

WINNIPEG

1917

STRIKE

ORLD

The Winnipeg Sympathetic Strike.

Street railway transportation in Winnipeg was tied up for three days during the week which began on May 18, owing to 1,000 employes of the Winnipeg Electric Ry. striking, in sympathy with civic employes who struck for advances in wages. The strike, which involved 15,000 workers, in over a dozen unions, was the most disastrous in the history of the city and from the time that the first civic employes walked out until a settlement was effected was over a month.

The city was without street car service on one of the most important holidays of the year, viz., May 24, being the first summer holiday, and the tie up, while it only lasted three days, caused inconvenience to thousands of workers, who, living in the outlying districts, had to walk in many cases as much as six miles to get to their places of employment. Hundreds of owners of motor cars co-operated, at the request of the civic authorities, and at the rush hours a continuous string of cars could be seen passing up and down the busy thoroughfares.

The street car men went out on the morning of May 22, and a settlement was reached at noon on May 25, as a result of the visit of Senator Gideon Robertson, who acted as a mediator, and who, at the time the street car men struck, was on his way west. The street car men were called out as a last resort by the striking committee and this action was considered the trump card.

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A magnificent spirit of co-operation was manifested throughout the city in a desire to keep the public utilities running. Society women, who did not know the meaning of work, manned the telephone switchboards and helped to maintain a service for a week that the operators were out. Girls in railway offices dropped their pens, donned overalls and hustled trucks when the freight handlers joined the striking unions, and private motor car owners acted as jitney drivers in their desire to assist to their work those who had long distances to travel.

The underlying motive of the strike was not based entirely upon the refusal of the city to grant increases in the different departments, but rather on a point of principle. The city maintained that employes should arbitrate matters of this kind in war time. Labor spokesmen asserted that the life of unionism rested solely upon the right of labor to strike to procure their demands. The thorn in the flesh, in so far as the city was concerned, was due to the fact that about three-quarters of the firemen, who had lately formed a union, were the first to go out in sympathy, leaving the city without adequate fire protection. The basis of the agreement finally reached was that all matters affecting increases in wages should be arbitrated, with a strike as the last resort.

The Winnipeg Electric Ry. suffered the loss of thousands of dollars in revenue as a result of the rolling stock being tied up over the holiday. May 24 came on a Friday and preparations had been made on a large scale for entertaining the public at the various parks. Up until noon of the holiday hopes were held out that an agreement would be reached that day, and crews were at the various barns waiting to take their cars out. The walkout, from a street railway standpoint, was very regrettable, owing to the fact that only a short time before a new schedule had been drawn up for the street car men, providing for increases in all branches, and the best of relations exist between the company and its employes.

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TH&B
BRIDGEBURG
YARD

emies from the ...
ie work. (Sept. pg. 391.)

Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Ry.—A
re at the shops at Aberdeen Ave., Hamil-
on, Aug. 27, is reported to have caused
10,000 damage. The boiler room, air-
compressor room and store room, all of
frame construction, were destroyed, the
machine shop only being saved.

The new freight yards at Bridgeburg,
Ont., laid out at a reported cost of \$100,-
000, were put into operation Sept. 2
(Aug. pg. 337.)

October
1918