

# FOREST BRANCH DISPUTE

British Columbia Department of Lands

Case 10 (Continued from Bulletin No. 10 of the Canadian Radio Division).

The Forest Branch of the British Columbia Department of Lands maintains a radiotelegraph service between three stations, situated at Myrtle Point, Thurston Bay (Sonora Island), and the Vancouver Court House. This service has the unique feature of being complete in itself, and without connection with the land-line telegraph system of the country. There is therefore no means of cutting off its communication with the outside world in the event of a dispute, for the outside world doesn't bother it at all. Another peculiar feature is that the equipment of these stations is supplied by the Marconi Company, and maintained by that firm, but the radiotelegraphers are not employed by the Marconi Company. If they were employed by the Marconi Company they would be paid in accordance with the terms of the agreement existing between the Company and the Commercial Telegraphers' Union of America, and they would be better paid than they are now. Whether this arrangement is or is not designed for the purpose of keeping down wages can only be surmised; but it looks that way. The men are taken on through the agency of the Marconi Company, as a rule, but they are on the payroll of the Department of Lands.

It would be a backward step to propose that these three stations should be removed from public to private control, and the Union would oppose such a transfer with all the force at its command, but it ill becomes a provincial government department to lay itself open to the charge of paying less than the prevailing rate of salary, especially in the circumstances which we have recited.

The three radiotelegraphers are paid a fixed salary of \$125.00 per month. They are thus discriminated against, not only in the amount of their compensation, but also in being excluded from the system of annual increments obtaining in respect to the other civil service employees of the provincial government.

It has been pointed out, in negotiations begun by the Canadian Radio Division in January last, that the service required at these stations is comparable in every way with that of commercial stations. Although the Deputy Minister of Lands appears to think that, the service not being strictly "commercial," standard wage rates are not applicable, the work is commercial in every sense except that the telegrams are sent free by government officials. This probably accounts for the volume of message traffic being even heavier than at some of the smaller commercial stations; and during the forest fire season the stations have all the work they can accommodate. If the average month's business of each station, which is about 7,000 words, were charged for at the moderate commercial rate of five cents per word, the three stations would earn a revenue of \$1,050.00 per month. An extension of the ordinary interdepartmental account-

ing system would therefore quickly show that these stations return a large "paper" profit for each month of their operation.

Each of the three radiotelegraphers has to perform a considerable amount of clerical work, in addition to his radio duties, and for this he is paid nothing.

At similar stations in the two largest radiotelegraph administrations in Canada, the salary would be as follows (including all allowances, as detailed for the information of the Lands Department):

1st year	.....	\$119.00	per month
2nd "	.....	124.00	" "
3rd "	.....	134.00	" "
4th "	.....	139.00	" "
5th "	.....	149.00	" "
6th "	.....	154.00	" "

Marconi Coast Station Service

1st year	.....	\$123.00	per month
2nd "	.....	128.00	" "
3rd "	.....	138.00	" "
4th "	.....	148.00	" "
5th "	.....	158.00	" "
6th "	.....	168.00	" "

These scales are not what they should be, but an increase to the same level in the Department of Lands will be satisfactory for the moment.

This dispute having been brought to the attention of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council, we understand that it will be discussed by the President of the Council, Mr. R. H. Neelands, M.L.A., in the present session of the Legislature, and we anticipate an early adjustment of the salaries of our Forest Branch members.

## CANADIAN NATIONAL STEAMSHIPS DISPUTE

(Case No. 12)

Increase Probable but Local Official's Attitude Distinctly Not Thornton-esque.

The General Committee has taken up the case for improved salaries and working conditions for its ten members on the Canadian National Steamships in the manner indicated below.

Vancouver, B. C.,  
25 October, 1925.

Mr. B. C. Keeley,  
Pacific Coast Manager,  
Canadian Government Merchant Marine, Ltd.  
1150 Main Street,  
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

I am directed by our General Committee, representing the Pursers, Radiotelegraphers, Assistant Pursers, and Freight Clerks of the Canadian National Steamships, all of whom are members of this Union, to call your attention to the discrepancy existing between the salaries and working conditions prevailing on these vessels and the salaries and conditions obtaining elsewhere for work of a similar character and standard, and to request the removal of this anomaly.

The salaries paid to Pursers in the two parallel services, the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific, on the Pacific coast of Canada, are as follows:

Shipping Route	Canadian National	Canadian Pacific
Northern B. C. and Alaskan run:		
S.S. "Prince George,"		
"Prince Rupert,"		
"Princess Alice,"		
"Princess Charlotte,"		
"Princess Louise"	\$155.00	\$170.00

General coastal run:

"Prince Charles,"		
"Princess Beatrice,"		
"Princess Mary"	130.00	155.00

Vancouver Island & Queen Charlotte Islands: SS. "Princess Maquinna,"

"Prince John"	130.00	155.00
---------------	--------	--------

The Radiotelegraphers, Assistant Pursers, and Freight Clerks on the Canadian National ships (who all combine radiotelegraphy with other duties) are paid \$100.00, \$80.00 and \$75.00 respectively, these being fixed ratings with no annual increments. The Freight Clerks on the Canadian Pacific ships, who are not required to have radio qualifications, are paid a scale of salaries rising from \$75.00 per month by annual increments to \$115.00, in four years.

The foregoing figures seem to need no embellishment being, it is thought, ample evidence of that under-payment which has for long been a rankling grievance among the Canadian National personnel. It is submitted that the salaries paid to Pursers should be placed on the same basis as those of the Canadian Pacific, and that the other grades should be granted annual increments on the Canadian Pacific scale, plus a reasonable allowance in recognition of their radiotelegraph qualifications. It is not considered that this allowance, which, as included in the undermentioned scale, amounts to only \$10.00 a month at the maximum, is adequate remuneration for the radiotelegraph duties performed, but the Union is prepared to accept it as an adjustment for the immediate future.

The proposed scale is as follows: