

If the parties are unable to reach agreement through bilateral negotiations, they are required, except in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to submit their differences to conciliation (referred to previously). Only after a certain number of days have elapsed following completion of the conciliation processes can a strike or lockout legally take place.

For the most part, collective bargaining in Canada is decentralized, with the result that most collective agreements are between an employer and a union acting on behalf of the employees of a single plant. There are, however, a limited number of industries -- for example, construction, clothing manufacturing and logging and lumbering -- in which bargaining encompasses employees in large numbers of firms within a locality or geographic area. In some of these circumstances, the negotiations may involve several unions separately, each representing a particular craft or other grouping of employees. There are other situations in which a collective agreement applies to several or all plants of a certain company, especially where the plants are in close proximity to each other. Finally, bargaining units in a few companies, particularly those engaged in national transportation and communication activities, are company-wide in scope, although separate agreements are made for different groups of employees. For example, there are company-wide agreements for railway employees applying separately to operating tradesmen, non-operating employees, shop crafts, etc. Collective bargaining on a national industry-wide basis has not, on the other hand, developed in this country.

Generally speaking, collective-bargaining agreements in Canada are broader in scope than those of many countries outside North America. This may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that some of the wide variety of subjects with which they deal may be matters for legislation in other countries.

It is not possible in a short paper to refer to the large number of subjects that may be covered in a collective agreement, but brief reference is made below to certain of the more important matters that are found in most agreements -- wages, hours of work and overtime, paid vacations and holidays, health and welfare benefits, seniority, union security, grievance procedure.

Wage-rates are matters for negotiation in all collective bargaining situations and, as a rule, collective bargaining contracts contain detailed wage schedules. These take the form of a listing of occupations covered by the contract with the rate -- hourly, daily, weekly, piece, etc., as the case may be -- to be paid to each. Any adjustments to the rates during the term of the contract and the dates on which they will become effective are also included in the schedules.

The periods of work during which the rates set out in the wage schedule apply are usually set forth in terms of hours a day and a week and days a week. Virtually all agreements require that any and all work beyond these hours must be paid at premium rates -- one and one-half times or twice the regular rate, in specified circumstances. Collective agreements may also set forth, with varying degrees of detail, regulations pertaining to starting