

Toronto Star - Toronto, Ont.  
Author: JOHN BREHL Star Staff Correspondent  
Date: Aug.30, 1950  
Start Page: A.2  
Section: NEWS  
Text Word Count: 488

Copyright 1950 Toronto Star, All Rights Reserved.  
Note

## **BILL ORDERS RAIL UNIONS BACK ON JOB IN 2 DAYS**

Ottawa - A national bill that may prove as history-making in Canadian labor relations as the Rand formula was introduced in parliament yesterday by Prime Minister St. Laurent and is being debated today.

It approaches the dispute between the railway unions and management with the "determination" that a just settlement be reached rather than with a view to compulsion.

The bill provides:

1. That services be resumed and strikers return to work within 48 hours of royal assent to the bill.
2. That workers shall be granted an immediate increase of four cents an hour pending final settlement. This was the latest railway offer and is one cent an hour below the last union offer.
3. A 15-day period during which the disputants may come to a collective agreement or agree upon an arbitrator.
4. Authority for the government to appoint an arbitrator if the disputants fail to do so.

On one point the bill represents a victory for the unions. Mr. St. Laurent stated that hotel workers and water transportation employees of the railways must be treated the same as all other employees and covered in the same contract. The railways had offered only two cents an hour to these groups and had insisted on separate contracts.

It was with evident regret that Prime Minister St. Laurent introduced the bill, which he acknowledged is an interference with the normal course of collective bargaining.

However, he pointed out, "the insistence upon what may be normally private rights may at times amount to what becomes public wrongs. And the injury that the insistence of private rights may do the public weal is sometimes so great that it has to be given serious consideration, because the existence and security of the state is the first and prior consideration for each one of us."

Shaking his head, he said "the transportation system has got to be resumed. It has got to be done."

He stressed that it was a bill to deal with an emergency situation, "without becoming a pattern for anything that might have any permanent effect on the labor laws of this country."

The prime minister's dramatic speech was listened to intently by members of the House, and by galleries crowded to overflowing, with standees lining the walls and filling the doorways. It was punctuated by bursts of long and loud applause, as the prime minister reviewed the government's reluctance to interfere with the collective bargaining process.

Mr. St. Laurent shaking his head, asserted that "over the years there have grown up institutions which have proved their value in the national economy of Canada, and I am sure there is no desire at this time on the part of any member of this House to interfere in any way that would have permanent effects upon the normal procedure for the settlement of those matters on a footing of equality between employers and employees."

It was Canada's first cross-country rail strike and it crippled transportation for two weeks until Ottawa ended it.