

Parliament. This is done at the presentation of the Estimates to Parliament. There is no regular method by which an administrative officer can obtain a review of his salary other than by application to the Minister in Charge for consideration when the Estimates are being framed. As practically no increases in the salaries of higher-paid officers have been paid for some years, certain definite cases of hardship have arisen. In the cases of officers who were appointed at a minimum salary on the assumption they would proceed to the maximum paid to their predecessor in office this hardship is accentuated. The annual increments of salary which might reasonably have been expected have not been granted, they have been subjected to the salary reductions in common with other officers, and they are in some cases receiving less remuneration for important administrative positions than paid to other administrative officers carrying out less important duties. When it is realized that the Permanent Heads of some of the large and important Departments of State are receiving less by way of salary than the superannuation annuity of their predecessors, I feel sure it will be evident that the matter calls for adjustment.

I have pointed out in previous reports that there should be a definite grading of administrative positions, due regard of course being taken of the duties, importance, and responsibilities of the positions. Were this done, an administrative officer should proceed from the minimum to the maximum salary fixed for his position. Notwithstanding reductions in salaries, as effected by the various Adjustment Acts, no action was taken to withhold the scale increments of salaries to other officers. The same condition should apply in respect of the officers of the Administrative Division.

In an earlier report dealing with salaries I stated :—

“ A comparison of the salaries paid to officers occupying administrative positions with those paid to persons in managerial positions in outside firms and institutions, having in many cases considerably less responsibility and less intricate problems to deal with, shows that the salaries paid to the higher administrative officers in the Service are relatively low.”

Notwithstanding that it must be recognized that there have been drastic reductions and reorganization in outside business concerns, this statement remains true. One has only to analyse the payments made to executive and professional employees of local bodies, quasi-Government concerns, control boards, &c., to realize that the salaries of similar officers in the Service compare unfavourably. On the whole, I am certain that this position is recognized as inevitable at present. However, it would be a small measure of justice if the adjustment I referred to earlier were given effect to.

GENERAL QUINQUENNIAL REGRADING.

The general quinquennial regrading of officers of the Public Service was due in the ordinary course as at the 1st April, 1934.

The regrading was delayed last year on account of the economic conditions which appeared to render it difficult to establish values likely to remain reasonably constant over a further period of years.

The only practicable course, it was felt, was to postpone the regrading, as was done during the war period, when the 1918 general regrading was postponed until 1919.

The provision was made last session—that is in 1933—under section 27 of the Finance Act (No. 2), postponing the general regrading until a date to be fixed by the Governor-General by Order in Council. The provision reads as follows :—

“(1) The Governor-General may by Order in Council fix a date on which the first general regrading of officers employed in the Public Service, the Post and Telegraph Department, or the Department constituted under the Government Railways Act, 1926, shall be made after the passing of this Act, and may by the same or a subsequent Order in Council fix the date on which the several regratings shall take effect. Such last-mentioned date may be the date fixed for the making of the several regratings, or may be a date earlier or later than that date.

“(2) Every Order in Council under this section shall take effect according to its tenor, anything to the contrary in any other Act notwithstanding.”

A “ regrading ” always means an increase in expenditure. All branches of the Service look to a betterment of their salaries.

The question of determining the date from which the next regrading is to take effect has been receiving consideration, but the time does not yet appear opportune to come to a decision in the matter.