

TABLE I

Wage of Lowest Paid Employee Related to Minimum
Living Level (MLL) for Families of Five
or Six Members

Percentage by which wage exceeds MLL or HSL	Reporting Units #
0 or Less	4
1 - 10	2
11 - 20	3
21 - 30	4
More than 30	8
Total	21

*Reporting units include in the cases of two
subsidiaries of Canadian companies wages information
submitted by branches in different locations.

Information on average monthly wage rates reflect the higher scales of remuneration paid to Black employees other than those at the minimum wage rate. When these rates are taken into account thirteen of the twenty-one units in Table I indicate average remuneration at levels 50% or more in excess of the MLL, including seven units above 75%.

Some companies pointed out that the standard reporting format did not ask for information on the maximum remuneration levels of their Black employees. Such information, they felt, would allow a more balanced presentation of pay structures and policies. Information which these companies volunteered on maximum pay rates for skilled and higher positions occupied by Black staff members ranged over rates from 144% to 469% above the MLL.

The annual process of wage increases provides companies with the occasion for the introduction of improvements in wages paid to their Black workers. The

reports of seven companies indicated a practice of giving larger annual increases to their Black workers than to their White employees. Two other companies reported giving to their Black employees recently extraordinary increases of the order of 30%. In the one case this measure was taken in spite of financial setbacks and the need for retrenchment in 1985. Two companies mentioned that the wage rates for their unionized employees were substantially higher than those negotiated during the period by their unions within the obligatory framework of the Industrial Council system.

From the point of view of improving and even maintaining remuneration levels in a period of economic recession the impact of inflation poses a particularly troublesome problem. Over the period with which this report is concerned the rate of inflation, as it affected Black family living standards varied according to locality from 11% to 17.5%. The annual wage increases of a number of companies exceeded the inflation rate. Eleven reporting units on Table I provided details that indicated that the increases granted to their employees had either just kept pace with the local rate of inflation or had fallen slightly below that rate.

My main impressions from my consultations with companies and the information they have provided on matters of remuneration in their reports are as follows:

[1] Companies are concerned to raise the wage levels of their Black and other non-White employees but if solid progress is to be maintained in real wages many companies will need to pay more attention to a satisfactory positive relation between annual wage increases and increases in the cost of living.

[2] Although relatively minor numbers of the employees of most companies are in the minimum wage category the number of companies with minimum wage rates still below the SLL standard is disappointing. Even if economic circumstances are unpropitious companies should treat the early achievement of wage levels in excess of the SLL as a matter of some urgency. This is not to imply that those companies which have the standard behind them have any reason