

Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

General Council Report 1341

(Meeting/s of 25 November 1998, 21 December 1998)

(a) That the Allowance payable to Private Secretaries to Ministers, Ministers of State, the Ceann Comhairle, the Leas Ceann Comhairle, and the Chief Justice and equivalent positions be increased substantially.

(b) That the Allowance payable to Private Secretaries to Heads of Departments and equivalents be increased in line with the increase in the allowance mentioned in (a).

CIVIL SERVICE CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION SCHEME

GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT NO. 1341

(Meetings of 25 November 1998 and 21 December 1998)

Claim for an increase in the allowance paid to Private Secretaries to Ministers, Heads of Departments and others

1. A claim for a substantial increase in the allowance payable
 - (a) to Private Secretaries to Ministers, Ministers of State, the Ceann Comhairle, the Leas Ceann Comhairle, the Chief Justice and others and
 - (b) to Private Secretaries to Heads of Departments and others

was discussed at the meetings of the Council on 25 November and 21 December 1998. As agreed, there had also been direct discussions outside of Council.

2. The basis of the claim outlined by the Staff Side was that the extra time worked by Private Secretaries had increased significantly since the last fundamental review in 1978. This was supported by a survey of hours actually worked by the Private Secretaries. Communications had progressed so that Private Secretaries were now on call almost all the time; work abroad is nowadays more frequent and there is an increasing tendency for Private Secretaries to be required to accompany Ministers to functions. There can be difficulty taking leave and the constant media pressure on Ministers can lead to extra hours for their Private Secretaries. The general difficulties of the job, including its current on call nature, had changed. There was an increase in expenses not reimbursed, such as clothes and meals, and in the context of foreign travel there was a case for a full delegates allowance to be paid.
3. The Official Side pointed out that there had been change in the nature of most

jobs in the Civil Service over the last twenty years. Any qualitative improvement or additional responsibilities had, in general, been compensated by periodic pay revisions over the period. These revisions had, of course, applied to Private Secretaries. Staffing in Ministers' Offices, including the appointment of advisers and persons to deal with the media, had improved. Matters such as liability to work extra unsocial hours, an element of on call, limitations on when leave may be taken (although this applied in many other cases), some extra expense etc. had always been features of the position of Private Secretary for which a significant allowance was payable. This allowance had also been subject to revision over the years.

4. However, having regard generally to all the arguments put forward, particularly that in relation to extra hours, the Official Side said they were prepared to offer an increase in the allowance for Private Secretary to Ministers to £9,000 with effect from 1 July, 1998. The relationship between this allowance and that of Private Secretaries to Heads of Departments would be preserved. The benefit of this adjustment in the allowance would also accrue to officers already in receipt of the special addition to pay as a result of having been Private Secretaries in the past. The Staff Side said they were prepared to accept this offer.

5. At the meeting on 21 December, 1998 the Council agreed to recommend for acceptance the arrangement outlined in paragraph 4.

6. This report, which records agreement, was adopted on 21 December, 1998.

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