

Minimum Wages in the Congo (Kinshasa)

J. P. ARLÈS¹

UNDER AN ORDINANCE issued by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement Legislative Ordinance No. 66-268/A dated 30 April 1966, national minimum wages were increased by 30 per cent. and family allowances by 100 per cent.²

These two basic documents established a new system of statutory minimum wage fixing in the Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa). An order issued on 7 May 1966 by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare laid down minimum rates for wages and family allowances for the city of Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville).³ Further orders implementing the new legislation are to fix the rates for each of the 12 provinces.

These measures came into force as from 1 April 1966. Too little time has elapsed since then for us to say just how they have affected the economy as a whole and wage and salary earners in particular. The fact that this legislation is of such recent date is an *a priori* reason for exploring developments leading up to it; it is an equally good reason *a posteriori* because one realises that, far from creating a wage-fixing system out of nothing, the recent measures are the result—though not perhaps the culmination—of a long and interesting process, which falls into two main periods: before and after Congolese independence.

The first part of the present study sets out to analyse colonial legislation on minimum wages as administered until 1 May 1961 under the decree of 16 March 1922. The second part deals with the corresponding legislative provisions under the Democratic Republic of the Congo, starting with the legislative decree and ordinance of 1 February 1961, which gave rise to all manner of practical difficulties and were accordingly

¹ International Labour Office.

The article is based on official documents, in particular an I.L.O. report prepared in 1966, and on information supplied by I.L.O. experts.

² Ordinance No. 66-268/B dated 30 April 1966.

³ On 1 April 1966 various towns whose names were of European origin were renamed. Both forms will be given in the present article.

amended several times until they were ultimately replaced by the 1966 legislation. Particular consideration is given to their economic and social repercussions.

Colonial minimum wage legislation ¹

Paternalistic approach to minimum wages

The first text embodying the principle of minimum wages was the decree of 16 March 1922 on the contract of employment ², section 11 of which empowered provincial governors to prescribe minimum rates within their own administrative areas. This permissive measure became mandatory under section 6 of the decree of 30 June 1954; it was only then that a statutory minimum wage became binding throughout the country.

The remaining important provisions governing methods of wage fixing are contained in an ordinance of 6 April 1946 setting up regional and provincial native labour and social progress boards (known as TEPSI boards), a royal decree of 19 July 1954 (consolidating the decrees of March 1922 and June 1954) amended by a decree of 10 June 1958, two ordinances dated 12 December 1954 and 24 August 1955 respectively, amended in 1956, and lastly an ordinance dated 23 January 1959.

These texts applied to any worker bound by a contract of employment ³, which in practice covered all wage and salary earners in whatever economic branch. The wage-fixing machinery operated as follows: general guidelines were issued by the Governor-General. The provincial governors laid down minimum rates for each area within their respective provinces. The rates were fixed each year, the Governor-General issuing a circular at the end of the year setting out the bases on which rates were to be revised.

Provincial governors consulted the TEPSI boards before issuing the relevant orders. These boards were tripartite committees consisting of government officials and equal numbers of employers' and workers' representatives nominated by the provincial governor. They were responsible for watching the price movement of the items in a standard budget, and conditions on the employment market. The provincial governors' orders not only prescribed minimum wages proper, but also minimum rates for a worker's food ration and lodgings, the minimum remuneration thus being composed of three items.

(1) The minimum daily wage was defined by law as a sum sufficient to meet the requirements of a bachelor employee, such requirements

¹ For this part of the article see I.L.O.: *Rapport sur les salaires dans la République du Congo* (mimeographed document O.I.T./T.F./Congo/R.1) (Geneva, 1960).

² See I.L.O.: *Legislative Series*, 1931—Bel. 4 B.

³ The legislation differentiates between two types of employment contract: the "contrat de travail" applicable to Africans, and the "contrat d'emploi" applicable to non-Africans, and governed by a decree of 23 June 1949. In the present paper reference is always to the former type of contract.

being determined in accordance with local custom and, more particularly, according to the stage of development reached by the population. This was a basic wage determined by reference to a standard budget specified in an order issued by the Governor-General. The standard budget comprised miscellaneous articles and services (household equipment, bedding, clothing and entertainment). The requisite number of these items and their serviceable life were assessed, and the budget also made allowance for expenditure on taxation and a small proportion of savings (5 per cent. of the total budget).

The ability of marginal undertakings to pay was also taken into account.

An eight-hour day was assumed in the determination of wage rates, which were based on local consumer prices and differed from one province to another. The provinces themselves were each divided into a number of zones each with a different rate.

The rates were further differentiated according to whether they applied to light or heavy work (10 per cent. below or above the rate for normal work).¹ There were no differentiations on grounds of age or sex.

(2) The employer was bound to supply the employees with an adequate ration of wholesome food. A different ration was specified for each of the three work categories: light, normal, and heavy. Subject to the approval of the district commissioner, the employer was entitled to pay the worker a food allowance equal to not less than the retail price of the foodstuffs comprised in the ration.

(3) Accommodation was the third item in minimum remuneration. The decree of 1922 bound the employer to supply suitable lodging and sleeping equipment according to precisely defined standards. Here again the employer was at liberty to fulfil his part of the obligation by paying a lodging allowance, so calculated as to defray the lodging costs of a married worker at average prices for the region. As in the case of food, the employer could be compelled to fulfil his accommodation obligations in kind.

It is difficult to form a clear idea of the total minimum remuneration, because the zones differed so widely and in so many respects. In 1960 it lay somewhere between 18 and 22 francs a day in nearly 50 per cent. of the geographical zones, the lowest rate being 13.7 francs and the highest 45.2 francs.²

For similar reasons it is not altogether easy to determine the relative importance of each of the three constituent items in the total remuneration. In the words of an I.L.O. mission to the Congo: "Taking the Congo as a whole, the food ration and the lodging allowance represent roughly

¹ Light work was defined as work requiring only slight physical exertion and no special skill or previous experience.

² See *Rapport sur les salaires* . . . , op. cit., p. 145.

33 and 12 per cent. of the minimum bachelor wage respectively. Thus for a family with two children that is in receipt of family allowances the daily minimum wage represents no more than 35 per cent. of the total minimum remuneration and family allowances combined".¹ Although remuneration was not automatically tied to the cost-of-living index, in fact the rate of remuneration was closely affected by fluctuations in the level of retail prices, since officials submitted annual price reports to the regional and provincial TEPSI boards. Acting on the recommendations of these boards the provincial governor was entitled to fix new rates for each item of remuneration.

The provisions governing minimum remuneration were a matter of public law; no exceptions were permitted either by means of individual contract or collective agreement. Supervisory powers were vested in labour inspectors, law officers and district officials.

The law made provision for the worker to recover sums due to him in case of underpayment, and also to sue for termination of contract.

Provincial governors' ordinances fixing minimum remuneration were first issued in 1946. The findings of the I.L.O. experts who visited the Congo in 1960 enable us to survey the development of the system, its practical application and economic and social repercussions.

Practical application of the minimum remuneration system up to independence

The first point one notes is that the system was complicated and difficult to put into practice.

(1) The criterion of a standard budget, which is vague in itself and difficult to apply, did not in practice do all that was expected of it in determining minimum wages.² Although it was frequently discussed at length by the TEPSI boards, the discussions lacked the most elementary tool (a methodical study of employees' consumer habits); they side-stepped the real problem, for no one gave a moment's thought to "how keen employees really were to purchase a given article, or, supposing that they were, whether they were interested in obtaining the quantity and quality suggested" ³; they were vitiated from the start by the fact that the government officials, who formed the predominant element on the boards, came to them with a preconceived idea of the wage rates to be applied.

In practice the minimum wage was determined to a much greater extent by the administration than by reference to the standard budget;

¹ *Rapport sur les salaires . . .*, op cit., p. 20.

² "When they were first introduced, minimum wage rates in some parts of the country were no more than 40 per cent. of what they would have been if calculated on the basis of the standard budget." (G. DUPRIEZ: "La rémunération minimum légale", in *Cahiers économiques et sociaux* (Leopoldville (Kinshasa), Université Lovanium), Vol. III, No. 4, Dec. 1965, p. 455.)

³ See *Rapports sur les salaires . . .*, op. cit., p. 49.

it was influenced primarily by official wishes to improve the wage earners' living conditions. Occasionally, in certain circumstances and areas, these wishes were modified by pressure either from employers' organisations or from workers' organisations in so far as the latter were sufficiently strong and representative.

Indeed it was under the combined impetus of the workers' organisations and the desire of the administration to raise minimum wages that the criterion of a standard budget developed: there was a move away from the idea of a "bachelor budget" to that of a "family budget" calculated in the light of the requirements of a married employee (ordinance of 8 October 1966). The Governor-General encouraged provincial governors to draw up budgets on these lines; it was not yet a fully accepted formula, but the objective was to steer minimum wages toward the sum represented by the family budget, also known as "ideal budget". From reports submitted to the I.L.O. on the application of the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928, it is clear that from 1957 onwards provincial governors were fixing minimum rates on that basis.

(2) The workers' minimum remuneration, comprising payment in cash and payment totally or partially in kind, was itself a complicating factor. The system of "paternalistic protection" was based on the idea that the lowest-paid worker was incapable of doing the simple sums necessary to manage his budget. When the "comprehensive wage" was introduced (entitling the employer to include the minimum daily wage and the food allowance in a single monthly payment but retaining the lodging allowance as an additional item), it was applied—not unnaturally—only to "the more advanced employees... [who] in practice already earn relatively high wages".¹

The I.L.O. expert mission to the Congo proposed that, in future, remuneration should not be itemised, partly as a measure of simplification but also in order to "induce in the employees a greater awareness of the value of personal effort in their work".²

This proposal was in line with developments that had begun in 1958-59 with the approval of all the parties (administration, employers and workers). The fact was that (a) employers were paying the workers their food and lodging allowances less and less in kind and increasingly in the form of cash equivalents³; and (b) the system of a comprehensive wage, hitherto regarded as an exception in minimum wage fixing, became widespread from 1958 onwards.⁴

¹ Letter from the Governor-General dated 1 September 1958.

² See *Rapport sur les salaires* . . . , op. cit., p. 62.

³ The I.L.O. mission noted that "by the beginning of 1959, it could be reckoned that no more than 25 per cent. of the wage earners working in establishments inspected by Ministry of Labour officials were in receipt of a food allowance in kind". See *Rapport sur les salaires* . . . , op. cit., p. 17.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

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When the Government decided to raise the total minimum remuneration by 30 per cent. on 7 July 1960 it was stipulated that the increase should be incorporated in the wage proper, whether or not the two allowances (for food and lodging) were paid in kind.¹

The changing ratios of the three constituent items of remuneration, shown in table I, bring out the increasing importance attached to the wage proper.

TABLE I. RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE THREE ELEMENTS
IN MINIMUM REMUNERATION, 1956 AND 1960
(Percentages)

Province and zone	1956				1960			
	Total remuneration	Wage	Food ration	Lodging	Total remuneration	Wage	Food ration	Lodging
Leopoldville:								
Leopoldville (Kinshasa) . . .	100	48.7	39.7	11.6	100	54.9	29.2	15.9
interior	100	56.0	40.0	4.0	100	58.9	32.4	8.7
Equateur:								
Coquilhatville (Mbandaka) . .	100	44.6	44.6	10.8	100	49.3	39.3	11.4
interior	100	57.3	35.6	7.1	100	61.2	26.5	12.3
Orientale:								
Stanleyville (Kisangani) . . .	100	48.6	40.6	10.8	100	48.0	36.4	15.6
interior	100	59.4	34.3	6.4	100	56.9	35.9	7.2
Kivu:								
Bukavu	100	41.5	45.2	13.3	100	48.1	32.6	19.3
interior	100	61.2	35.9	2.9	100	62.1	35.0	2.9
Katanga:								
Elisabethville (Lubumbashi) . .	100	44.3	44.1	11.6	100	48.8	31.9	19.3
interior	100	51.1	41.7	7.2	100	54.3	34.8	10.9
Kasaï:								
Luluabourg	100	46.9	43.7	9.4	100	53.9	33.8	12.3
interior	100	52.1	43.2	4.7	100	62.5	31.8	5.7

Source: I.L.O.: *Rapport sur les salaires dans la République du Congo* (mimeographed document O.I.T./T.F./Congo/R.1) (Geneva, 1960), p. 135.

It will be noted that with the exception of Orientale province the proportion of total remuneration represented by the wage proper was on the increase.

¹ See DUPRIEZ, op. cit., p. 457.

Whenever remuneration is composed of a wage and other items, it is important that the percentage represented by the latter should be low; otherwise the link between a worker's wage and his productivity may become too tenuous and the system of incentives ineffective.

(3) Other unsatisfactory features were the way the advisory bodies worked and the unrepresentativeness of their members. The TEPSI boards did play an important part but not in their character of joint bodies. They were already losing their influence when the I.L.O. expert mission arrived in the Congo at the beginning of 1960.¹ This was mainly due to their complex organisation and to their membership.

One regional board had been set up in each district and one provincial board in each province. In practice this resulted in a good deal of overlap as to both responsibilities and personnel.

As for the membership of the TEPSI boards, its weakness lay in the disproportionate number of officials and in the fact that the worker members were not sufficiently representative.

On the provincial boards it was by no means rare to see a dozen officials seated with eight or nine employers' and workers' representatives. The latter were chosen by the governor, and while the employer members may well have been representative, this could not be said of the worker members.

In this connection the I.L.O. mission noted that "the workers seem for the most part to have been dignitaries and relatively well-paid office and clerical staff, not infrequently seated opposite their own employers, at least on the regional boards".² The trade unions, which were not officially recognised until 1957, were represented belatedly and even then in symbolic fashion only.

At the National Labour Conference held on 15 February 1960 employers and workers agreed that the TEPSI boards should gradually disappear and that, in the interim, the working methods and representativity of the board members should be reformed; they felt that the boards were not the ideal instrument for determining minimum wage rates.³

(4) Enforcement was further hampered by the unwieldy and complex system of rates. According to the table showing changes in rates from 1956 to 1960⁴, on 1 January 1960 there were more than one hundred different minimum remuneration rates in force in 257 geographical zones. In many cases the span was fairly slight: for example, as will be seen from the table below⁵, in nearly 50 per cent. of the zones concerned the rate lay between 18 and 22 francs.

¹ See *Rapport sur les salaires* . . . , op. cit., p. 67.

² Ibid., p. 187.

³ Ibid., p. 188.

⁴ Ibid., Appendix II, p. 123.

⁵ Ibid., p. 145.

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Total minimum remuneration rate	Percentage of geographical zones operating the rate
<i>(On 1 January 1960)</i>	
Under 18 francs	19
18-22 francs	47
22-26 francs	17
26-30 francs	11
Over 30 francs	6

It may be added that in 34 per cent. of the zones the rate lay between 19 and 21 francs¹ and that in the large urban areas and industrial centres minimum levels were substantially higher—between 35 and 45 francs.²

The whole system was illogical; there were a great many very minor variations not to be accounted for by economic or social differences but due rather to imperfect co-ordination between the authorities at the national and provincial levels. Even where total remuneration was identical, wide divergences existed between the relative importance of the three constituent items (wage proper, food allowance, and lodging allowance). The I.L.O. mission laid particular stress on the need to streamline the system.

Although the differentials related to geographical considerations were extremely numerous, they were applied to all workers, irrespective of age, sex, qualifications, or branch of activity. As mentioned earlier, the only difference made was a very slight one as between the rates for light and heavy work respectively. In practice the rates for light work were applied to women and young workers. The I.L.O. experts held the smallness of the differential (10 per cent.) responsible for worsening the unemployment situation among young people: since the difference between their wages and those of adult workers was too slight to compensate for their lower output, the employers had no incentive to engage young workers.

Effects of the system of minimum remuneration up to independence

THE WAGES EARNERS' STANDARD OF LIVING

Given the inadequacy of the statistical information available, it is by no means easy to trace the movement of minimum wage rates. However, the following useful pointers emerge from the surveys carried out by the I.L.O. experts when they visited the Congo: taking 1950=100, by 1959 the index of minimum wages had risen to 200 in rural and 250 in

¹ See *Rapport sur les salaires* . . . , Appendix II, p. 19.

² See DUPRIEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

urban zones; farmers' incomes (at current prices) had risen to 140, and the consumer price index to 124.¹

These upward trends resulted in a fairly rapid rise in the living standard of workers earning the minimum rate: in 1950 in the rural areas their incomes were about half that of a farmer who was head of a household; in 1960 the I.L.O. experts noted that the average yearly income of a labourer in receipt all the year round (275 working days) of the minimum remuneration and family allowances amounted to roughly 6,000 francs, which came very close to that enjoyed by a self-employed farmer.² The experts accordingly concluded that "if successive increases in minimum wages were designed to enable the wage earner to maintain his family in no less comfort than a village family, that objective may be said to have been attained".³

The urban wage earner was still better off, since minimum wage rates went up by 150 per cent. between 1950 and 1960 as against only 100 per cent. in the rural areas.

Real wages and incomes are impossible to calculate, and the price index quoted is only provided for illustrative purposes; because of its limited application it can hardly be considered valid for the rural areas.

MINIMUM WAGES, ACTUAL WAGES AND THE WAGE STRUCTURE

Reports by the labour inspectorate show that in 1959 the daily wages paid to almost half of all the workers were not more than 10 per cent. higher than the minimum daily wage rate for a standard worker.⁴ Actual wages in fact "showed a marked tendency to hover near the official rate".⁵

In some areas, particularly those where there were plantations, the two rates practically coincided: minimum wages were in fact actually paid.⁶ Elsewhere the differences between the two rates were generally very small.

This emerges clearly from the figures given below, despite the sparse and vague nature of the data. Average monthly wages in 1959 were as follows:⁷

¹ See *Rapport sur les salaires . . .*, op. cit., p. 149 (rural zones), p. 147 (urban zones), p. 147 (farmers' income), and p. 22 (consumer prices, the index being the one used to adjust the wages of established public service employees).

² Ibid., pp. 140, 145 and 147.

³ Ibid., p. 148.

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ See DUPRIEZ, op. cit., p. 456.

⁶ See *Rapport sur les salaires . . .*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁷ Wages estimated on the basis of contributions to the Workers' Pension Fund in February 1959. See *ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

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Branch of activity	Average monthly wage (francs)
Agriculture	598
Preparation and processing of food- stuffs	893
Mines	971
Commerce	952
Construction	920
Textiles	1 059
Transport	1 236
Over-all average	901
<i>Average excluding agriculture</i>	<i>1 010</i>

Minimum total monthly remuneration at that period ranged between 303 and 1,023 francs.¹ It would be fair to say that, at a rough estimate, in the rural areas in 1960 the minimum daily rate of 18 to 20 francs corresponded to an average monthly wage of about 475 francs for 25 working days and an income of about 550 francs, counting family allowances (3 francs per day per child). Rates paid in urban zones were for the most part 50 to 150 per cent. higher than those in rural zones, ranging between 700 and 1,200 francs.

The movement of minimum wages and that of actual wages can be compared by looking at the following indices for 1958, which are based on the report of the I.L.O. mission to the Congo: taking 1950=100, the index of minimum wages was 200 for rural and 250 for urban zones; on the same basis the index of actual wages, measured in terms of labour costs per worker in firms employing more than 500 persons, was 243, whereas the index of annual earnings per employee, calculated on the basis of the proportion of the national income represented by wages, was 238.

Actual wages follow a pattern similar to that of minimum wages, and the I.L.O. experts noted that the former responded to changes in the latter. They also noted that increases in minimum rates even had an impact on the wages paid by firms that habitually applied appreciably higher rates²; a further point noted was that even if other factors could in theory account for the upward trend of wages in relation to national income—showing a 138 per cent. increase in average annual earnings per worker between 1950 and 1958—in practice the main reason for it seems to have been the improvement in minimum rates.³

The impact of the minimum wage rate on the general wage level was largely determined by the extent of the gap between the two, and the same was therefore also true of the Government's intervention in the preparation and application of wage policies.

¹ See *Rapport sur les salaires . . .*, op.cit., p. 43.

² Ibid., pp. 22-23.

³ Ibid., p. 150.

When the two levels were very close to each other the slightest change in the statutory minimum rate affected a large proportion of the wage earners and triggered off a series of changes in actual wages; to use a metaphor, a "domino effect" may be said to have operated. This converted the minimum wage into a basic wage, which served as a point of departure for the calculation of wage levels and structure. Since the Government was empowered to fix and alter minimum rates, it was able to control the movement of wages as a whole.

The minimum wage was the keystone of wages policy in the Congo. Since it was based on a paternalistic concept (criterion of the "standard budget", and splitting of remuneration into three elements), which concealed from the worker the link between his output and his pay, it was largely responsible for the irrational and uneconomic wage structure.

The result was that differences in levels of skill, responsibility and output were not adequately reflected in the wage scale. There was no incentive for workers at the bottom of the scale to increase their productivity or to acquire fresh skills, since their extra effort would go unrewarded.

A minimum wage based on economic criteria, applying only to the least skilled and least privileged workers, and pitched further from the general wage level, would have given employers greater latitude in the remuneration of varying degrees of output, responsibility and skill.

Not only were the official minimum wages responsible for an uneconomic occupational wage structure; they also gave rise to an uneconomic geographical structure. Thus in 1958 the total annual income of an adult male worker in the traditional agricultural sector was assessed at not far short of 6,000 francs, whereas the average income of a salaried employee or manual worker was 12,790 francs. This difference was largely due to the higher minimum wage rates in force in the urban zones.¹ The highest urban minimum wage rate was 2.5 times greater than the lowest rural wage in the province of Leopoldville (Kinshasa) but it was only 1.5 times greater in Equateur province.² This system encouraged migration from the rural areas. The influx of workers into the towns outran the numbers of vacancies, and the problem was aggravated by the fact that these workers had neither the skills nor the work habits that they needed if they were to adapt themselves to an urban and industrial environment.

Minimum wage legislation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Legislation from 1961 to 1966

With the advent of independence new social legislation came into force, which had as its prime object the complete abolition of racial

¹ See *Rapport sur les salaires . . .*, op. cit., p. 149.

² Ibid., p. 148.

discrimination in the field of employment relationships. Such was the spirit of the legislative decree respecting contracts for the hire of services, dated 1 February 1961¹, which abrogated the two previous decrees on the same subject (the decree of 25 June 1949, which applied only to foreign citizens, and the decree of 19 July 1954, which applied to Natives of the Congo). The new laws were drafted by experts and were thoroughly thrashed out by an advisory committee on labour questions, which was a tripartite body composed of representatives of government, employers and workers.

Turning to section 35 of the legislative decree and its supplementary ordinance (No. 5 dated 1 February 1961) making provision for the implementation of the decree, we find it stipulated that the amount of the remuneration was to be freely determined by the parties but that such remuneration was to be not less than the fixed minimum rate.

Section 10 of the ordinance specified the methods and criteria to be applied in determining the minimum wage. Minimum wages were fixed by the provincial government on the recommendation of the TEPSI board. The statutory minimum wage of an ordinary labourer was designed to cover (i) the minimum needs of a household comprising two persons; (ii) the elements of a wholesome diet for two persons; and (iii) suitable housing.

Rates were adapted to the varying skills of the workers, who were graded as follows: (i) labourers; (ii) semi-skilled; and (iii) skilled. The differentials were carefully laid down, the statutory rates for semi-skilled and skilled workers being respectively 150 and 200 per cent. of that for labourers.

The practice of grading wages was introduced to put a stop to the previous practice of paying a labourer's wage to a semi-skilled, or even a skilled worker, if he was the head of a household and in receipt of a family allowance.²

The new legislation retained the distinction between light and heavy work and variations in regional rates; however, henceforward governors were entitled to fix no more than four wage rates for ordinary labourers throughout their province. As there were at that time six provinces, this imposed an upper limit of 24 rates.

Special rates were laid down for young workers: for those aged 14 to 16 years the minimum was fixed at 60 per cent. of the minimum rate for labourers doing light work, and for those aged 16 to 18 years at 80 per cent.

The explanatory report on the decree of 1 February 1961 recognised that "it is in the interests of progress and simplification to fix a com-

¹ I.L.O.: *Legislative Series*, 1961—Congo (Leo.) 1.

² See A. DOUCY: *Matériaux pour servir à l'étude des aspects économiques et sociaux de neuf provinces de la République du Congo (anciennes Provinces de Léopoldville, de l'Equateur et orientale)* (dossier établi à la demande du B.I.T.) (Brussels, 1963), p. 212.

prehensive remuneration". This meant the end of the breakdown of remuneration into three separate items and was in conformity with the wishes of employers and employees alike.

Section 37 of the decree accordingly stipulated that remuneration should be paid in cash; the food ration should be paid in kind in exceptional cases only, subject to the worker's consent and as prescribed by the provincial government; the employer might discharge his liability in respect of the third item of remuneration by supplying housing of a specified standard. In all cases where such allowances were paid in kind, the equivalent value as fixed by the competent provincial authority was to be deducted from the remuneration.

In addition, the new legislation improved on existing arrangements for enforcement and for penalties in the event of contraventions. The decree imposed a liability on employers to keep a pay register for each worker, to be checked and initialled by the labour inspector; contraventions of its provisions were made punishable by fines.

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

Section 10 of the ordinance of 1 February 1961 immediately aroused the opposition of the employers' representatives, in whose eyes the grading system was oversimplified and the three categories were "too far apart". Employers found that their wages bills grew much heavier just when the country's economy was taking an upward turn¹; the ordinance itself was to be suspended only a few months after it had come into force; as for section 10, it was to be repeatedly amended.

The "chequered history" of section 10 is worth retracing because of the light it throws on an important development: although the notion of strict central control underlay their initial wages policy, the legislators were led bit by bit to adopt more liberal ideas and gradually to reduce government intervention in this sphere.²

In brief, the main legislative landmarks of this sequence of events were as follows:

(1) Ordinance No. 46 of 7 July 1961, section 1, amended section 10 of the February ordinance: it prescribed that provincial governments should no longer fix minimum daily remuneration except for "ordinary workers"; in other words, rate-fixing for semi-skilled and skilled workers was abandoned. Section 2 suspended section 10 as amended, and section 3 ordered a general 30 per cent. increase in minimum total remuneration for an interim period.

(2) Ordinance No. 88 of 22 April 1963 repealed the previous ordinance and then went on to re-enact almost the same provisions with

¹ See DOUCY, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-210.

² See G. DUPRIEZ: "La législation congolaise du travail, facteur de paix sociale?", in *Cahiers économiques et sociaux*, Vol. II, No. 4, Dec. 1964, p. 354.

one simplification, however, namely that the number of rates was now to be restricted to three per province. This simplification was more than offset by the new division of the territory into 21 provinces instead of the previous six. In addition, it authorised an increase in total remuneration, not exceeding 25 per cent.

(3) Ordinance No. 275 of 26 November 1963 abolished the distinction between light, ordinary and heavy work hitherto used in the grading of labourers and authorised a fresh increase, again not exceeding 25 per cent.

(4) Ordinance No. 106 of 23 April 1964, the most important provision of which was a general occupational classification, contained a new version of section 10.

The competence of the provincial authorities in minimum wage fixing, which had hitherto held the field alone, would appear to have been considerably reduced by section 1, paragraph 1, which confines it "within the limits laid down by the Minister of Labour".

This was accompanied by the abandonment of the "standard budget" as a basis for minimum wage fixing—giving official sanction to a *de facto* situation; as already noted, on two occasions general uniform increases had already been unilaterally decided. Since the TEPSI boards had already been abolished, all that remained until 1966 of the minimum wage fixing system was a temporary arrangement whereby a generally applicable minimum wage could be fixed within limits prescribed by the central authority.

MINIMUM WAGES AND ACTUAL WAGES FROM 1960 TO 1966

Table II gives the movements of minimum remuneration rates between June 1960 and April 1966 in the various provinces of the Congo; it reflects the new administrative pattern of the territory and shows two rates for each province: the highest rate (applied in the chief town of the province) and the lowest rate (applied in rural zones).

We have already noted that until 1960 the level of wages actually paid kept very close to that of minimum wages. It emerges from the study by G. Dupriez that this parallel development continued up to the middle of 1964 but that "after mid-1964 and during 1965 trade union pressure caused undertakings gradually to readjust the wages they actually paid their staff".¹

This assertion can be verified in respect of Leopoldville (Kinshasa) (see table III). A series of statistics on hourly wages in selected occupations in 1965 is available and this can be compared with figures for minimum wages. The minimum rate in force for that year is known to have been 133 francs per day; since under Congolese law minimum

¹ See DUPRIEZ: "La rémunération minimum légale", *op. cit.*, p. 461.

TABLE II. MINIMUM DAILY REMUNERATION RATES FOR ORDINARY
LABOURERS BY PROVINCE, JUNE 1960 TO APRIL 1966
(*Francs*)

Province and zone	June 1960	July 1960	July 1961	Apr. 1963	Oct. 1963	Apr. 1966
City of Leopoldville (Kinshasa)	45.20	58.50	85	106	133	173
Kongo-Central:						
Matadi	34.90	45.35	67	84	93	130
Provincial minimum . . .	22.60	30	45	56	71	94
Bandundu ¹ :						
Kikwit	22.80	29.65	43	54	68	94
Provincial minimum . . .	17.20	22.35	34	43	54	69
Sud-Katanga ² :						
Elisabethville (Lubumbashi)	38.90	45	57	98	123	173
Provincial minimum . . .	23.30	30	37	68	85	130
Kasai-Occidental ³ :						
Luluabourg	26	—	50	63	79	109
Provincial minimum . . .	17.60	—	33	41	61	81
Sud-Kivu ⁴ :						
Bukavu	27	35	51	64	80	109
Provincial minimum . . .	14.10	18.10	27	34	42	69
Nord-Kivu:						
Goma	23.70	31.20	45	56	70	84
Provincial minimum . . .	13.70	17.70	24	33	41	69
Nord-Katanga:						
Albertville	28.60	35.50	44	70	88	109
Provincial minimum . . .	23	30	37	54	70	94
Kasai-Oriental ⁵ :						
Port Francqui (M'Buji-Mayi)	20.20	—	—	82	82	109
Provincial minimum . . .	14.30	—	19.20	29	39	81
Haut-Congo:						
Stanleyville (Kisangani) . .	38.50	50	54	93	116	151
Provincial minimum . . .	19.80	25.80	27.56	47	59	81
Uélé:						
Paulis (Isiro)	25	32.40	34.60	59	74	94
Provincial minimum . . .	18.60	24.20	25.72	44	55	69
Equateur ⁶ :						
Coquilhatville (Mbandaka) .	26.40	—	69	86	95	130
Provincial minimum . . .	18.40	—	34	49	58	81
Kibali-Ituri:						
Bunia	22.70	29.60	31.64	53.95	67	94
Provincial minimum . . .	16.30	21.20	22.76	39	45	69

Source: Based on figures supplied by an I.L.O. expert in Kinshasa, June 1966.

¹ Combining the former provinces of Lac Léopold II, Kwilu and Kwango. ² Combining the former provinces of Katanga-Oriental and Lualaba. ³ Combining the former provinces of Sankuru, Luluabourg and Unité Kasafenne. ⁴ Combining the former provinces of Maniema and Kivu-Central. ⁵ Combining the former provinces of Lomani and Sud Kasai. ⁶ Combining the former provinces of Ubangi, Moyen-Congo and the Cuvette centrale.

Minimum Wages in the Congo (Kinshasa)

TABLE III. HOURLY WAGES OF ADULT WAGE EARNERS IN SELECTED
OCCUPATIONS AND THEIR RELATION TO THE STATUTORY MINIMUM WAGE,
LEOPOLDVILLE (KINSHASA), OCTOBER 1965

Branch and occupation	Average hourly rate	
	In francs	As a percentage of minimum rate
<i>Textiles :</i>		
Spinners (male)	22.50	135
Labourers	20.00	120
<i>Furniture :</i>		
Cabinet-makers	33.00	198
<i>Machine manufacture :</i>		
Fitters	60.00	361
Labourers	24.60	148
<i>Construction :</i>		
Plumbers	26.00	156
Labourers	19.00	114
<i>Transport :</i>		
Drivers	32.50	195
<i>Municipal services :</i>		
Labourers	22.00	132

Source: Figures for average hourly wage rates are taken from *Bulletin of Labour Statistics* (Geneva, I.L.O.), 1966, 2nd quarter, results of the inquiry of October 1965, Part I, p. 97.

remuneration relates to an eight-hour working day, the minimum hourly rate must have been 16.62 francs.

Before commenting on table III, it is fair to call attention to one point which detracts from the comparison: this is the fact that whereas the statutory remuneration for labourers relates to labourers in category 1, grade 1, the figures given in the results of the October Inquiry fail to show which category is meant.¹

Apart from this, the range of wages gives every appearance of widening. In the first place, at the bottom of the scale the average rate for labourers in several industries seems to break away fairly sharply from the statutory minimum rate: in the construction sector it is 14 per cent. higher; in textiles, 20 per cent.; in municipal services, 32 per cent.; and in machine manufacture, 48 per cent. In the second place, the wage

¹ Ordinance No. 106 dated 23 July 1964, which instituted the general job classification, made the following distinctions:

- Category I: labourer (two grades): 1. ordinary labourer
- 2. heavy labourer
- „ II: specialised labourer
- „ III: semi-skilled worker (three grades)
- „ IV: skilled worker (two grades)
- „ V: highly skilled worker.

structure comes closer to reflecting variations in skill; the average wage rate is 150 per cent. of the statutory minimum rate in the case of plumbers, almost 200 per cent. in the case of drivers and cabinet-makers, and as much as 360 per cent. in the case of fitters.

Lack of data makes it impossible to extrapolate for other parts of the country. The study by G. Dupriez pointed out that the upward movement of wages actually paid occurred "imperceptibly" in Leopoldville (Kinshasa), "more suddenly" in Elisabethville (Lubumbashi) and in the rest of Katanga, and "belatedly and only partially" in other parts of the country.¹

TABLE IV. MINIMUM NOMINAL AND REAL WAGES FOR AN UNMARRIED WORKER IN TSHELA (MAYUMHE), KONGO-CENTRAL, JUNE 1960 TO DECEMBER 1965

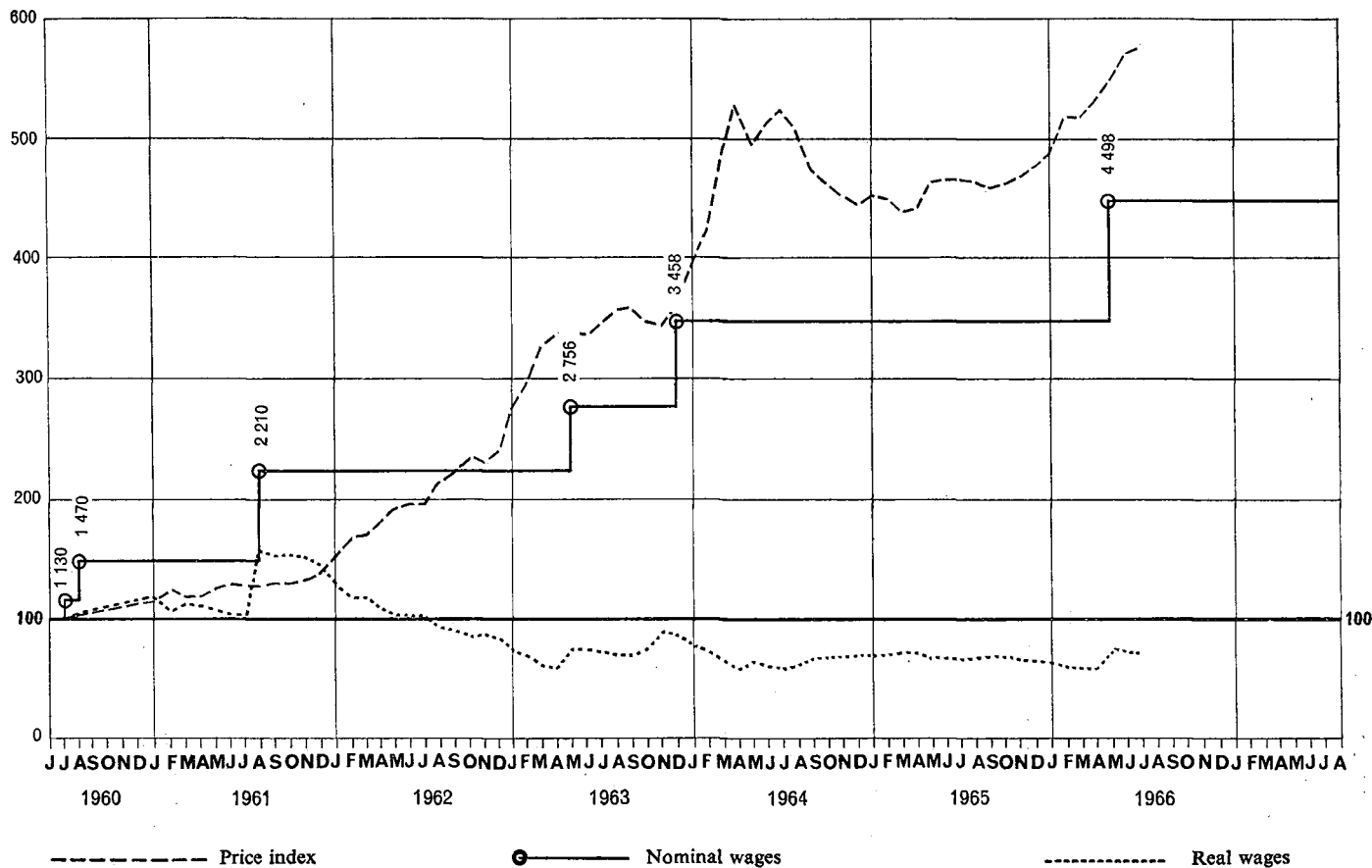
Year and month ¹	Price index ²	Nominal wage		Real wage index
		Francs per month	Index	
1960: June	100	620	100	100
July	100	806	130	130
Dec.	118	—	—	110
1961: June	149	—	—	87
July	149	1 274	205	138
Sep.	153	—	—	134
Dec.	166	—	—	123
1962: Mar.	184	—	—	111
May	204	—	—	100
Oct.	211	—	—	97
Dec.	224	—	—	92
1963: Mar.	263	—	—	78
June	291	1 586	256	88
Sep.	292	—	—	88
Dec.	340	2 054	331	97
1964: Mar.	448	—	—	74
June	505	—	—	66
Sep.	440	—	—	75
Dec.	409	—	—	81
1965: Mar.	431	—	—	77
June	447	—	—	74
Sep.	458	—	—	72
Dec.	470	—	—	70

Sources: DUPRIEZ: "La rémunération minimum légale", op. cit., p. 467; and "Index des prix de détail à Kinshasa, Elisabethville et Tshela, 1964-66", in *Cahiers économiques et sociaux*, Vol. IV, No. 3, Oct. 1966, p. 370.

¹ The months included in the table are those for which price data were available; it follows that increases in income are not always shown against the month from which they became effective.

² The price index is based on prices paid by the workers in a large agricultural company, these being the controlled prices charged in company stores.

¹ See DUPRIEZ: "La rémunération minimum légale", op. cit., p. 461.



Sources: G. DUPRIEZ: "La rémunération minimum légale", op. cit., p. 464; and "Index des prix de détail à Kinshasa, Elisabethville et Tshela, 1964-66", in *Cahiers économiques et sociaux*, Vol. IV, No. 3, Oct. 1966, p. 370.

Note: The price index is an unweighted index of prices in markets; it is regarded as typical of the trend in uncontrolled prices; it covers a wide range of food items and semi-durables.

PURCHASING POWER OF THE MINIMUM WAGE FROM 1960 TO 1966

A complete survey of changes in real minimum wages throughout the Congo is impossible in the absence of reliable information covering the country as a whole. The trends described below relate only to minimum remuneration and prices in Kinshasa (Leopoldville) and Tshela in Kongo-Central. In the diagram and table IV daily rates of remuneration have been converted into monthly rates by multiplying them by 26 (since 1 February 1961 each month has included 26 paid days compared with 25 previously).

The diagram and table IV show that the 30 per cent. increase in minimum rates prescribed by the Congolese Government as a general measure just after independence was accompanied by a real increase in the labourer's purchasing power. This state of affairs held good for some time though it deteriorated little by little as prices rose. It lasted longer in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) than in Tshela: by June 1961 the price index in the former had risen by only 27 per cent., whereas in Tshela it had gone up by 49 per cent. The fact that improved purchasing power persisted for as long as it did is due to the fact that when it attained independence the Congo had considerable stocks of goods to fall back on and this prevented prices from shooting up; since the city of Leopoldville (Kinshasa) had better sources of supply, it was there that real wages dropped more gradually.

In an attempt to maintain the purchasing power of the minimum wage the Government decreed a fresh increase in July 1961; the increase in the nominal wage was fairly swiftly absorbed by rising prices; in May 1962 the real wage index was back to its June 1960 level in both towns; from that point onwards it continued to drop below 100, and despite the two wage increases in 1963 it failed to catch up again. In 1963 purchasing power began to respond better to increases in nominal wages. On 9 November 1963 the Government decided to devalue the currency. This dealt a heavy blow to the purchasing power of wage earners, who saw the prices of home-produced goods and of their "canteen" purchases rise steeply. (Canteens are company stores, where workers are entitled to buy specified quantities of home-produced or imported goods at controlled prices.) Indices remained stable in 1964 and 1965, years in which no action was taken with regard to minimum wages; but the position of the worker in receipt of no more than the minimum living wage continued to worsen: by March 1966 the price index (June 1960=100) had gone up by 430 per cent. in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) while that of the nominal wage had only gone up by 206 per cent. The most recent increase to date, ordered on 30 April 1966, succeeded to some extent in raising the purchasing power of the minimum wage. Even so, the real wage index in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) (June 1960=100) had fallen to 72 by April 1966 and had started to slip back again in May and June.

Minimum Wages in the Congo (Kinshasa)

WAGES AND THE NATIONAL INCOME

To end our survey of this period we give some information on wages as a proportion of the national income.

As will be seen from table V, the wages earned by Africans as a proportion of the national income increased between 1959 and 1964 from 29.7 to 34.4 per cent.; a corresponding decrease took place in the proportion represented by wages earned by non-Africans—it dropped heavily from 26.3 per cent. in 1959 to only 8.5 per cent. in 1964. However, as the African share did not rise in the same proportion as the non-African share fell, the ratio of African and non-African wages combined (56 per cent. of the national income in 1959) shrank to 51.4 per cent. in 1962 and to 42.9 per cent. in 1964.

TABLE V. TOTAL WAGES IN FRANCS AND AS A PROPORTION OF THE NATIONAL INCOME, 1959 TO 1964

(At current prices)

Item	1959		1961		1962		1964	
	Thou- sand million francs	Per- centage	Thou- sand million francs	Per- centage	Thou- sand million francs	Per- centage	Thou- sand million francs	Per- centage
National income .	48.2	100	48.5	100	78.6	100	167.3	100
All wages	27.0	56.0	27.7	57.1	40.4	51.4	71.8	42.9
of which :								
Africans' wages .	14.3	29.7	18.6	38.3	35.6	45.3	57.6	34.4
Non-Africans' wages	12.7	26.3	9.1	18.8	4.8	6.1	14.2	8.5

Source: République démocratique du Congo, Ministère du Plan et du Développement industriel, Direction de la statistique et des études économiques: *Notes statistiques et de conjoncture*, No. 1, June 1966.

Nevertheless, there are two good reasons why we should pause before inferring that the workers were "pauperised". In the first place, the relation between the wage bill and the national income does not indicate very much; it depends upon a number of factors, which may have opposite effects. In the second place, we have to allow for so large a margin of error that the reports themselves lose all meaning; it must be remembered that here accountancy on a national scale is in its infancy and that figures quoted are derived from estimates and hypotheses; the authors recommend that they be handled only with "the utmost caution".¹

¹ See République démocratique du Congo, Ministère du Plan et du Développement industriel, Direction de la statistique et des études économiques: *Notes statistiques et de conjoncture*, No. 1, June 1966, pp. 58-59.

New minimum wage legislation

Legislative Ordinance No. 66-268/A dated 30 April 1966¹ regulating national minimum wages and minimum family allowances, and Ordinance No. 66-268/B of the same date², which concerned measures for its implementation, together make up the Republic's new legislation on minimum wage fixing.

This legislation was grounded on the work of the study group on wage questions set up under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in July 1965, on which the Government, employers (the Federation of Employers of the Congo (F.E.C.)), and workers (the Union of Workers of the Congo (U.T.C.), the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of the Congo (C.S.L.C.), and the General Federation of Workers of the Kongo (F.G.T.K.)) were each represented by six members. The I.L.O. experts were invited to attend committee meetings, where the conclusions and recommendations formulated by the I.L.O. mission in 1960 and the resolutions adopted at the African Advisory Committee at its second session in Tananarive (1962) and by the Second African Regional Conference of the I.L.O. in Addis Ababa (1964) were presented. As will be seen, a number of the recommendations were embodied in Congolese law.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE LEGISLATION

The aim of the legislation of 1966 was to create a framework within which the provincial authorities would be free to exercise their powers, since under the Constitution³ jurisdiction in minimum wage matters is vested in the provinces within the limits established by the national legislation.

Article 2 of the legislative ordinance defines the minimum national wage as that "payable to an ordinary labourer, category I, grade 1 . . ."; food rations no longer constitute a separate item of remuneration, accommodation remaining the only item payable in kind subject to an equivalent deduction from wages.

The rules are intended to be universally applied and to cover every branch of economic activity; no provision is made for exceptions. In other words, they constitute a "national" system as distinct from a "sectoral" system under which the scope of application was limited to certain sectors of activity.

WAGE ZONES

The large number of zones and rates has been considerably reduced. As already mentioned, the I.L.O. mission had noted 257 geographical

¹ *Moniteur congolais*, 7th Year, No. 11, 15 June 1966, p. 368.

² *Ibid.*, p. 375.

³ Article 50/16 of the Constitution (see *Moniteur congolais*, 1 Aug. 1964, special issue).

Minimum Wages in the Congo (Kinshasa)

wage zones and over 100 rates in 1960; under the 1963 ordinance these had contracted to 100 zones and 46 rates. At present each province is divided into not more than three wage zones.¹ The first consists of the provincial capital and the large urban centres; the second of the main centres of local government; and the third of the remainder of the province.

The territory of the Congo is divided into 12 provinces plus the city of Leopoldville (Kinshasa). In all, for a total of 35 wage zones, there are only seven different wage rates.

ASSESSMENT OF DAILY RATES

In accordance with the legislative ordinance, the Government fixed the ratios to be used in calculating daily rates for (a) minimum national wages, (b) minimum family allowances, and (c) the maximum deductible in respect of accommodation.

The 35 wage zones were regrouped around seven basic rates made up in the following prescribed proportions (in francs per day):

Minimum wage	Family allowance	Accommodation
53	4	4
62	5	5
72	6	6
84	7	8
100	8	9
116	9	10
133	10	11

Under section 7 of the legislative ordinance, the provincial authorities are to apply to these basic daily rates the coefficients fixed by the central Government at 30 per cent. for wages and lodging allowances (section 1 of the executive ordinance) and 100 per cent. for family allowances (section 4 of the same ordinance).

These are the rates for ordinary labourers, category I, grade 1² of the general job classification appended to Ordinance No. 106 of 23 April 1964.

In addition, section 2 of the executive ordinance introduced two further minimum rates for: category III, grade 1 (semi-skilled)³, and category IV, grade 1 (skilled).⁴ Section 3 of the ordinance fixed minimum wages for categories I, III and IV respectively at 100, 150 and 200 per cent.

¹ This is in conformity with the suggestions made by the I.L.O. mission in 1960.

² The definition given of this class of labourer is "the worker who carries out the simplest tasks, for which no special skill or training are required".

³ Defined as "the wage earner or salaried employee whose job requires some knowledge of the trade".

⁴ Defined as "the wage earner or salaried employee whose job requires a broad knowledge of the trade".

To sum up, let us take as an illustration zone 1 (the town of Matadi and the urban centres of Boma and Thysville) in the province of Kongo-Central, where under the legislative decree the calculation of minimum wage rates, family allowances and accommodation allowances is to be based on the ratio 100 : 8 : 9.

By applying the rule that the labourers' minimum wage and accommodation allowance are to be increased by 30 per cent. while his family allowances are to be increased by 100 per cent., the following daily rates (in francs) are obtained: minimum wage, 130; family allowance, 16; lodging allowance, 12.

Under section 3 of the executive ordinance, the three minimum wage rates applicable to the three occupational categories in the province will be: category I, 130; category III, 195; and category IV, 260.

MINIMUM WAGES AND CONSUMER PRICES

The comparison between minimum wage rates and the movement of prices was one of the factors considered by the Government when it first started to fix the rate of wage increases. The Ministry of Labour provided the study group on wage questions with the comparative table given below setting out minimum wages and consumer price indices from 1960 to 1965. For the purposes of the present paper, figures have been added for 1966.

Date	Minimum wage (29 June 1960=100)	Consumer prices ¹
30 June 1960 . . .	130	100
1 July 1961 . . .	169	127.5
1 Apr. 1963 . . .	211.2	200
1 Oct. 1963 . . .	264	216.1
1 Jan. 1964 . . .	264	261.1
1 June 1965 . . .	264	427.6
1 Mar. 1966 . . .	294	517

¹ Weighted price index in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) calculated by the Institut de recherches économiques et sociales of Lovanium University.

This table clearly shows how the purchasing power of a wage earner in receipt of the minimum statutory rate fell progressively between 29 June 1960 and 1 March 1966, during which time his wages went up by 194 per cent., while consumer prices went up by 417 per cent. By 1 March 1966 the minimum wage index had lagged behind the price index in the ratio of 294 : 517, i.e. it had fallen to 56.8.

The workers' representatives asked for a minimum wage increase of 40 per cent; the employers were unwilling to grant more than 20 per cent. The 30 per cent. increase laid down under Ordinance No. 66-268/B of

30 April 1966 would appear to have struck a balance between the two; and in the view of one expert's report was at least partly based on the principle of fixing a minimum wage in relation to prices. From the same report we learn that the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare is drawing up a list of goods and services whose prices will be noted by inspectors of labour; the intention is to instruct Ministry of Labour departments to watch statistics and price and wage trends in each centre of local government so as to keep a check on changes in the wage earners' purchasing power. On the basis of this and other information, the Minister of Labour should be in a position to decide when wages ought to be adjusted. There would be nothing automatic about this adjustment, for section 4 of the legislative ordinance of 30 April 1966 speaks of determination "as necessary" of increases in minimum wages. However, the novelty of the legislation of 1966 lies in the adjustment machinery it provides for. Paragraph 1 of section 4 further stipulates that "the daily national minimum wages in force in the provinces shall be scrutinised by the provincial authorities and compared with the consumer price index". In his initial report to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister notes "this marks an important departure in our social legislation".¹

Under section 4, paragraph 3, provision is made for the full report on the comparison to be submitted to the Minister of Labour before 1 January each year; this report is to be prepared by provincial governments, but the legislation provides for the participation of the most representative workers' and employers' organisations, without laying down any specific procedure for it. Once the provincial economic and social councils have been set up under articles 131 to 135 of the Constitution, the provincial authorities will in addition be expected to take their views into account.

The Minister of Labour will examine the provincial reports annually and decide, in consultation with the Economic and Social Council, whether to prescribe wage increases. The comparative price and wage studies are alone intended to be held regularly, the revision and adjustment of the rates being left, as already stated, to the discretion of the central Government, which need not proceed with them either automatically or at regular intervals.

IMPLEMENTATION

Section 8 of the ordinance states that the Minister of Labour, the provincial governors and the commissaires of the Republic are responsible for its implementation. The Labour Inspectorate is officially responsible for enforcement, but in practice its staff is limited, especially in view of

¹ See *Moniteur congolais*, No. 11, 15 June 1966, p. 369.

the fact that "in addition to their work of inspecting enterprises, labour inspectors will in future have to assist employers and employees to engage in collective bargaining".¹

The report of the Congolese Government to the I.L.O. regarding application of the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928, gives no figures for the numbers of workers covered by the legislation. According to an expert's report, however, prior to the promulgation of the 1966 legislation the statutory minimum wage appears to have coincided with the wage actually paid for almost 50 per cent. of the workers.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE RATES

The system was streamlined by reorganising it around seven basic rates applicable in the different zones and provinces according to the following plan:

Basic rate ¹	Provinces and zones ²
53	Bandundu (3), Sud-Kivu (3), Nord-Kivu (2), Uélé (3), Kibali-Ituri (3)
62	Bandundu (2), Kasai-occidental (3), Sud-Kivu (2), Kasai-oriental (3), Nord-Kivu (1), Haut-Congo (3), Uélé (2), Equateur (3), Kibali-Ituri (2)
72	Kongo-central (3), Bandundu (1), Kasai-occidental (2), Kasai-oriental (2), Nord-Katanga (2), Haut-Congo (2), Uélé (1), Kibali-Ituri (1)
84	Kongo-central (2), Kasai-occidental (1), Sud-Kivu (1), Kasai-oriental (1), Nord-Katanga (1), Equateur (2)
100	Kongo-central (1), Sud-Katanga (3), Equateur (1)
116	Sud-Katanga (2), Haut-Congo (1)
133	Sud-Katanga (1), city of Leopoldville (Kinshasa)

¹ Basic rate for a labourer fixed by the legislative ordinance of 30 April 1966. See p. 409. ² The figure given in parentheses in each case refers to the number of the zone of the province in which the rate is applied. (Zone 1: capital and largest towns; zone 2: main centres of local government; zone 3: rural areas.)

So far as it has been possible to discover, the provincial orders which must be issued before the increased rate fixed by the central Government can take effect have not yet been issued.

¹ See DUPRIEZ: "La législation congolaise du travail, facteur de paix sociale?", *op. cit.*, p. 301.

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Leopoldville (Kinshasa) appears to be the only place in which the increased rate has taken effect: the relevant order (No. 12/66) was issued by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare on 7 May 1966, and provides as follows: ordinary labourer, category I, grade 1—173 francs per day; semi-skilled worker, category III, grade 1—260 francs; skilled worker, category IV, grade 1—346 francs.

Minimum rates for other parts of the country are, however, quite easy to work out on the basis of the rate fixed for each province in the schedule to the legislative ordinance of 1966, merely by adding the 30 per cent. increase.

Table VI sets out the rates calculated in this way for each wage zone. As already seen, the provinces are mostly divided into three zones; where there are no more than two zones in a province, zone 2 takes the place normally occupied by zone 3. Given the statutory ratio between the wages of a labourer, semi-skilled worker and skilled worker, the two latter categories can be worked out on the basis of the first category.

TABLE VI. NATIONAL MINIMUM DAILY WAGE RATES APPLICABLE FROM 1 APRIL 1966 IN THE 12 PROVINCES OF THE CONGO

(In francs)

Province and zone	La-bourer	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Province and zone	La-bourer	Semi-skilled	Skilled
Kongo-Central: 1 .	130	195	260	Nord-Kivu: 1 . .	81	122	162
2 .	109	164	218	2 . .	69	104	138
3 .	94	141	188	Nord-Katanga: 1 .	109	164	218
Bandundu: 1 . . .	94	141	188	2 .	94	141	188
2 . . .	81	122	162	Haut-Congo: 1 . .	151	227	302
3 . . .	69	104	138	2 . .	94	141	188
Sud-Katanga: 1 .	173	260	346	3 . .	81	122	162
2 .	151	227	302	Uélé: 1	94	141	188
3 .	130	195	260	2	81	122	162
Kasai-Occidental: 1	109	164	218	3	69	104	138
2	94	141	188	Equateur: 1 . . .	130	195	260
3	81	122	162	2 . . .	109	164	218
Sud-Kivu: 1 . . .	109	164	218	3 . . .	81	122	162
2 . . .	81	122	162	Kibali-Ituri: 1 . .	94	141	188
3 . . .	69	104	138	2 . .	81	122	162
Kasai-Oriental: 1 .	109	164	218	3 . .	69	104	138
2 .	94	141	188				
3 .	81	122	162				

Table VI calls for some comment. In the first place it will be noted that some rates are applied more often than others. This is shown clearly by the following table:

Labourer	Minimum wage rate in francs		Frequency of application
	Semi-skilled	Skilled	
69	104	138	5
81	122	162	9
94	141	188	8
109	164	218	6
130	195	260	3
151	227	302	2
173	260	346	2

This shows that in all three occupational categories the second lowest rate is the one most often used. This recurrent or dominant minimum rate is 81 francs for labourers, 122 francs for semi-skilled workers and 162 francs for skilled workers.

The minimum daily rates for labourers ranges from 69 to 173 francs according to zone, giving a differential of 104 francs; semi-skilled workers' wage rates range from 104 to 260 francs, with a differential of 156 francs; and skilled workers' wage rates range from 138 to 346 francs, with a differential of 208 francs.

In each of these three occupational categories, however, the ratio of the differential remains the same—69:173, 104:260, 138:346, or 0.4. Zone differentials are substantial: in the zone with the highest wage, minimum rates are 150 per cent. higher than in the zone with the lowest. In the absence of information on the cost of living in the different areas and zones, it is impossible to say whether these wide variations are reasonable or not.

Average daily wages are 115.2 francs for labourers, 173.2 francs for semi-skilled workers and 230.5 francs for skilled workers.

MONTHLY REMUNERATION FOR UNMARRIED AND MARRIED WORKERS

As already discussed, the system of family allowances is closely linked with that of minimum wages. Seven basic rates were prescribed in 1966, in addition to which the provinces have to enforce the 100 per cent. increase laid down under the executive ordinance of 30 April 1966. The immediate effect was to give married workers a minimum daily family allowance entitlement ranging from 8 to 20 francs for each child, according to the zone. This increase was designed, as noted by the Minister of Labour in his report to the President of the Republic concerning the executive ordinance, to take account of the fact that "in July 1960, family allowances were left untouched, whereas minimum wages were increased by 30 per cent."¹

Once the new rules are implemented, married workers, whose remuneration has lagged behind that of bachelor workers, will be able to catch up to some extent. Table VII illustrates the movement of minimum

¹ See *Moniteur congolais*, 15 June 1966, p. 375.

Minimum Wages in the Congo (Kinshasa)

TABLE VII. MOVEMENT OF MINIMUM REMUNERATION OF AN UNMARRIED LABOURER COMPARED WITH THAT OF A MARRIED LABOURER WITH THREE CHILDREN, KINSHASA, 1960 TO 1966

Item	June 1960		Nov. 1963		Oct. 1965		Apr. 1966	
	Bachelor	Married (with 3 children)	Bachelor	Married (with 3 children)	Bachelor	Married (with 3 children)	Bachelor	Married (with 3 children)
Remuneration (francs per month) ¹ . .	1 130	1 633	3 458	4 160	3 458	4 160	4 498	6 058
Nominal index of remuneration	100	100	306	255	306	255	398	371
Price index . .	100	100	361	361	468	468	549	549
Real index of remuneration	100	100	85	71	65	54	72	68

¹ Monthly remuneration is obtained by multiplying daily rates by 26 (legislative decree of 1 February 1961 on the hire of services).

wages for an unmarried labourer since 1960 as compared with that of a married labourer with three children in the town of Kinshasa.

After the 1966 ordinance came into force the real index (base 1960=100) for the remuneration of a married worker with three children rose by 14 points between October 1965 and April 1966, while that of a bachelor worker rose by only 7 points; even so, the latter index remained at a slightly higher level (72 as against 68).

PREDICTABLE EFFECTS OF THE NEW REGULATION ON GENERAL WAGE STRUCTURE

As already noted, Ordinance No. 66-268/B of 30 April 1966 instituted three mandatory occupational categories, namely categories I, III and IV (grade 1) of the general job classification under the ordinance of 23 April 1964; as a result, all employers were obliged to grade their employees according to the prescribed grades and steps.¹

Apart from this, there are few collective agreements containing wage tables available to us; however, some useful data on the subject are contained in an expert's report on the collective agreement in the textile industry in Leopoldville (Kinshasa). The wage levels quoted are comparable with statutory levels, as the job classification tallies with that of the 1964 ordinance. The skill differentials fixed under the agreement

¹ See the report of the Minister of Labour to the President of the Republic concerning the executive Ordinance, in *Moniteur congolais*, 15 June 1966, p. 375.

are as follows: Category I, grade 1 (labourer)—100; Category III, grade 1 (semi-skilled)—132; Category IV, grade 1 (skilled)—161. As the statutory differentials for those categories at present stand at 100, 150 and 200, when the legislation is fully implemented the minimum contractual rate will go up by 13.6 per cent. for the semi-skilled workers concerned and by 24.2 per cent. for the skilled workers. In other words, skill differentials will widen.
