

Canada



 A Labour Day parade in Toronto, Canada in 1900

Labour Day has been celebrated on the first Monday in September in Canada since the 1880s. The origins of Labour Day in Canada can be traced back to April 14, 1872 when a parade was staged in support of the Toronto Typographical Union's strike for a 58-hour work-week.^[1] The Toronto Trades Assembly (TTA) called its 27 unions to demonstrate in support of the Typographical Union who had been on strike since March 25.^[1] [George Brown](#), Canadian politician and editor of the [Toronto Globe](#) hit back at his striking employees, pressing police to charge the Typographical Union with "conspiracy."^[1] Although the laws criminalising union activity were outdated and had already been abolished in Great Britain, they were still on books in Canada and police arrested 24 leaders of the Typographical Union. Labour leaders decided to call another similar demonstration on September 3 to protest the arrests. Seven unions marched in [Ottawa](#), prompting a promise by Canadian [Prime Minister](#) Sir [John A. Macdonald](#) to repeal the "barbarous" anti-union laws.^[1] Parliament passed the [Trade Union Act](#) on June 14 the following year, and soon all unions were demanding a 54-hour work-week.

The Toronto Trades and Labour Council (successor to the TTA) held similar celebrations every spring. American [Peter J. McGuire](#), co-founder of the [American Federation of Labor](#), was asked to speak at a labour festival in Toronto, Canada on July 22, 1882. Returning to the United States, McGuire and the [Knights of Labor](#) organised a similar [parade](#) based on the Canadian event on September 5, 1882 in New York City, USA. On July 23, 1894, Canadian Prime Minister [John Thompson](#) and his government made Labour Day, to be held in September, an official holiday. In the United States, the New York parade became an annual event that year, and in 1894 was adopted by American president [Grover Cleveland](#) to compete with [International Workers' Day](#) (May Day).

While Labour Day parades and picnics are organised by unions, many Canadians regard Labour Day as the Monday of the last long weekend of summer. Non-union celebrations include picnics, [fireworks displays](#), water activities, and public art events. Since the new school year generally starts right after Labour Day, families with school-age children take it as the last chance to travel before the end of summer.

An old custom prohibits the wearing of white after Labour Day. The explanations for this tradition range from the fact that white clothes are worse protection against cold weather in the winter to the fact that the rule was intended as a status symbol for new members of the middle class in the late 19th century and early 20th century.^{[1][2]}

A Labour Day tradition in Atlantic Canada would be the Wharf Rat Rally, while the rest of Canada is watching [Labour Day Classic](#), [Canadian Football League](#) event where rivals

like [Calgary Stampeders](#) and [Edmonton Eskimos](#), [Hamilton Tiger-Cats](#) and [Toronto Argonauts](#), and [Saskatchewan Roughriders](#) and [Winnipeg Blue Bombers](#) play on Labour Day weekend. Before the demise of the [Ottawa Renegades](#) after the 2005 season, that team played the nearby [Montreal Alouettes](#) on Labour Day weekend. Since then, the Alouettes have played the remaining team in the league, the [BC Lions](#).

Labour Day parade in Grand Falls-Windsor Newfoundland started in 1910 and still continues today, 100 years later. The celebrations go on for three days with the parade on Labour Day Monday.