

being given power to determine what industries are essential in prosecuting the war. In such industries a strike or lockout is unlawful until the dispute has been investigated by a board of conciliation and investigation appointed by the Minister. The Act was also amended to prohibit any person acting on a board who has, within the previous six months, been the legal adviser or paid agent of either of the parties to a dispute.

In a further effort to assist the parties to compose their differences promptly, power was given to the Minister in June, 1941, to appoint three Industrial Disputes Inquiry Commissioners to make preliminary inquiries and to effect settlements wherever possible without recourse to formal boards under the Act. The value of this provision lies in the promptness with which the Commissioners can act as compared with the time spent in appointing a board for each dispute. Special authority is given these Commissioners to inquire into charges of discrimination on the ground of trade union activity and the Minister may issue orders based on their recommendations that are to be binding on employers and employees or on other persons concerned.

*Wages and Prices.*—The relation of wages and prices engaged the attention of the Department early in the War. In addition to such control as is exercised by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, watch is kept under the Combines Investigation Act on any attempt to suppress competition or enhance prices unreasonably.

A wages policy was adopted in December, 1940, and amended in June, 1941, to assist in preventing an undue rise in prices by stabilizing wages, and to protect the workers against any unavoidable increase in the cost of living.

Boards under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act are directed to consider the highest wage rates paid between 1926 and December 1940, as fair and reasonable unless the wage level under review during that period was unduly low, in which case a board may recommend such rates as it considers fair. Where the cost of living index has risen 5 points since August, 1939, workers are entitled to a bonus of 25 cents a week for every rise of 1 point, but persons under 21 years of age earning less than 50 cents an hour are to be given 1 p.c. of the basic rate. An additional bonus may be granted after three months if the index has risen another 5 points. As a flat and not a percentage increase, the bonus gives maximum protection where it is most needed, to the lower paid workers.

In line with this policy, the minimum rates established in 1934 for workers on government contracts for supplies were raised on May 30, 1941, from 30 and 20 cents, to 35 and 25 cents for males and females, respectively, over 18 years of age, with provision for lower rates for beginners. Two important steps to enforce the fair wages policy have been taken: first, power has been given the Deputy Minister of Labour to require contractors for Government construction to deliver to him the difference between wages paid and wages due under the wage schedules in their contracts and, second, a joint Dominion and Provincial inspection system has been arranged for plants producing war supplies to ensure enforcement of the Dominion minimum rates.

*Labour Supply, Training, etc.*—The National Labour Supply Council was set up as an advisory body in June, 1940. Equally representative of industry and labour, the Council has devoted attention to the question of an adequate supply of suitable labour. In a broader field, it has been invited to make reports to the Minister on any matter it wishes, and to draft regulations; in addition questions of policy have been submitted to it for criticism and suggestion.