

# The **RADIOTELEGRAPH BULLETIN**

of the Canadian Radio Division, No. 65,  
THE COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPHERS' UNION OF AMERICA.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWFOUNDLAND

No. 2.

VANCOUVER, B.C., DEC. 22, 1925.

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

## "Liberal" Government's Seven-Day Week

Coast Station Radiotelegraphers Regret That Government's Excessive Liberality Is Handicapped Somewhat by There Not Being Eight Days in the Week

### CASE 6—MARINE AND FISHERIES DISPUTE

What is the dispute? At Dominion Government Coast Stations on the east coast, the radiotelegraphers work seven days a week all the year round; at the stations on the west coast they work seven days a week for from a third to half the year. No overtime is paid for unless in excess of 56 hours a week, and not always then.

**T**HERE may or may not be one law for the rich and another for the poor, but there is no denying the truth of the statement that there is one law for a Canadian government department and another for the commonalty. It is one thing for a Prime Minister and a Minister of Labor to orate about a "square deal for labor"; it is quite another thing for them to put such precepts into practice in their own bailliwick.

In the last issue of The Radiotelegraph Bulletin we had occasion to indicate the cynical disregard of the Dominion Department of Marine and Fisheries for the law of the land and for the Department's own regulations respecting the qualifications of persons allowed to operate radiotelephone transmitters. It was clear, in that case, that the law and the general practice of the whole world could be brushed aside by the deputy minister of Marine and Fisheries if they did not suit the convenience of himself and his friends. It will be equally evident, from the correspondence which has passed between the Canadian Radio Division and that department, that a law which defines the working conditions of the radiotelegraphers at government coast stations can likewise be ignored by this gentleman at Ottawa—for a time.

The radiotelegraphers employed by the Canadian government, on its coast stations, number about 80. The stations are situated in the most outlandish parts of the country, being placed with regard to proximity to shipping routes rather than to landwise accessibility. Some of them are unnecessarily isolated, foolishly chosen locations be-

ing perpetuated to avoid the admission of an error. The result is that the radiotelegraphers, who maintain one of the most vital services for Canada's sea-going trade, are deprived of most of the comforts and all of the luxuries of communal existence. That more or less unavoidable hardship is bad enough, in all conscience, but when the radio men are, in addition, treated in a most inconsiderate manner by the heads of their department, it is not surprising that they work under a rankling sense of grievance.

#### The Legal Aspect

Being in the civil service, these radiotelegraphers come within the scope of the Civil Service Act of 1918. Section 33A of that Act reads as follows:

"The following days and none other shall be the holidays to be observed in and by the Civil Service:

- (1) Sundays;
- (2) New Year's Day;
- (3) Good Friday;
- (4) Easter Monday;
- (5) Victoria Day;
- (6) The birthday of the reigning Sovereign, or the day fixed by proclamation by the Governor in Council for the celebration thereof;

- (7) Dominion Day;
- (8) Christmas Day;
- (9) Any day appointed by proclamation by the Governor in Council to be observed as a general fast or thanksgiving or as a holiday."

Now, it is manifestly impossible, in a service which is maintained day and night the year round, for all members of the staff to take Sunday as a holiday, and though the Civil Service Act does not explicitly say so it is obvious that those who, through the continuous nature of their work, are unable to take Sunday off duty, are legally entitled to one day of rest in the seven. Yet, despite this being the law, during all or a large part of each year the government's radiotelegraphers never get a day's rest unless they break down under the strain and are allowed sick leave.

#### Sauce for the Gander

Seven days a week, in a government service! The complacent senior servants of the public at Ottawa, rejoicing in their possession of the Order of the Blind Eye and other honorary decorations, feel perfectly entitled to take their Saturday afternoon holiday after the tedium of attending the office six hours daily for five days in the week. But the men on the outposts, with no variety to relieve the long vigil of their night watches, can work their fifty-six hour week, for months at a stretch—and be damned.

There are regulations drawn up by Civil Service Commission under the Civil Service Act to fix the hours of work; these regulations cannot vary the six-day working week, nor do they attempt to do so. But they lay down working hours which amount to about 36 in the week. The officials in Ottawa apply these rules to their own case, but contrive to arrange that they do not interfere with the hours worked by the radiotelegraphers.

The Civil Service Act, in limiting the working week to six days, merely gives legal sanction to a universal custom. Throughout the industrial life of Can-

### ALL BRITISH COAST STATION TELEGRAPHERS HAVE A 45-HOUR WORKING WEEK

No country in the world except Canada demands a seven-day week of its radio men.

Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen has said that Canada is morally bound to give effect to the Draft Convention of the International Labor Conference, 1919, limiting the hours of work in industrial establishments to 8 in the day and 48 in the week. There is nothing to prevent the application of this Convention to government employees.



ada, the six-day week is regarded as a sine qua non. The statistics of the Department of Labor, as published in the "Labor Gazette," show that among all communication services in Canada more than 84 per cent. work 48 hours a week or less. Even in the worst groups of trades, which include Chinese laundries, the 56-hour week is the exception rather than the rule. Among communication services, the radiotelegraphers stand alone with their seven-day week. Although an ill-conceived contract still exists (now near its date of expiry) between a unit of the C. T. U. A. and the Marconi Company whereby the men employed on the government stations that are Marconi-operated work seven days a week, that is no reason for similar conditions to obtain on the stations that the government runs itself. Government working conditions are not usually regulated by those of the worst employers in the country.

#### History of the Dispute

Protests were made by the Canadian Radio Division in 1924 against the seven-day week in the Marine and Fisheries Department. An adjustment being refused by the department, notwithstanding the provision of the Civil Service Act above quoted, an application was made to the Department of Labor for a board of conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907. At the moment this was made and when it was known that feeling among the members was running high, the Marine and Fisheries Department telegraphed to the Union, on the 31st of December, 1924, promising an adjustment on a 48-hour basis. The board of conciliation was refused by the Minister of Labor, but he assured the Union that the adjustment contemplated by the Marine and Fisheries Department would be satisfactory.

The six-day week seemed to have already been conceded; all that was in doubt was the date on which it would go into effect. This impression was shared by the officials of the department, and the local superintendent of the radiotelegraph service on the west coast broadcasted the deputy minister's telegram to the whole staff, adding his New Year's greetings to the message. The full text of the telegram was as follows:

Ottawa, Ont., 31 Dec. 1924

W. T. Burford,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Radio Division,  
Commercial Telegraphers' Union  
of America,  
Vancouver, B.C.

Conditions outlined proposed agreement unacceptable. Department in letter dated twenty-ninth August last signified opinion that bonus to married operators introduces undesirable complications and Union having refused commercial operators' pay and conditions we propose, in conjunction with Civil Service Commission, to consider revision of operators' salaries on the basis of forty-eight hours operating duty per week and to the end of removing inequalities between pay of

married or single men in present schedule. The result of deliberations with Civil Service Commission will be communicated to operators as soon as available.

A. JOHNSTON,  
Deputy Minister.

Thereafter, the Union allowed considerable time to elapse for the Department to produce its revision. Instead of the six-day week being put into effect, however, when the revision finally appeared in June, 1925, it was found that the length of the working week remained unchanged. The dispute immediately became acute once more. The various shufflings of the Department of Marine and Fisheries occupied much time. At first reluctant to admit open-

#### A LIE

By way of excuse for the fifty-two Sundays, all or part of which the radiotelegraphers do not get as days of rest, it is sometimes stated by those who know better that the men are allowed "twenty-eight days' annual leave." This is a bare-faced misrepresentation. The radiotelegraphers are allowed the regular eighteen days' annual leave, plus six days in lieu of the nine public holidays a year provided by law. By counting the Sundays falling within the dates, the officials stretch the number of days to twenty-eight, whereas actually the men are robbed of three public holidays, getting a total of twenty-four days, of which only eighteen are annual leave.

Public holidays, such as Christmas Day, etc., are intended to be a break in the routine, but by being compelled to take them in a lump (cut down, at that, from 9 days to 6), the radiotelegraphers lose the chief benefit of these "breaks."

It should be bad enough to deprive these workers of their rights, without adding to the offence by lying about it.

ly its breach of faith with the Union, the department entered into correspondence with the Minister of Labor (across the street), but was finally compelled to state that it definitely refused to abide by the law (15 August, 1925). On the 28th of September, the Union mailed strike ballots to its members, and it appeared probable that shipping would be tied up on both coasts of Canada as a result.

#### A Red Herring

A federal general election was on at the moment, and though from the Union's point of view this had no bearing on the pending action, it apparently had some effect on the government. Two days after the ballot papers had been distributed, an order in council appeared in the "Labor Gazette," purporting to grant a weekly day of rest for government employees. This

order was dated the 7th of September, but it did not reach the west coast till the 30th. Its wording was peculiar, as follows:

P.C. 1537

Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 7th September, 1925.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a Report, dated 3rd September, 1925, from the Minister of Labor, submitting:

That the Lord's Day is customarily and by law observed in Canada as a day of rest;

That it is provided in the Dominion Lord's Day Act (R.S.C., chap. 153), that in the case of certain classes of employees who are required to work on Sunday they shall be allowed a compensatory period of rest;

That the Civil Service Act, 1918 (chap. 12 of 1918), as amended by chap. 41 of 1920, provides for the observance of Sunday as a holiday in and by the Civil Service;

That investigation has disclosed that there are many employees of the Dominion Government who on account of the special nature of their duties are required to work on Sundays;

That the attention of the Government has been directed to a certain Draft Convention and Recommendation adopted by the International Labor Conference (League of Nations) in 1921, with a view to securing to all employees in industrial and commercial employment a weekly period of rest of at least twenty-four consecutive hours; and

That it is considered desirable that the general principle embodied in the Draft Convention and Recommendation aforesaid should be applied and observed so far as possible in the administration of the public service of Canada;

The Minister, therefore, recommends that the policy of the Government on this subject be hereby declared as follows:

(1) That no employee of the Dominion Government should be required to work on Sunday except in circumstances of emergency or necessity,

(2) That in the case of any such employee who by reason of emergency or necessity is required to work on Sunday, he shall be allowed, in substitution, during the next six days of such work, a compensatory period of rest of twenty-four consecutive hours,

(3) That no exceptions to the foregoing principle shall be allowed except by departmental authority, and then only in cases where there may be no substitute help available to perform the duties which are involved.

The Committee concur in the foregoing recommendation and submit the same for approval.

(Sgd.) E. J. LEMAIRE,  
Clerk of the Privy Council.

Immediately upon the receipt of this, a telegram was sent to the Minister of Labor, informing him of the strike vote and seeking an interpretation of the order that would possibly settle the dispute. It was pointed out to the Minis-



ter that, with the rotation of night and day shifts, it was a simple matter to arrange for employees to have 24 consecutive hours off duty in a week, but not necessarily a day of rest. Thus, a man might come off at 8 a.m. one day, after doing a full eight hours' work, and go on at 8 a.m. the next day to do another eight hours; he would have had 24 consecutive hours off, mostly spent in sleep, but no holiday. Unless the order was to be interpreted as compelling a limited number of hours' work per week, it meant nothing in a day-and-night communication service.

The Minister of Labor, the Hon. James Murdock, telegraphed that he thought the order would be "acceptably applied" but could make no promise until the cabinet had met to discuss the point. Being in the throes of electioneering may have accounted for some further remarks he made to the effect that he considered it "inconsistent" for any body of government employees to strike or to talk of striking. We will pass that by. There appeared to be some ground for hope that the new order would have an important bearing on the matter in dispute, and on the strength of Mr. Murdock's assurance, vague as it was, the General Committee decided to cancel the ballot papers, and did so by telegraph on the 16th of October. The following communication indicates the Union's attitude at this juncture:

Vancouver, B.C.,  
16 October, 1925

Hon. James Murdock,  
Minister of Labor,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your telegrams of the 2nd and 4th instant, and to advise you that in view of your recommendation of a postponement of action, the General Committee agreed to hold up the return of ballot papers for one week; and further that now, after an opportunity to communicate fully with the east coast by mail, it has been decided to cancel the ballot altogether.

The Committee hopes it will be understood that this action is taken largely with a view to avoid suspicion of capitalizing the present political situation, and that you will appreciate the sacrifice of initiative that may thereby be involved.

Nevertheless, the committee wishes to go on record as in no way waiving the unquestionable right of those members of the Union who are in government employ to exert such economic pressure as is in their power, and it can recognize no curtailment for those members of the freedom of action enjoyed by other wage-earners.

The present dispute, which is of long standing, would not now have been brought directly to your attention but for the publication and receipt, two days after the ballot-papers had been distributed, of the order in council P.C. 1537. The committee, having had time to discuss the new situation created by the order in council and by your assurances of a satisfactory application

thereof, recognizes the desirability of postponing action to enable a ruling to be given by the Cabinet in respect to the forty-eight or forty-four hour week.

In securing a favorable interpretation of the order, the committee looks to your Department to exercise a good influence, and appreciates very highly your offer of continued friendly assistance in that direction.

Yours very truly,

W. T. BURFORD,  
General Secretary,

Canadian Radio Division, C. T. U. A.

Ottawa, October 24, 1925

W. T. Burford, Esq.,  
General Secretary, Canadian Radio  
Division No. 65,  
Commercial Telegraphers' Union  
of America,  
4144 14th Avenue West,  
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

The Minister of Labor, who is at present in Toronto, has requested me to acknowledge your letter of the 16th instant with respect to the postponement of the strike vote of the radio telegraphers employed by the Department of Marine and Fisheries on the sea coasts of Canada, and to state that he has read your letter and hopes to be able to deal further with the matter of the dispute in the near future.

Yours truly,

H. H. WARD,  
Deputy Minister of Labor.

To ascertain the intentions of the Marine and Fisheries Department in respect to the new order, the following letter was sent:

Vancouver, B. C., 14 October, 1925

The Deputy Minister,  
Department of Marine and Fisheries,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I am directed to inform you that in consequence of changes at the headquarters of our International organization, the correspondence with reference to the working conditions of the radiotelegraphers employed by your department has been taken over by this office.

No acknowledgment of Mr. Schnur's letter of the 5th of September has yet been received.

Our General Committee requests to be informed whether, in view of the order in council of the 7th of September (P.C. 1537), the department still adheres to the position regarding the six-day week taken in your letter of the 15th of August, or whether the department will take the opportunity provided by this order of implementing the promise conveyed by your telegram of the 31st of December last.

If it is the intention to comply with the order in council, we shall be glad to know on what basis it is proposed to pay for overtime in excess of forty-eight hours per week.

Yours very truly,

W. T. BURFORD,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Radio Division,  
C. T. U. A.

The answer, below, shows the same attitude towards the new order in council as the department had already adopted towards the Civil Service Act.

Department of Marine and Fisheries,  
Ottawa, Ont.,  
5th November, 1925.

W. T. Burford, Esq.,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Radio Division,  
Commercial Telegraphers' Union,  
4144 14th Avenue W.,  
Vancouver, B.C.

Sir:

Re 48-hour week for radio operators

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th instant, and note that you will in future take over the correspondence previously handled by Mr. Schnur. Mr. Schnur's letter of the 5th September has not been answered, and a very brief perusal of its contents will indicate the reason therefor. The arrangement outlined in the department's letter of the 15th August, will remain in effect until further notice.

How Order in Council P.C. 1537 of the 7th September, is going to affect the operator situation, we are unable to say. Should the government, when it has time to deal with this question, decide that it is to apply to operators, the staff will be so advised. We understand, indirectly, that the Union has been in communication with the Honourable the Minister of Labor in this reference; no doubt he will take the matter up on the first convenient opportunity.

The Department has given some consideration to the basis of overtime which would be effective in the event of the government placing the 48-hour week in effect. Should it be decided to adopt the 48-hour week plan throughout the entire year, the whole question of remuneration will be carefully considered by the Civil Service Commission.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,  
A. JOHNSTON,  
Deputy Minister.

#### A Shameful Record

The Deputy Minister,  
Department of Marine and Fisheries,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of the 5th instant, and note that it is not the intention of the department to apply the order in council P.C. 1537, which covers all government employees, until the government passes a further order stating that the radiotelegraphers in the Civil Service are among those referred to.

The Department, by this declaration that it intends to disregard an order in council designed to promote the welfare of its employees, is evidently continuing the arbitrary tactics so long adopted towards its radiotelegraphers, tactics that have for years past been productive of nothing but rancour and that called forth the appeal for fair-play contained in our Deputy International President's unanswered letter of the 5th of September. Our General Committee is heartily in accord with the position



taken by Mr. Schnur, and his letter was written with its full concurrence.

Mr. Schnur drew attention to the frequent changes in the Department's attitude respecting the six-day week, and the various reasons offered for delaying action. These may be recapitulated as follows:

On the 31st December, 1924, the Department telegraphed that it proposed, "in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, to consider revision of operators' salaries on the basis of forty-eight hours' operating duty per week." This telegram was broadcast, with New Year's greetings appended, to all stations on the west coast, by the local superintendent.

On the 23rd June, 1925, after half a year's wait for the department to produce definite proposals implementing the above promise, the Director of the Radiotelegraph Branch wrote: "We expect a ruling in regard to overtime in the immediate future."

On the 27th June the Director wrote again, saying that the general question of the six-day week for government employees was receiving the attention of the Minister of Labor, "and in the event of the government approving of this it would automatically apply to our staff." He also admitted that the radiotelegraphers were being deprived of overtime payment or substitution reliefs to the extent of \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year. In conclusion, he stated that if it were found that the forty-eight hour week question was "in an indefinite state, the question of a 48-hour week for our men will be laid before the authorities for consideration." This conveyed the impression that the department was going to do its utmost to get permission to stop ignoring the Civil Service Act.

On the 9th July the Assistant Deputy Minister confirmed this attitude, stating that the Department was in correspondence with the Department of Labor regarding the six-day week, and that a definite decision was expected in a week or two.

On the 8th August the Director of the Radiotelegraph Branch qualified his admission that the radiotelegraphers were being deprived of overtime and holiday reliefs to the extent of \$6,000 or \$7,000 by writing: "We have had records kept of the hours which the men are actually working at this moment and you would be surprised to see how near it approaches a 48-hour week." (Meanwhile, all the east coast stations were working from 53 to 56 hours a week.)

On the 15th August the Department pleaded a decrease of revenue as a reason for not conceding the six-day week. As the stations principally concerned in this question are Direction Finding Stations, which make no charge for their service, this reason was ingenious.

On the 28th August the Department furnished an extract from the Civil Service Act (which had been obtained from the Civil Service Commission); the part of the Act, providing a weekly day of rest, being well known and

already quoted by the Union 13 months previously (13th July, 1924). No indication was given, however, that the department proposed to comply with the section of the Act which it had quoted.

On the 7th September the Department of Labor, having taken the action anticipated by the Director of the Radiotelegraph Branch in June and by the Assistant Deputy Minister in July, secured the government's consent to an order in council (P.C. 1537) providing a weekly day of rest for all government employees—which the Director had said "would automatically apply to our staff."

On the 5th November the Department announces that it will abide by neither the Civil Service Act nor the order in council.

It is evident from the foregoing recapitulation of the Department's changes in its expressed intentions that the view is held that the law can be set aside with impunity. Our members on the east coast are still working a seven-day week; on the west coast a seven-day week, without pay for the overtime, is enforced during a third or a half of the year.

The order in council appeared just at the moment when strike ballots had been issued to the members on both coasts; action was stayed by the Union at the eleventh hour, at the request of the Minister of Labor, until arrangements could be made to put the new order into general effect. The refusal of the Department to take any notice of the order in council until another order is issued, leaves matters where they were prior to the appearance of the order, and the responsibility for the present intensity of feeling rests with the Department.

The Union cannot tolerate the existing conditions and can accept no settlement that does not provide payment for overtime when seven days have to be worked, and our General Committee hopes that even at this late date the Department will see its way to make a prompt announcement of a voluntary change in policy.

Yours very truly,  
W. T. BURFORD,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Radio Division,  
C. T. U. A.

#### The Government's Responsibility

Some regret has been expressed by certain members of the Union that the issue was not put to the test of a strike in October. But the representations of the Minister of Labor (Hon. James Murdock), the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Dr. J. H. King), and the Dominion Fair Wage Officer in Vancouver, to the effect that the new order in Council should be given a chance, could not well be ignored.

The order in council, P. C. 1537, is, as stated in its preamble, based on a draft convention of the International Labor Conference (League of Nations) of 1921. Now, this draft convention is not well known, not nearly so well known as another draft convention, of the year 1919, which is intended "to limit the hours of work in industrial

undertakings to eight in the day and forty-eight in the week." Both being related to working hours, the 1919 and 1921 draft conventions are easily confused; and for some time the General Committee of the Canadian Radio Division was under the impression that the preamble really referred to the 1919 convention. The 1921 edition had also either not been heard of or was forgotten by those whose attention was drawn to the wording of the order by the Committee.

The question presents itself, why, with the choice of the two draft conventions before it—the 1919 one with the 48-hour week, and the 1921 with its meaningless 24 hours' rest—the Government chose first to put the later one into effect. Why did it not come out for a definite limit of 48 working hours per week? It is difficult to resist the conviction that in making this order in council the Government was not genuinely desirous of improving the lot of its workers, and that it was actuated mainly by vote-catching considerations in issuing the order in September. Nor is it any less difficult to understand the motive of the International Labor Organization in making this draft convention, unless it was the desire of the employers' representatives on that body to furnish just such a red herring as a means of saving the face of those governments which would not adopt the 48-hour standard.

Both the draft convention of 1921 and the order in council based upon it are obviously insincere. The order in council, with its provisions for exceptions to be made "by departmental authority," goes to the limit to render itself innocuous. Imagine the order being extended to cover the case of private, as well as public, employment; in that case it would be no more nonsensical to say: "Except by authority of the employer." The Department of Marine and Fisheries, if it ever condescends to observe the order at all, will, from what we know of it, decide that an emergency exists every time staff shortage occurs through annual leave. And, if there are no unemployed radiomen wandering loose on St. Paul's Island, Nova Scotia, the Department will feel itself entitled to say that there is "no substitute help available."

The Union contends that order in council P. C. 1537, insofar as it applies to the Radiotelegraph Branch of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, is a mockery of the aspirations of a deserving body of workers. In the circumstances of its appearance, when pressure was being applied to secure decent conditions for the radiotelegraphers, and when an election was drawing near, both its conception and its genesis were disingenuous, and in giving the shadow instead of the substance it is a plain fraud.

The General Committee believes that the radiotelegraphers have friends enough in Ottawa to insist that the Government either:

(1) Issue a definite interpretation of P. C. 1537 to place the working week on a 48-hour basis, with payment for overtime in excess of 48 hours; or



(2) Make a new order in council to carry out the provisions of the draft convention of 1919 (in respect to Government employees), "to limit the hours of work in industrial undertakings to eight in the day and forty-eight in the week," also with payment for overtime.

We hope to be able, in an early issue of The Radiotelegraph Bulletin, to report progress toward securing justice for the radiotelegraphers, and that prompt action by the Government will render it unnecessary for the Union to resort finally to its only remaining weapon.

W. T. B.

**FOREST BRANCH DISPUTE**

**Case 10—Increase Secured**

While confirmation is still awaited from Victoria, B. C., where the Provincial Legislature is in session at the time of going to press, it appears certain that the members employed by the Forest Branch of the Department of Lands will receive an increase of salary. The amount of the increase is not known, but the estimates of the Department indicate that \$5.00 a month was regarded as sufficient by the officials. This would, however, not be considered sufficient by the Union, and if \$5.00 is all that is forthcoming the dispute is still open.

**CANADIAN NATIONAL STEAMSHIPS DISPUTE**

**Case 12—Increase Secured**

It will be recalled that in the correspondence published in the last issue of The Radiotelegraph Bulletin, the Canadian Radio Division requested the management of the Canadian National Steamships to indicate its intentions before Saturday, the 28th of November. The following letter was received:

Vancouver, B. C.,  
26th November, 1925.

Mr. W. T. Burford,  
General Secretary,  
Canadian Radio Division,  
Commercial Telegraphers Union  
of America,  
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your letter of the 17th, with reference to rates for pursers on our steamers.

You will no doubt be pleased to learn that we have in contemplation an adjustment of these rates at an early date, and feel satisfied when the new scale is brought into effect it will be entirely satisfactory to them.

Yours very truly,

Canadian Government Merchant Marine,  
B. C. Keeley,  
Pacific Coast Manager.

Pending a more definite announcement of the proposed new scale, the General Committee is suspending action.

**NEWS OF AFFILIATED BODIES**

**The British Strike**

Very little news is available of the

progress of the strike called on the first of December by the Association of Wireless and Cable Telegraphists against the combined radio employers of Great Britain. The strike was caused by the employers' demand for a reduction in wages, in line with the present policy of all shipping concerns, and Canadian telegraphers will be greatly interested in the outcome. The latest report from the International Federation is that "the position is well covered and everything is going splendidly."

It is unfortunate that the British seagoing and coastal radio men are in separate organizations; there is thus no possibility of cutting off communication with ships carrying strike-breakers. The Government is also issuing permits for vessels to sail without their complement of telegraphers, thereby assisting the capitalists to defeat the workers. It is hoped, however, that in spite of these handicaps the tie-up will be effective enough to compel the radio administrations to come to terms.

**Transoceanic Strike**

The Marconi Company of Great Britain precipitated a strike of its transoceanic telegraphers when, on the 31st of October, it arbitrarily dismissed nine senior men. The walk-out was complete and immediate. Work was resumed on the 4th of November, upon the reinstatement of the nine employees.

**Toronto and Montreal District Councils, C. T. U. A.**

The non-enforcement of the regulations in regard to the employment of telegrapher personnel at radiotelephone transmitting stations in Canada has been made the subject of a protest by the Toronto District Council. The Canadian Radio Division will be interested to hear the result. The Toronto Council followed the line taken by the Vancouver Council, as shown in our last issue. The Montreal District Council, at a recent meeting, also interested itself in this matter, and decided to request the co-operation of the Marconi Division in making its protest.

**Canadian Marconi Division**

A serious situation is reported to exist in the Pacific District of the Canadian Marconi Wireless Telegraph System Division, No. 59, the members being deeply concerned at the failure of their Division's executive to conduct a referendum on the question of amalgamating with the Canadian Radio Division. As the Canadian Radio Division did much to place the Pacific District on a sound footing some months ago, at a time when it had become practically defunct, we should regret to see the entire membership of the District become delinquent, as is now considered probable. At the same time, it is difficult for us to understand the motive of the General Committee of the Marconi Division in declining to take a vote on a question which was submitted to it in due form, in accordance with its own by-laws, as long ago as last May.

Perhaps Brother F. Cuthbert Allen can explain.

Vancouver District Council, C.T.U.A.  
In the declaration of principles which

forms the introduction to the by-laws of the Vancouver District Council, the following is the chief paragraph:

"We declare that one of the cardinal objectives of our International organization is the procurement of industrial conditions wherein each worker shall give according to his ability and receive according to his needs. We pledge ourselves to the principle of equal pay for Morse and automatic telegraphy, and shall refuse to condone conditions of work in any branch of the industry which would be considered intolerable by members in any other branch, with particular regard to radiotelegraphy."

The Canadian Radio Division, as an affiliate of the Vancouver District Council, stands behind that declaration, and will not associate itself with any unit of the C. T. U. A. which makes a working agreement for a week of longer than 48 hours.

**UNION  DIRECTORY**

**COMMERCIAL TELEGRAPHERS' UNION OF AMERICA**

Jurisdiction: All telegraphers (except those employed on the railway) in North America.  
R. H. Johnson, International President;  
F. B. Powers, Int'l. Sec.-Treas., 113 South Ashland Blvd., Chicago, Ills.

**CANADIAN RADIO DIVISION, NO. 65, C. T. U. A.**

Jurisdiction: All radiotelegraphers and radioelectricians (except those on the payroll of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of Canada, Ltd.) in Canada.

F. J. Hollis, General Chairman, Radio Station, Alert Bay, B. C.; W. T. Burford, General Secretary-Treasurer, 4144 14th Avenue, West, Vancouver, B.C. General Committee: F. J. Hollis, W. T. Burford, C. W. Mellish, F. S. Ogilvie, A. Stocker, H. Wolfe.

**British Columbia District Committee:**

C. W. Mellish, Chairman, Digby Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C.; H. Wolfe, Secretary, Estevan Point, B.C.; W. G. Lloyd, SS. "Griffco"; S. P. Jones, Digby Radio, Prince Rupert, B.C. District Organizer: B. W. Mugford, 1750 4th St., Victoria, B.C.

**Eastern District Committee:**

A. Stocker, Chairman, Radio Station, Canso, N.S.; F. S. Ogilvie, Secretary; J. L. Walsh, Radio Station, Canso, N.S.

**Delegates to Vancouver District Council, C. T. U. A.:**

W. J. Busswood, W. T. Burford, E. S. Brooks, W. G. Lloyd.

**Delegates to Vancouver Trades and Labor Council:**

W. J. Busswood, W. T. Burford, E. S. Brooks.

**VANCOUVER DISTRICT COUNCIL, NO. 15, C. T. U. A.**

Jurisdiction: All C. T. U. A. members in British Columbia. W. T. Burford, President; C. H. Gibbs, Vice-President; W. T. Jones, Secretary-Treasurer, 303 Pender St., W., Vancouver, B.C.; E. H. Slim, Sentinel.

**VANCOUVER TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL**

Jurisdiction: All trade union members in Vancouver, New Westminster, and District. R. H. Neelands, M.L.A., President; F. R. Bengough, Secretary, 16 Hastings St., E., Vancouver, B.C.

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RADIOTELEGRAPHISTS**

Jurisdiction: All autonomous radiotelegraph unions in the world. J. Madsen, President, Denmark; H. Robinson, Secretary, 8 Canute Road, Southampton, England.



## NEWS OF AFFILIATED BODIES

### International Federation of Radiotelegraphists.

With regard to the next International Radiotelegraph Conference, to be held at Washington in 1926, the I. F. R. is informed by the International Labor Office at Geneva that "it is not yet known how and by whom the Conference which will probably revise the Radiotelegraph Convention next year will be organized, but whether it is summoned by a government or by the League of Nations, the office will in due course approach the proper authorities with a view to obtaining an opportunity for your Federation to state its views."

The objects of the International Federation of Radiotelegraphists are:

(a) To secure the adoption of uniform international regulations which make the most advantageous use of the science of radiotelegraphy for the purpose of safety of life.

(b) To establish a uniform manning

scale, and uniform normal working hours on the basis of the 8-hour day.

(c) To protect and improve the conditions of service and status of all radiotelegraphists who are members of organizations affiliated with the Federation.

(d) To assist in movements which have for their object the betterment of industrial conditions, and to secure, or assist in securing, legislation and the more effective administration of existing laws which affect the welfare of radiotelegraphists.

It will be seen from the above objects that the I. F. R. looks upon the art of radiotelegraphy (it is not a science) as a purely maritime phenomenon, and that some of the clauses need revision to cover the case of radio men employed on land. Thus, the 8-hour day means nothing unless it is coupled with the six-day week or the five-day week. However, the I. F. R. is doing splendid work, and it is to be hoped that its affiliations will eventually cover the entire radio field of the world.

The Canadian Radio Division is the first extra-European organization to affiliate with the I. F. R.

## ANNUAL ELECTION OF THE CANADIAN RADIO DIVISION

At the close of nominations on the 25th of November, the only names recorded for the general offices were those of the present incumbents. Brother F. J. Hollis is therefore elected General Chairman, and Brother W. T. Burford is elected General Secretary-treasurer by acclamation.

In the British Columbia District, Brother C. W. Mellish is elected Chairman by acclamation. Eastern District results are not yet to hand.

### British Columbia District

Members of the British Columbia District are notified that the following nominations have been received, and are asked to communicate their votes for the candidates of their choice to the Scrutineer, Bull Harbour Radio, by the quickest available means. Ship members working out of Vancouver may ask Brother W. J. Busswood, Point Grey Radio, to forward their votes. Closing date, 27th December.

For District Secretary—Candidates, F. H. Cornish and H. Wolfe; one to be elected.

For District Committee—Candidates, S. P. Jones, W. G. Lloyd and B. W. Mugford; two to be elected.

## Start the New Year Right

The mid-winter festival is with us. The various radiotelegraph administrations will send their greetings broadcast to the "hands," and the messages will be duly placed in the proper depository. Greetings are cheap, and the underpaid and ill-used radiotelegrapher should not be thought ungenerous if he receives them cynically. For kind words butter no parsnips, and the radio employers are, even with the best intentions in the world, largely responsible for the deplorable conditions that prevail in this branch of the communication industry.

We say "largely" advisedly, for the responsibility does not rest wholly on the capitalist and his representatives. It rests partly on you, Mr. Brasspounder. What, you may say, is it your fault that a pinchbeck Napoleon orders west coast stations to exchange signals every five minutes, day and night, by way of a penance for an imaginary transgression existing only in his own disordered mind? It is your fault that a dyspeptic dictator plots a scheme of penalties to be inflicted on direction finding telegraphers and appoints himself prosecutor, judge, jury and hangman for their execution? Is it your fault that your maximum salary, for telegraphing in two codes, is less than the minimum of the land-line man who knows only one? Is it your fault that radiotelegraphers everywhere are underpaid, and that the number of jobs is curtailed by a Government department's flagrant abuse of authority? Yes; it is as much your fault as anyone's, unless you are striving, in co-operation with your fellow-workers, to raise radiotelegraphy out of the rut.

The guilt lies heavily upon the average radiotelegrapher for the present state of his job. He has not acquired the degree of inquisitiveness that results in the state of mind known as class consciousness; he does not realize the full extent of his humiliation, and therefore has formed no definite determination to fight for its eradication.

The employer, be it a public or a private body, treats labor as a commodity, to be bought at the lowest market price, and to be discarded like a worn-out shoe when its usefulness is ended. And in our present social system it is not surprising that the employer should take that attitude. But it is incomprehensible that any body of intelligent workers should be content to accept the capitalist's psychology as their own, and that they, too, should regard labor as an article of commerce instead of considering it in terms of human life.

Not only does the radiotelegrapher's fault lie in his general mental outlook, but in the more immediate problems of getting a living—in the practical business of everyday life—he displays, on the average, a steady indifference toward the things that matter most to himself. His salary and his working conditions are such obvious matters that one would expect them to elicit his constant attention, with a view to their improvement. One would expect to see him participating actively in the work of the organization which offers the only means of securing that improvement. But such is not the case. If he is a member. If he is a member of his Union, he feels satisfied that he is thereby doing his share to improve the common lot; he pays his dues tardily, votes for some other fellow to represent him in the organization, and experiences a virtuous feeling that he has done all that could be expected of one person. And, in comparison with the man who remains outside the Union, he certainly has done a great deal. The non-member and the delinquent member do nothing at all. They reap where the Union member has done the sowing; they are parasites, and should be despised as such if they were not more to be pitied.

But this Bulletin will not reach the non-member. It will reach only that large body of radiotelegraphers who call themselves the Canadian Radio Division of the C. T. U. A., and we wish to urge them, at the end of the year, to take stock of themselves as trade-unionists. Have they taken part in their Union's work during the last twelve months? Have they co-operated with their Committees? Have they—have you—brought a new member into the Union?

A few have helped; the many have left it to "George."

Let us work together to make radiotelegraphy the job it OUGHT to be. Then 1926 will indeed be a Happy New Year.

—W. T. Burford.