

British Civil Service Notes

War Bonus Adjustment

The figure taken for the war bonus settlement for the four months ending February 28th was 155, based on the average figure for the previous four months (158). The actual figure on October 1st was 164, and subsequent figures have been November 176, December 169, January 165, and February 151: giving a total of 661 points for the four months and an average of 165.25. Thus Civil Servants are entitled to the benefit of a further increase of two twenty-sixths of basic bonus during the six months commencing 1st March, in spite of the fact that the cost of living is going down; this being due to the fact that under the scheme, civil servants are gaining now what they lost when the tendency was in the upward direction.

As an example of the "day-to-day" business performed by the Civil Service Whitley Councils in London, the following announcement posted recently by the Ministry of Labour:—

The tenth meeting of the National Council for the Administrative and Legal Departments of the Civil Service was held at the Ministry of Labour on Friday, the 28th January, Sir Malcolm Ramsay, K.C.B., in the chair. Several changes in the membership were announced.

The final report of the Committee on the Organisation of the Civil Service was received, and it was agreed that the report should be printed. This report recorded *inter alia*, disagreement in regard to the basis for the calculation of overtime, and the Council took formal notice of this disagreement. A further disagreement on the Cost of Living Committee in regard to the pay of temporary clerical classes was also formally recorded.

The Council agreed to set up the following Committees:—(1) A Standing Committee to examine and report from time to time on any questions of general principle not covered by the recommendations of the Interim Report of the Reorganisation Committee which may emerge in the course of applying the revised scheme of reorganisation throughout the Civil Service; (2)

A series of Committees to consider certain classes of Professional, Technical, and Scientific Civil Servants. The exact scope and constitution of these Committees was left over for settlement between the Secretaries; (3) A Special Committee to elucidate the conditions, and the consequences of those conditions, which constitutionally underlie the application of the Whitley Procedure to the Civil Service.

In addition to the above formal business the Council dealt with the following matters:—1, *Receipt Stamp for Wages*.—The Official Side stated that, while there appeared to be serious difficulties in waiving the requirement of a receipt stamp for wages, no final decision had been arrived at. 2, *Acting Appointments*.—The Official Side were unable to accept certain amendments proposed from the Staff Side in regard to the arrangements for the remuneration of officers appointed to acting rank embodied in Treasury Circular E 1668 of the 9th October, 1920. 3, *Travelling and Subsistence Allowances*.—The Official Side stated that they had considered the memorandum circulated by the Staff Side and were making further enquiries into the matter. The importance of an early settlement was emphasised. 4, *Disciplinary Entries on an Officer's Record*.—The Council was unable to agree to a proposal that disciplinary entries should be expunged after a fixed period of approved service. It was stated that both for promotion and superannuation purposes it was the practice to disregard minor offences after a certain number of years' approved service, but the Official Side felt that the ultimate discretion must be left to the Head of the Department or the Treasury. 5, *Grade Committee for Staff Clerks*.—The Council considered a proposal to get up a Grade Committee to consider the application to Staff Clerks of the Reorganisation Committee's Report and the Assimilation Agreement. No agreement was reached. 6, *Communication of Treasury Circulars to the Staff*.—The Chairman stated that it was already the practice of the Treasury

to send to the Staff Side Secretaries of the National Council copies of Treasury Circulars of general interest to the Civil Service, and that in future these Circulars might be published or circulated by the Staff Side on condition that if so published they were reproduced in full.

In answer to questions from the Staff Side the Official Side made a general statement as to the progress in dealing with the departmental schemes of reorganisation, and indicated that, while they were not yet in a position to make any definite suggestions in regard to the method of dealing with the allocation of particular border-line classes as between the Industrial or Administrative Councils, they hoped that an agreed procedure would result from the informal consultations which were taking place between the Secretaries.

Mark Tapley.

The examinations for temporary officers in the Civil Service, with the idea of choosing the best for permanent employment, have not been severe, but the "general knowledge" paper brings out some curious answers. One man scored heavily through a curious incident. He had been a gardener in civil life, but, having been wounded, became a temporary clerical assistant. He was so cheerful that the others christened him "Mark Tapley." He could never understand why he had earned this name, and at Christmas, 1919, his colleagues gave him "Martin Chuzzlewit." This he read, and taking a liking to Dickens, studied his writings during 1920. The examination came, and quite a number of the questions referred to characters from Dickens' works—and "Mark Tapley" is now a permanent officer of the Crown.—*Civil Service Gazette*.

Give a man brains and riches, and he is a king.

Give a man brains without riches, and he is a slave.

Give a man riches without brains, and he is a fool.