

# The **RADIOTELEGRAPH BULLETIN**

of the Canadian Radio Division, No. 65,  
THE COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPHERS' UNION OF AMERICA.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWFOUNDLAND

No. 2.

VANCOUVER, B.C., DEC. 22, 1925.

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

## "Liberal" Government's Seven-Day Week

Coast Station Radiotelegraphers Regret That Government's Excessive Liberality Is Handicapped Somewhat by There Not Being Eight Days in the Week

### CASE 6—MARINE AND FISHERIES DISPUTE

What is the dispute? At Dominion Government Coast Stations on the east coast, the radiotelegraphers work seven days a week all the year round; at the stations on the west coast they work seven days a week for from a third to half the year. No overtime is paid for unless in excess of 56 hours a week, and not always then.

**T**HERE may or may not be one law for the rich and another for the poor, but there is no denying the truth of the statement that there is one law for a Canadian government department and another for the commonalty. It is one thing for a Prime Minister and a Minister of Labor to orate about a "square deal for labor"; it is quite another thing for them to put such precepts into practice in their own bailliwick.

In the last issue of The Radiotelegraph Bulletin we had occasion to indicate the cynical disregard of the Dominion Department of Marine and Fisheries for the law of the land and for the Department's own regulations respecting the qualifications of persons allowed to operate radiotelephone transmitters. It was clear, in that case, that the law and the general practice of the whole world could be brushed aside by the deputy minister of Marine and Fisheries if they did not suit the convenience of himself and his friends. It will be equally evident, from the correspondence which has passed between the Canadian Radio Division and that department, that a law which defines the working conditions of the radiotelegraphers at government coast stations can likewise be ignored by this gentleman at Ottawa—for a time.

The radiotelegraphers employed by the Canadian government, on its coast stations, number about 80. The stations are situated in the most outlandish parts of the country, being placed with regard to proximity to shipping routes rather than to landwise accessibility. Some of them are unnecessarily isolated, foolishly chosen locations be-

ing perpetuated to avoid the admission of an error. The result is that the radiotelegraphers, who maintain one of the most vital services for Canada's sea-going trade, are deprived of most of the comforts and all of the luxuries of communal existence. That more or less unavoidable hardship is bad enough, in all conscience, but when the radio men are, in addition, treated in a most inconsiderate manner by the heads of their department, it is not surprising that they work under a rankling sense of grievance.

#### The Legal Aspect

Being in the civil service, these radiotelegraphers come within the scope of the Civil Service Act of 1918. Section 33A of that Act reads as follows:

"The following days and none other shall be the holidays to be observed in and by the Civil Service:

- (1) Sundays;
- (2) New Year's Day;
- (3) Good Friday;
- (4) Easter Monday;
- (5) Victoria Day;
- (6) The birthday of the reigning Sovereign, or the day fixed by proclamation by the Governor in Council for the celebration thereof;

- (7) Dominion Day;
- (8) Christmas Day;
- (9) Any day appointed by proclamation by the Governor in Council to be observed as a general fast or thanksgiving or as a holiday."

Now, it is manifestly impossible, in a service which is maintained day and night the year round, for all members of the staff to take Sunday as a holiday, and though the Civil Service Act does not explicitly say so it is obvious that those who, through the continuous nature of their work, are unable to take Sunday off duty, are legally entitled to one day of rest in the seven. Yet, despite this being the law, during all or a large part of each year the government's radiotelegraphers never get a day's rest unless they break down under the strain and are allowed sick leave.

#### Sauce for the Gander

Seven days a week, in a government service! The complacent senior servants of the public at Ottawa, rejoicing in their possession of the Order of the Blind Eye and other honorary decorations, feel perfectly entitled to take their Saturday afternoon holiday after the tedium of attending the office six hours daily for five days in the week. But the men on the outposts, with no variety to relieve the long vigil of their night watches, can work their fifty-six hour week, for months at a stretch—and be damned.

There are regulations drawn up by Civil Service Commission under the Civil Service Act to fix the hours of work; these regulations cannot vary the six-day working week, nor do they attempt to do so. But they lay down working hours which amount to about 36 in the week. The officials in Ottawa apply these rules to their own case, but contrive to arrange that they do not interfere with the hours worked by the radiotelegraphers.

The Civil Service Act, in limiting the working week to six days, merely gives legal sanction to a universal custom. Throughout the industrial life of Can-

### ALL BRITISH COAST STATION TELEGRAPHERS HAVE A 45-HOUR WORKING WEEK

No country in the world except Canada demands a seven-day week of its radio men.

Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen has said that Canada is morally bound to give effect to the Draft Convention of the International Labor Conference, 1919, limiting the hours of work in industrial establishments to 8 in the day and 48 in the week. There is nothing to prevent the application of this Convention to government employees.