

Confidential to Steering Committee

Mr. L. B. Mullett.

members.

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To all Division Heads

Promotion to P.S.O.

I have received a letter from Sir William Penney as Chairman of Appointments Board A saying that the Board have been considering the problems of P.S.O. numbers which are likely to develop as the Authority's manpower requirements stabilise if the average age for P.S.O. promotions continues at its currently low level.

They have concluded that, if we are not later to be faced with a more radical change in the concept for promotions in the Scientific Officer Class, an attempt should be made from now on to achieve a greater spread in P.S.O. promotion ages. The average Authority promotion age for P.S.O.'s has been about 33. The lowest average in any Civil Service Department employing a sizeable number of scientific staff is 35 plus.

The particular need is for a wider spread in the ages of promotion of the unrealistically high proportion of S.S.O.'s who have been assessed as having Alpha minus quality and promoted at or near the minimum age set for officers who really justify this marking.

... I attach a copy of a statement of guidance which Board A have sent to Panel I. I am also having copies sent to the members of the Personnel Sub-Committee of the Division Heads' Committee and to the members of our Promotion Committee I.

May I rely on you to ensure that the proposals for promotion which you send forward will reflect the Board's guidance and to enable us to avoid presenting candidates who will from now on have little hope of being promoted immediately.

F. A. Vick

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5th December, 1961.

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FOR THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF PANEL I MEMBERS

NOTE BY CHAIRMAN OF APPOINTMENTS BOARD 'A'

PROMOTIONS TO P.S.O.

1. Until recently the pressure of expansion in the Authority has led to the forcing of responsibilities on to the staff at the earliest possible time.
2. In the Scientific Officer Class this has resulted in an average age for promotion to the P.S.O. grade of between 33 and 33½ years which is significantly younger than that envisaged in the Government White Paper on the Reorganisation of the Scientific Civil Service (Command 6679) on which the Authority's concept for the Scientific Officer Class is based, and that in force in any of the Civil Service Departments employing sizeable numbers of scientific staff.
3. The basic concept for the Scientific Officer Class is that the outstanding scientist should have a reasonable expectation of reaching the P.S.O. grade in the early thirties and that every S.O. Class entrant of "proved ability" should get there "in a reasonable period" - interpreted as implying by about the age of 40. The lowest average P.S.O. promotion age in Civil Service Departments is currently 35 plus.
4. Appointments Board 'A' have recently reviewed the effect of a continuing young average promotion age on P.S.O. numbers as the staffing requirements of the Authority stabilise.
5. On the best estimates which can currently be made the projected build-up in the ratio of P.S.O. to more junior appointments in the S.O. Class is not likely to be serious for some 3 to 5 years ahead but thereafter will progressively become more a matter of concern, particularly in certain disciplines.
6. While these forecasts do not give cause for immediate alarm they point to the need for some reduction in the current rate of progression if jobs worthy of their talents are to continue in the longer term to be available at an early age for people of outstanding ability and the more ordinary man is to be assured of a career to the P.S.O. level.
7. The Board have accordingly concluded that they should aim from now on for a gradual pulling out of promotion ages to accord more nearly with the rates of progression originally in mind for the Scientific Officer Class. They do not envisage a sudden and major change in promotion practice: indeed their primary aim is to avoid the need for this in the future. Their present objective is to secure, by a more critical assessment of individual members of the staff, an increase in the average age for P.S.O. promotions in the Authority of about one year over the next two years.
8. The outstanding people should continue as now to advance at early ages. The first need, however, as the attached summary of recent promotion review assessments indicates, is to distinguish more clearly than in the past between them and

their colleagues.

9. Of the S.S.Os. nominated to Panel I by Groups for the four reviews from January 1960 to July 1961, over 80% were assessed as above Beta plus by their Groups and over 70% by Panel I. For the two 1961 reviews, over 90% were marked above Beta plus by Groups and over 80% by Panel I. By far the greatest number of the candidates were regarded as Alpha minus and the majority were submitted and promoted (although in a number of cases after an initial deferment by Panel I) in the earlier part of the age range of 31½ to 34½ for the consideration of Alpha minus people. No candidate was assessed Beta either by his Group or Panel I at the last two reviews.

10. The explanation is not simply that the S.S.Os. immediately under consideration for promotion are an unrepresentative sample of those in the grade as a whole. According to their 1960/1961 Annual Confidential Reports, 60% of the Authority S.S.Os. are assessed as above Beta plus, 35% as Beta plus and 5% Beta (only two officers having a lower assessment).

11. Given the numbers in the Scientific Officer Class throughout the Authority the Board would expect a normal distribution of abilities. The general inflation of markings which the statistics reveal may have led to some lowering of an appropriate standard for Alpha people. But the clearly untenable proposal is that the average S.S.O. in the Authority is Alpha minus, with the spark of Alpha quality which this marking denotes, and by definition "well above average" for his grade. It is similarly unrealistic that no candidate for promotion - and only a handful in the S.S.O. grade as a whole - can properly be assessed as ordinarily competent, worth a normal career to the P.S.O. level, but without special inspiration, i.e. a Beta man.

12. Appointments Board 'A' accordingly invite Panel I to aim progressively at the current and forthcoming reviews for a more realistic balance between the several assessments and, in particular, between the Alpha minus, Beta plus and Beta markings. They should, in addition, ensure that the whole of the suggested age ranges are used to spread the ages of promotion of candidates with particular assessments according to their relative merits.

13. The Panel are particularly asked to bear the following considerations in mind:-

- (1) A spark of Alpha quality should be sought in all candidates accorded an Alpha minus assessment.
- (2) The full age range should be employed in considering the appropriate age of advancement for individual officers with a particular assessment.
- (3) An Alpha minus candidate should not be promoted under age 32 (which is within the age range for the consideration of Alpha candidates) unless he has significant Alpha qualities. Similarly candidates on the borderline between Alpha minus and Beta plus should be assessed

accordingly and normally not promoted before age 35.

- (4) Only the best of the Beta plus candidates should be promoted at the minimum age of 35½: the ages for advancement of the remainder should be spread over a period of years.
 - (5) The consistency or otherwise with which a particular candidate has had a given technical assessment in his Annual Confidential Reports could be a factor to be taken into account in determining whether his advancement should properly be earlier or later within the appropriate age range.
 - (6) No officer has an automatic "entitlement" to promotion merely because his age and assessment fit the provisions of the Age Guide. His immediate suitability for responsibilities appropriate to the P.S.O. grade must be the determining factor. An officer with relatively short experience of work of the Scientific Officer Class type may, for example, require further experience before his promotion, even if his age brings him into the field for consideration.
14. The results for which the Board are aiming will not necessarily be reflected in average ages of promotion in the short term. Indeed, if as is envisaged, more of the older candidates who in the past have been promoted with an Alpha minus assessment are for the future marked A-/B+ or B+, the short term effect could be a reduction in the average age of the people recommended for promotion at a single review. The need is for an appropriate increase in the average age at which all the candidates for a particular review are ultimately likely to achieve promotion compared with the pattern established at earlier reviews.
15. In considering the Panel's recommendations, the Board will, for the future, take account of their effect on this objective.
16. It is clearly essential for Groups also to be aware of the Board's aims, and for the proposed greater spread in promotion ages to be reflected in their nominations of candidates. Guidance similar to that in this note is, therefore, being given to the authorities in Groups responsible for the submission of candidates to Panel I.
17. The relative merits of individual candidates can be more appropriately determined if the number with whom comparisons can be made at each stage of consideration is relatively large.
18. Until recently the number of candidates under consideration for P.S.O. promotions at individual reviews (although they may only represent a relatively small proportion of the people from individual Divisions or Establishments) has been too large in total to be considered at a single annual review without imposing too heavy a load of interviewing on Panel Members.

19. These numbers, which have reflected the peak period of the Authority's expansion, have been falling at recent reviews and are now at a level which makes annual reviews practicable.

20. In these circumstances the Board are proposing to hold the July 1962 review in the ordinary way but thereafter only to review annually for promotions to the P.S.O., C.E.O. and S.E.O. grades.

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COMPARISON OF TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS BY
GROUPS AND PANELS

FOR P.S.O. PROMOTION

NOTE: The first figure gives the number of technical assessments by Groups. The second gives technical assessments by Panel I. The third in brackets gives the number of candidates recommended for immediate promotion.

Group	A+	A+/A	A	A-/A	A-	A-/B+	B+	B+/B	B
<u>JAN. '60</u>									
D. & E.	4 -	-	2:1(1)	-	4:4(3)	1:1(1)	4:4(1)	-:1(-)	-
Prod.	2 -	-	-	-	1:1(1)	-	1:-(-)	-	-:1(-)
Research	2 -	-	2:3(3)	7:-(-)	10:12(8)	1:3(2)	1:2(2)	-	-:1(-)
Weapons	8 -	-	-	-	5:4(4)	2:1(1)	-:3(3)	1:-(-)	-
	42 -	-	4:4(4)	7:-(-)	20:21(16)	4:5(4)	6:9(6)	1:1(-)	-:2(-)
<u>JUL. '60</u>									
D. & E.	4 -	-	5:2(2)	-	10:10(4)	-:1(-)	3:5(3)	-:1(1)	1:-(-)
Prod.	2 -	-	-	-	1:1(-)	-	1:-(-)	-	-:1(-)
Research	24 -	-	4:1(1)	1:-(-)	13:14(11)	1:3(1)	5:5(4)	-	-:1(-)
Weapons	9 -	-	-	2:-(-)	7:8(5)	-:1(1)	-	-	-
	54 -	-	9:3(3)	3:-(-)	31:33(20)	1:5(2)	9:10(7)	-:1(1)	1:2(-)
<u>JAN. '61</u>									
D. & E.	17 -	-	4:1(1)	1:-(-)	9:10(4)	1:2(2)	2:4(3)	-	-
Prod.	2 -	-	-	-	2:1(1)	-:1(-)	-	-	-
Research	21:1(1)	1:-(-)	2:5(5)	6:1(1)	16:14(11)	-:3(2)	1:3(1)	-	-
Weapons	-:1(1)	-	2:-(-)	-	2:3(2)	-	-	-	-
	50	1:2(2)	1:-(-)	8:6(6)	7:1(1)	29:28(18)	1:6(4)	3:7(4)	-
<u>JUL. '61</u>									
Reactor	10 -	-	1:-(-)	-	9:6(4)	-:2(1)	2:3(1)	-:1(-)	-
Prod.	0 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Research	11 -	2:-(-)	5:5(2)	1:3(1)	5:2(1)	1:3(2)	2:2(-)	-:1(-)	-
Weapons	1 -	-	2:1(-)	-:1(1)	4:4(3)	-	1:-(-)	-:1(-)	-
AH & SB	1 -	-	-	-	1:-(-)	-	-:1(-)	-	-
	36	2:-(-)	8:6(2)	1:4(2)	19:12(8)	1:5(3)	5:6(1)	-:3(-)	-

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ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY

COMPARISON OF ASSESSMENTS AND PROMOTIONS OVER EIGHT REVIEWS

SSO - PSO

	b-	b	b/b+	b+	b+/a-	a-	a-/a	a	a/a+	a+	Totals
<u>January 1959</u>											
Panel Assessment	-	1	-	12	3	13	2	-	-	-	31
Promoted	-	-	-	8	1	9	2	-	-	-	20
<u>July 1959</u>											
Panel Assessment	-	1	1	10	6	15	1	7	-	-	41
Promoted	-	-	1	5	3	13	1	5	-	-	28
<u>January 1960</u>											
Group Assessment	-	-	1	6	4	20	7	4	-	-	42
Panel "	-	2	1	9	5	21	-	4	-	-	42
Promoted	-	-	-	6	4	16	-	4	-	-	30
<u>July 1960</u>											
Group Assessment	-	1	-	9	1	31	3	9	-	-	54
Panel "	-	2	1	10	5	33	-	3	-	-	54
Promoted	-	-	1	7	2	20	-	3	-	-	33
<u>January 1961</u>											
Group Assessment	-	-	-	3	1	29	7	8	1	1	50
Panel "	-	-	-	7	6	28	1	6	-	2	50
Promoted	-	-	-	4	4	18	1	6	-	2	35
<u>July 1961</u>											
Group Assessment	-	-	-	5	1	19	1	8	2	-	36
Panel "	-	-	3	6	5	12	4	6	-	-	36
Promoted	-	-	-	1	3	8	2	2	-	-	16
<u>January 1962</u>											
Panel Assessment	1	8	1	28	3	27	4	6	-	-	78
Promoted	-	-	-	14	2	20	4	4	-	-	44
<u>July 1962</u>											
Panel Assessment	-	4	3	33	3	27	5	6	-	-	81
Promoted	-	1	-	17	2	13	4	6	-	-	43

b- b b/b+ b+ b+/a- a- a-/a a a/a+ a+

ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITYAges on Promotion to P.S.O.

Review	Year	Month	% Promoted
July '55	34	1	78
Jan '56	34	6	74
July '56	33	5	62
Jan '57	33	6	84
July '57	34	9	75
Jan '58	32	5	54
July '58	33	7	70
Jan '59	34	-	65
July '59	33	4	68
Jan '60	33	3	67
July '60	33	10	57
Jan '61	32	11	69
July '61	33	1	41
Jan '62	32	9	48
July '62	33	6	52

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Mr. L. B. Mullett

Promotion to P.S.O.

Thank you very much for your comments. First, I should perhaps make it clear that the Board 'A' paper and directions are addressed to the Authority as a whole, and the figures in the paper are integrated quantities for all Groups. As was stated at the D.H.C. meeting, the Research Group has, on the whole, a very good record of realistic recommendations for promotion. As far as I can judge, the Northern Groups have tended more than we have "to force responsibilities on some of their staff". It is completely agreed that really good men should be promoted early: one of the main effects of the revised procedure will be to differentiate more clearly between the outstanding man and the average (or below average), not by holding up the alpha plus but by delaying somewhat the betas.

... As you will see from the attached list of university salaries, our P.S.Os (£1840 - £2590) are paid at approximately the same rates as university Readers who (except perhaps in London) must be within reasonable distance of F.R.S. quality and often are not promoted to the grade until their 40s or 50s. It is true that university salaries may go up soon, but the comparison will still be broadly true.

I don't think that the "guidance" means that we should be less generous overall, but simply that if a large majority of the staff are in one "box" (at present the alpha minus one) some means must be found of differentiating between the good and the less good. Otherwise we should promote them all more or less en bloc at the same age, instead of giving early promotion to the really good, and naturally promoting a little later those who fall just below them, and deferring the indifferent.

We have been looking at staff statistics, and a number of histograms have been prepared (though in some cases the numbers have not been large enough for the histograms to be really meaningful). You would be able to see those we have by arrangement with Mr. Oates or Mr. Kilvington. I do not think the NIRNS need necessarily follow the AEA in frequency of reviews, etc. especially during a formative period when staff have not been with you very long.

I agree with you that the main responsibility now rests with Panel I.

F.A. Vick
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AERE, Harwell
22nd December 1961

University Salaries (Non-Medical) 1961

Professors range from £2,600 to £3,600
average £3,100

Readers) range from £1,850 to £2,425
Senior Lecturers) (a few to £2,525)

Lecturers £1,050 x 50 - £1,400 (bar) x 75
- £1,850 (a few to £2,000)

Assistant Lecturers £800 x 25 - £950

All plus child allowance £50 a child.

JAV

Dec. 1961