

CLASSIFICATION REVISION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Note: This summary, based on previous speeches by Mr. Love, is included in order to amplify remarks on the subject made during the discussion of collective bargaining.

The first normal system of classification and pay in the Public Service came as the result of the Civil Service Act in 1918, which gave to the Civil Service Commission the authority to bring order out of chaos. The Commission brought in Arthur Young & Company, a firm of management consultants from Chicago. After a period devoted to study and investigation, a plan was devised and, in due course, employees found that they occupied positions and that their positions had been described and analysed and grouped together in classes and grades.

Opinions vary about the system introduced at that time. Some say it imposed on the Canadian Service a highly fragmented structure of classifications from which we have been struggling ever since to escape. Others say -- and I count myself among them -- that, for its time, it was very progressive. In support of this view there is some evidence that, for a long time after its introduction, the classification plan in the Canadian Civil Service was regarded by many public and private employers in both Canada and the United States as something of a model. In any event, it seems clear that it was a great improvement over what it replaced.

It is probably fair to say that all classification systems have a tendency to "grow like Topsy", as employees and managers press for modifications and additions designed to serve a multitude of purposes. If allowed to go unchecked, the tendency is almost bound to produce an unsatisfactory result. This is what it seems to have produced rather quickly in the Canadian Service.

By 1930, the Royal Commission on Technical and Professional Services, -- known in official shorthand as the Beatty Commission -- was criticising the "very great" number of classifications, referring to the system as "unnecessarily cumbersome" and making recommendations aimed at simplification -- recommendations that were apparently never implemented.

Meanwhile, as a result of a series of decisions to exclude certain classes from the Civil Service Act, a separate system for labouring and trades classes was beginning to take shape. Governed by different principles and a different administrative mechanism, it was destined to develop in time into the present prevailing rate system.

In the 1930's and 1940's, as the country sought first to pull itself out of a major depression, then to gird itself for an all-out war and, finally, to adjust to the perils and opportunities of an uneasy peace, the