

## ABSTRACT

The question of designing an effective machinery for the settlement of labour disputes has been a source of concern for policy-makers in Trinidad & Tobago since the turn of this century and in 1965 an Industrial Court was finally established for that purpose.

In so doing, Trinidad & Tobago, borrowing from the Australian system, became the first country in the English-speaking Western Hemisphere to experiment on the system of compulsory arbitration of labour disputes through the instrumentality of the Industrial Court. But the true nature of the controversial scheme which has been in existence since 1965 does not seem clear to all concerned. Nor has the jurisprudence and the impact of that Court on collective labour relations hitherto been evaluated. Accordingly, this thesis concerns itself with those two prime objectives.

In order to provide the background upon which the Industrial Court was established in 1965, Part One delves into the history of labour relations legislation and practice in Trinidad & Tobago before 1965. It similarly analyses the nature of the scheme which estab-

lished the Court, the early problems in administering it and the subsequent pruning exercise of 1972.

From the reading of the 1965 and 1972 Acts one discovers that the Industrial Court must have been structured differently from the ordinary courts. It is in the attempt to provide an answer to the problems inherent in the scheme that Part Two examines the personnel, procedure, special powers, and the peculiar jurisdictions entrusted upon the Court by these Acts.

In assessing the contributions of the Industrial Court in shaping the industrial jurisprudence of Trinidad & Tobago a detailed analysis of the specific awards and orders of the Court in the process of settling collective bargaining issues, employment grievances and disciplinary actions against workers has been undertaken in Part Three. Although its contributions could hardly be under-estimated in wage disputes settlement, it is in connection with disciplinary actions that the importance of the Industrial Court has been more heavily felt hence its treatment occupies four Chapters of Part Three. Part Four provides some conclusions and recommendations.