

CANADA'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COME OF AGE

In a Labour Day message on September 1, Labour Minister Nicholson said that, though employment in Canada, was expanding and living conditions were improving, such problems as the level of productivity, under-development and underemployment, as well as the disruption caused by automation and technological change, remained to be solved. The Minister continued:

...There is, fortunately, a new sense of energy and confidence emerging from most, if not all, regions of Canada. Nowhere is this more evident than in industrial relations. Unions are examining critically their structure and their changing roles. Employers and employee organizations are increasingly conscious of the vital importance of human resources, and are reviewing their tasks and responsibilities in collective bargaining.

An increasing number of union and management leaders are engaging in more frequent dialogue about matters of direct interest not only to themselves but to the country as a whole.

This more critical look at the important parts they play in the functioning of our economic and social life and the closer relations developing between unions and employers are signs of growing maturity in dealing with increasingly complex problems. This closer relation should not, however, be interpreted as evidence that industrial conflicts are likely to be removed. There will continue to be strong differences in viewpoint, but I am convinced that, through intelligent and mature participation in bargaining, most of these can be resolved.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES

Consumer price indexes advanced in all ten regional cities in the June-July period. The increases ranged from 0.9 per cent in Montreal and Edmonton-Calgary to 0.1 per cent in Saint John.

Food indexes moved up in all but one of the ten cities, a decline of 0.4 per cent being recorded in St. John's, Newfoundland. Increases ranged from 0.5 per cent in Saint John, New Brunswick, to 2.7 per cent in Montreal. Housing indexes also rose in all cities except Saint John, which remained unchanged. Changes in the clothing indexes were mixed with declines in three cities, advances in two cities and no change in five cities. Transportation indexes increased in seven cities and declined in three. Movements in the indexes of health and personal care were mixed with advances in seven cities, declines in two and no change in one. Recreation and reading indexes declined in four cities and advanced in six. The tobacco and alcohol index was unchanged in all ten cities.

REGIONAL CITIES

St. John's: The all-items index moved up 0.2 per cent, to 129.4 in July from 129.2 in June. Increases were recorded in the housing, transportation, health and personal care and recreation and reading components.

FEWER WORK STOPPAGES

It is significant that so far this year there have been relatively few stoppages of work in industries under federal jurisdiction.

As I write this, on August 25, Canada has benefited from eight months of reasonably good industrial relations. At the moment, the only significant dispute not yet resolved in the federal jurisdiction is in the shipping industry on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway....

Up to mid-July of this year, 53 disputes in federal jurisdiction were carried to finality by the conciliation services of the Department of Labour. Of these, 44, or 83 per cent, were settled with the help of conciliation officers and seven others were settled on the basis of conciliation board proposals. Thus 96 per cent of the disputes brought to the Department were settled without work-stoppage. This is a good record — a very good one. It is evidence that our industrial-relations system does and can work effectively when the will to make it work is there.

In the Department of Labour we are taking a hard look at all our policies and programmes. We have already expanded our activities in support of labour-management joint consultation and we are increasing our efforts on behalf of fair employment practices. Steady progress is being made in the application of minimum labour standards. We will soon be active in the field of industrial safety and accident prevention as the new Canada Labour (Safety) Code goes into effect....

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The food and clothing indexes declined and the tobacco and alcohol index was unchanged.

Halifax: The all-items index rose 0.5 per cent, to 141.4 in July from 140.7 in June. Increases in the food, housing and recreation and reading components outweighed declines in clothing and transportation. The health and personal care and tobacco and alcohol indexes were unchanged.

Saint John: The all-items index edged up 0.1 per cent, to 144.6 in July from the previous month's level of 144.4. Increases were recorded in the food, health and personal care and recreation and reading components. The housing, clothing and tobacco and alcohol indexes were unchanged, while the transportation index declined 0.2 per cent.

Montreal: An increase of 0.9 per cent brought the all-items index to 149.0 in July from 147.6 in June, reflecting a 2.7 per cent increase in the food component and minor increases in the housing and health and personal care indexes. Transportation and recreation and reading components declined, while clothing and tobacco and alcohol components remained unchanged.

Ottawa: The all-items index rose 0.6 per cent in July, to 147.9 from 147.0, as a result of increases in the food, housing and transportation indexes. Declines were recorded in the health and personal care and recreation and reading components. Clothing and