

The Minister of Labour & National Service has made a new essential works order for the shipbuilding & ship repairing industry to come into force on 25th February, 1942. The Order differs in several important respects from the earlier one which he made in March of last year. Under the previous Order a time worker absent through sickness for part of a week, or a piece worker for part of a day, forfeited all right to the guaranteed payment for that week or day as the case might be. This anomaly has been removed by providing that a worker absent through sickness during part of the prescribed period shall be guaranteed a proportionate payment for the remainder of the period. Provision has also been made to permit an employer who has power under the contract of service to suspend any worker without pay for disciplinary reasons, to exercise that power for a period not exceeding 3 days. A worker will have the right to appeal against any such suspension. An employer will now be relieved in certain circumstances of the obligation to pay a guaranteed minimum wage in cases where an undertaking is affected by an illegal strike. A worker on the other hand who successfully appeals to the local Appeal Board against dismissal for serious misconduct and is reinstated, may claim payment of arrears of the guaranteed minimum wage, a right which was denied to him under the previous Order.

The outstanding changes in the Order which the Minister of Labour & National Service has just made, are in connection with the scope and functions of the Yard Committees. These Committees are composed of the representatives of the managements and of the workers in the shipping-yards, and the Minister's intention is that they shall be bodies to assist him in combating absenteeism and indiscipline. The amendments which he has made in the Order, therefore, with this end in view, are directed towards giving these Committees greater responsibility and towards tuning up the administrative machine so as to accelerate the procedure whereby the National Service Officer is empowered to issue directions under the Defence Regulation.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR & NATIONAL SERVICE