

of provident fund, leaving him with a net amount of Rs 93.30. This has only to be compared with his present remuneration of Rs 92.50 to establish that the immediate gain will be negligible.

In the case of lower division clerks the present pay scale is Rs 60-130, the starting basic pay is Rs 60 to which is to be added Rs 55 dearness allowance (including Rs 5 interim), Rs 12.50 compensation allowance and Rs 15 for house rent, making a total of Rs 142.59. The new scale for lower division clerks is Rs 110-180. The starting salary is Rs 110 to which is added Rs 10 as dearness allowance, the compensatory allowance is slightly less viz Rs 10 and the house rent slightly higher, Rs 20, making up a total of Rs 151. From this, compulsory contribution to the provident fund takes away Rs 6.60, leaving a net amount of Rs 111.10. This is to be compared to the present total remuneration of Rs 142.50.

With the increase in pay, holidays are to be cut down from 23 to 16, hours of work increased, casual leave reduced from 15 to 12 and earned leave also slightly restricted. In other words, what is expected is more work but, with no corresponding advantage immediately.

The merger of dearness allowance with pay will raise another problem. At present those Government servants who are provided with Government accommodation pay 10 per cent of their salary exclusive of dearness allowance as their rent. In the new scheme as there is no distinction between basic pay and dearness allowance, the house rent one has to pay will go up to the extent of 10 per cent of dearness allowance, which hereafter would form part of the regular pay, in the case of officers who are getting dearness allowance at present, i.e., those getting a salary of Rs 1000 and below. This class is also likely to lose a portion of their compensatory allowance admissible to high cost areas like Bombay and Calcutta, because under the new scheme, this allowance is a percentage of the salary, with a ceiling, and not a fixed amount for different slabs, as before. And there is also a possibility of losses, where the pay in the new scale is fixed on point-to-point basis.

When one takes all these things into consideration, it is difficult to

see how the Government can resist the claim for interim relief in lieu of the proposed amenities which form a part of the pay revision scheme but which are not likely to materialise* in the immediate future, for example, the Commission has calculated Rs 15/20 per head for the extension of contributory health service scheme. How far this scheme is workable outside Delhi is a problem by itself. But as it is admitted that the present facilities outside Delhi are unsatisfactory, it is only natural that a Government servant should be entitled to some compensation, when he cannot take advantage of the existing facilities for no fault of his.

The entire scheme of salary fixation will come to naught, unless Government employees are assured of obtaining their essential requirements, at least the food items, at reasonable prices. This follows from the Commission's decision of de-linking wages from cost of living

index. Whether this could be done through properly organised consumers' co-operatives or through any other method has to be examined carefully and the governmental assistance necessary for such an organisation is overdue.

One item on which controversy is raging is in regard to the age of retirement. The Commission's recommendation to raise it to 58 from the present 55 was based on sound considerations. Its rejection by the Government is unreasonable when the non-gazetted staff are allowed to serve upto 60. The gazetted staff whose number is infinite—imal as compared to the non-gazetted is the class whose experience Government can hardly forgo at this juncture and why they should be retired at 55 remains debatable. This is not in any way going to reduce unemployment for most of them secure employment outside Government and some times very lucrative employment.

Betrayal and Dishonesty

IT is seldom the fate of Commissions to solve issues: perhaps it is their function not to. But, as a rule, the futility of a commission comes to light after its work is finished. In the case of the Monckton Commission now being appointed by Britain to report on conditions in Central Africa — the futility is apparent from the very start.

The Monckton Commission will have 26 members, of whom 20 have already been appointed. They comprise the nominees of the British and Central African governments, two of them being appointed from Australia and Canada as "impartial" members. The six places which remain to be filled will be given to British privy councillors, three Tory and three Labour. And here a minor deadlock has developed. The Labour party has refused to associate itself with the Commission, on the ground that both its composition and terms are objectionable. If alterations are made in both, the party says it might co-operate.

The objections of the Labour party are indeed valid. The Monckton Commission, as now envisaged, is overwhelmingly loaded in favour of Federation in Central Africa. Of the 20 members so far appointed, only five are Africans; and none of

these are in any sense representative of African opinion in the Rhodesias and Nvasaland. In fact three of them are actually Government employees. The Labour party's demand is that nationalist African opinion should be adequately represented on the Commission, and should in any case be quite free to try to influence the Commission's verdict by organising political opinion in favour of its stand. Mr Macmillan has unbended so far as to allow Dr Hastings Banda and some of the oilier nationalists, who are now in detention camps, to testify before the Commission; but the demand that these leaders should be set at liberty and the bans on their

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political organisations should be lifted, has been rejected. This means that not only the Commission, but the conditions in which it will work will also be heavily loaded in favour of Federation. Pro-Federation opinion will be free to organise itself and win converts; but the nationalists will be all but gagged.

The Commission's terms of reference are no less unfair to the Africans. The Commission will be empowered to inquire into and make recommendations regarding the Redistribution of powers of the three territories and the Federal Government, and to suggest other ways of making the Federation work smoothly. To the Africans, who object to Federation in principle, this is anything but satisfactory or fair.

Here it needs to be recalled that Federation was imposed on Central Africa in 1952 in, spite of the unanimously expressed opposition of the Africans. The imposition was justified on two grounds: first, that the Africans opposed it because they did not understand it; and secondly, that there was no doubt that as the benefits of federation became clear to the Africans, and once they saw these benefits in action, their opposition would vanish, to be replaced with fervent approval. In support of this reasoning, it was declared that federation was being imposed, to begin with, for a trial period of seven years only; it would be perpetuated only if, at the end of that period, majority opinion favoured its continuation.

Well, seven years have now passed. The Federal Government has had every opportunity of proving itself in African eyes as a progressive administration and the proper instrument for translating the official policy of "racial partnership" into practice. Now the Monekton Commission should be given every opportunity of finding out how far the federal experiment has proved itself, and how much opposition against itself it has neutralised. Yet this particular inquiry — which alone would have any justification and which alone is necessary — is barred to the Commission. The continuation and perpetuation of Federation are being taken for granted; only steps to streamline it are to be considered. This is obviously unfair to the Africans, who are perfectly entitled to condemn this as a gross betrayal of solemn pro-


mises made by Britain at the time of the commencement of the federal "experiment."

The plain fact of the matter is that Federation has done to Central Africa precisely what the so-called illiterate and uninformed African opinion feared it would do. It has made nonsense of racial partnership: and it has so firmly entrenched white power in the three territories concerned that not even the British Government dare any longer upset it. Sir Roy Welensky, the Federal Prime Minister, clearly announced in Salisbury long before the Monekton Commission was appointed, or even envisaged, that if the Federation was refused perpetuation and independence next year (when a constitutional review is due) his Government would go ahead and proclaim its independence unilaterally. That is the situation

with which Mr Mecomillan is faced; and rather than risk a white revolt in Central Africa, he has preferred to appoint this white-washing and eye-washing Commission, which, by its very nature, can do nothing except oblige the white population with an "impartial" verdict in its favour.

A truly impartial Commission, with the sort of composition and terms of reference demanded by the Labour party, would expose the unpleasant fact that the Africans in Central Africa are today even more bitterly opposed to Federation than they were in 1952. Mr Macmillan therefore feels he cannot risk it. The truth about Central Africa is disastrous to white ambitions. Quite simply, therefore, preparations are being made to suppress it. The name of these dishonest preparations is the Monekton Commission.

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