

### CONCILIATION

The Commission's application for an order to apply the provisions of the standard wage pronouncement to employees other than casual workmen resulted in seven days of conciliation proceedings with the Public Service Association under the appointed conciliator, Mr. B. L. Dallard. Agreement was reached only on one minor point, and that during the first day of proceedings. On the other hand, conciliation proceedings with the industrial unions representing the casual-workmen groups have been on a very satisfactory basis and really effective. In fact, complete agreement was reached on all matters at issue in respect of seven orders covering approximately 11,000 workmen. Only two orders required argument before the Tribunal. Not only were the parties able to exchange views and gain a better understanding of each other's problems, but the matters at issue were thoroughly sifted before being taken to the Tribunal. The result has been that many matters have been settled and referred to the Tribunal as agreed items for approval, rather than as claims and counter-claims for adjustment.

### EFFECT OF TRIBUNAL SYSTEM

That the operations of the Tribunal, in so far as they affect the casual-workmen groups, have been generally acceptable to the parties appears to be indicated by the absence of disputes of any moment. Indeed, the present system is a welcome change from the previous method, which was the subject of comment in our report for 1948. Then, conditions and rates of pay were finally determined by the appropriate Minister after a process of conciliation between union, Department, and Commission.

However, so far as the permanent Public Service is concerned, experience has shown that the Tribunal system does not allow for the flexibility essential to sound administration. Under the present set-up the Commission may not approve any general salary increase nor regrade any occupational group without first submitting an application to the Tribunal. Inevitably, this delays administrative action. The proceedings which led up to the Tribunal's final decision applying the provisions of the standard wage pronouncement to the Public Service extended over four months. An application—lodged by the Commission in December last—to increase the salaries of certain prisons staff in the Justice and Prisons Department has not yet been heard by the Tribunal.

### TRIBUNAL AND THE 1951 GENERAL REGRADING

The Commission is required by law to "regrade (all) officers at intervals of not more than five years." The last general regrading took place in 1946; the next is due in 1951. In the interim the number of "officers" in the Service has increased from 12,599 to nearly 30,000 through the transfer of temporary employees to the permanent staff. The task of classification will consequently be far bigger than ever before. Under the Tribunal system it will be virtually impossible for the Commission to carry out the regrading; publication of the Classification List and payment of increased salaries where regratings are involved could be delayed indefinitely.

In an endeavour to overcome this difficulty, discussions have been held with the Public Service Association. They have agreed to support the Commission in a recommendation to the Government for amending legislation to enable the 1951 regrading to proceed as usual, subject to rights of employees being protected.

### STAFF EMPLOYED AND SALARIES

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Numbers of staff employed and salaries paid at the 1st April, 1949, are set out in Tables I, II, and III of the Appendix. Table I shows permanent employees classified according to Department, Division, and sex; Table II according to grade, Division,