

employee organizations and in hearings before the Public Service Staff Relations Board on applications for the exclusion of employees from bargaining units.

The board develops policy guidelines for public service pension, insurance and related programs, co-ordinates their administration and recommends periodic revisions. It negotiates reciprocal pension transfer agreements with other public and private employers. It also studies and proposes means of ensuring compatibility between public service employee benefits and social security programs such as medicare and the Canada and Quebec pension plans.

Public Service Commission. The Public Service Employment Act, which became effective in March 1967, continues the status of the Public Service Commission as an independent agency responsible to Parliament. The commission has the exclusive right and authority to make appointments to and from within the public service. The commission is also empowered to operate staff development and training programs, to assist deputy heads in carrying out training and development and in 1972 was charged to investigate cases of alleged discrimination on grounds of sex, race, national origin, colour or religion in the application and operation of the Public Service Employment Act. Age and marital status were added to these grounds by amendment to the Public Service Employment Act in 1975.

It may establish boards to decide on appeals against appointments made from within the public service and against release or demotion for incompetence or incapacity; to make recommendations on the revocation of appointments improperly made under delegated authority; and to decide on allegations of political partisanship.

The commission grants or withholds approval of applications for leave of absence from public servants who wish to be candidates in federal, provincial or territorial elections and investigates allegations of improper political activities by public servants.

The act authorizes the commission to delegate to deputy heads any of its powers, except those relating to appeals and inquiries. The commission has delegated powers to make appointments in operational and administrative support categories; employing departments are required to use Canada Manpower Centres as their recruitment agency for appointments from outside the public service. Appointing authority has been delegated in the administrative and foreign service, technical, and scientific and professional categories under conditions which preserve the commission's authority as central recruiting agency for the public service of Canada with a few exceptions, that is, those cases where a department is virtually the sole employer of a particular occupational specialty. The commission ensures that appointments made under delegated authority comply with the law and commission policies.

The Public Service Commission is guardian of the merit principle, ensuring that high standards are maintained in the service, consistent with adequate representation of the two official language groups, a bilingual capability to the extent prescribed by the government, equal employment and career development opportunities irrespective of sex, race, national origin, colour or religion, and encouragement of opportunities for the disadvantaged.

Every citizen may apply for positions. Competitive examinations are announced through the news media and posters displayed on public notice boards of major post offices, Canada Manpower Centres, Public Service Commission offices and elsewhere.

The commission's major task — staffing the public service according to merit — is done on an occupational basis. The classification system divides the service into six broad occupational categories which are further divided into groups of occupationally similar jobs. For each major category or group there is a program of recruitment, selection and placement. Appointments are made from within the service except where the commission believes it is in the best interests of the service to do otherwise. Appointments from within are made either through a formal competition or from an employee inventory. The commission's computerized manpower inventory is the primary employee inventory for the executive, scientific and professional, technical and administrative and foreign service categories. Under the Public Service Employment Act, public servants who are candidates in a competition open to all or part of the service may appeal the selections to the Public Service Commission.