

IV.—THE DURATION AND INTENSITY OF WORK.

The 5-hour schedule adopted from motives of economy.—5-hour system viewed from standpoint of duration of employment or quality of work performed meant more than appearances indicated.—Some operators required to work 6½ or 7 hours at 5-hour remuneration.—Some operators required to work 10 hours, or double time certain days.—Distinction between double time and overtime.—Double time not paid for by company as 'overtime' in ordinary sense.—Double time an important feature of 5-hour system. Evidence of Mr. Dunstan.—Corroborative statements by operators; evidence of Miss Hattie Davis, Gladys Sangster, Mamie Breck, Laura Rockall; self-supporting operators dependent on double time to make ends meet.—Operators obliged to work double time.—Regular 'overtime' also a feature of 5-hour system.—'Overtime' not infrequently unremunerated.—Evidence of Mr. Maw.—Instance of extended period of service without compensation.—Evidence of Florence Maitland.—Summary as to actual practice under 5-hour system.—5-hour system viewed from standpoint of intensity of employment or rate of speed at which work performed.—Method of operating switchboard illustrated from Toronto exchange.—Method of operating switchboard illustrated from article by C. J. Larned, General Superintendent of the Chicago Telephone Company.—Speed of operating dependent on number of lines, number of possible connections and calling rate.—Meaning of an operator's 'load'.—Extent of operator's duties at Main exchange, Toronto.—Evidence of Mr. Maw.—Average calling rate at Toronto and Montreal compared.—Peg test records illustrative of calling rates in the two cities.—Higher calling rate in Toronto confirmed by evidence.

To understand aright the merits of the dispute and the respective positions of the parties as to their contentions in regard to the nature and effect of the change in the hours and rates of wages, which was the subject of the difference, it is necessary to review briefly the experience of the operators under the five-hour schedule; also to examine more closely the motives of the company in making the change to the eight-hour schedule of February 1, and the views which the operators may, with reason, have held as to the probable effect of the change upon themselves, from such information as was in their possession at the time they entered their protest.

As already stated, the five-hour schedule became effective in 1903 as a temporary arrangement at the Main exchange. The local manager, as already shown, was never very sanguine as to its success, though he was prepared to give it a fair trial. The fact that the system established under it was continued as the adopted practice of the company at the Main exchange from 1903 to January, 1907, that it was extended to the Parkdale and North exchange in January, 1905, and that the experiment period terminated at the latest about January 1, 1906, are sufficient to show that from a business point of view the five-hour system contained elements which made it a profitable one for the company to follow. What these elements were was clearly shown from the evidence taken before the commission.

The 5-hour schedule appears to have been introduced in the first instance from motives of economy. In a letter to the General Superintendent, dated the 14th November, 1903, Mr. Dunstan wrote as follows:—

I inclose herewith a copy of report signed by Mr. Maw, but in reality a joint report from Mr. C. C. Stark, on the question of shortening the operators' hours. Mr. Stark says that he has gone into the matter thoroughly with Mr. Maw, and that the figures given in the reports are the result of their joint work. He has nothing to add and can see no way of working out an eight-hour day without the cost being excessive, considering the benefit derived. He will report further if he has any suggestions to offer, but at present can see no medium between the present 8½-hour and the 5-hour day.

The scale of wages under the 5-hour schedule has already been given. It was a rate per month ranging, for local operators, during most of the time, from \$18 to \$25 per month, depending upon length of service, the maximum being reached at the end of 2½ years.

The Workings of the 5-hour System.

To appearances, under the 5-hour system, the staff of day operators was so arranged that each operator worked only five hours a day, the work being continuous and the arrangement such that the largest number would be on duty during the busiest hours; in actual practice, however, so far as duration of employment or duration of quantity of work performed, was concerned, the 5-hour system meant something considerably more.

In the first place, it would seem that at least 32 operators each day were expected to work, not five hours only, but six and a half or seven hours per day, and this for the rate of remuneration fixed for the five-hour period. By a system of rotation, each operator came in for her turn of the longer hours. In his evidence Mr. Frank C. Maw, the Inspector of Service, stated as follows:—

Q. While you were running the 5-hour system, did any of the operators have to work 7 hours?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did they have to work 7 hours without being paid for the extra two?

A. They were paid the same scale of wages; that was part and parcel of the system; the 7 hours was worked in with the 5.

Q. Then surely they were paid for the extra 2 hours?

A. They were paid the same salary, 5 hours and 7 hours; time was no difference; it was not treated as extra, and it was understood that was part and parcel of the system.

Q. Then they were compelled to work 7 hours while supposed to be on 5-hour periods?

A. They worked 6½ hours; they had half an hour for lunch.

Q. They had to work 6½ hours then, did they not?

Yes.

Q. How many hours a day, then, did that make that the company got for nothing in those three offices? (Main, North and Parkdale.)

A. I have never calculated it.

Q. . . . 48?

A. Yes.

Q. And if it were 2 hours it would be 60?

A. Yes.

Q. So that there would be that number of hours that the telephone company was getting each day in the year from their operators for nothing?

A. That is the way you consider it.

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