

ada, the six-day week is regarded as a sine qua non. The statistics of the Department of Labor, as published in the "Labor Gazette," show that among all communication services in Canada more than 84 per cent. work 48 hours a week or less. Even in the worst groups of trades, which include Chinese laundries, the 56-hour week is the exception rather than the rule. Among communication services, the radiotelegraphers stand alone with their seven-day week. Although an ill-conceived contract still exists (now near its date of expiry) between a unit of the C. T. U. A. and the Marconi Company whereby the men employed on the government stations that are Marconi-operated work seven days a week, that is no reason for similar conditions to obtain on the stations that the government runs itself. Government working conditions are not usually regulated by those of the worst employers in the country.

History of the Dispute

Protests were made by the Canadian Radio Division in 1924 against the seven-day week in the Marine and Fisheries Department. An adjustment being refused by the department, notwithstanding the provision of the Civil Service Act above quoted, an application was made to the Department of Labor for a board of conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907. At the moment this was made and when it was known that feeling among the members was running high, the Marine and Fisheries Department telegraphed to the Union, on the 31st of December, 1924, promising an adjustment on a 48-hour basis. The board of conciliation was refused by the Minister of Labor, but he assured the Union that the adjustment contemplated by the Marine and Fisheries Department would be satisfactory.

The six-day week seemed to have already been conceded; all that was in doubt was the date on which it would go into effect. This impression was shared by the officials of the department, and the local superintendent of the radiotelegraph service on the west coast broadcasted the deputy minister's telegram to the whole staff, adding his New Year's greetings to the message. The full text of the telegram was as follows:

Ottawa, Ont., 31 Dec. 1924

W. T. Burford,
General Secretary,
Canadian Radio Division,
Commercial Telegraphers' Union
of America,
Vancouver, B.C.

Conditions outlined proposed agreement unacceptable. Department in letter dated twenty-ninth August last signified opinion that bonus to married operators introduces undesirable complications and Union having refused commercial operators' pay and conditions we propose, in conjunction with Civil Service Commission, to consider revision of operators' salaries on the basis of forty-eight hours operating duty per week and to the end of removing inequalities between pay of

married or single men in present schedule. The result of deliberations with Civil Service Commission will be communicated to operators as soon as available.

A. JOHNSTON,
Deputy Minister.

Thereafter, the Union allowed considerable time to elapse for the Department to produce its revision. Instead of the six-day week being put into effect, however, when the revision finally appeared in June, 1925, it was found that the length of the working week remained unchanged. The dispute immediately became acute once more. The various shufflings of the Department of Marine and Fisheries occupied much time. At first reluctant to admit open-

A LIE

By way of excuse for the fifty-two Sundays, all or part of which the radiotelegraphers do not get as days of rest, it is sometimes stated by those who know better that the men are allowed "twenty-eight days' annual leave." This is a bare-faced misrepresentation. The radiotelegraphers are allowed the regular eighteen days' annual leave, plus six days in lieu of the nine public holidays a year provided by law. By counting the Sundays falling within the dates, the officials stretch the number of days to twenty-eight, whereas actually the men are robbed of three public holidays, getting a total of twenty-four days, of which only eighteen are annual leave.

Public holidays, such as Christmas Day, etc., are intended to be a break in the routine, but by being compelled to take them in a lump (cut down, at that, from 9 days to 6), the radiotelegraphers lose the chief benefit of these "breaks."

It should be bad enough to deprive these workers of their rights, without adding to the offence by lying about it.

ly its breach of faith with the Union, the department entered into correspondence with the Minister of Labor (across the street), but was finally compelled to state that it definitely refused to abide by the law (15 August, 1925). On the 28th of September, the Union mailed strike ballots to its members, and it appeared probable that shipping would be tied up on both coasts of Canada as a result.

A Red Herring

A federal general election was on at the moment, and though from the Union's point of view this had no bearing on the pending action, it apparently had some effect on the government. Two days after the ballot papers had been distributed, an order in council appeared in the "Labor Gazette," purporting to grant a weekly day of rest for government employees. This

order was dated the 7th of September, but it did not reach the west coast till the 30th. Its wording was peculiar, as follows:

P.C. 1537

Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 7th September, 1925.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a Report, dated 3rd September, 1925, from the Minister of Labor, submitting:

That the Lord's Day is customarily and by law observed in Canada as a day of rest;

That it is provided in the Dominion Lord's Day Act (R.S.C., chap. 153), that in the case of certain classes of employees who are required to work on Sunday they shall be allowed a compensatory period of rest;

That the Civil Service Act, 1918 (chap. 12 of 1918), as amended by chap. 41 of 1920, provides for the observance of Sunday as a holiday in and by the Civil Service;

That investigation has disclosed that there are many employees of the Dominion Government who on account of the special nature of their duties are required to work on Sundays;

That the attention of the Government has been directed to a certain Draft Convention and Recommendation adopted by the International Labor Conference (League of Nations) in 1921, with a view to securing to all employees in industrial and commercial employment a weekly period of rest of at least twenty-four consecutive hours; and

That it is considered desirable that the general principle embodied in the Draft Convention and Recommendation aforesaid should be applied and observed so far as possible in the administration of the public service of Canada;

The Minister, therefore, recommends that the policy of the Government on this subject be hereby declared as follows:

(1) That no employee of the Dominion Government should be required to work on Sunday except in circumstances of emergency or necessity,

(2) That in the case of any such employee who by reason of emergency or necessity is required to work on Sunday, he shall be allowed, in substitution, during the next six days of such work, a compensatory period of rest of twenty-four consecutive hours,

(3) That no exceptions to the foregoing principle shall be allowed except by departmental authority, and then only in cases where there may be no substitute help available to perform the duties which are involved.

The Committee concur in the foregoing recommendation and submit the same for approval.

(Sgd.) E. J. LEMAIRE,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

Immediately upon the receipt of this, a telegram was sent to the Minister of Labor, informing him of the strike vote and seeking an interpretation of the order that would possibly settle the dispute. It was pointed out to the Minis-