

## Electric Railways Employees' Wages, Working Conditions, Etc.

The British Columbia Electric Ry.'s street railway employees on Aug. 8 submitted a proposed new wages schedule together with notice of the re-opening of the present agreement, which will, therefore, automatically expire thirty days from that date. The new scale for city motormen and conductors asked by the men is 55c to 65c an hour, to be reached in 12 months, in place of 40c to interurban men the proposed scale is 65c 51c an hour, reached in 18 months. For to 69c, reached in 12 months, instead of 40c to 53c, reached in 18 months.

A totally new provision is for the payment of 70c an hour to city motormen and conductors on night runs, which the men propose shall be those after 6.30 p.m., except when completed before 8.30 p.m.

The proposed agreement provides for a guarantee of an 8 hour day for week days, and 6 hours for Sundays, instead of a minimum of 6 hours on week days, as under the old contract. The spread is proposed to be reduced from 11 hours to 10 hours.

Under the terms of the present agreement, either party can reopen it on giving one month notice, and it will be, therefore, necessary to come to some conclusion before Sept. 8. The matter will in all likelihood go before a conciliation board.

**Guelph Radial Ry.**—The Guelph, Ont., City Council has under consideration an application from Guelph Radial Ry. employees for an increase of wages. The men are reported to be asking for an 8-hour day, for 44c an hour for the first three months, and 47c thereafter, with time and a half for overtime.

**Hamilton St. Ry.**—The branch of the union to which the Hamilton St. Ry. employees belong, is reported to have been discussing the wage question. The present agreement between the men and the company will not expire until Mar., 1920, and the younger members are reported to be in favor of repudiating the agreement and demanding the same rates of pay as were granted recently to the employees of the Dominion Power and Transmission Co.'s suburban lines. It was reported Aug. 8, that the company had offered to pay 4c an hour additional by way of bonus, on condition that the agreement be extended for a year. The Minister of Labor was asked, Aug. 12, to send a representative to Hamilton to discuss the situation.

**Moose Jaw Electric Ry.**—A settlement was reported to have been effected, Aug. 15, between this company and its employees, and the car service was resumed Aug. 16. The wage schedule is said to have been adjusted temporarily, but the question which delayed the settlement was that of the recognition of the union. The terms of the settlement had not been made public at the time of writing. During the strike, the company made several efforts to carry on the service, but is said to have been able to operate only a limited service during the week preceeding the settlement.

The Ottawa Electric Ry. had, prior to June 3, had a signed agreement as to wages and working conditions with Division 279 of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America, which contained about 65 clauses, and was the result of boards of conciliation appointed in past years,

each year adding more and more to the agreement and binding the company to various concessions. All of the employees who worked on an hourly basis, with the exception of about 10, were members of Division 279. This agreement expired on June 30. On June 1, the company was presented with a draft agreement, to take effect on July 1, asking for an increase in the wage rate to 60c an hour, and many other concessions, such as double time for Sundays and legal holidays, two weeks holidays with pay for all employees, etc., which would amount in all to an increase of over \$600,000 a year. It was pointed out to the committee from the union that such an agreement was impossible, as the total profits from the business during the past fiscal year were less than \$300,000. Negotiations were carried on during June, but without reaching any agreement, as the men stated that they could not be satisfied with anything less than 60c an hour, although they agreed to drop many other concessions asked.

The men refused to apply for a board of conciliation and stated that on July 1 they would go on strike. The Superintendent urged them to apply for a board of conciliation and to comply with the law, but they did not agree to this. The company thereupon applied for a board which was appointed by the Labor Department. The men refused to appoint a member of the board to represent them, and the Labor Department appointed one for them. At a meeting of the board on June 30, the men notified the chairman that the board must bring in an award as to wages for their mass meeting at midnight or they would go on strike the next day. The chairman stated this was impossible and strongly urged them to wait until the board could make its award as in any case if the rates could be adjusted satisfactorily to both parties, they would be dated from July 1.

However, the men went on strike on July 1. The company stated publicly that it would not do anything to operate a service until the board had finished its work. The Minister of Labor, who was out of town, returned a few days later and notified the board to suspend its sittings until the men had returned to work and restored the conditions which prevailed before the strike. A mass meeting was held and the union refused to allow its members to return. Although the President of the international organization had wired, stating the strike was illegal and urging to men to return to work, also that they would receive no strike pay.

The company then announced in the press that it would not employ strike breakers, but asked for applications from men who wished to be trained for the positions of conductors and motormen, and who would be given a guarantee of 9 hours a day as permanent employees. A class of 100 was formed at once and several hundred applications were received and kept on a waiting list until this first class had become trained. On July 9 the company started operating 22 cars and commenced another class for training. The service was gradually increased until on July 18 the company had 56 cars running, out of a normal service of 100. It could undoubtedly have done much better than this but purposely held back in order to give the old hands a chance to return. On July 18

the union committee asked for a proposition from the company and were told that 150 employees who had been given a promise of permanent work would have to be retained in the service, at nine hours work a day; those who were employed as conductors and motormen to be booked at the bottom of the relief runs. This would mean that 150 of the men who were on strike could not return to work, but would be placed on a waiting list and called upon as vacancies occurred. After a very stormy meeting the men voted to return under these conditions and at the old maximum rate of 39c, at which rate the new employees had been engaged.

The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen offered to act as mediators between the company and the striking employees, but their efforts were devoted in trying to induce the company to break faith with the new employees and restore the rest of the strikers who were left without employment. These negotiations failed. On July 25 a meeting was arranged between representatives of the company, the men's union and two members of the board of conciliation, and agreement was reached with regard to rates and also the status of the striking employees who were on the waiting list. This was reduced to writing and signed by the various parties, the company refusing to sign an agreement such as the men had asked for prior to the strike. The net result was that the men received increases ranging from 3c to 6c an hour, and that as far as the strike was concerned, the company won an unqualified victory. It was clearly established that the work of a car man in city service is not skilled labor, and that men can be trained in a few days. The company had the sympathy of the general public and the newspapers all through the strike. An attempt to cause a sympathetic strike through the Trades and Labor Council failed. The principal provisions of the agreement are as follows:

Wages to be paid conductors and motormen from Aug. 1, as follows, per hour: First year, 39c; second year, 41c; third year, 43c; fourth year and thereafter, 45c. On Sundays, New Year's Day, Victoria Day, Dominion Day, Civic Holiday, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, 10c an hour extra over regular rates will be paid. The rate for overtime shall be time and one half on all days at the regular rate. This will not include Sundays and legal holidays mentioned above. An allowance of one hour will be made to spare men who show up at 6 a.m., noon relief, and 6 p.m., who do not get work. An allowance of 10 minutes will be made for crews taking out or putting in cars in barns.

The overtime rate, and Sunday and legal holiday rate mentioned above will apply to all departments and to all employees working on an hourly basis. The following rates will be paid per hour:

Air brake and fare box repairer, machinist, carpenter and armature winder.....	50c
Painter, pitmen, car changers.....	45c
Glazier, armature winders' assistant, electrical trouble and bench workers, pit helpers, oilers and greasers.....	42c
Car cleaners.....	35c
Car inspectors.....	40c
Apprentices, at rates arranged for on employment with 5c an hour increase every six months.....	
Linemen.....	45c
Ground men.....	39c
Chauffeurs.....	40c
Trackmen.....	40c