

I think we can say that the systems of classification and pay applying to both civil servants and prevailing rate employees have had a long and chequered history, that they have been badly bruised and battered by great forces, that they have been in need of renovation for a long time.

But renovation has not come easily. It is 35 years since the Beatty Commission called for simplification. It is almost 20 years since the Gordon Commission endorsed what the Beatty Commission had said and went on to add its own plea for a simpler, more orderly structure of classes and pay grades. The record almost suggests that, in a large-scale organization like the Public Service, resistance to change is not unknown.

The fact of the matter is that the classification revision programme in which we are now caught up is the first major reform of its kind since the reclassification of 1919. Like its predecessor, the programme is associated with sweeping changes in the whole approach to personnel administration. In 1919, the change revolved around the introduction of the merit principle of appointment. In 1965 they revolved around the anticipated introduction of collective bargaining and the emphasis given, since publication of the Glassco reports, to the concept of managerial responsibility. The historian of the future may conclude that comprehensive classification and pay reforms occur only when the trouble and inconvenience they are bound to produce can be justified by the causes they serve.

Be that as it may, we are all now deeply involved in a classification revision programme that will affect perhaps 200,000 employees of the Federal Government -- civil servants, prevailing rate employees and ships' officers and crews. It is a mammoth undertaking.

Let us spend a few minutes looking at the objectives. At an early stage in its deliberations, the Preparatory Committee on Collective Bargaining recognized that, if it were to serve the emerging needs of the Public Service, the new system of classification and pay would have to have characteristics that could be clearly described and easily understood. The importance of simplicity was underlined.

The Committee concluded that the system should be designed to serve several objectives. The first was to provide a logical framework for the determination of bargaining units and the negotiation of pay rates. Of all the subjects that bargaining may touch, none is more vital than rates of pay. There must therefore be some coincidence between the class or group of employees to which a particular pay plan applies and the group for which a particular organization is certified to speak. The Committee said that the new system should be designed in such a way as to permit the required coincidence.

The second objective was to make it possible for the Government to respond flexibly to changes in outside rates of pay and, at the same time, to retain a relatively high degree of stability in the more important rate relationships between jobs within the Service. By way of explanation, I should perhaps point out that, at the extremes, there are two types of