

The way
it is . . .

BY FORREST "FROSTY" NEWMAN
Director of Industrial Relations

While Awaiting Arbitration . . .

How to Recover Work Lost to Mailhandlers

The American Postal Workers Union met with the Postal Service on April 10 to discuss modifications of the recent ruling on jurisdiction in mailhandling operations at post offices and Bulk Mail Centers.



"Frosty" Newman

Several weeks ago your representatives also met with management to express our many objections to the assignment of primary craft functions in areas where we believe the work is rightfully that of the Clerk Craft.

After reviewing the proposed modifications submitted by the United States Postal Service on April 10, the American Postal Workers Union made an immediate written request for arbitration of all unresolved disputes.

In the meantime, we urge local presidents and field officers (1) to resist infiltration of the Mail Handler Craft in areas where the work has been performed by the Clerk Craft and (2) to continue efforts to regain that work which was awarded by the Postal Service to the Clerk Craft, since mailhandlers in many areas are performing Clerk Craft work.

A HELPFUL DECISION

On this score, we have just received a copy of a decision issued in Boston which we think helpfully explains the action that good local leadership should take to obtain work for the Clerk Craft during this period while we are awaiting the arbitration process.

I am reproducing the entire decision rendered on APWU grievance No. 78-620G because it deals with a very important area of postal operations and with an area which has now been clearly assigned to the Clerk Craft. Note that the award recognized that the guidelines call for clerks to be the primary craft in the distribution of outgoing IPPs, newspapers, rolls, letters or flat bundles, slugs, special delivery and special handling parcel post in Operations 110-129.

I wish to add that the same is true of Operations 180

and 185 (opening units) in the incoming section.

Work of the type that Nick Diliberto, President of the Clerk Craft in Boston, and other officials there have done in obtaining this prompt and proper decision is to be commended. I urge all other local presidents to read this decision carefully and take immediate action to regain work in the opening and pouching units as President Diliberto has done.

TEXT OF DECISION

"Reference is made to APWU Grievance No. 78-620G, wherein the Union requested that the practice of utilizing Mail Handlers on the "slug" belt in the Rack Section at South Postal Annex be stopped.

We have now had an opportunity to thoroughly review your contentions that the "slug" belt is an integral part of the distribution function and contains a "distribution" separation of small parcels, rolls, newspapers and other bulky mail. As I told you verbally, this is not dissimilar from the contention raised in some other operations by the Mail Handlers' Union, wherein they contend that in some instances Mail Handler operations are performed by Mail Handlers and by Clerks.

Nevertheless, the grievance is sustained primarily as the result of our review of recent Regional Instructions dated February 16, 1979 relating to mail processing work assignment guidelines. As you are no doubt aware said guidelines call for Clerks to be the "primary" craft in the "distribution of outgoing IPP's, newspapers, rolls, letter or flat bundles, slugs, special delivery or special handling parcel post" in Operations 110 through 129 (outgoing SPR distribution pouch sack, and loose pouch).

By copy of this communication the Manager, Detached Mails Unit will be asked to implement the findings contained herein, notwithstanding Management's reasonable contention that since there is no scheme involved and Mail Handlers have been doing this work for some time and it is merely "simple distribution".

As of the date of this article, an arbitration date has not yet been chosen. You will be advised of developments in this serious challenge to our work jurisdiction.