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11 March 2009

Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
(Attn : Ms Sarah YUEN)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms YUEN,

Recruitment of Civil Service Transport Services Officer II

Thank you for your letter dated 13 February in which you referred to us Mr WONG Man-kit's views concerning the civil service recruitment exercise of Transport Services Officer II conducted by the Government Logistics Department (GLD) in 2008. We have looked into the matter with GLD and our reply is as follows -

Fair principle applied to all candidates with equivalent qualifications

According to the entry requirements of Transport Services Officer II, candidates should have either of the followings -

- (1) (a) a Higher Diploma in Transport and Logistics Studies from the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, or equivalent; and
(b) the language proficiency at Level 2 or above in Chinese Language and English Language in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) or equivalent; or
- (2) (a) a Certificate in Supervisory Management from the former Hong Kong Polytechnic or technical institute, or equivalent; (b) the language proficiency at Level 2 or above in Chinese Language and English Language in the HKCEE or equivalent; and (c) 5

years' supervisory experience, 3 years of which should be in the supervision and control of transport services.

The GLD received a total of 646 applications in this recruitment exercise. 97 applicants met the basic entry requirements and were all invited to an interview. The GLD applied the same and fair principles when vetting and screening the academic qualifications of the applicants. Due regard had been given to all the candidates, including those who possessed qualifications equivalent to or higher than those obtained from the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education.

In addition, according to the existing civil service recruitment procedure, the departmental recruitment board will, after the interview, select suitable candidates on the basis of their competency and performance at the interview and determine their priority for appointment. It was not the case, as alleged by Mr Wong, that the department prioritised all the applicants in accordance with their individual qualifications and then worked out the shortlisting criteria in view of the large number of applicants who met the entry requirements. Nor did the department draw up a priority list before the interview.

Candidates interviewed in batches

Owing to the large number of applicants and the need to further assess the academic qualifications and working experience of some of them to make sure they were qualified for the job, the 97 candidates who met the basic entry requirements were invited by the GLD to attend selection interviews in June/July and November in 2008 in batches, so as to avoid delaying the recruitment process. The information provided by the 76 candidates who were invited to attend the first round of interviews clearly showed that they met the basic entry requirements. The remaining 21 candidates, whose academic qualifications needed to be further assessed, or who were required to produce supplementary information, were invited to attend the second round of interviews as the vetting process took a longer time. To ensure fairness and impartiality in selecting the most suitable candidates, the departmental recruitment board, upon the conclusion of all interviews, adopted the same criteria in reviewing fairly, vigorously and comprehensively all candidates as to whether they were suitable for the post of Transport Services Officer II. Among the 28 candidates recommended for appointment, 21 are from the first round of interviews (i.e. representing 28% of candidates attending this round of interviews) whereas 7 are from the second round of interviews (i.e. representing 33% of candidates attending this round of interviews). As such, the same selection criteria had been applied by the GLD to select the right candidates, irrespective of their interview sequence.

Whether there is discrimination against Non-Civil Service Contract (NCSC) Staff

Mr Wong opined that the GLD had not considered the relevant working experience of the NCSC staff, and was suspicious that there was discrimination against them.

The GLD indicated that before the selection interview, the recruitment board had carefully studied the candidates' qualification and background, including the information provided in the application forms and the proof of academic qualifications and working experience. In addition, if the candidate was a serving or a former NCSC staff, GLD had, in accordance with the established procedures, asked the departments concerned to provide documents such as the candidate's appraisal report for reference by the recruitment board. During the interview, the recruitment board asked candidates questions in a non-discriminatory manner so as to assess their abilities and experience. All in all, the recruitment board of the GLD had made a full and prudent assessment in a just and equitable way in selecting the most suitable and capable candidates for the post.

We understand that GLD have already offered appointment to 11 of the candidates recommended for appointment to fill existing Transport Services Officer II vacancies and one of them is an NCSC staff. GLD expects that additional Transport Services Officer II vacancies will arise later this year, and having regard to the number of vacancies available, GLD will offer appointment to other candidates recommended for appointment.

Recruitment Board

As mentioned above, members of the recruitment board had assessed all candidates with different academic qualification or background in a prudent and fair manner. In fact, appointed candidates are of various academic qualifications or background. No candidate was given preferential treatment due to the academic qualification or background of individual board member.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Leung', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(Jeff LEUNG)

for Secretary for Civil Service