

cc: Messrs. Newman  
Morgen  
Jordan  
Wolff



EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS GROUP  
Washington, DC 20260

May 24, 1979

Mr. Emmet Andrews  
General President  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
817 - 14th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20005

Re: Jurisdiction Committee Arbitration

Dear Mr. Andrews:

This is in response to your letter of April 10, 1978, requesting arbitration of all unresolved jurisdictional issues between the Clerk craft and Mail Handler craft pursuant to the September 15, 1978, Memorandum of Understanding.

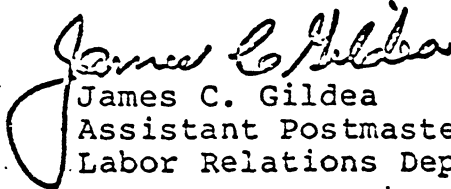
As you are aware, the Memorandum of Understanding provides a detailed mechanism for resolving disputes involving duty assignments. It establishes a national level Committee on Jurisdiction to identify and resolve any jurisdictional disputes. The Committee is granted, by agreement to all signatory parties to the Memorandum, including the American Postal Workers Union, 180 days in which to resolve any disputes after they are first considered by the Committee. In the opinion of the Postal Service, the 180 day requirement is a necessary and integral part of the entire process of trying to resolve these matters without resort to a third party. We see the 180 days as a jurisdictional prerequisite to any case for arbitration of these disputes.

On January 9, 1979, you informed the United States Postal Service by letter that there was a dispute with regard to certain assignments of work. Thereafter, on February 16, 1979, the Committee on Jurisdiction met for the first time to consider those disputes. The Committee met subsequently on April 10, 1979, with regard to the same matters.

In our view, the language of the Memorandum of Understanding is clear that 180 days must elapse from February 16 before any party may request that the disputes you raised can be arbitrated. Furthermore, contrary to the statement in your April 10 letter, representatives of the Postal Service have never taken the position that matters could not be resolved by the Committee. On the contrary, the Postal Service believes that progress was made by the Committee on Jurisdiction and stands ready to continue to meet with all parties in an effort to reach an amicable resolution of these disputes without resort to arbitration.

In short, we believe that under the Memorandum, your request for arbitration is premature at this time. We are ready and willing to continue to try to resolve this matter informally within the 180 day limit as established by the Memorandum.

Sincerely,

  
James C. Gildea  
Assistant Postmaster General  
Labor Relations Department

cc: Lonnie L. Johnson  
National Director  
National Post Office  
Mailhandlers Union, AFL-CIO