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Pay Commission

THE Pay Commission's major recommendations in regard to salary revisions have been accepted by the Government of India. The Commission's job was not an easy one. It had to examine as many as 517 pay scales covering about 18 million employees. Besides, it was also asked to examine the service conditions and to recommend suitable modifications, if necessary. The recommendations to be realistic could not ignore the economic conditions in the country and the need for reasonably rapid development. To these is added the all-pervading problems of large-scale unemployment with its tendency to lead to overemployment and to depress wages. The arduousness of the task entrusted to the Commission can therefore be well imagined.

The main recommendation relates to the merging of dearness allowance with the basic pay and tie formulation of suitable scales of pay for various types of jobs, taking into consideration the present cost of living. On a first look, the principles enunciated by the Pay Commission for fixing pay scales and the actual scales prescribed would appear to be fair and reasonable. In the revision of pay of such a vast number of employees, anomalies are bound to occur and they will come to light only when the present employees are brought to the new scales.

The general approach of the Commission to the revision of pay was guided by the consideration that recruitment at different levels of persons with requisite qualifications and abilities should not suffer and that the new scale should help to maintain their efficiency. Hence the Commission's concern for amenities like housing, medical aid, facilities for the schooling of children etc and retirement benefits. These three together should satisfy the reasonable demand of Government employees. But the snag is that the proposed amenities are not likely to materialise in the near future.

The question of pay revision came up because of the rising cost of living. Cost of living has not shown any tendency yet to abate. In these circumstances, it would not be surprising if Government employees press for some immediate relief instead of relying on the promise of a more secure future on retirement. If one looks at it from that angle, one will find the immediate gains negligible.

Take, for example, the wage scales proposed for peons and lower division clerks, sav, in Bombay City which is a high-cost area and compare it with the present scale. Peons on the pay scale Rs 30-½-35, start on a basic pay of Rs 30 to which is added dearnes., allowance Rs 45 (including the interim relief of Rs 5), compensation allowance Rs 7.50 and house rent allowance, Rs 10, making up a total of Rs 92.50. In the proposed scale for peons Rs 70-85. the starting salary would be Rs 70 basic and dearness allowance of Rs 10, making up a total of Rs 80 which is the minimum basic that the Pay Commission has fixed on examination of cost of living, nutritional standards, etc. This Rs 80 should be compared with the Rs 75 in the present scale—Rs 30 pay and Rs 15 dearness allowance, The compensatory allowance and allowance for house rent remains unchanged. The total in the proposed scale, therefore, would come to Rs 97,50 as against Rs 92.50 as at present. This, however, is not the whole story, for against Rs 5 increment that the peon will get in hia total remuneration, there will be a deduction of Rs 4.20 on account