

say that it is a physical impossibility with our enormous telephone business to stand the strain of such long hours. The company refuses to deal with them in any way. Could you not come up to-night or to-morrow and make an effort to relieve the situation in the public interest, which will be seriously affected by a strike.

(Signed) E. COATSWORTH,
'Mayor.'

To the request of the Mayor for the intervention of the department under the Conciliation Act, the Minister of Labour replied as follows:

E. COATSWORTH, Esq.,
'Mayor of Toronto,
'Toronto Ont.

OTTAWA, January 30, 1907.

Your telegram to Mr. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour, stating that a strike of telephone operators is imminent and likely to occur at Toronto on Friday, and requesting his intervention has been submitted to me.

I have had pleasure in directing Mr. King to proceed at once to Toronto to lend the good offices of the Department of Labour, with a view to averting the threatened strike, and of effecting an amicable settlement of the differences between the company and its operators.

In sending my deputy to act on behalf of the government in this dispute I trust that both parties will show a disposition to be governed in their actions toward each other, by a due regard for the public interests involved, and that considering the necessity of an uninterrupted and continuous operation of the telephone service, the parties will, failing an adjustment of their differences before Friday, be prepared, in order to avert a strike, to accept such method of amicable settlement as Mr. King may suggest, and, as in the public interest, as well as in the interests of the parties themselves, may seem reasonable and fair.

(Signed) RODOLPHE LEMIEUX,
'Minister of Labour.'

Mr. Mackenzie King, the deputy minister, left Ottawa the same day as that on which the reply had been sent by the Minister of Labour to His Worship the Mayor, and arrived in Toronto the following morning. He called upon the Mayor and met at His Worship's office Mr. John Armstrong, the Secretary of the Ontario Bureau of Labour, who had been requested by Mr. Coatsworth to lend the good offices of the Ontario government. Mr. King and Mr. Armstrong then waited on Mr. Dunstan. During their conference with the local manager the threatened strike of the employees took place.

The following telegram had been received by Mr. Dunstan from the head office, on the morning of January 31:

K. J. DUNSTAN,
'Bell Telephone Co.,
'Toronto.

MONTREAL, QUE., January 31.

As this is last day of month insist upon declaration of intentions to-night. Pay off strikers, but do not allow them to again enter building, particularly operating room.

(Signed) 'C. F. SISE.'

Pursuant to the instructions contained in this message, Mr. Dunstan directed that each operator should sign one of two papers, headed respectively as follows: 'We will continue in the service and report regularly for duty,' and 'We resign from

the service to-day.' These papers were placed before the operators at noon on Thursday, January 31. Referring to the signing of these papers, Mr. Maw, the inspector of service, said in his evidence:

'After I read Mr. Dunstan's note that you have (notice of January 24), and went into the matter verbally trying to calm the matter down and so forth, and asked them that I would like them to sign one way or the other for the reason we didn't know whether we wanted 50 operators to keep a continuous service uninterrupted, at the same time we should try and run smoothly, none had left before, and hoped it would continue.

Q. They had left the board and you were conferring with them; they had not left with the intention of leaving the company's service permanently at that time?

A. No, I think not, they were going off duty.

Q. After you asked for signatures I understand that a number refused to sign and left the service altogether?

A. Yes, I don't know whether they left the service.

Q. Then in your opinion did the requesting the employees to sign these papers at that time in that manner in any way account for their leaving the employment at the time they did?

A. I think it did.

Q. I am trying to find out whether in your opinion the action of the company in requesting the operators to sign this sheet was responsible for the strike taking place when it did or not; if I understand it rightly you are of opinion it was?

A. It brought it on at that moment, I think.'

Notwithstanding that the strike had been precipitated in this way through the company's action, Mr. King and Mr. Armstrong endeavoured to arrange a joint conference between officers of the company and representatives of its employees, and to have the company agree to refer to arbitration such questions as could not be settled by a conference. The following communication, having this end in view, was addressed after the interview, by Mr. King to the local manager of the company, and personally delivered about two o'clock in the afternoon:

TORONTO, January 31, 1907.

K. J. DUNSTAN, Esq.,
'Manager The Bell Telephone Co.,
'City.

SIR,—As you are aware, I have been directed by the Honourable the Minister of Labour, acting on a request from His Worship Mayor Coatsworth, to lend the good offices of the Dominion Department of Labour towards effecting a settlement of the difficulties which exist between the Bell Telephone Company and its operators in this city in reference to a new schedule of hours and wages which it is proposed by the company to put into force to-morrow.

I arrived in Toronto this morning, and at the earliest opportunity had, in company with Mr. John Armstrong, Secretary of the Ontario Bureau of Labour, an interview with you, during which interview certain of the operators ceased work, in consequence, I understand, of their being asked to state in writing whether they proposed to accept the new schedule or consider themselves as no longer in the company's employ.

You will doubtless agree that it is very much in the public interest as well as in the interest of your company and its employees that the service should remain uninterrupted and your present employees retained in their positions provided an amicable settlement can be reached on the questions in dispute, and that every fair and reasonable means of effecting such amicable settlement and averting a general strike should be adopted.