

Maintenance of Railway Operation Act

(2) the number and variety of the unions which were attempting to bargain as one unit; (3) the very low level of effectiveness of collective bargaining in the industry; (4) the fact that the rapidly approaching menace of the strike created confusion between genuine bargaining and attempts to make statements of positions before the work stoppage took place.

Throughout the brief period of my activities I had the most willing and helpful co-operation from the deputy minister of labour and the director of the industrial relations branch and his staff.

Faithfully yours,

W. A. Mackintosh

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I should like to interject an expression of my own gratitude and that of the government for the task performed by Dr. Mackintosh. The fact that it was not successful in its immediate results does not detract in any way from the value of the effort from a long term point of view.

Mr. Diefenbaker: He was appointed too late.

Mr. Gregg: On August 22, 1950, a nationwide strike began at 6 a.m. regional standard time. On the same date at 11 a.m. the Prime Minister made the following statement:

Office of the Prime Minister

Ottawa,

August 22, 1950

Press release

The Prime Minister, Louis S. St. Laurent, today made the following statement:

The government regrets that all efforts to settle, by collective bargaining, the labour dispute between the railways and the unions have failed and that a nation-wide strike has started.

The suspension of railway and telegraph services, particularly with the world situation we face, will quickly create a serious emergency and the government will have to act to protect the vital interests of the whole national community. Parliament which, in view of the international situation, was to meet at an early date is now being called to meet at once so that the representatives of all the people may act together in discharging their responsibilities to meet the situation.

Meanwhile, I would hope that, whatever disruption and loss the strike may cause, all of us will recognize that the railway employees concerned have not broken any law applicable to their case.

The record shows that our railway workers are and have always been responsible and public-spirited Canadians and whatever action the government may have to take will be intended solely to protect the vital interests of the whole Canadian people.

As soon as the matter of practicable arrangements for the transportation of members has been attended to, the proclamation fixing the actual date for the meeting of parliament will be published—probably later today or tomorrow.

On August 24, 1950, the Prime Minister telephoned an invitation to the two principals of the unions and of railway management to meet with him, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Labour, in Ottawa at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. respectively on August 25, 1950.

On August 25 these meetings were held, and the parties concerned agreed to direct negotiations in camera at 8.15 p.m. of the same day in Ottawa to seek a solution.

On August 26 representatives of the unions and management resumed their meeting, but no agreement was reached. The following statements were issued by them.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I am in the hands of the house as to the statements which were issued by the parties concerned. If hon. members would prefer to have them incorporated in the record, I should be glad to do so.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the wish of the house that the documents should be included in *Hansard*?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gregg: The statements are as follows:

The *Ottawa Citizen*, Aug. 23, 1950.

(Released Saturday—Aug. 26, 1950.)

STATEMENT BY UNIONS
By The Canadian Press

Text of statement issued Saturday night by rail unions following the collapse of negotiations in the general railway strike follows:

These 17 unions, 15 international and two national, served notice on the railways as far back as June 16, 1949, looking to the establishment of the five-day, 40-hour week and wage increases of seven cents per hour.

Negotiations, and various proceedings subsequent thereto, failed to bring about a settlement. The employees took a strike vote and, pursuant thereto, withdrew from the service legally and peacefully.

Within the past two days and at the instance and request of the Prime Minister, the unions agreed to reopen discussions with the railways.

These have now been terminated without results.

During the discussions and in the interests of reaching a settlement and restoring railway operations, the unions made substantial concessions, pointing out that 14 months had already gone by during which the position of the employees continued to deteriorate.

"Modified Demands"

The unions nevertheless modified their demands. They offered to accept a seven-cents-an-hour wage increase as of June 1, 1950, instead of July 6, 1949, and to project the application of the five-day 40-hour week as far ahead as June 1, 1951, and added to that a three-month transition period during which straight time would be payable up to 48 hours per week.

A proposed alternative was that there be a two-year contract with a five-cents-per-hour increase retroactive to January 1, 1950, with a cost-of-living provision effective immediately, under which there would be a one-cent-per-hour increase for each one point rise in the cost-of-living index.

All of this went much further than had ever been contemplated by the employees, and gives the railway several months in which to continue to enjoy the returns from the higher freight rates they now have and from the extremely high level of business.

Earnings for the first six months of this year already reflect a highly satisfactory state of affairs.