

Public Printing and Stationery Act

Mr. Knowles: How about saving time and putting the two letters on the record?

Mr. Sinclair: Hear, hear.

The Chairman: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles: Here is the letter from the union to the hon. member for Temiscouata.

Some hon. Members: Read it.

Some hon. Members: Table it.

The Chairman: Order. Is it agreed?

Mr. Sinclair: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles: And here is the reply of the hon. member for Temiscouata.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles: I am prepared to leave it at that. The first letter is as follows:

Ottawa Typographical Union
No. 102

Ottawa, Nov. 5, 1951

Mr. J. F. Pouliot, M.P.,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir,—

Hansard for October 30, 1951, on page 561, contains a statement by you, speaking to Mr. Stanley Knowles, M.P., to the effect that the wages in the printing bureau are established by statute, being subsection 3 of section 16 of the Public Printing and Stationery Act (R.S., Chap. 162.).

The act referred to establishes a maximum above which the wages in the bureau cannot be raised. It sets no minimum. Likewise, it sets no time period during which the wage rates in the bureau must be adjusted with the wage rates in Montreal and Toronto when new wage rates are negotiated in those cities. As a rule, the bureau is at least six months behind Montreal and Toronto in establishing new wage rates, and they are never made retroactive for any period of time approaching six months.

The act establishes a ceiling over the wages paid in the bureau, and nothing else. It does not set the rate of wages. In support of this statement, we enclose a copy of a letter from R. B. Bryce, assistant deputy minister of finance and secretary to the treasury board, clearly stating this fact. Such a clear statement from such a source should be acceptable, and we hope you will find it so and, perhaps, correct the statement attributed to you in *Hansard*.

You will note that Mr. Bryce states: "The rates currently authorized for printing trades employees of the bureau have been based on rates prevailing in Ottawa." Yet *Hansard* quotes you as saying: "Just before the minister answers the hon. member" (Mr. Knowles) "may I say that he must know that the rate of wages is fixed by statute" and "my hon. friend" (Mr. Knowles) "knows, and he knows that the wages paid at the printing bureau are exactly the same \$1.65 per hour."

We respectfully submit that the wages in the bureau are not fixed by statute. As stated above, they are only limited by a very ambiguous statute.

We also respectfully call your attention to the fact that the phrase "the same \$1.65 per hour" betrays a surprising lack of information. The rate in

[Mr. Knowles.]

Toronto has been more than \$1.65 for a long time. At the present time, the \$1.65 rate of wages in Montreal has expired and negotiations are in progress, the employees asking for more than \$2 per hour. In Toronto, the employees have refused to accept an offer of \$1.87 per hour and the matter is in the hands of a board of conciliation.

The same *Hansard* also attributes to you the statement that a former union official was defeated in the last election because the members of the union did not support his policies in regard to the printing bureau. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In so far as the policies of the union are concerned in relation to the printing bureau, including the institution of the five-day week, the withdrawal of order in council P.C. 6190, etc., there has been no change whatever, neither on the part of the union officers nor the employees in the bureau.

The policy of the union regarding the five-day week, P.C. 6190, and working conditions in general in the bureau have been stated repeatedly by this union and is in line with the policy of allied printing trades throughout Ontario, a fact attested to by the two resolutions passed by the Ontario federation of printing trades, copies of which we enclose. The federation, and this union, have repeatedly called attention to the fact that the government's labour policy, as applied in the printing bureau, is undermining the working conditions of the entire industry throughout Ontario and western Quebec.

Inasmuch as this union's policy was made the subject of debate in the house, we are taking the liberty of forwarding copies of this letter and the enclosed exhibits to the other hon. members involved, Secretary of State Bradley and Mr. Stanley Knowles. We feel confident that, as a seasoned member of the house, you will concede that they should, in fairness, be informed of the union's actual stand as well as yourself.

We hope that this letter will serve the purpose of furnishing you with the true facts of the case. If it is agreeable to you, we would be glad to meet you and discuss this matter at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

J. A. LeBlanc
President
Jack Fry
Secretary

The letter from the hon. member for Temiscouata is as follows:

Ottawa, November 9, 1951

Mr. J. A. LeBlanc,
465½ St. Patrick street,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 5 with reference to what I said in the house on October 30 about the prevailing rate of wages at the printing bureau.

The rate paid for similar work in the cities of Montreal and Toronto shall be the ceiling for the rate of the printing bureau in virtue of a statutory provision the text of which I quoted in my remarks.

Mr. Knowles stated that the rates in Montreal and Toronto were higher than at the bureau; that statement was not correct, because, in the second page of your letter, you agree that the basic rate in Montreal is \$1.65 and the same as it is at the printing bureau. You add that it has expired (in Montreal) and that negotiations are in progress, but I am sure that you will agree that \$1.65 remains the prevailing basic rate in Montreal as long as the parties concerned have not entered into a new agreement. Therefore, as I said in the house, the