

*Government Prevailing Rate Employees.**—Many departments and agencies of government employ non-office workers in public buildings, defence establishments, parks and forests, experimental farms, canal operation, airports and government vessels, survey parties, special projects, etc. Such positions are exempt from the operations of the Civil Service Act and rates of pay are fixed by the Treasury Board in consultation with the Department of Labour on the basis of prevailing private industry rates for comparable work in the appropriate area. Data used in the determination of these pay rates are secured from wage surveys made by Industrial Relations Officers of the Department of Labour, from wage research conducted by the Economics and Research Branch, and from collective agreements and wage rates established under the legislation of some provinces.

The Fair Wages and Prevailing Rates Division of the Industrial Relations Branch also recommends rates of pay for 4,000 commissionaires employed by various government departments and agencies throughout Canada, provides wage data to assist certain Crown corporations in the preparation of their wage schedules, and gives assistance in the establishment of class titles, job descriptions and the application of job evaluation techniques.

Three sets of comprehensive Regulations have been established by the Treasury Board governing hours of work, overtime, vacations, statutory holidays, sick leave, pensions, etc., for (1) prevailing rate workers generally employed, (2) ships' officers and (3) ships' crews.

The Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act.—This legislation came into effect by proclamation on Sept. 1, 1948, revoking the Wartime Labour Relations Regulations in effect since March 1944 and repealing the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act which had been in force from 1907 until suspended by the Wartime Regulations in 1944. The Act protects proceedings commenced and decisions, orders and certifications made under the wartime legislation in so far as these involve services authorized by the Act.

The Act applies only to industries within federal jurisdiction, viz., navigation, shipping, interprovincial railways, canals, telegraphs, steamship lines and ferries, both international and interprovincial, aerodromes and air transportation, radio broadcasting stations, and works declared by Parliament to be for the general advantage of Canada or of two or more provinces. However, the Act provides that provincial authorities if they so desire may enact similar legislation for application to employees within provincial jurisdiction and make mutually satisfactory arrangements with the Federal Government for the administration of such legislation by the federal authorities.

In general, the Act in its important features provides that employees and employers shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively and that trade unions may be certified as bargaining agents for employee groups. Trade unions and employers are required, upon notice, to bargain collectively in good faith. The Act provides for invoking collective bargaining negotiations and for the mediation of conciliation officers and conciliation boards in reaching collective agreements. Employees may change bargaining agents at times under conditions specified in the Act, which also prescribes conditions affecting the duration and renewal of collective agreements. Collective agreements are required to contain provision for the arbitration of disputes concerning the meaning or violation of such agreements and where such provision is lacking application may be made for its establishment. The Act prohibits unfair labour practices, i.e., the interference with or domination of trade unions by employers or interference, discrimination and coercion in trade union activity. The conditions that must be observed prior to strike and lockout action are set down in the Act. Industrial inquiry commissions may be appointed to investigate industrial matters or disputes.

The Minister of Labour is charged with the administration of the Act and is directly responsible for the provisions affecting the appointment of conciliation officers, conciliation boards, industrial inquiry commissions, consent to prosecute, and complaints that the Act has been violated or that a party has failed to bargain in good faith.

* Statistics on numbers and earnings of prevailing rate and other groups of federal employees exempt from the Civil Service Act are given at pp. 132-141.