

FEATURE

Mr Johnson said that it was very unlikely that it would bring in a return to the old seniority system. One of the reasons why the AFP had progressed was that it had been able to shake off the shackles of seniority. People had been able to obtain promotions and transfers on their personal qualities and qualifications, not because they happened to have joined three months sooner than another member. Bright people who have worked hard had already been able to progress in the AFP. This had placed the AFP in a position of leadership in Australian policing. The AFP would not regress by returning to a seniority system and did not want to return to a seniority system.

Mr Johnson said it was unlikely ranks would be abolished as a result of the Review, but some other classifying system could be recommended. It was possible that ranks could be merged.

Some had argued that there were too many levels through which decisions had to be made and part of the Review results may show that a flatter organisation structure was needed. That would not happen until the proper consultations had been undertaken and the implications understood.

Mr Johnson said the Review was not a reaction to Government pressure on streamlining or simply to save money. The Government did ask the AFP Management to be efficient. But this Review came about because of members' requests and it was simply good management.

Mr Eaton said the Review also looked at allowing members to stay operational longer where in the past they have had to seek promotion or more money by applying for promotions to non-operational areas when they would have preferred to stay operational. The Review would also be about recognising the work which was already being done by members. The Review was not about changing the work that was already being done. What it would do would be changing the organisational structure to recognise the work being done. What the Association had been saying was that the work had progressed but the organisation had not caught up with the work.

Mr Johnson said members should recognise that the Review was about improvement which would help the whole AFP. He hoped they would accept the integrity of those conducting and guiding the Review and see that their own Association was very much part of it. He and Mr Eaton hoped that all members approached would assist to their utmost and any members who felt they had a point of view, to make that known to the Review Working Group.

Super Review

THE stress of police work has emerged as a major factor in the review of the AFP's superannuation system.

Chief Superintendent Alex Bunt (Commander Industrial Relations Division) explained: 'The review team found that the AFP's invalidity rate is much higher than the Australian Public Service, but it is similar to the invalidity rates in the state police forces.

'The indications are that early retirement related to stress has become a growing problem in the past 10 years,' he said.

'A joint management review in 1984 raised the question of the validity of the AFP's superannuation scheme and in 1986 the government appointed a working party to look at it.

'The working party report advocated the need for a young, active, police force and said the current superannuation scheme did not help in providing for that.

'Under the current arrangements it could be argued that there is more appeal to a person to go out on invalidity than to wait to be eligible for superannuation.

'A new scheme has been proposed involving higher member contributions with the possibility of improved superan-

uation after 30 years service and at 55 years of age. That proposal is now before the Government,' Superintendent Bunt said.

Pay Rates

In other developments, a review of the AFP award, or Determination T3, was being finalised as this edition of *'Platypus'* went to press. This review has involved preparing clearer provisions in the Determination to make it easier progressively for all members to understand.

The AFP received a formal claim from the AFPA on August 19 for a 4% increase under the second tier of the national wage system.

Chief Superintendent Bunt said the Industrial Relations Division, in conjunction with the AFPA, was looking at suitable offsets for second tier wage increases, as required under the national wage guidelines.

Cyprus

'The Division is also reviewing the conditions of service for AFP members on Cyprus,' he said.

'A revamped package of allowances is expected to be provided soon and under that new system allowances will be extended to some officers who in the past didn't get benefits'.