

PROPER COMPENSATION FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, PROVINCIAL TREASURERS, AND PROVINCIAL AUDITORS

About a quarter of century ago the present rates of pay of our Provincial Governors, Provincial Treasurers, and Provincial Auditors were fixed by the Philippine Government under the Jones Law. Since then, that government and a Commonwealth regime had passed into history, a second world war ended, and a new Republic inaugurated. During that span of time, changes were made upward in living costs and in every line of endeavor, including increase in compensation of certain officials other than those adverted to above and a few more.

In the past, the activities of local governments had to do primarily with the essential functions of political subdivisions. Now the same local governments have taken upon themselves the performance of positive constructive work for the promotion of the public welfare and prosperity of their inhabitants. This accent on the public weal has created functions for Provincial Governors, Provincial Treasurers, and Provincial Auditors that are unequalled in their respective provinces in magnitude and complexity, and the operations to be performed by them in connection therewith are of an exceedingly technical and diverse character.

In the case of the Provincial Governors, their functions are not merely political—one involving the exercise of judgment in its use—but are also, and largely, administrative—one concerned with the putting into effect of policies and orders as determined or given by other superior offices or authorities. In a word, the Provincial Governors are the heads of the administration in their respective provinces. This means that the National authorities will look primarily to the Provincial Governors for the efficient carrying out of executive policies and administrative determinations. Besides their usual functions, there is inherently the desire of Provincial Chief Executives to stand well in the opinion of their constituents and in the opinion of the National authorities—an incentive, among others which might be mentioned, did space allow, that calls for expenditures, mostly from private funds, auditing requirements not allowing the charging thereof to public funds although apparently incurred to subserve public interests. Under such circumstances, therefore, the Provincial Governors should be placed in their proper rank—that of being the highest officials in their respective provinces. An indicium of official rank is the salary attached to the position occupied, for it is a popular observation that the amount of emolument received establishes one's rank. This being so, the Provincial Governors should be given compensation in amounts at least equal to the salary of any official from any branch of the government of whatever category permanently stationed in the provinces concerned.

Like most governmental problems, that of financial administration must be viewed from two standpoints, political and technical. These are functions allocated upon career men in the treasury service. While Provincial Treasurers have been entrusted with a cargo of duties larger than those discharged by their positions a quarter of a century ago, their emoluments have remained as they were fixed at about that time. Nay, such emoluments are even lower than those paid to certain chiefs of divisions with whom they deal in the National Government whose appointments are not of the category extended to Provincial Treasurers. The

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vital question to be considered in this case of the Provincial Treasurers is not, however, whether they deserve or should receive more from a moral point of view. The crucial question is: Do we want the best financial administrators and advisers inside the government or outside? There is no doubt that we want them inside, for there is work there worthy of their mettle and an attractive career to strive for.

Akin to the status of Provincial Governors and Provincial Treasurers with respect to compensation is that of Provincial Auditors. The Provincial Auditors have been placed in a position of great power in regard to the expenditure of local funds. Their functions concern the task of ensuring honest administration, and of preventing corruption or the improper application of public funds. Such tremendous powers and responsibilities call for commensurate pay. As it is now, the highest paid Provincial Auditor receives but P4560 per annum. Let us be fair to them!

Succinctly we are not here advocating vertical nor horizontal increases in compensation for the Provincial Governors, the Provincial Treasurers and the Provincial Auditors. What we hereby emphasize is a parallel compensation with apt level, that is to say, an adjustment of compensation that should at once insure uniform justice amongst the officials of whatever category in a particular province. This does not necessarily mean identic rates of compensation. An equitable rate of compensation is all that is being sought for to establish the nearest relation between compensation and rank, goodwill and enthusiasm that should prevail, an equilibrium called for by the difference in the values of the work involved in the respective positions, and the principle of compensating the position rather than the incumbent.

Bearing in mind the foregoing facts and views, we respectfully propose to the authorities concerned the adoption now, before another quarter of a century passes by, the following rates of compensation for Provincial Governors, Provincial Treasurers, and Provincial Auditors:

<i>Class of Province</i>	<i>Prov. Gov.</i>	<i>Prov. Treas.</i>	<i>Prov. Aud.</i>
1st Class- A	P10,000	P9,000	P8,000
1st Class- B	9,400	8,200	7,000
1st Class	8,800	7,600	6,400
2nd Class	8,200	7,200	6,000
3rd Class	7,600	6,400	5,200
4th Class	6,800	5,600	4,400
5th Class	6,000	4,800	3,600

With respect to the seeming high rates of salary herein proposed, we wish to add to the reasons given above that the rates advocated follow the maxim, so widely accepted by trade unionists and enlightened employers, that high wages are cheap wages, and can be aptly applied to the five- or four-figure-income man no less than to the weekly wage-earner. This can be achieved, it is hereby submitted, through careful budgetary analysis and plantilla adjustments. However, as a means of precluding financial embarrassments, it may be feasible by means of a proviso to empower the Chief Executive to reduce the compensation by a certain percentage or to give only such compensation as may be warranted by the condition of finances of the province concerned. This suggestion would save the theme of parallel compensation with proper level herein being brought to the sympathetic consideration of the Executive and Congressional authorities for positive legislation.—*J.F.R.*