

PROCEDURE

6. Our first task was to decide on how to proceed. We have referred to the fact that our appointment had been made against a background of growing discontent within the civil service. It was therefore desirable that we report quickly. At the same time, from the material provided to us, it was clear that to comply with our terms of reference and to conduct more than a preliminary study of the problems affecting the civil service would take some considerable time.

7. Fortunately as a Standing Commission we are under no obligation to produce a single comprehensive report and as a continuing organisation there is no reason for us not to conduct preliminary reviews in the knowledge that we may make changes in the light of our experience at a future date. We therefore decided to conduct our first review in stages. We also decided that our first report should be on the key principles and practices governing the salary structure of the civil service (our term of reference I(a)).

8. Before beginning our examination of key principles and practices we were anxious to obtain the views of staff and management. Thus our next step, on 14th February 1979, was to call for representations. While not unnaturally many staff were primarily concerned with individual grade issues, over 130 representations had been received by the end of March. These representations raised a number of issues on which we believed staff and management should be further consulted and accordingly we embodied the major points in a Consultative Document¹ which was issued to the civil service on 14th May 1979. The response to this document was gratifying with over 180 submissions being received from staff and management representatives.

9. Concurrent with our study of key principles and practices we commenced our first review of individual grades. For both purposes, we divided ourselves into three Working Groups with each member serving on two of the Working Groups. By this means, it was possible, to ensure a closer examination of the representations we received than would otherwise have been the case. The Working Groups reported to the twice weekly meetings of the full Commission. By the end of June 1979 we had held 36 meetings of the full Commission and the Working Groups had met on 20 occasions.

/Also

¹ See Appendix G

10. Also, in accordance with our wish to ensure maximum consultation with staff and management we began a series of interviews and departmental visits at which both principles and practices and individual grade issues were discussed. A list of senior government officials and independent bodies met is at Appendix B, a list of contacts made with other organisations is at Appendix C, a list of departments visited is at Appendix D and a list of staff associations and group representatives who were met either by members of the Commission or its staff is at Appendix E.

11. A list of those who have submitted representations to the Commission will be included in our first report on individual grades since many of the representations are concerned with both principles and practices and individual grade issues. Representations on the latter are still being processed.

12. By 1st July 1979, we had completed our examination of the replies to the Consultative Document. The chapters which follow contain our findings and recommendations.