had a good performance during the acting period, the then Constitutional Affairs Bureau/Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) has recommended him in writing to take up acting appointment in the Chauffeur post in the Bureau. Having taken into account the manpower situation of the Chauffeur grade, the operational need and the recommendation of the Bureau, Government Logistics Department (GLD) agreed to the acting arrangement.

(2) Under the prevailing requirement, there is no time limit for an acting appointment but the department concerned has to conduct regular reviews. As regards the acting appointment in question, a total of seven reviews were conducted. After each review, CMAB confirmed that the acting arrangement was necessary to meet operational need and recommended the said driver for continued acting as Chauffeur. Having considered the manpower situation of the Chauffeur grade, the operational need and the recommendation of the Bureau, GLD agreed to the acting arrangement.

(3) An acting appointment is a non-substantive appointment which will be arranged when there is an operational need to assign an officer to carry out the duties of a vacant post at a higher rank. As explained in (2) above, under the prevailing requirement, there is no time limit for an acting appointment but the department concerned has to conduct regular reviews. A total of seven reviews were conducted regarding the acting appointment in question. Furthermore, after confirming that there was a long-term operational need and that there would not be any surplus staff in the coming few years, GLD conducted two in-service recruitment exercises in 2005 and 2007 and invited Special Drivers and Motor Drivers in the civil service to apply for the post of Chauffeur so as to fill the vacancies substantively. A total of 25 serving Motor Drivers were selected in the two exercises and took up the posts of Chauffeur. As such, the opportunities for the Special Drivers and Motor Drivers to be appointed to fill the posts of Chauffeur have not been affected by the acting appointment in question.

Ends