

On May 30, 1930, an Act of Parliament was adopted known as the Fair Wages and Eight Hour Day Act, 1930, providing for the payment of current wage rates to all persons employed on contracts made with the Government of Canada for works of construction, remodelling, repair or demolition, provided that the wages in all cases should be fair and reasonable. This statute also directed that the working hours of persons while so employed should not exceed eight hours a day. It was further declared that the foregoing conditions were to be applied to all workmen employed by the Government itself on the construction, remodelling, repair or demolition of any work.

The Fair Wages and Eight Hour Day Act, 1930, was superseded, however, on May 1, 1936, by the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, 1935, which was adopted by Parliament on June 28, 1935. This latter statute re-enacts a number of the sections of the former Act and adds new provisions to comply with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads. Like its predecessor, the Act makes provision for fair wages and an eight-hour day on Government contracts for works of construction, remodelling, repair or demolition, imposing, however, a limit of forty-four hours a week on such works and extending the Dominion Government's policy of fair wages and an eight-hour day to works carried out by any provincial or municipal authority with the aid of Dominion Government funds, as well as to other works aided by the Government of Canada.

The Act sets out that the term 'fair wages' means such wages as are generally accepted as current for competent workmen in the district in which the work is being performed for the character or class of work in which such workmen are respectively engaged; but shall in all cases be such wages as are fair and reasonable.

The benefits of the Fair Wages Policy apply also to workmen employed by Government Departments on a day labour basis in building and construction works.

On Mar. 27, 1930, an Order in Council was passed providing that, except in cases where the work of employees was intermittent in character, or the application of the rule was not deemed to be practicable, or in the public interest, the hours of work of any Dominion Government employees who had up to that time been required to work more than eight hours daily should be reduced to eight hours a day, with a half-holiday on Saturday.

An Order in Council was adopted on Dec. 31, 1934, rescinding the labour conditions previously applied to contracts for the manufacture of various classes of government supplies, and substituting other conditions therefor. The provision for the payment of wages not less than current rates, or fair and reasonable rates if there are no current rates, is retained in the new conditions, but with the added proviso that in no event shall the wage rate for male workers 18 years of age or over be less than 30 cents an hour, and for female workers 18 years of age or over, 20 cents an hour. It is also declared that males and females under 18 years of age shall be entitled to rates of wages not less than those provided for women and girls in the minimum wage scales of the respective provinces, and that, in any cases where the provincial minimum wage laws require the payment of higher wages than those set out above, such higher rates shall apply in the execution of Dominion contract work.

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