

Copy of Circular letter No. 9129-G-56/3964, dated the 17th September, 1956 from the Chief Secretary to Government, Punjab, to all Heads of Departments etc., etc.

**Subject :—**Procedure to be followed in selection of officers/officials for promotion to higher posts—Greater emphasis on merit than on seniority.

I am directed to refer to the correspondence resting with Punjab Government letter No. 2334-51/1-2152, dated the 6th April, 1951, regarding the maintenance of Ranking lists for the purpose of promotion and to state that the question of laying greater emphasis on merit rather than seniority has been engaging the attention of Government for sometime past. Although theoretically, the principle is recognised that promotion to selection posts implies a conscious act of selection, Government are convinced that, in practice, promotion is primarily made not on the basis of merit but on the basis of seniority-cum-fitness. It cannot be ignored that selection for the purpose of promotion also affords chances of abuse and therefore some method has to be found which would safeguard against this. It is also necessary to ensure that, in an effort to widen the scope of eligibility for promotion to higher posts immature officers/officials are not included and due weight is given to experience.

Taking all the above mentioned points into consideration it has been decided to adopt the following revised procedure for selecting officers/officials for promotion to selection posts :—

- (i) A standard of required minimum experience in respect of each kind of higher post should be laid down in terms of years of service in consultation with the Public Service Commission/Subordinate Services Selection Board, except in cases, where a reference to the Commission/Board is not under the rules, required for making such appointments.
- (ii) A list should then be drawn up of officers/officials possessing the requisite minimum length of service as laid down above.
- (iii) Out of the lists so prepared, selection for filling the vacancies which may have arisen, will be confined to first three candidates for each vacancy. For every vacancy a slab of three suitable officers/officials is to be formed and unless a junior among them happens to be of exceptional merit and suitability, the senior-most will be selected. This does not mean that after selection has been made the other two become unsuitable. For the next vacancy another slab of three will be formed and the two who were not selected for the first vacancy will necessarily have to be included in that slab. It is quite possible that one of them may be selected for the second vacancy. In effect, therefore, after one slab has been formed for the first vacancy, every subsequent slab will necessarily contain two candidates of the slab preceding it.
- (iv) The criteria to be observed for making the final selection of officers/officials for the vacancies in question will be :—
  - (a) An officer known to be dishonest will not be promoted. For the rest, each officer/official would have to be judged on the basis of ability, industry, personality and bearing, experience and aptitude. It is difficult to lay down generally what importance should be attached to each of these qualities. This would have to depend on the nature of the posts in question.
  - (b) While making selection for purposes of promotion to higher selection posts, out of the three suitable candidates for each post, seniority would be ignored only

in favour of that junior candidate who is considered to be of exceptional merit. No Selection Committee need be formed or a written test or an interview need be introduced for the purposes of selection.

3. In respect of selection to gazetted posts, appeals against non-selection will be disposed of by the Council of Ministers, if they lie to Government. In other cases, where no appeals lie, or where the appeal lies to an authority subordinate to Government, a representation against rejection of the appeal by the latter authority for non-selection will also lie to the Council of Ministers. The period for such appeals/representations to the Council of the Ministers shall be one month from the date of the receipt of the orders represented against. These appeals/representation will normally be disposed of by the Council of Ministers within two months of their receipt. It will not be necessary for the Council of Ministers to consult the Public Service Commission in these cases.

The following procedure in putting up the case to the Council of Ministers would be followed. The memorandum, will in addition to the facts of the case, describe the history of service of the officers/officials concerned and also include summary of their personal files. The personal files of the officers/officials concerned would also be made available to the Council of Ministers for reference if necessary. The Administrative Secretary will put up such memoranda through the Chief Secretary, in the Gazette Branch, who would examine the case and make such revisions in the draft, as may be necessary, with a view to ensuring that the case of the representing officer does not go by default.

4. It is intended that the new principles to be adopted for the selection of officers/officials should apply to all posts to be filled by selection, whether within the cadre of the same service or from one service to another even if consultation with the Public Service Commission/Subordinate Services Selection Board, as the case may be, is required. Where a reference to the Commission/Board is required under the rules, a list containing the names of officers/officials with the requisite minimum length of service, weeding out the unsuitables, should be prepared and forwarded to the Commission/Board keeping in view the fact that if there is one vacancy, three names; if two, four names and if three, five names and so on are recommended. In doing so, the character rolls of the officers recommended and also of those with the prescribed minimum length of service, who are not recommended, will be forwarded to the Commission/Board.

5. These instructions supersede all previous instructions, if any, on the subject and shall come into force with immediate effect. They should be brought to the notice of all concerned for information and guidance.