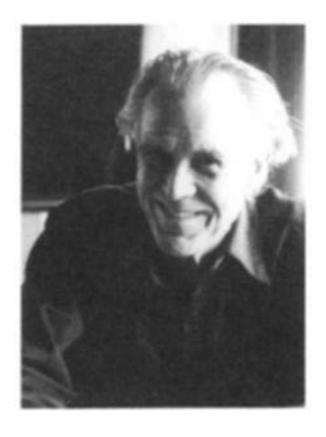


# Workers' Control on the Railroad:

A Practical Example "Right Under Your Nose"



The strongest bulwark of the capitalist system is the ignorance of its victims.

Adolph Fischer, on being sentenced to hang after the Haymarket Riots, Chicago, 1886

## Workers' Control on the Railroad:

# A Practical Example "Right Under Your Nose"

by

R. E. (Lefty) Morgan

Edited by G. R. Pool and D. J. Young

St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History

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#### **Preface**

Every so often, with good fortune, you will meet an individual that is so unique and able, it will seem they have advanced to a level of understanding or ability far beyond what you would expect as ordinary. In July, 1973, at Porteau, British Columbia I had my first encounter with such a person, R.E. "Lefty" Morgan.

Working as a trainman on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, following a 1960s education with a main interest in the social sciences, I had heard many of my fellow workers speak of Lefty. Some mentioned his longer than normal hairstyle. Others had mentioned his writings. Some had told me colourful stories of his involvement in the various social issues of the previous few decades. Some simply tried to label him. Others mentioned his strict obedience to and understanding of the operating rules. On many occasions when discussing union or political interests, senior workers had advised, "You should talk to Lefty."

Having recently exercised my seniority at the North Vancouver terminal of the British Columbia Railway, I was finally to meet the person known throughout the system simply as Lefty. I had been called as part of a relief crew, and seniority dictated I would relieve the head-end brakeman. This meant only myself and the engineer would occupy the engine for the trip from Porteau to North Vancouver.

I entered the engine cab and placed my grip on the brakeman's side. Expecting to introduce myself and be warmly received I turned towards the engineer. Before I could say a word, a bundle of train orders were thrust into my hands by a rather stern and formal Lefty who simultaneously mentioned that I was a new man.

Somewhat taken aback, I slouched to my seat uttering the words, "Yes, new man." After having read the orders Lefty asked if I had seen anything wrong with a certain train order. Quickly I referred back to the particular train order. "The operator didn't put the dispatcher's initials on it," said Lefty, "but I heard him transmit the order so we will go with it." By now I had decided that Lefty certainly wasn't what I had expected, and that I didn't like the way things were going.

I continued to shuffle through the train orders, then looked up to see Lefty standing directly in front of me. "Well, you might be a Preface 7

new man, but I bet you have a name," stated Lefty. We both chuckled, introduced ourselves, and I quickly explained that I wasn't really a new man, just new to that subdivision. The next couple of hours were spent sharing our various ideas on the world and the railroad. The trip seemed to end too soon, but before we reached North Vancouver it was clear to me that Lefty Morgan had done a lot of thinking about many things. Eventually, I had the opportunity to read A Practical Example "Right Under Your Nose." This work is an accurate description of the railway running trades work as it existed during the 1960s and early 1970s. Lefty has captured the very feelings and experiences of the railroader that only the most intimate of insiders could explain. The use of the rules, daily negotiations over workload, the seniority system, the presence of the new man, the existence of the unwritten rules, and the freedom from direct supervision are just some of the areas that Lefty explains. While most workers engaged with the railway running trades understood what was taking place, only someone with Leftv's knowledge of the railroad, the railroader, the social-economic order, and human relations is able to explain the nature of these various relationships.

Many changes have occurred on the railroad since Morgan wrote A Practical Example. Technological change has resulted in longer, heavier trains being manned by only two crew members, the engineer and conductor, both qualified to do the other's job. The caboose has been replaced by trackside heat detectors and end of train radio transmitters. The engineer uses radio signals to operate remote control engines in the middle of the train. An electronic device records each move of the train and demands that the locomotive engineer respond to signals, or it will initiate an emergency stop of the train. A computerized traffic control system issues instructions for train movements. Despite technology, the fundamental characteristics of the railroad operating trades remain just as Lefty described them.

As we can see from the introductory biography, Lefty Morgan was a political and social activist for much of his life. In my experience, Lefty was always most interested in talking of the future. Many of his fellow workers were unaware of, or misinformed, about his activities during the depression years. Lefty's comradeship with his fellow railroaders perhaps evolved from his experiences during those times. This camaraderie manifested itself in his willingness to lend assistance to any worker who had a problem. Lefty would take on grievances, U.I.C. appeals, and dismissals. Often these cases were hopeless and had been abandoned by others. More than one

of these workers returned to the job because of Lefty's efforts on their behalf.

Like many of the running trades, the railway influenced Lefty's lifestyle. Each day Lefty would compare his railway watch with the official radio time signal. Like most railroaders his conversation was sprinkled with the language of his work. Railroaders have a tendency to assume that their jargon is understood by the world at large and when writing Lefty occasionally fell into the trap. The reader not familiar with railway jargon is advised to use the editors' notes when in doubt. A Practical Example serves as a yardstick for the present and future railroader to measure what has been gained or lost from technology; what and why certain things remain; and what, as humans we may wish to reclaim for the workplace.

Kevin Rhodes Kamloops, BC July, 1994

## Acknowledgements

We began this project in 1988 when Donna Young was working on an M.A. thesis on the organization of labour in a maintenance-of-way gang in British Columbia. It came to our notice that R. E. (Lefty) Morgan, a member of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, had passed away, leaving unpublished manuscripts on the running trades. Shortly after writing Mrs. Margaret Morgan to see if we could read his papers, we found them in our mail. Eventually we decided to find a wider audience for his work. Interviews with Margaret Morgan in Fredericton and further research in British Columbia led to the publication of a short paper by Morgan and an introduction to his work in Labour/Le Travail. \(^1\)

This biography draws on interviews with people who knew Morgan. As well, several archives and libraries were consulted: the University of British Columbia Special Collections Division, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, the National Archives of Canada, the Dechief Information and Documentation Centre. Canadian National Railways, Montréal, the Canadian Pacific Archives, Montréal, the Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration. Montréal, the Thomas Fischer Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto, the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, and Lefty Morgan's personal papers in the possession of Margaret Morgan (referred to below as the Lefty Morgan Papers). The editors thank Mrs. Morgan for her generous support and for giving up many hours of her time. We are also grateful to Jim Stanley who worked on the project in earlier stages of this research. David Frank has been very helpful in guiding us though this project and identifying sources of information on the CCF/NDP and on labour history. We also thank the University of New Brunswick for its generous financial support both in conducting research and in supporting the publication of the present work. McGill University provided institutional support in 1992-93. Without the help of the following people. the project could not have been completed: Colette Bart (Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration), the late Morris Carrell, Stewart Cooper, Merle Bottaro, the late Ruth Bullock, George Brandak (UBC

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>"Informal Participation Patterns in the Railway Running Trades" *Labour/Le Travail*, 27 (Spring 1991), 231-44.

Library, Special Collections Division), Moe Flynn, David Frank, Bill Jukes, Myron Kuzych, Hugh Lautard, Steven Lyons (Canadian Pacific Archives, Montréal), Jim McKenzie, Martin Meissner, Clyde Mulhall, Fiona Murray (Dechief Library and Documentation Centre, Canadian National, Montréal), the late Jack O'Brien, the late David Patterson and Sheila Patterson, Henry Reimer, Kevin Rhodes, John Smith, Dave Stupich and Gillian Thompson. We also thank Frances Stewart and Uzoma Esonwanne for their continued support and encouragement.

G.R. Pool and D.J. Young August 1994

#### Introduction

## R. E. (Lefty) Morgan, His Life and Work

G. R. Pool and D. J. Young

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE "Right under your Nose" is unique among working class documents. While it is a study of the railway running trades, the manuscript goes beyond a description of the jobs themselves: it analyses the entire realm of workplace relations as an example of democracy at work. Written in 1963-65<sup>2</sup>, A Practical Example was based on Morgan's belief that people could control their lives in an independent workplace. Lefty Morgan maintained that workers could actually control the pace, conditions, and organization of their own work as well as their lives. To show this was the case, he wrote extensively about the labour process he knew best, from the perspective of a locomotive engineer. In A Practical Example, he examined his experiences as a worker, but also drew on many studies written by and about railway operators, engineers, and

<sup>1</sup>This is the original title of the manuscript, hereafter referred to as: A Practical Example.

Although the manuscript is undated, it was written mostly between 1963 and 1965 while Morgan was removed from service from the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, having accumulated more than 60 demerits. At this time the company was eliminating sidings as an economy measure, which forced trains to wait for longer periods. Under the collective agreement, time spent waiting on the siding could not be claimed, but Morgan claimed an extra hour, since he was being forced to wait while still on duty. He was assessed 40 demerits for claiming time not allowed. The case took three years to resolve. The Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration re-instated Morgan with an award of \$12,721.50 for lost wages. The demerit system is described in note 5 on p.137. See Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration, Case No. 49, Heard at Montreal, Monday, January 9th, 1967 Concerning Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Montréal 1967). In 1965 and 1966 Morgan wrote several letters requesting information from various railway unions and for permission to quote excerpts from books. Martin Meissner of the University of British Columbia read the manuscript and commented on it in August 1966. Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from Martin Meissner to Mr. Richard Morgan, 23 August 1966.

related trades.<sup>3</sup> In another unfinished manuscript entitled *Enough*, Morgan outlined the workings of a fully democratic society.<sup>4</sup> Also, in his daily life Morgan tirelessly discussed and developed ways of creating a true democracy which would free people from a hierarchical, often dehumanizing, society and its workplaces.

## Biographical Sketch

We know little of R.E. (Lefty) Morgan's early life. Born in White River, Ontario on 14 December 1914, he came with his family to British Columbia while still a youth. The nickname Lefty was given to him due to his extreme left-handedness, but is not unfitting politically. He first worked as a cowboy near Kamloops, BC and later became a dispatcher for a trucking firm in Vancouver. The years as a cowboy left a lasting impression, and his home was decorated with many mementoes from these days, including a cowboy hat, protective gear, and paintings of the BC interior. As he moved from driving cattle to dispatching trucks and then operating trains, he became increasingly interested in the organization of work. The ideas expressed in A Practical Example were grounded in Morgan's many years of work (1954-78) as a railway engineer on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (PGE), later BC Railway.

Morgan had a quick mind and could see the fallacy of an argument. He loved people and was always ready to pursue his ideas with any person who happened to come along. Often he picked up hitch-hikers with whom he would talk seriously about how society does and should work. If somebody littered a sidewalk he would stop them and ask: "What made you think you owned that particular spot of land?" He would then turn the discussion to property and the inequalities engendered by the idea. His quick mind and ready wit were compelling; those who met him admired him deeply. As the late Morris Carrell put it, "You could trust him with your life."

<sup>4</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, *Enough*, unpublished manuscript. *Enough* will be discussed further on pp. 45-6. The title meant that people should be able

to have enough of whatever they needed.

<sup>6</sup>Interview with Morris Carrell, 20 July 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See the bibliography for A Practical Example, p.193.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>A document in his files suggests that he worked on a logging train for the first time in August, 1951 for CN-CP-BC Electric. This was unconfirmed since CP no longer has the staff to do research on personnel inquiries. It is consistent with the fact that he moved from engineman's helper to engineer on the PGE in less than three years. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Margaret." The PGE became BC Railway on 1 April 1972.

Much of his concern for people stemmed from his belief that we have allowed others to make decisions for us. As he wrote in *Enough*:

This is not something which can be tackled without consideration but there is no doubt in my mind that *it can be done*. Two main things are necessary — power and determination. Much depends on power, who has it, what they do with it. When combined together in a common purpose we ordinary people have the power to live in almost any sort of world we choose. Power is required if you want your choice to be effective. One of our major problems is that we have loaned our power out. We now have to reclaim it. Without a firm hold on our power, we can accomplish nothing. With it we can create and firmly establish the kind of world most of us want, here and now.<sup>7</sup>

The source for these ideas lay in his experiences in Vancouver during the Dirty Thirties, on the picket line, as a social activist and as a member of the CCF/NDP.

#### The 1930s

To understand the context in which these manuscripts were written, we must recall the time when he began to work, think, and organize. During the 1930s, Morgan repeatedly found himself in confrontations with the state. Like many single unemployed men, he spent considerable time in the relief camps. Conditions there were better than starving on the streets, but as administration was taken over by the military, the camps became more like holding areas for containing protest. As might be expected, food and wages were inadequate and there were dozens of protests in BC relief camps, resulting in the expulsion and blacklisting of hundreds of activists. The men often refused to work, complained about the food, held sympathy strikes over the discharge of men who refused to work. and even demanded an 81/2 hour day. On 15 February 1934 there was a "large disturbance" at all camps due to "agitation" by the BC Single Unemployed Relief Workers Association. Like many of his friends, Morgan was on more than one occasion blacklisted and ejected from the camps. He later re-entered under an assumed name.8 By late December 1934, many of these men wound up on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, *Enough*. Emphasis in original.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>It was a practice to adopt an assumed name, as the army kept blacklists of those whom it considered troublemakers. Morgan was not the only name he assumed, but was the one he kept and legalized. Public Archives of British Columbia, GR 429, Attorney General, Correspondence Inward 1933-37, Box 21, File 4, No. 101, letter from C.B. Russell, Lieutenant Colonel to the Commissioner of British Columbia Police, 17 December 1934.

the streets of Vancouver, precipitating demands to abolish the blacklist. Shortly after one such expulsion and Early in April, the single unemployed from the interior relief camps went on strike and converged on Vancouver to demand work and wages, the right to vote, the abolition of military control of the camps and other improvements. Under the guidance of the Worker's Unity League, the unemployed men organized and staged many strikes, hunger marches, and sit-ins. When the demands of the unemployed were not met in Vancouver or Victoria, they began their famous On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935. There were other battles to be fought, however, and Morgan did not participate in the Trek.

Morgan and his friends patronized many of Vancouver's cheap rooms and lunch counters where political debate was the order of the day, according to the late Jack O'Brien, a life-long friend of Morgan. During their time in Vancouver, Morgan, O'Brien and Rod Young (later Member of Parliament) frequently attended rallies and picketed for one cause or another. They were all attracted to the newly formed CCF and were members of the Cooperative Commonwealth Youth. Their participation came to a climax on the Vancouver waterfront.

In an acrimonious dispute involving longshoremen, a company union (the Vancouver District Waterfront Workers Association) had signed an unacceptable agreement. The union members responded by taking control of the union and electing a "communist and left-leaning executive" which then led a strike against "unfair"

National Archives of Canada, McNaughton Papers, MG 30 E133 (Series II) Vol. 57, File 359, (Vol. 1), "Riots, Disturbances, Strikes, Demonstrations, Etc. in Unemployment Relief Camps."

<sup>9</sup>During 31 March 1934 — 15 April 1935, the work camps' population dropped from 6,060 to 3,859. National Archives of Canada, McNaughton Papers, MG 30 E133 (Series II) Vol. 57, File 359, (Vol. 2), "Memorandum, Situation in Vancouver, B.C. 19th April, 1935" from Major-General C.G.S. [Chief General Staff].

<sup>10</sup>R.C. McCandless, "Vancouver's 'Red Menace' of 1935: The Waterfront Situation," *BC Studies*, 22 (Summer 1974), 59. See Lorne Brown, *When Freedom was Lost* (Montréal 1987), 57ff.

<sup>11</sup>See Derek Reimer, ed., "Fighting for Labour: Four Decades of Work in British Columbia, 1910-1950," Sound Heritage, VII, 4 (1978), 41-60; Ben Swankey and Jean Evans Sheils, eds., Work and Wages! A Semi-Documentary Account of the Life and Times of Arthur H. (Slim) Evans 1890-1944. Carpenter, Miner, Labour Leader (Vancouver 1987).

<sup>12</sup>Jack O'Brien interview, 29 July 1989. O'Brien had worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1920s in the Prairies and came to Vancouver in 1931, where he obtained casual work as a railroad switchman.

He may have roomed with Morgan.

cargoes.13 The company fired all the militants and hired scabs, creating new company unions to replace the worker-controlled one. In the ensuing conflict many non-workers supported the strikers and vice-versa. 14 The company was ready with police support.

During the ensuing Battle of Ballantyne Pier, 60 people were reported to be injured when a crowd of 5.000, "two-thirds of whom" were "not longshoremen" according to the Chief of Police, were ordered to disperse. 15 According to John Stanton, the police attacked on horseback and on foot:

The former swung four-foot, leather-covered clubs weighted with lead. while the police on foot used wooden 'billies.' Grey tentacles of tear gas spread out in some places. This onslaught quickly broke up the marching column, and individuals or small groups were hunted down and beaten mercilessly. No guns were used. The marchers offered minimal resistance, and in only a few minutes the strike had been seriously weakened. The scabs carried on, and the new company unions were preserved, at least for the time. 16

On that day Jack O'Brien, Rod Young and Morgan were on the picket line and when the police came "hitting people with their sticks," O'Brien and Young escaped. Morgan remained to be clubbed on the head by police, a wound that required stitches and hospitalization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>John Stanton, Never Say Diel: The Life and Times of John Stanton, A Pioneer Labour Lawyer (Ottawa 1987), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>See Stanton, Never Say Die!, 3-5. While there was a split between the scabs and union men, the longshoremen donated one dollar a month per worker to the unemployed workers' union, and supported tag days when people would stand at a corner with a tin can wearing a banner such as "JOBS MEAN SECURITY." These generous public donations, sometimes reaching thousands of dollars, supported the efforts of the unemployed workers. See Brown, When Freedom Was Lost, 116. There is evidence that longshore workers refused to join one relief-camp march on the waterfront. and on 18 May longshoremen voted against a sympathy strike in support of relief camp workers. However, the longshoremen's union was one of few to join the May Day parade which attracted 12,000 people in 1935. National Archives of Canada, McNaughton Papers, MG 30 E133 (Series II) Vol. 61, File 380C, "Diary of Events Leading up to and in Connection with B.C. Longshoremen's Strike."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Anonymous, "Sixty Injured in Tuesday's Rioting," Vancouver Sun, 19

June 1935, p.1.

16Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 5-6. For other descriptions of the strike, see Ben Swankey, "Man Along the Shore"! The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront As told by Longshoremen Themselves (Vancouver 1975), 86-8.

He was jailed briefly. <sup>17</sup> An item in a short-lived socialist publication, *Amoeba*, gives insight into Morgan's character in the face of this onslaught:

For some time the membership of the C.C.Y. [Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement] will miss the engaging smile and ready wise-crack of "Lefty," whilst he will be stretched on a bed of pain, the victim of police brutality and the ruthless hand of organized Capital.

Of all the young workers none was more devoted to the cause than he. The camp boys will long remember his "Home on the Range" and "Git along little Doggie" at the Royal Theatre when the youth movement set out to entertain them during their stay in Vancouver. Amongst the first of our members to volunteer for picket duty, he has maintained energetically and faithfully his duties on the midnight or "graveyard shift" of the flying squad. In company with other members, Lefty drove down in Roy's car to the Ballantyne. Leaving the car to get a fuller report of the situation he stood for a moment on the sidewalk, an isolated figure. A squad car took the corner on two wheels drawing up alongside.

"Search him!" came the order.

But Lefty was unarmed.

The city officer in the back seat yelled, "Kill the S ... of a B ... ."

They hit him three times over the head and over the legs, and he fell senseless.

When we visited him in the General Hospital he had eight stitches in his scalp, a fracture is feared. The pillow and his shirt were covered in blood. His Wobbly button dinted by the police club lies on my desk. As he rode in the ambulance he sang the "Internationale" weakly.

Lefty, Comrade and Fellow-worker, member of the I.W.W. [Industrial Workers of the World] delegate to the Provincial Council Y.S.L. [Young Socialist League] and Provincial Secretary to the C.C.Y. In theory and action second to none. May your recovery be swift. We salute you! 18

<sup>17</sup>The Vancouver Sun, 19 June 1935 listed the injured. This source cited Morgan's original name, and indicated he was in fair condition after receiving contusions to the head. A news release he wrote in 1961 recalled his very short jail term. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" to the Vancouver Sun, 8 May 1961.

<sup>18</sup>Anonymous, "LEFTY (An Appreciation)," *Amoeba*, 1, 8 (1935), 4. The YSL and the CCY were very active in British Columbia at this time. Ivan Avakumovic suggests that the youth movement was disdainful of the older members of the party who were participating in elections, and "explains why some CCYMers preferred to devote their talents to building up trade unions or a broader-based youth organization." See his *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics* (Toronto 1978), 87.

17

The style of this "appreciation" reflects both the times and the high regard the writer had for Morgan. It also suggests that Morgan was not settled politically, but then these were unsettling times.

In later years Morgan frequently spoke of his admiration for the IWW or Wobblies and at one time he was a member. 19 Part of his admiration for the IWW was its abhorrence of hierarchy and pursuit of democracy and freedom, in short its anarcho-syndicalism. 20 He also belonged to the Socialist Party of Canada, most of whose members favoured joining the CCF in 1935.<sup>21</sup> It is also significant that Morgan was especially interested in workplace struggles, although in his view the unemployed were also workers.

During this strike and throughout the thirties the issue of Communist control of the union was hotly debated. As the late Jack O'Brien put it, "The main fight in the 1930s was against the Communists."22 Morgan also saw how Communist control of the unions embittered and divided workers.<sup>23</sup> Later in life, he expressed

<sup>19</sup>Upon learning in 1971 that a friend who looked after the Wobbly library had died, the Morgans went to retrieve what they could. These Wobbly documents and posters were given to the UBC Library, Special Collections Division.

<sup>20</sup>Anarcho-syndicalism goes back to the early days of socialist thinking and reached its height in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The principle idea is that a socialist society would be based on self-governing collectives organized through trade unions as a substitute for all forms of state organization. Working within existing unions and labour syndicates, anarcho-syndicalists believe that unions or syndicates should have an educational role and create self-managed institutions in preparation for the revolution. Working class defeats of the 1920s led to the decline of anarcho-syndicalism as a serious alternative to other socialist and communist thinking. Peter Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism (London 1992), 8-9; Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (London 1976), 37-8; Tom Bottomore, et al., eds., A Dictionary of Marxist Thought (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 19, 477.

<sup>21</sup>Anonymous, "Socialist Party of Canada 'Commits hari-kiri'." *B.C. Workers' News*, 1, 20 (31 May 1935). In a referendum to merge with the CCF, 417 voted in favour and 182 were opposed, and so the required two-thirds majority was won. There were 44 branches of the SP of C in BC, of which 29 participated in the referendum. Of those, 19 were for the merger and 10 were against.

22 Interview, 29 July 1989.

 $<sup>^{23}</sup>$ The issue of Communist-controlled unions was hotly debated during the Vancouver Trades Council meeting in 1935. Anonymous, "Trades Council Debate," Labour Statesman (July 1935). In his book about his experiences as a labour lawyer, John Stanton suggested that Communist control was not a factor in the defeat of the longshoremen's strike, Never Say Die!, 9-10.

concern for the welfare of all workers, and frequently spoke out against the authoritarian aspect of the Communist Party.

During the 1930s Morgan frequented the White Lunch restaurant at Pender and Granville in downtown Vancouver, where he joined the lively debates on the future of capitalism. Using government vouchers, unemployed workers could get meals at the White Lunch, often their only nourishment for the day.<sup>24</sup>

It was more than a mere restaurant, it was an institution .... One could buy a 5¢ coffee and baby it for as long as one wished, reading or writing. No one bothered you .... I first saw [Morgan] as he stood engaged in an animated discussion with an assorted group of various ages, seated around a big, white-marbled table. The discussion swirled around the I.W.W., its history and its goals, strategy and tactics. <sup>25</sup>

Many of his friends opposed the tactics of the Communist parties and their strategy of controlling unions or manipulating the unemployed workers. They found anarcho-syndicalism more to their liking. Similarly, Morgan was very much against the Communists and he would tear down their posters. Once, while doing so, a friend said, "Lefty, you've got to hear Doc Roberts!" Perhaps it was at the

John Smith, however, referred to another split between the unionized workers and the unemployed, "John Smith Interview," UBC Library, Special Collections, Rolf Knight Papers Box 8, File 3, p.10.

<sup>24</sup>Vouchers were \$2.00 for food and \$1.05 for rent. The White Lunch offered toast and coffee for 10 cents, and for lunch, costing 15 cents, a choice between ham and chips with soup and coffee, or fish and chips with soup and coffee. Thus, one could have 13 meals each week. The Wonder Lunch offered a poached egg for 10 cents but was not popular among those interested in politics. Jack O'Brien recalled that this diet was so poor that he was rejected for military service due to his physical condition. Interview, 29 July 1989. Interview with John Smith, 1 August 1989.

<sup>25</sup>This quotation is from the typescript of a speech by Myron Kuzych honouring Lefty Morgan when an engine was installed in a boat donated to Nicaragua by the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, 15 April 1989. Myron Kuzych, had come recently from the Ukraine and was quite interested in North American trade unions and in socialism/communism, having "witnessed the Bolshevik Insurrection from its very inception." Some time later Lefty arrived at Kuzych's door, and they became life-long friends. Interview with Myron Kuzych, 7 August 1989.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Margaret Morgan, 29 May 1990. The term Communist in this case refers to the Communist parties of the day, and for many years Morgan did not wish to abandon communism as a form of society if it meant real control by the people or workers' control. As a theory or way of thinking,

White Lunch that Morgan first met Doc Roberts, a dynamic speaker who crossed the province addressing "the bewildered victims of capitalism."27 In Tappen, a small interior town, more than 300 people attended one of Roberts' speeches and he became the talk of the town the following day. A study group even presented him with a gold watch for "teaching socialism." 28 Doc Roberts frequently took part in discussions at the White Lunch, and Morgan, impressed by Roberts' convincing arguments against capitalism, became an ardent supporter of the CCF.

Many jobless people believed capitalism had to be replaced since it had failed to meet the needs of working people. It was at this time that Morgan became interested in socialism, labour history, and economics. Not only did he discuss political and social issues. he began to write about them as well. Indeed, his first published work appeared when he was only 20 years old and a CCY member.<sup>29</sup> A second article Morgan wrote in Amoeba shows Roberts' influence:

We are told that the function of a Socialist in society is to fertilize the minds of the masses. The worker may have several reactions to the present economic conditions. Apathetic which leadist to despair, Anarchistic which lead[s] to jail, Fascist which lead[s] to retrogression mentally and morally or Scientific Socialist founded on the dialectic nature of all things, to real understanding ....

communism was not condemned; but if communism stood authoritarian regimentation, it was anathema to Morgan. In this text we use "Communist" to refer to the parties and "communist" to refer to theory or way of thinking.

<sup>27</sup>Some of Frank Roberts' lectures were published in *Amoeba*. See Frank Roberts, "Dialectical Materialism," Amoeba, 1, 12 (December 1935), 9. Mimeographs of a series of Roberts' lectures on dialectics were in Morgan's papers. One is headed: Frank Roberts, "Uniform Study Course': First Series 'Dialectics'." The first page identifies an executive committee representing various organizations: Mrs. R.P. Steeves (CCF Club), Mrs. A.L. Corker (SP of C), R. Young (Young Economic Students), W. Scott (WEL), W. Offer (WEL), Norman Cooper (YSL), W. Hanna (YSL), A.M. Stephens (chair). The Socialist Party of Canada (SP of C) was a major supporter, and the meetings were organized in February 1934 through the party's headquarters on 60 Cordova Street. Some copies of the lectures bear the SP of C stamp. See UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 3.

<sup>28</sup>Diorothyl Siteeves], "An Appreciation of Frank Roberts," CCF News, 16 March 1949. Letter from Jack Wilson to Eve Smith, n.d. UBC Library, Special Collections, Eve Smith Collection Box 10, File 1.

29 "Lefty," "Boose Blasts Bennett" Amoeba, (21 January 1935), 2-3.

Fellow-workers, let us adopt our first sentence [above] as a slogan. Let us apply the flaming match of understanding to the dynamite of growing discontent. 30

Morgan's call to workers was more than rhetorical. By the end of the 1930s he had become a member of the CCF Stanley Park Club,<sup>31</sup> which had attracted many if not most of the Vancouver CCF's most radical element. The clubs were relatively autonomous and varied widely in political views. The Stanley Park Club was the most troublesome for the provincial executive, as various club members openly defied provincial CCF leaders. 32 Morgan debated politics and at times lectured at the Stanley Park Club and elsewhere around Vancouver. Morgan, O'Brien and Young were the principal CCF workers for central Vancouver.33

Morgan's opposition to the Communist organizations stemmed from his unbending conviction about the right to make decisions about one's own affairs. This attitude pertained to government, bureaucracy, unions or wherever managers made decisions for others. So when he was conscripted into the military, the idea of somebody else telling him what to do was abhorrent. A pacifist, he could not tolerate the idea of workers killing other workers. He refused to work and eat with others, anxiously taking his food into a corner. If he was play-acting, he put on a good show. Perhaps he realized that he was incapable of submitting to another person's command. In any case, his peculiar behaviour resulted in his discharge within ten days. The army was no place for him. 34

fibrositis in the right hip. Lefty Morgan Papers, Canada Pension Commission certificate, 12 March 1945.

<sup>30&</sup>quot;Lefty," "Logic in Action," Amoeba, 1, (1935), 3. These ideas appear to come from Roberts' lectures on dialectics. Books recommended by Roberts were Engels' Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science [Anti Dühring] (Chicago 1907), and Socialism — Utopian and Scientific (New York 1935); Joseph Diegtzen's The Positive Outcome of Philosophy (Chicago 1906), and Philosophical Essays (Chicago 1906); and Fred Casey's Thinking: An Introduction to its History and Science (Chicago 1926). Lefty Morgan Papers, Frank Roberts, "'Uniform Study Course': First Series 'Dialectics,'" 3. All of these lectures of Roberts and the recommended books were still in Morgan's library after his death, indicating that Roberts' influence was long-lasting. <sup>31</sup>There are no membership lists for this period, but in 1961 he wrote a news release indicating he had been a member of the Stanley Park Club for 24 years, (i.e., since 1937).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>See Walter Young, "Ideology, Personality and the Origin of the CCF in British Columbia," BC Studies, 32 (Winter 1976-77).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Jack O'Brien interview, 29 July 1989. <sup>34</sup>His discharge papers indicate that he had a nervous condition and

### Political Activism in Later Years: The CCF/NDP

Politically, Morgan described himself in a 1961 press release as having been a member of the Stanley Park Club for 24 years and provincial secretary of the CCY and an associate editor of *Amoeba*, circa 1935. He also mentioned his participation in the Labor Party of Canada (1958-60) as member and officer, and his role as associate editor of and contributor to *Press*, official organ of the Labor Party of Canada. *Press* continued after the party's dissolution under the banner "Socialist Association for Publication of *Press*." In fact, Morgan was one of a handful of *Press* workers, a lithographed bulletin which openly challenged the CCF/NDP. In the press release he emphasized that he was "at no time connected in any way with Stalinist i.e. communist party" nor the "4th (Trotskyist) International, differing on role of 'party' in socialist movement." "35

In the late 1940s Morgan worked for various transport companies as a dispatcher, but he still had time for political work. Much of his activity was on the sidelines. He usually took on jobs as secretary and more rarely as a chair or president. In 1951, he asked to be transferred to the CCF Burrard Club, but he returned a short time later to the Stanley Park Club, where he was listed on the executive as "organizer." He chaired the Vancouver Centre Riding Association in 1953. However, his involvement in a steady if irregular job on the railroad precluded further roles at the centre of CCF club activity.

For most of his life, Morgan admired the Wobblies and their organization's principles. He opposed hierarchy and nationalism and he embraced pacifism, but in later years, at least, he refused to be labelled. One foundation of his ideas was the *Regina Manifesto*, particularly the final clause that "No C.C.F. Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full program of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth." 37

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" for the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961. <sup>36</sup>UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 4, and Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 7, Files 5 and 10. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" for the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Anonymous, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. National Manifesto and Immediate Program as Adopted by the First Annual Convention of the Federation at Regina, July 19-21, 1933 (Regina n.d.). A readily available copy of the Regina Manifesto is cited in Walter D. Young, The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961 (Toronto 1969), 304-13. See also Michael Cross, The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea: CCF-NDP Manifestos 1932-1969 (Toronto 1974).

In the early 1950s, this socialist clause became an embarrassment to the Party's provincial and federal leadership.38 In response to bureaucratization of the party and its interests in elections rather than principles, many supporters drifted away from the CCF. Others were bound to uphold the principles of socialist policy, and so in August 1950 a conference was held in Vancouver to organize the left wing of the CCF in British Columbia. While Morgan is not identified among the 70 persons attending, his close associates were there. Jack O'Brien spoke about there being "a 'moral' obligation for Left Wingers to stand together," while Rod Young proposed a resolution to "disaffiliate from the CCF." The resolution was defeated and a Socialist Caucus was formed within the CCF instead.<sup>39</sup> About this time a mysterious Committee of Box 16 was organized "by a group of people 'who are concerned about the current problems of the movement."40 Little is known of the Committee's activities, but it is clear that the ideas of the left wing of the party had sources in the socialist working class parties which formed the BC CCF in the 1930s.41 According to the late Ruth Bullock,

Box 16 and different little journals that were put out were trying just to keep some sort of a network together, some contact with left-wingers in one place or another ... [and] went as far as Lloydminster ... and Alberta .... And it was to keep the idea of the importance of class and to try to combat middle class ideas within what we felt should be the worker's political party.

Along with one letter addressed to "Fellow Citizens" was " ... a copy of a pamphlet which has been produced by the labour of a small committee of people interested in presenting material dealing with current affairs from an international socialist position." It was signed simply "Box 16" owing to " ... the wave of persecution of unpopular

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>As Lipset put it, "The CCF began compromising its radical doctrine the day after the Regina Manifesto was issued in 1933." Agrarian Socialism (Berkeley 1971), 357.

<sup>39</sup>UBC Library, Special Collections, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection,

Box 7, "Minutes of Left Wing Conference." According to John Smith, Lefty was on the outskirts of this movement. Interview 1 August 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 1.
UBC Library, Special Collections, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>The Commonwealth, 1, 7 (28 June 1933), "The Story of the CCF." See Norman Penner, The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis (Scarborough 1977), 202.

points of view by certain bureaucrats in the trade union and certain executive officers in the political parties ... "42

When Rod Young came under attack in 1954 for remarks he made about communism, Morgan and the left wing strongly supported Young. 43 Morgan appears to have been more at the sidelines of the subsequent debate about Young, but he did recognize the increasing autocratic tendencies within the provincial party. Throughout the 1950s, the Stanley Park Club's activities were questioned by the provincial executive, in one instance about a speech by John Stanton to the monthly meeting of the club, Open Forum, and in another instance about an article written by Malcolm Bruce, a well known Communist, in *Press*.

At the national level, the CCF began a process of re-writing the *Regina Manifesto*. Beginning in 1950 a committee was organized to examine the question and there was debate for several years which culminated in the Winnipeg Declaration in 1956. <sup>44</sup> The Winnipeg Declaration ends with: "The CCF will not rest content until every person in this land and all other lands is able to enjoy equality and freedom, a sense of human dignity, and an opportunity to live a rich and meaningful life as a citizen of a free and peaceful world." While Morgan would not object to such a statement, the focus on eradicating capitalism was clearly put aside. Increasingly unhappy with the gradual abandonment of the *Regina Manifesto*, Morgan and Jim McKenzie organized the Labour Party of Canada in 1958. <sup>46</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Interview with Ruth Bullock 8 August 1989. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Box 16" to "Fellow Citizens." (n.d.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>See UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 4, "Extract of the Official Record of the B.C. Provincial Convention C.C.F. 1954 Containing the Speech Delivered by Rodney Young and for which he was subsequently Compelled to Resign from the C.C.F." The UBC Library, Special Collections contains extensive documentation on attempts to expel Rod Young from the CCF in both the Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 10, and the Rod Young Collection, Box 3. See Young, Anatomy of a Party, 282-4 for a short description of the Rod Young Affair, and Elaine Bernard, "The Rod Young Affair in the British Columbia Co-operative Commonwealth Federation," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979.

Young suggests that the CCF's attention to democracy was eroded by the ruling oligarchy within the party. This executive control was bitterly opposed by the BC delegates to the 1950 national convention. *The Anatomy of a Party*, 170-1.

<sup>45</sup> Young, The Anatomy of a Party, 317.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>The Winnipeg Declaration eliminated the offending paragraphs calling for the eradication of capitalism. On the problems of the *Regina Manifesto*, see

The first annual report of the Labor Party contained a list of 21 members including Morgan and the Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Mc-Kenzie. The main activity of the Labor Party was publishing Press. Volume 1, Number 1, an issue of about 20 pages was published 5 February 1957 with a run of 100, prompting a response from the League for Socialist Action's Workers Vanguard. 47 By May Press had a run of 500 copies and a new machine was purchased. Press was edited and written under various pseudonyms by McKenzie, Lefty and Margaret Morgan, Rod Young, Bill Jukes, CCF/NDP party members and others. Press was intended as a vehicle to provide people an opportunity to express themselves and over the years there were many writers. Editorial or organizational responsibility shifted from one issue to the next, but articles were received and expected from all members in September 1957. McKenzie lamented in the annual report: "But they relapsed into the old familiar groove, and our last issue has only three members writing."48 In part, the reason for pseudonyms was to avoid the appearance of a narrow. small group, but there was some concern that they might get into difficulties with the CCF/NDP or risk losing their jobs. 49 Among the contributors was Jack Scott, who had become disillusioned with the Communist Party by that time, and had met Morgan and Mc-Kenzie.<sup>50</sup>

By the early 1960s Morgan took up other struggles, such as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. At the time, the CCF candidate for the national leadership, T. C. Douglas, had condemned Kennedy's support of the Bay of Pigs invasion, but made it clear that he was "not defending the Castro regime." 51 While leaders of the CCF/NDP appeared to distance themselves from Cuba, Morgan gave cautious support in a talk he gave to a crowd of over 100 at the Stanley Park

Penner, The Canadian Left, 195-204. For a short biography of Jim Mc-Kenzie, see Olenka Melnyk, No Bankers in Heaven: Remembering the CCF (Toronto 1989), 154-8.

<sup>47</sup>D. Randall, "Ex-CCF MP Attempts to Organize New Socialist Party on West

Coast," The Workers Vanguard, 2, 3 (February 1957), 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, "Annual Report, Labour Party." A complete collection of Press is located in the UBC Library, Special Collections. Interviews with Margaret Morgan, 31 July 1989, 7 August 1989, and Jim McKenzie, 31 July 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>An early report by Morgan on "The Running Trades" appears in *Press*, 2, 2 (March 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Jack Scott mentions meeting McKenzie and the Morgans in his autobiography, A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers' Movement, 1927-1985 (St. John's 1988), 140-1, 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Douglas Raps U.S. on Cuba," Vancouver Sun, 8 May 1961.

Club Open Forum. Notes from his address in May 1961 singled out Castro's emphasis on human values. Morgan maintained that Castro could not remain leader by telling people what to do:

In the unfolding of the relations between the supporters of the revolt and the leadership, can be seen the only kind of faith that makes sense or reason. Faith must be reciprocal! There must be a continuous flow of faith in each direction, from the leader to the follower and from the follower to the leader, and the quantity of the flow in each direction must be an equation. Faith based on anything less than this reciprocal flow is blind and therefor unworthy of the human spirit. If blind faith exists, the follower descends to the level of a slave mentality and the leader falls victim to his own delusions.

He expressed a fear that failure on the part of Canadians to support Castro would result in the "deformation that was Stalinism, a vicious and tyrannical police state that should be avoided at all costs." Morgan favoured anarcho-syndicalism and its emphasis on human values and freedom.<sup>52</sup>

It is not surprising that Cuba was the focus of Morgan's attention. Daily articles in the *Vancouver Sun* ran much of 1960-62. During the week following Morgan's talk to the Stanley Park Club, the *Vancouver Sun* carried no fewer than 16 articles on Cuba and various letters as well.<sup>53</sup> For Morgan, Cuba could have represented the type of society he would have like to see.

Morgan supported Cuba and the activities of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. During the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee marched in front of the American

<sup>52</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" to the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961. The ideas jotted down by Morgan for the speech were echoed some years later by Colin Ward, in his *Anarchy in Action*: "There is an order imposed by terror, ... an order enforced by bureaucracy (with the policeman in the corridor), and there is an order which evolves spontaneously from the fact that we are gregarious animals capable of shaping our destiny. When the first two are absent, the third, an infinitely more human and humane form of order, has an opportunity to emerge." Ward, cited by George Woodcock in his review of *Anarchy in Action*, *Our Generation*, 10, 4 (1975), 83.

<sup>53</sup>Examples in the *Vancouver Sun* from U.S. wire services include headlines such as "Travel Agencies Besieged As Mass Exodus Hits Cuba," (10 May 1961, 1) "U.S. Studies Threat of Cuba Rocket Base," (11 May 1961, 2) and "Castro Operating 'Vast Red Network'" (12 May 1961, 1). The two articles supplied by Canadian services were more cautiously optimistic: "Cuba Doesn't Fit Usual Red Picture" (8 May 1961, 7) and "Economic Blockage 'Nasty Business'" (11 May 1961, 22). As might be expected, the Canadian perspective was less likely to appear on the front page.

Consulate. Demonstrators carried placards reading "No more Koreas," "Hands Off Cuba," and "Try Kennedy for War Crimes."54 One letter to the Editor of the Sun complained that the Committee was "infiltrated with many well-known Communists who seem dedicated to a 'Cuba does everything right, U.S. everything wrong' campaign."55 The Fair Play for Cuba Committee was formed in part by the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, which saw Cuba as an example of an anti-colonial permanent revolution.<sup>56</sup> Other demonstrations were held October 24 by the Voice of Women and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament outside the Vancouver Courthouse and on October 25 an estimated 5,000 students attended the Student Christian Movement noon rally at UBC to hear five professors attack the U.S. blockade of Cuba and U.S. threats to world peace. 57 The missile crisis, as Norman Epstein told the rally, left people "threatened with being blown off the map but we have no say in the decision to do so."58 Denying such fundamental rights was anathema to Morgan.

Morgan spread the word every day with a professionally painted sign atop his Volkswagen Beetle:

# QUESTION KHRUSHCHEV'S MOTIVES HANDS OFF CUBA! QUESTION KENNEDY'S MOTIVES

Other signs included: "No! Nuclear Arms for Canada, Russia or Elsewhere — Committee of 100" and "The Sons of Freedom are Both Christians and Humans!" He frequently parked his car and signs on railway (PGE) property. One sign in the election year 1962 said: "No nuclear arms for Canada, Russia or elsewhere, vote NDP." It prompted disciplinary action from the railway, which claimed that "No unauthorized signs or advertising [were] allowed on Company

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>Vancouver Sun, 24 October 1962, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>Vancouver Sun, 25 October 1962, 4.

Left, Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas, eds., (New York 1990), 727. The U.S. Party was affiliated with the League for Socialist Action in Canada and with the Toronto-based Fair Play for Cuba Committee. A Vancouver chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee was active throughout the 1960s. Roger O'Toole, "The Sociology of Political Sects: Four Sects in Toronto in 1968-69," PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1972, 639; "NTL Fair Play for Cuba Cmttee Launched at Toronto Mass Rally." [sic] The Workers Vanguard, 6, 1 (Mid-February, 1961). Fair Play for Cuba Committee Bulletin, Summer 1963, 4-5; Winter 1963, 20-21; Summer 1966, 6-7; Summer 1968, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Vancouver Sun, 25 October 1962, 6, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Vancouver Sun, 25 October 1962, 13.

Property." Mr. Goad, the Superintendent of Motive Power at Squamish, charged Morgan with insubordination on 2 April 1963. At a disciplinary hearing Morgan argued:

The announcement made by Mr. Goad was, to say the least considered by myself to be quite amazing in as much as it is common knowledge that in their very nature all cars carry advertising in one or more places and therefore I failed to see unless instructions were forthcoming to mask or in some manner obliterate this advertising how such company policy could logically be complied with.

Morgan requested " ... instructions in terms of what shall and shall not be deemed to be advertising." In any case, the car could not be started and so he was not being purposefully disobedient.<sup>59</sup>

Morgan had tremendous faith in the power of words. Whereas television was a medium whose message was based in part on appearance, he believed writing could reflect the true meaning of ideas. Morgan wanted his ideas to reach a broader audience, so he turned his attention to writing. It was at this time that *A Practical Example* was written. Through the years he gave away a number of copies of the manuscript at union meetings.

While still writing for *Press*, Morgan returned to the CCF in 1960 and was secretary of the Deep Cove CCF Club in North Vancouver where he resided. As a Club officer, he attended the founding convention of the NDP in Ottawa in 1961, where a new policy statement emphasizing planning was adopted. In the following year he attended the provincial NDP convention and was even more disillusioned. In a long handwritten report on the provincial convention Morgan stated:

In reporting the convention proceedings I can only say that I found our party to be in a very sick condition, if one views this party as a vehicle to achieve certain ends. If the end to be achieved is the creation of a party that will attract people who are looking for place in a scheme of life that will give meaning and purpose to the life of the individual person then the party is on its death-bed ... On the other hand, if the

<sup>60</sup>Anonymous, The Federal Programme of the New Democratic Party (Ottawa 1961), 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Hearing," 5 April 1963. Morgan was returned to service as of 9 April 1963. The company policy of no advertising came out after Morgan was ordered to remove the car. He was told to remove the car and he replied that they should tow it. Some hours later he moved the car. After all these events, Morgan was charged, the company policy was changed and the hearing was held at which time he was assessed demerits. Letter from Margaret Morgan to G. R. Pool, 6 July 1994.

party is to be one in which the individual member is regarded as the simple provider of willing hands at election times and a constant source of revenue at all times then there is perhaps some future for this machine of political forces. <sup>61</sup>

After describing the resolutions which had been discussed at the convention, Morgan concluded:

In conclusion ... there is no hope of returning to the degree of fairness of debate and willingness to face up to controversial issues and make clear decisions thereon as was done to a far greater extent in the old C.C.F., until we are rid of the procedural methods introduced from the trade union movement at the founding convention [of the NDP] at Ottawa. So long as these rules of procedure last there is far too great a possibility of death in [committee], convincing for defeat by lobby, and cutting the heart out of contentious resolutions, watering them down to unctuous and pious statements with [which] anyone including the Liberal Party could agree. 62

It was clear to Morgan that the NDP did not want any radical elements to disrupt the peace of the party, either. They would be excluded:

A high point in unfair and unjust conduct was reached in the case of considering the application of Rod Young for membership. Mr. Berger, a lawyer by profession[.] ruled in his own favor to insist that the case for Young be presented prior to the case against him by the executive. This procedure is tantamount to forcing a lawyer to defend a client who is not yet charged. This is a flagrant abuse of even the most elementary justice. <sup>63</sup>

## Morgan ended his report with:

It is with regret that I have had to tender such an analysis of our party in convention .... I am sorry not to be able to report a more healthy condition. We must all now redouble our efforts to straighten out these tendencies.

That is, of course, unless you like it as it is ....

To us right — to them left. 64

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "'62 Convention Report."
 <sup>62</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "'62 Convention Report."
 <sup>63</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "'62 Convention Report."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "62 Convention Report."

Morgan felt the party had betrayed its socialist principles.<sup>65</sup> A few years later, in a speech on a local radio show, he blamed "Douglas, Lewis, Coldwell and Knowles, among others ... [who believed] that as long as this disturbing call for the eradication of capitalism remained a declared goal for the party, power would never be obtained on a wide scale." He felt that the original CCF policy had attracted people of two opposing views: those who wished to "dull the barbs of an iniquitous social system" and "those who wish to put an end to that system, barbs and all."

Morgan's desire for a truly democratic and humanist approach to politics led him to read a wide variety of political literature. Rather than fraternizing with his fellow workers for the sake of a good time, Morgan read voraciously while off duty. One book in particular impressed Morgan: Facing Reality, by Grace Lee, Pierre Chaulieu. and C.R. Johnson (C.L.R. James, a well-known Trinidadian Marxist). 67 Not content to just read, Morgan sought out these people. So, on the trip east to the NDP Convention in 1961. Morgan returned via Detroit where he visited Grace Lee and her husband Jimmy Boggs, engaging in non-stop political discussion for ten days. Through Lee and Boggs, Morgan met Raya Dunayevskaya over supper. 68 Dunayevskaya (Freddie Forest) had in 1945 allied with C. L. R. James to form the Johnson-Forest tendency within the American Trotskyist movement, although by the mid-1950s both had split with the Trotskyists. Morgan thus became acquainted with Dunayevskaya and her Marxist-humanist movement newspaper, News and Letters, begun in 1955. Morgan subscribed to the newspaper for many years and contributed letters. 69 One letter was typical:

Rightly or otherwise, I am very pleased with the political developments visible and audible through the normal news media. To see the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>It is not clear when Morgan finally withdrew from the NDP. Even in 1965 he wrote to the provincial executive stating that the Deep Cove NDP Club was defunct. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" to the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961; letter from BC-NDP to Richard E. Morgan, 8 June 1965.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Comments prepared for Town Meeting in Canada', Taped in Vancouver, BC, 13 July 1967. *Topic*: "What is the Significance of the N.D.P. National Convention and Policy?" 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>Grace Lee, Pierre Chaulieu and C. R. Johnson, Facing Reality (Detroit 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Margaret Morgan interview, 30 January 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>News & Letters, Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxism-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development (Chicago 1981?), 2-3.

apparently great cracks spreading in the framework of the great colossus of "free" capitalism, which is the U.S.A., is a joy.

Railroad Worker Canada 70

In 1965 Dunayevskaya gave a talk at UBC and during her stay met with Morgan again. Two years later Morgan returned from Montréal via Detroit to again meet with Lee, Boggs and Dunayevskaya. Not long after, Lee and Boggs visited Kathleen Gough, then professor of anthropology at Simon Fraser University, and they all had lunch at the Morgans'. Dunayevskaya, Lee and Boggs thus continued their friendship with Morgan. Morgan visited C.L.R. James in London, probably en route to a conference on workers' control in Paris in 1977. Another strong influence was Erich Fromm, a Marxisthumanist whose influence can be seen in A Practical Example. 22

Morgan's disillusionment with the CCF/NDP dovetailed with the direction of Marxism-humanism. Fromm's emphasis on alienation resulting from authority in a capitalist society complemented Dunayevskaya's "philosophic breakthrough" of the unity of practice and the idea, particularly the "movement from practice to theory as

<sup>70</sup>Most letters were anonymously attributed and identify the writers' backgrounds, such as "steel worker" or "auto worker." *News and Letters*, 13, 5

<sup>71</sup>No regular personal correspondence between Dunayevskaya and Morgan was located. Dunayevskaya frequently wrote broadcast letters to "Dear Friends" or "Dear Colleagues," apparently reserving personal letters for a select few such as Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Grace Lee, or C. L. R. James. See the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Vol. 14, 9209ff. Raya Dunayevskaya, Marxism and Freedom ... from 1776 until Today (New York 1958). The Boggs' Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century (New York 1974) was in Morgan's library, along with several books by Dunayevskaya, some of which are stamped with the address of News & Letters.

<sup>72</sup>Shortly after her visit, Dunayevskaya wrote a letter to Erich Fromm. "Have I written you that during my recent lecture tour in British Columbia I found an 'adherent' of yours in Vancouver — a very unusual man named Lefty Morgan, a railroad worker who is presently ... at work on a book on the conditions of labor which lead to spontaneous actions, workers' control of production, self-development quite other than those the managers of production planned as they worked out those conditions of labour? Lefty quotes from your works, especially *The Sane Society*, and wanted to know whether he could get your permission. I told him that I felt sure you would grant such permission. Have you heard from him?" Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from Raya Dunayevskaya to E[rich] F[romm], 23 May 1965; copy in The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Vol. 12, 10005. See below pp. 105-6, 147.

well as the movement from theory to practice." For an organic intellectual such as Morgan, Marxism-humanism had many of the answers. As his involvement with the NDP waned, his attention focussed on practical ways to ensure the unions did not subvert the wishes of workers. He began to write at length about democracy in the workplace and his hope for a humanistic democracy.

## Practicing Workers' Control

When Morgan got a job as a dispatcher at Ryan's Cartage Ltd. in 1938, he was able to put into practice some of his ideas. According to Stewart Cooper, a co-worker, "His willingness to co-operate and his devotion to duty under severe pressure are a matter of personal knowledge."<sup>75</sup> Cooper wrote:

During the entire period[,] I knew that Mr. Morgan and Mr. Ryan [the company owner] spent the greater part of their spare time in promoting ideas that supported the creation of a new society. Also, whenever the opportunity presented itself during working time, they expounded their ideas. They helped to form a local of the Teamsters' Union for the men on the job. It was apparent that Morgan and Ryan were convinced that there could at times be a coincidence of employer and employee interests. They believed men have common interests without regard to their relative economic relationships. <sup>76</sup>

After a few months as company owner Ryan felt he could not justify having employees. So one afternoon he called in Cooper, Morgan, and two others and announced "Well, boys, you are now co-owners." This experience provided Morgan with early evidence that workers could jointly manage their own labour process. Some time later, Cooper and the others bought out Morgan's share.

By this time Morgan had developed a technique for dispatching trucks, which was copied by several firms, including Merchants

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>Raya Dunayevskaya, "Introductory Note by Raya Dunayevskaya." In News & Letters, Guide to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup>Antonio Gramsci developed the term *organic intellectual* to describe an individual whose ideas spring from experience. In short, he realized the dialectic between practice, particularly in the workplace, and ideas. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London 1971), 6, 360. See Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (London 1976), 101-5, 118.

 <sup>75</sup> Lefty Morgan Papers, "Testimonial of Stewart A. Cooper," 6 April 1964, 1.
 76 Lefty Morgan Papers, "Testimonial of Stewart A. Cooper," 6 April 1964, 1.

Cartage, until at least the mid-1960s.77 The system apparently involved the colour-coding of dispatch zones and statuses. Few people were better at coordinating pick-up and delivery than Morgan. After quitting Ryan's in 1942, he worked for several cartage and warehouse firms, where he used his exceptional skills as a dispatcher. 78 By 1954, he was working for the PGE as a trainman. His love was the head end and he quickly requested engine service. 79 As he rose up the seniority ladder, he worked as a fireman and finally as an engineman — the job he held until he retired in 1978.

Over the years he was engaged in numerous union struggles, holding a number of minor offices. 80 Morgan supported attempts to break away from the traditional Brotherhoods, which he thought did not represent the interests of the workers. His own case of dismissal was not taken up for over a year by the Brotherhood and he argued his own successful defence between 1964 and 1967. Finally, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (B of LE) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (B of LF&E) were replaced by the Canadian Union of Transport Employees (CUTE) on 24 May 1974.

In addition to being Secretary General and Vice President of Local #1, Morgan drafted the by-laws for CUTE Local No. 1, and part of the CUTE constitution. Some of these constitutional provisions are a lasting monument to Morgan's concern for workers. CUTE's central purpose encompasses such aims as:

- a) To regulate relations between employees and employers ...
- b) To promote the material and intellectual welfare of the member ...

<sup>77</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Testimonial of T. J. Lehane, President Amerada Bridge and Steel Erectors, Ltd.," 6 April 1964.

<sup>78</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, "Testimonial of Kenneth A. Calder, 6 April 1964," 2 and "Testimonial of T.J. Lehane, Amerada Bridge and Steel Erectors, Ltd.," 6 April 1964, 1.

<sup>79</sup>Within a few months Morgan was transferred to engine service as a hostler's helper and engine watchman, and then as locomotive helper. He qualified as locomotive engineer in 1956. Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration, "Statement of Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company." In the Matter of a Dispute Between Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company and The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (Local No. 105).

80 As early as 1959 he was General Chairman of the Howe Sound Lodge

#972 of the B of LF&E. Normally he took positions as secretary since he had a great letter writing skill, especially when it came to defending the rights of workers. Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from L. J. Broten to R. E.

Morgan, 14 May 1959.

- c) To bring about improvement in the working conditions of the member ...
- d) To educate and enlighten the member ...
- e) To organize workers into the National Union.
- f) To provide a democratic form of organization ... encouraging equal and free voice and a vote to all members regardless of race, colour, sex, creed or political opinion.
- g) To promote the rights of all workers, freedom to belong to labour organizations which are operated in the sole interest of those who work for wages, those retired from that category, and those who are generally socially disadvantaged and ... are not influenced or dominated by any element not in the best interest of the above-mentioned categories of persons.81

These provisions were adapted from the Constitution of the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW). CAIMAW includes an additional clause "to bring about fair wage standards" and instead of provision (g), the CAIMAW constitution mentions only "Canadian workers." According to Kevin Rhodes, provision (g) shows Morgan's influence since it includes wage workers, the retired, and the disadvantaged.83

While Morgan strongly supported unions, he felt that they were subverted by the negotiation process and the requirements of a capitalist economy - in some instances to the extent that the executive had simply become a company tool. This was noted by Morgan and others before academic writers took up the issue of control. Workers' control of the workplace meant fighting the managers as well as the unions, issues which were taken up in Canadian Dimension and Our Generation some time after Morgan wrote A Practical Example.84 Unions were at times neglectful of their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup>Memo from R.E. Morgan to Canadian Union of Transportation Employees, 6 July 1974. A copy of the by-laws which make up this memo was kindly provided by Kevin Rhodes.

82 Constitution of the CUTE (Revision of 1987) Article II, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup>Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers, Constitution and By-Laws (Adopted 23-4 October 1965), (Winnipeg 1965). 3-4. CAIMAW merged with the United Auto Workers in 1991. See Canada. Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada (Ottawa 1991), x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup>Ed Finn, a member of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers Union (CBRT) often wrote about union struggles in Canadian Dimension, and by 1969 was referred to as Canadian Dimension's regular labour columnist. See his "Bureaucratic Conservatism in the Trade Unions & the growing rank & file threat," Canadian Dimension, 8, 1 (June 1971), 29-33, and "Nationalist Feeling is Growing Among Canadian Unions," Canadian Dimension, 6, 3-4 (Aug.-Sept. 1969), 2, 4-5. On workers

historical role and ignored the needs of their members. Morgan was often at loggerheads with his own union. When the company attempted to dismiss him, he had first to fight with the Brotherhood to have them take up his case. As a result, his own dismissal and eventual re-instatement took three years to complete. Few workers were willing to confront the union and so it is not surprising that they often turned to Morgan for help. He frequently took up the cause of employees who were disciplined, writing briefs and documents supporting their re-instatement. He was chairperson of the BC Branch of the Canadian Railways Employees' Pension Association from 1971 until 1987, and he fought several pension cases for workers. Morgan's activities on behalf of workers over a lengthy period were widely appreciated.

#### The Railroads

Morgan's typewriter was rarely silent. It is necessary at this point to put these writings in historical perspective. A Practical Example "Right under your Nose" came out of his experience as an engineer in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There are few detailed descriptions of train crew operations elsewhere, which makes the document valuable for that reason alone. However, the document goes well beyond a mere description of railroad operations. Morgan's point is to show how the labour process on the railroad represents workers' control.

A Practical Example is only loosely tied to time and place. The manuscript describes a model or an ideal type, one which was pertinent over a broad temporal and geographical spectrum of railroads.<sup>85</sup> Although Morgan chose to use examples from the U.S.

control see André Gorz, Strategy for Labor: A Radical Proposal (Boston 1967); James Jacobs, review of Strategy for Labor, in Our Generation, 5, 3 (1967), 118-24; John Case, "Workers Control: Toward a North American Movement." Our Generation, 8, 3 (1972), 3-12; Gerry Hunnius, G. David Garson and John Case, eds., Workers' Control: A Reader on Labour and Social Change (New York 1973); Alexander Matejeko, "Industrial Democracy: A socio-technical approach." Our Generation, 9, 1 (1973), 24-41. While Morgan read Canadian Dimension, he was particularly influenced by Black Rose and the Our Generation Press in Montréal. He corresponded with Dimitrios Roussopoulos, a major figure at Black Rose and Our Generation. For an example of Black Rose's publications on workers' control, see Gerry Hunnius's Participatory Democracy for Canada: Workers' Control and Community Control (Montréal 1971), which included a list of pamphlets on workers' control available from Our Generation Press. See p. 50 of A Practical Example.

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about management, the descriptions of workers' control came from his own experience on the PGE between 1954 and 1964. Morgan was trying to show what was common to the running trades throughout North America and over time. To a large extent, of course, the standardization and regimentation of railways which began in the 19th century created this commonality. The rule book, as noted in the manuscript, was one important standard developed by the Association of American Railroads. Other organizations such as the American Association of Railroad Superintendents, the American Railroad Engineering Association, and the Brotherhoods all contributed to railroad standardization, especially in the running trades. 87

If work was so regulated due to the nature of operating trains (the need to coordinate the movement of goods over long distances to varying locations, through different lines and with important safety considerations), then why, of all places, was the railway an example of labour autonomy? One explanation might be that the railroaders became strongly identified as members of a craft. From an early period railroaders looked upon their choice as a career, a life commitment. They were among the first to develop unions in the 19th century and it was not without cause that they called themselves brotherhoods — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen was formed in 1873 for the purposes of life insurance and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen was a benevolent

<sup>86</sup>See Paul Craven and Tom Traves, "Dimensions of Paternalism: Discipline and Culture in Canadian Railway Operations in the 1850s," In Craig Heron and Robert Storey, eds., On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada (Kingston 1986), 47-74.

<sup>87</sup>Several organizations are cited in footnotes to the text, the most important of which are the American Association of Railroad Superintendents. For the development of work rules negotiated by the railway Brotherhoods see Reed C. Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer 1863-1963: A Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules* (Ann Arbor, Michigan 1967). See also the *Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the American Railway Engineering Association*, which began publication in 1900. Rules in Canada were similar to those in the United States. The fifth edition of a standard primer on railway operations included the Canadian Pacific for comparison. See Peter Josserand, *Rights of Trains* (New York 1957), ix.

<sup>88</sup>Both quite soon took on the more normal tasks of unions. See Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century*, (New Jersey 1983) 147, 243, 267. The four main unions (Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT), Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (B of LF&E), the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen (ORCB) and the Swithchmen's Union of North America (SUNA)), combined to form the United Transportation Union in 1969. Gary M. Fink, ed., *Labor Unions* (Westport, Conn. 1977), 402-3.

society.88 Early issues of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers' Monthly Journal were concerned with the dangers of the job and the need for life insurance. Because of their attachment to the railroad and perhaps because of the dangers, they identified railroading as a craft. The rules were not created just to control labour; the rules were guidelines to be interpreted by the crew who worked as a unit. Railroaders frequently suffered oppressive conditions of heat and cold while on the road, creating work conditions not unlike miners in Nova Scotia. As Ian McKay has suggested, "The coal miners [of Nova Scotial were cruelly oppressed and worked in an appalling environment, but they had the freedom to create their own traditions, and these were strengthened by the collective experience of death."89 Mine managers realized that they had limited authority due to the conditions of the workplace and further recognized that employees had a special interest in their workplace rules, particularly with regard to safety. 90 Like the miners, railroaders had a sense of dignity in their work and were not amenable to Taylorism.

Railroad workers belong to a select group which in actuality is as much a social as a working group. <sup>91</sup> It is not unusual for railroading to be passed down from generation to generation. In the railway community there are several divisions and a status hierarchy separates these workers. Workers who repair tracks (maintenance-of-way gangs) or those who repair the trains and cars are quite separate from those who are associated with the running trades. <sup>92</sup> At the time of Morgan's writing the running trades were further divided into the tail end crew (conductor, switchman) and the head end (engineman, brakeman, fireman). The running trades work changes depending on whether the crew does yard work or

<sup>90</sup>David Frank, "Contested Terrain: Workers' Control in the Cape Breton Coal Mines," in Heron and Storey, eds., On the Job, 104-6.

<sup>92</sup>See Donna J. Young, "The Right Way, the Wrong Way, and the Railway': The Experience of Work on a CPR Maintenance-of-Way Extra Gang," MA Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup>Ian McKay, "The Realm of Uncertainty: The Experience of Work in the Cumberland Coal Mines, 1873-1927," *Acadiensis*, XVI, 1 (1986), 57. <sup>90</sup>David Frank, "Contested Terrain: Workers' Control in the Cape Breton

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup>The sociologist W. Fred Cottrell wrote a classic description of the railroad, including the community, social status and language of the railway workers. W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader* (Dubuque, Iowa 1971). Other articles include John Spier's "The Railroad Switchman," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 5, 1 (Fall 1959), 40-62, and Luis S. Kemnitzer's "Language Learning and Socialization on the Railroad," *Urban Life and Culture*, 1 (1973), 363-78. Much of the following description is based on interviews with railroaders in British Columbia who were asked to reflect on the period of time of Morgan's manuscript.

road work, but all workers act together as a crew. Authority in the crew is principally divided between the conductor and the engineman, but all members of the crew are responsible for operating the trains. Coordinating the scheduling and operations of the trains are the dispatchers and yardmasters. Upper management is frequently selected from running trades crews and so is quite knowledgeable about train operations.

Twice a year workers make secret bids on jobs. Some workers prefer the stable work of the yard, perhaps close or far from home. while others prefer road work. Bids are opened in the presence of the union and management and assigned according to seniority numbers.93 The uncertainty of seasonal demands, personal holidays, and cancelled trains may lead to bumping, which then affects all other workers who are bumped down the line. In addition to the regular jobs, there is an extra or spareboard, for jobs where there are no assigned crews, or where crew members of an assignment have to be replaced due to "booking off sick," moving to another assignment, taking extra work on another assignment or "booking rest." Generally it is workers with the least seniority who make up the spareboard and when there is a lot of extra work or booking off, it can be quite lucrative. Regular workers may also seek extra assignments that the spareboard cannot cover. If a worker has asked for extra work and so is on standby, the company may call two hours before a train is due to be moved. Spouses may be called upon to prepare a meal and lunch at a moment's notice. As Margaret Morgan suggested, wives cannot expect their husbands to attend dinner or other engagements and might say: "I'll come but I don't know if Lefty can come."94 Instances of train delays were common and workers could be away from home for days, leading to a very disrupted home life. Whatever job one has, there is constant shifting in the running trades.

Yardmasters assign tasks to crews, who then assemble trains for yard work or for moving them out of the yard to a distant location within certain time limits. Regardless of one's role, railway work requires the coordination of complex tasks that may involve yardmasters, dispatchers, train crews, switchmen, and even main-

<sup>94</sup>Much of the above is based on an interview with Margaret Morgan, 7 August 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup>If one's seniority number were high enough one might bid as follows: Job 1 for passenger trains, Job 2 for a day freight, Job 3 for a night freight, Job 4 for a day yard, Job 5 for night yard, and expect to be successful on one of the bids. If one's seniority were low, one might bid for "helping" on a night freight or yard crew, i.e., as fireman/brakeman.

tenance-of-way crews. Undoubtedly machine-shop operations exhibit a different pattern of labour cooperation. To Morgan, the railway is only one example of how, in almost all situations, labour could be in control of the workplace because the manager had no role to perform. While academics have written about the nature of work on the railroad they have largely ignored the political implications of what they are describing. Morgan could not divorce the practice and the idea, and so his manuscript tends to be misunderstood.<sup>95</sup>

Many changes in railway technology have affected the organization of labour which is described in *A Practical Example*. Diesel-electric engines, introduced in switching operations in the 1930s, were in regular service by the mid-1950s, after which firemen were made redundant, except on passenger trains. <sup>96</sup> In terms of tracking, the Automatic Block Signal System was widely used by the 1950s, whereby block signals are controlled by the presence of a train on the track or position of switches. <sup>97</sup> Also, the Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) system, used on only 52 miles of CN and CP track in 1958, was installed on the first mainline in that year. <sup>98</sup> CTC became standard during the 1960s, limiting the ability of a train crew to alter the progress of a train. More recent changes which diminish the flexibility of the crew are computerized dispatching and in-cab

<sup>95</sup>A book by the anthropologist Frederick C. Gamst, *The Hoghead* (New York 1980), gives considerable detail about the running trades from the point of view of an engineer. Gamst, once an engineer, studied engineers for many years and published extensively on the running trades. At one time he corresponded with Morgan about *A Practical Example*, and suggested that "the theme of 'democracy' in the introduction should either be tightened and made more explicitly useful or else deleted." Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from R. E. Morgan to Frederick C. Gamst, 11 February 1981, letter from Frederick C. Gamst to R. E. Morgan, 1 June 1981.

<sup>96</sup>See pp. 77-8 of *A Practical Example*. PGE's last steam engine was in standby service in 1959 and was taken out of service in 1962. Anonymous, "Railway News," *Canadian Railway Historical Association News Reports*, 102 (July-August 1959), 81; anonymous, "Railway News," *Canadian Railway Historical Association News Reports*, 136 (September 1962), 146. For changes which resulted from dieselization see Maury Klein, "Replacement Technology: The Diesel as a Case Study," *Railroad History*, 162 (Spring 1990), 109-20.

<sup>97</sup>A block is a section of track governed by signals, usually coloured lights. <sup>98</sup>Anonymous, "Railway News," *Canadian Railway Historical Association News Reports*, 88 (April 1958), 59-60. Some years earlier an article extolled the virtues of CTC, called Central Tracking Control at that time. Anonymous, "Central Tracking Control Benefits Canadian National Subdivision," *Railway Age*, 130, 14 (9 April 1951), 52-4.

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signalling. With Automatic Train Control (ATC) the locomotive automatically responds to reduced speed requirements, estimates stopping distances and controls the speed of trains to maintain a safe braking distance. Tail end crews have been replaced with detection devices for hot wheel bearings, dragging equipment and shifted loads. Still, the engineer-less train remains for the future.<sup>99</sup>

### Writing on Workers' Control

Morgan did not see the labour process as one in which capital unequivocally opposed labour. There was no question that workers should use their skills to the best of their abilities. If there was something wrong with work, it was not inherent in work but rather in the structure of the labour process. The workplace required cooperation to ensure that work was done with maximum efficiency, subject to natural conditions and safety considerations. Work in the abstract sense is accomplished with cooperation. However, under capitalism workers had to be supervised and disciplined, but managers could not make people work without their consent.

Since Morgan wrote A Practical Example, many others have tried to analyze the workplace, focusing on changes in labour-management relations. Rather than writing in the traditions of worker resistance or class conflict, Morgan's approach was to discover how work, in reality, was self-realized and oriented toward "getting the job done." Morgan recognized conflict, but tried to see how workers could meet each other's needs and organize themselves through cooperation, a fundamental social need. As he concludes in A Practical Example:

The actual management of the final phases of production is performed by the railroaders themselves .... The amount of control exercised ... over the selection of permanent staff has been fully described. The only logical conclusion is that the running-trades themselves must properly be classed as part of management. [emphasis in original]. <sup>101</sup>

If running-trades workers are managers of production then "There is no foundation to support the theory that men and management

<sup>99</sup>Jeffery Young, "Railways, Track and Yards," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Edmonton 1985), III, 1545. See p. of *A Practical Example*, p.74.

100 Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York 1974); Richard Edwards, Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century (New York 1979); Michael Burawoy, Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism (Chicago 1979).

101 A Practical Example, p. 186.

must clash at all times." 102 Work is thus an expression of what it means to be human.

However, institutions and organizations could easily subvert the labour process. Morgan often questioned union officials about their ideas. For example, in a letter to G. H. Harris, President of the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen (ORCB), Morgan cited a passage in the constitution of the B of LE which states that "The interests of the employer and employee being co-ordinate, the aim of the Organization will be co-operation and the cultivation of amicable relations with the employer ... " Morgan also drew attention to a parallel passage in the B of LF&E constitution: " ... the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen has been instituted ... having as one of its aims the desire to cultivate a spirit of harmony between employer and employee."103 Morgan asked Harris whether the ORCB had ever had such a clause in its constitution. Harris replied he was unaware of such a clause, but the union had always "strived for amicable relations." 104 For Morgan, these clauses and attitudes showed that the unions had become agents of the company, and he had nothing but contempt for such alliances because he felt that the needs of the workers were not adequately protected.

In keeping with Braverman's perspective, if there were conflicts between employers and employees, it was because the employer had to impose rules on employees. Braverman suggests that markets must remain the "prime area of uncertainty" and the organization of the corporation flows directly from this fact. Marketing becomes secondary only to production. The market economy spurred by competition was the probable cause of labour-capital conflict. This calls to mind Michael Burawoy's more recent view that "conflict is endemic to the organization of work."

According to Morgan, it was capitalism that had subverted the labour process. As he wrote in *A Practical Example*: "Being 'human' is a difficult thing to define, but in my opinion, it embraces more than simply what is good for business. It is not a case of being anti-employer, but rather a case of being pro-individual human

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup>A Practical Example, p.187.

<sup>103</sup> Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from R. E. Morgan to G. H. Harris, President, Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen, 7 April 1965.

<sup>104</sup> Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from G. H. Harris to R. E. Morgan, n.d.

<sup>105</sup> Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup>Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 261ff. On the railway, marketing is less visible since other corporations use the transportation system as a marketing channel.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup>Burawoy, Manufacturing Consent, 66.

being."<sup>108</sup> Just as Morgan had regarded the agitation against Rod Young as evidence of the subversion of socialist democratic principles, he held that certain unions were acting against the interests of their members. The labour process was the one arena where control could reach its fullest expression, especially in the running trades.

In another paper, Morgan asked whether "the work relationships of the running trades in North America qualify as an operating example of industrial democracy, co-determination, workers' control or self-management?" He answered that co-determination is the most appropriate idea, and listed 23 different criteria for evaluating the degree of democracy in the workplace, ranging from "An almost total absence of work-related alienation" to "a very restrained tendency to withdraw labour en masse." Understanding the workplace, in particular its organization, was of utmost importance to social change and improvement.

Two questions remain to be addressed here: what does workplace autonomy, or workers' control mean? A second question is: if there is workplace autonomy, can it lead to any wider social impact and how can that be accomplished?<sup>110</sup> In studying coal miners in the 1920s David Frank offered three meanings of workers' control:

<sup>108</sup>A Practical Example, p.71.

109Lefty Morgan Papers, "Peculiarities of the North American Railway Running Trades' Labour Relationships." Paper presented to the Second International Conference on Participation, Workers' Control and Selfmanagement, sponsored by the Centre international de coordination des recherches sur l'autogestion, Paris, 7-10 September 1977. The journal Autogestion: l'autogestion et socialisme was published by the centre in the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>110</sup>See H. B. Wilson's *Democracy and the Work Place* (Montréal 1974). Wilson wrote to Morgan in 1972:

This past weekend I read your manuscript on railroad workers and I would like permission to make reference to it in my forthcoming book on industrial democracy. Specifically, I would like to refer to it as an unpublished manuscript which I hope will soon be published and which I strongly recommend to my readers because I believe it shows remarkable insights (quoted in *Democracy and the Workplace*, 154).

During the NDP government of the early 1970s in British Columbia, Wilson was asked to try to democratize BC Rail. During this time he had "many long conversations with Lefty." Letter from H. B. Wilson to G.R. Pool, 6 November 1992, 1. For another study of this time period see Gerry Hunnius, G. David Garson and John Case, eds., Workers' Control: A Reader on Labor and Social Change (New York 1973).

(1) organic control: common attitudes and practices of the coal miners' daily work life favoured the growth of a limited but significant tradition of workplace authority; (2) tactical control: at key moments in the strikes of the 1920s, the coal miners exploited the unusual physical conditions of their workplace in order to strengthen their effectiveness in confrontations with their employer; (3) strategic control: the militancy of the coal miners in the 1920s also included strong sympathies for ideals of industrial democracy, public ownership, and other alternatives to capitalist domination of the coal industry. 111

While it is clear that *A Practical Example* is concerned with the first meaning, Morgan's writings and life work clearly suggest that the other two were priorities in his mind, and that they flowed from the workplace, regardless of its type.

Some writers have suggested that workers need to find satisfaction on the job and so improperly identify their control over the craft with workers' control. 112 Others suggest that worker resistance is due to alienation and leads to job actions where nominal, if temporary, control takes place. 113 Management, the boss, and the foreman may also replace the workers, not only during a strike, but also as an object of managing production, i.e., managers try to undercut the development of skill. From the early 1900s, scientific management focussed on time and incentives to labour as well as other methods of making skilled workers ancillary. 114 As Charles Sabel suggests, "Craftsmen learn as apprentices that management tries to profit from eliminating their prerogatives. When such challenges do come they are resisted as an affront to the craftsmen's ethos, an insult to their dignity, an attack on their well-being and the freedom they need to work."115 Craft workers are more likely to be self-disciplined and defiantly egalitarian, but is it realistic to believe that one is in control? Montgomery suggests that control is not "a condition or state of affairs" but rather a "struggle, a chronic battle in industrial life." 116 Montgomery's position skirts the issue of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup>"Contested Terrain: Workers' Control in the Cape Breton Coal Mines in the 1920s," in Heron and Storey, eds., *On the Job*, 102.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup>David Montgomery, Workers' Control in America (Cambridge 1979), 9ff. <sup>113</sup>See for example, James W. Rinehart, *The Tyranny of Work: Alienation and the Labour Process* (2nd ed.) (Toronto 1987), 10-1, 93-4, 197-203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup>Daniel Nelson, Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920 (Madison 1975), 55ff; David Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925 (Cambridge 1987), 214ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup>Charles F. Sabel, Work and Politics (Cambridge 1982), 15.

<sup>116</sup> Montgomery, Workers' Control in America, 10.

how real control can be accomplished. Also, management would like workers to think they are in control since that leads to labour peace. Did Morgan succumb to the desires of management, or at least misinterpret the role of skilled labour?

To answer this question it may be useful to discuss the nature of labour in capitalist modes of production versus pre-capitalist labour, and so evaluate the limits on the worker's freedom. Burawov argues that there are five points of contrast. First, capitalist workers are separated from the means of production in time and place and the entire product of labour is appropriated by the capitalist. Second, capitalist workers cannot live off what they produce. Third, capitalist workers do not set the means of production in motion by themselves but are subordinate to the managers. Fourth, capitalist workers agree to sell labour power over a set period or for a set rate and do not coordinate or control production. Fifth, the relationship between worker and capitalist is based on their economic interdependence. 117 While Morgan would most certainly have agreed with Burawov on most points, the ability of capital to wrest control away from workers was far from complete. Perhaps Burawoy overstated the case as a consequence of the industries he chose to examine. In many industries control is difficult to achieve and pockets of worker autonomy remain. As Richard Price noted, there is a "mutual and dialectical relationship ... between resistance and subordination and the intensity of this relationship ... may depend upon the historical conditions under which the labour process was transformed." Further, there is no completely autonomous labour process and therefore we need to integrate particular labour processes "into the totality of labour history."118

On the railroad, managers had only some opportunities to oversee the workers and so have controlled the labour process via a set of rules. The rules developed early in the 19th century in response to a need to coordinate the operations of different railways, where workers might switch companies more often than today. Once out of the yard and even within some large yards, the managers do not directly supervise the workers. On this one "freedom" engineers have long recognized their power and responsibility. As Warren S. Stone, Grand Chief Engineer, B of L E said in 1912:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup>Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent*, 23-5. See also James G. Carrier, "Emerging Alienation in Production: A Maussian History," *Man*, 27, 3 (1992), 539-58.

<sup>(1992), 539-58.

118</sup> Richard Price, "The labour process and labour history," Social History, 8, 1 (January 1983), 62, 65.

The element of superintendence must necessarily be a consideration .... When a passenger or freight train leaves a terminal it is completely under the control of the engineer and the conductor. There is no superintendent or other officer of the company in immediate touch with that train to direct its movements or the duties of the employees thereon. They may, of course, be reached by wire and given orders as to manner of procedure, but whatever movements are made by that train until it reaches its terminal are directly and immediately under the control of those employees. <sup>119</sup>

All other criteria of the capitalist labour process imply control by capital. More important, capital controls the labour process through legal means and extends itself into the community of workers, most obviously in the company town but also into communities built up in railroad operations.

So if locomotive engineers controlled only a small aspect of the labour process, why does Morgan maintain that it is an example of industrial democracy? Has the craft tradition been romanticized and job control falsely elevated to workers' control, as Monds suggests? Does the same criticism which Monds applies to Montgomery and Hinton, apply to Morgan? These questions, pertinent to labour process theory in the past few years may be answered by reading Morgan's contribution, but we need to also see the wider context of his ideas.

In A Practical Example, Morgan may present a idealized picture of the running trades. If so, this is because he sought every possible avenue which might lead society toward a fully humanized democracy. When others assumed that conflict was pre-eminent in human relations, Morgan immediately questioned them. If anything can characterize his ideas, it was his conviction that society should strive to become "a free association of free people." He felt that scrupulous adherence to democratic principles and practice was the only route to true social evolution. In Enough, considerable time is spent on how to maintain discipline in a humanist democracy. Morgan wrote:

<sup>121</sup>Myron Kuzych speech, 15 April 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup>Warren S. Stone, Brief In the Matter of the Arbitration between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers ... and the Railroad Officials .... (Cleveland 1912), 19-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup>Jean Monds, "Workers' Control and the Historians: a new Economism," New Left Review, 97 (1976), 81-104. Monds severely criticized unpublished manuscripts by David Montgomery, later published in Workers' Control in America (Cambridge 1979), and James Hinton's The First Shop Stewards' Movement (London 1973).

When in groupings which revolve around "humanist" principles, it has been found that the fringe of people surrounding the core are hard to discipline. People who band together on a program of broad social liberties are people who supply their own brand of discipline. In general, they are self-disciplined. <sup>122</sup>

He wanted to see a world based on cooperation and free of the need for money. He believed that each person should have a say in the social and economic affairs of the world. For Morgan, the defense of individual freedom and democracy was fundamental. Democratic decision-making, whether in the workplace or elsewhere, was essential to social peace and economic well being. Work was the most important touchstone of discovering this freedom, as he writes in *A Practical Example*: "All the various things that a man does, from art to railroading, are only parts of his total existence, both as a part of the mass and as an individual."

In *Enough*, Morgan suggests that people should live according to their needs in a society organized without money. Consumer goods would be produced only to meet the requirements of the people — nobody would produce or consume more than needed. If *A Practical Example* examines only the work on railroads, it is applied in *Enough* to wider social issues. Far from having a 'workerist' illusion, Morgan proposed a profound vision of a workers' democracy. On work he wrote:

The question could occur to you: "If men do not really have to be driven to work, in what way do those who do the driving earn their pay?" If it can be shown to your satisfaction that there is another way, a better way, rather than driving men to work, you could ask yourself: "Why not absorb a great number of these supervisors into the actual working body and thereby cut down on our hours of work?"

For now I shall just mention six of the reasons why I think they would "work that way." One: they would overcome the obstacles which stood between them and such satisfaction as could be taken from doing a good day's work without being criticized for doing so. Two: they would be independent and working for themselves as much as it is possible to do so (if for instance they worked in a factory) within the framework of a highly industrialized society. At the same time they would be working to serve the needs of everyone else for if we are to maintain our living standards, this is the only way it can be done. (The function which the "small businessman" of today could serve is described in a later chapter.) Three: they would no longer have to put up with unnecessary "wants." Four: those among them who would

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup>Lefty Morgan, Enough. <sup>123</sup>A Practical Example, p. 77.

accept the responsibility of co-ordination and supervision and were at the same time qualified people, would likely have already been elected or would be slated for office. Five: those among them who wanted power for the sake of being powerful would be waiting. And I see no reason why they shouldn't continue to wait! Six: they would control their own work pace, production quotas and working conditions (emphasis in original). <sup>124</sup>

Beyond the workplace he wrote about how wealth is produced and why distinctions of labour, capital and ownership could be rethought:

Little wealth can be produced without tools. In the productive process, tools take the center of the stage. The more intricate they are, the more man is fascinated by them. Control of those tools has, many times influenced the course of history .... Only labour applied to raw material through manufacture makes possible the machine that fashions objects without assistance from human hands. This is an inescapable, fundamental, never-to-be-forgotten fact. Tools of any sort from stone axe to computer are labour appearing as capital.

For the same reason that the surplus crop of the ancient farmer belonged to him, surplusses created in modern industry are considered owned by the owners of the industries. However, the argument that a surplus, over and above the needs of research, development, and all the other expenses of a business should fall into the hands of private persons, will not wash. It stands to reason that all existing wealth is the result of the labour of men who are mostly unknown to each other. The total wealth present at any one time is there not through the conscious co-operation of men. Each part of that wealth is made by men to serve their individual purposes for, in producing the wealth, wages were received which permitted them to live.

The focus on cooperation originates in the workplace.

A concern for work pervades all of Morgan's social thinking. This is likely due to the fact that he never forgot the dirty thirties. Remember that work as a massive social problem re-surfaced in the 1930s when many were unable to provide for themselves and their families. Many people felt that a new type of society had to be built. 126 While World War II and the post-war prosperity eliminated work as a survival problem, Morgan continued to be concerned about work and in the wider social issues of the day. In short, *A Practical Example*, while focussing on the labour process in the running trades, has a wider relevance — the control by those whose lives are

<sup>124</sup> Lefty Morgan Papers, Enough.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup>Lefty Morgan Papers, Enough.

<sup>126</sup>Rinehart, The Tyranny of Work, 3-4.

affected most and cooperate to get the job done in the wider society. For Morgan, concrete solutions derived from the workplace but the main aim was the development of democratic institutions. As Noam Chomsky, with whom Morgan probably would have agreed, has put it:

In general, I think that if a movement for social change does develop, it will involve many strata of the population with very different outlooks and interests, very different needs, but I hope, needs that can be related and made compatible. 127

As an organic intellectual, Morgan had a remarkable vision and the gift to put his experiences into action. It is to be hoped that his work will be widely shared.

<sup>127</sup> Noam Chomsky, Radical Priorities, (Montréal 1990), 205.

## **Editors' Note**

The original manuscript was reproduced on a lithograph. Every attempt has been made to preserve the original flavour of the manuscript. Editing has consisted of correcting for plural agreement, changing references to a consistent format, and inserting some words in square brackets for clarity. All cited publications were verified and corrections were made to the text. Capitalization was retained where emphasis was the desired effect, unless part of a quote where the original was italicized. At the time of writing there were few if any female engineers so much of the text is male specific. Editors' notes are gender neutral, except where reference is made to railway terms such as enginemen, trainmen, firemen, etc. Railway terms have been defined in footnotes unless the terms are clear from the text. For a comprehensive list of terms see Ramon F. Adams, The Language of the Railroader. Unless indicated by "Editors' Note," all notes were in the original manuscript.

# A Practical Example "Right Under Your Nose"

## "Right Under Your Nose"

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF OUR PEOPLE has fostered practicality. The taming of this continent in so short a span of time is a feat unequalled in history. Practicality has become, for us, a more or less reliable yardstick of utility. Any cause based on wishful thinking gets rather short shrift in North America. There has always been another element of nature to subdue, another river to dam or mountain to cut through.

The dream of vast increase in wealth draws thousands who followed the Plymouth Rock Brethren. As well as that dream, ideas about the worth of the individual person and about individual rights took root in the new soil. These ideals could not be given practical expression in the restricted atmosphere of Europe. It is safe to say that the desire for wealth and the urge for freedom were both represented in the early pioneers. It is not safe to say which of these was uppermost in the mind of any one person. It is easy to suspect that the dream of personal wealth, gained through personal effort, was the more powerful drive. If this is so, it could account for much of the materialistic outlook so evident today.

The idea that democracy, personal worth and personal wealth could and must exist side by side, made it possible to accept the general ideas put forth by the founding fathers of the United States of America. There was a popular concept in the vastly wealthy new continent — all a person had to do was hustle. If everyone hustled, all would be relatively well off and society could function with a minimum of supervision. This concept has much merit, but in recent times we have been able to see the limits of democratic expression which are built into the original concept.

Modern technology and the thinking which it forces upon us gives rise to a broader concept of democracy. New ideas as to what democracy really means are being presented from all layers of society. Many will say that few if any of the new concepts are really new. This is worthy of debate, but not here.

A working model of anything is of immense value in promoting any idea. A "pilot plant" or "pilot area" is used extensively in industry and in other fields to test theories.

Some will say that to produce a working model of full democracy in North America is impossible. However, if we remember that nowhere in nature do we find anything perfect, we may be content to examine the nearest thing to the ideal. Such a model exists, though in a form that is overlaid with many trappings. It is not a fully developed model and suffers many twists and faults. To expect to find something other than that is to be impractical.

In outlining the life of the railroader it is my purpose to show that a warped but practical example of democracy on the job (or industrial democracy) exists here and now. We are taught that the only scientific method of examination is that of relating a thing to its surroundings. Job democracy exists on the railways as an island surrounded by less democratic forms in other industries. As an isolated instance it is coloured by its general surroundings and therefore the degree of industrial democracy is both less easily seen and somewhat reduced. To the extent that it is reduced we say that our example is warped.

What is the true relationship between the railroader, his job, his industry, and his society? The answer will have to be made piecemeal, with the constant attempt to create the feeling or aura of railroading. The railroader expresses his feeling for life with the simple statement, sometimes heard in other places, "it gets into your blood." In many instances, the familiar pattern of family footsteps can be seen, sometimes extending to three generations on one road at one time. A desire to railroad is not inherited though "cousin Jack" seems ever present.

The "family pattern" is not necessarily a welcome one. Mr. W.J. Fox, Terminal Superintendent, Union Pacific Railroad, referred to it as a "problem" when he spoke to the Pacific Coast Post Convention Meeting:

... one of the problems that confronts railroads today ... is the old family pattern where the son follows the father.

<sup>1</sup>Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Association of Railroad Superintendents, Including the Fourth Annual Pacific Coast Post Convention Meeting. Proceedings and Committee Reports, 1952. Held June 4, 5, and 6 1952 at Chicago, Ill. (Topeka, Kansas 1952), 296. Succeeding references will show as: Proceedings-Convention, or Proceedings-Meeting. The remarks attributed to the various speakers at this convention and post-convention meeting are presumed to have been reported verbatim.

**Editors' note:** Although the 56th Annual Meeting was held in June (footnoted as *Proceedings-Convention*), the Pacific Post Convention Meeting was held 7-8 August 1952 for superintendents of western U.S. railways (footnoted as *Proceedings-Meeting*). The discussions centred around common committee reports on yard operations, manpower problems, the economic effects of dieselization, methods of handing freight, overheated bearings or hot boxes, and the handing of mail.

It can "get in the blood" of the son of any person. Many men have tried their hand at the game. Most of them give it up rather quickly, because of the nature of the work.

For sixty-five years, democracy on the job has been a fact of life for the railroad running-trades worker. These men provide a unique example of the extent to which democratic control can be exercised on the job. In making that statement I restrict its meaning to cover the activities of the men who actually move the trains and/or switch them out or make them up. A term often used to cover all those jobs is "the running trades." For brevity and precision, I shall use the term "railroader" to convey the idea of a given group of men only — conductors, trainmen (brakemen), switchmen (yardmen), enginemen (engineers), and enginemen's helpers (firemen).<sup>2</sup>

Within the general group of railway employees, excluding the executive category, there is a rather sharp social and economic division between the train and engine service group, (who consider themselves the real railroaders) and the other groups.<sup>3</sup>

There are other men closely linked with the railroaders but certain significant differences prevent their being classed as such.

This does not in any way mean that there is an absolute barrier between the train and engine groups and other railroad workers, but merely indicates that because of similarity of interests and working conditions the train and engine employees naturally tend to gravitate together as a distinct social and economic group.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Editors' note: Training for fireman took place on the job, under the guidance of an engineer. A fireman worked with various engineers and was on the same seniority list. In time, the road foreman would consult with the engineers and decide if the fireman was fit to operate the engine, i.e., become an engineer. See below p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Professor Reed C. Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer 1863-1963: A Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules* (Ann Arbor 1963), 41. Professor Richardson is a Co-Director, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of Utah.

**Editors' note:** Morgan was impressed with Richardson's work, based on his PhD thesis, "The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, 1863-1955, A Study of the Origin and Evolution of Railway Working Rules," Cornell, 1955. Both studies are exhaustive and show remarkable understanding of railroaders and their relationships with management. Much of Richardson's work deals with the development of work rules, with some attention to the social aspects of railroading.

<sup>4</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 41-2.

If some railroader, on reading this, finds it a little hard to identify himself or present mates, he is asked to consider the whole history of railroading in North America, and the attitudes of the men toward the job in the olden days as well as today. In other words, think of the "old rail," about whom more will be said later.<sup>5</sup>

No-one ever met the "average railroader" any more that anyone ever met the "average man." Both are models, built from what we can discover about them. Do not accept my word that the life of the railroader is correctly set forth here. Take this evidence to any number of railroaders that you may know or can find. I suggest that it be shown to more than one, for railroaders are pretty independent thinkers and are not inclined to agree with one another. By showing this to more than one of them you will be on safer ground regardless of what conclusion you reach.

There are many aspects of the life of the railroader which can be found in the lives of other workers. For instance, some longshoremen have a fair amount of freedom to choose when they will and will not work. Deep-sea and other divers are clearly on their own and are also part of a co-operating team. However, it is my contention that there are more freedoms in the life of the railroader and that these freedoms are greater in scope.

In general, trains are seen to operate efficiently. The industry as a whole has a history of practicality but its inner workings are a matter of mystery to many. Any mystery is a temptation and some non-railroad people try from time to time to solve this one. None of the attempts is completely successful. Most tries bog down in the first ten minutes of talk with a railroader for there are so many "maybe's" involved that the inquirer leaves, wondering how the thing functions at all.

It is fairly well known that there are very few people outside the industry who have any real grasp of how trains are operated. Even among railway employees who are not directly concerned with the running-trades (known to some as non-ops) there is little basic understanding of train operations. There is always a hard core of admirers continuing from generation to generation and the industry has, until recently, enjoyed a favourable public. Waving at train

<sup>5</sup>Editors' note: An old rail is a member of the running trades with many years of experience, and in the 1960s, had knowledge of steam engines. <sup>6</sup>Editors' note: The main division among workers is between ops (the train crew) and non-ops (clerks, mechanics, maintenance-of-way gangs). Yardmasters and train dispatchers consider themselves ops even though they are not part of the train crew.

crews is becoming less of a national habit. Other, more modern forms of transport have stolen many fans.

It is my great good fortune to be able to use this particular example of how men govern themselves on the iob. Of all the industries we have, perhaps none can claim such a widespread interest among the public as can railroading. As has been said, the interest is declining, nevertheless it does reach back into the personal lives of a very many people. It is hardly necessary for me to mention, even briefly, the tremendous impact which this industry has had on the growth and development of North America. The early days of railroading are fairly well recorded and many museums (including private ones), exist with displays ranging all the way from "golden" track spikes to complete locomotives. Pioneer days are vividly remembered in living minds and many are the stories, songs, plays and even movies in which railroading is the central theme. For these reasons perhaps it will be easier for those who are interested to follow me when I try to explain some of the features of the lives of the railroaders.

## The Break In The Chain

INGENERAL, industry operates through the medium of command from the owners, down through a series of lesser officers, to rank and file. The decisions of owners and management are subject to the control of a market economy. The market economy makes it necessary for employers to exert certain controls over their labor forces. Some of these forms of control are much more in general practice than others, but none of them precisely fits the requirements of the employer of running-trades' men. This is not due to a difference in nature of either railway owners or the railroaders themselves. It is due to the nature of the enterprise. A notable difference from the general run of industry is the high incidence of practical men in upper and lower management. There is also evidence of a high degree of frustration in both owners and managers.

Some people have trouble figuring out why management cannot simply make the railroaders behave thus and so. The owners and managers enjoy certain liberties and satisfactions. Nonetheless, among them there is a feeling that they are not the absolute masters. The lesser officials who are responsible for the control of the running trades' workers learn to adjust themselves to this curtailment of their authority. It is the relative lack of autocratic control of the railroader at his work that produces this aspect of industrial democracy.

With the many strikes against job democracy, both from the general environment and technical trends within, it is no wonder that this bit of democracy is hard to spot and is decaying rapidly.

Job control by the railroader is being constantly reduced by modern inventions such as mobile radio, centralized traffic control, retarder yards, etc., which alter the nature of the work. Each of these innovations has increased the amount of direct and absolute control of the job by management. The following exchange occurred between a Mr. Miller of the R.C.A. Victor Co., and a member of the A.A.R.S. during a demonstration of the application of television to industrial controls.

Question:

How much detail would you want to see?

Answer:

I would want to see whether that engine is moving or loafing.1

As it is my purpose to point out where the normal chain of command does not fully apply in the running-trades, we should consider at this point, the nature of industrial authority, as it applies to railway operations.

To commence at source, a human need or desire, real or fancied, healthy or otherwise, creates a market. To that market is drawn that which satisfies it in greater or lesser degree. Where a market needs a railway, one usually appears. When a railway is no longer the most efficient means of serving the market it loses out to other forms of transport. Government interference may promote, delay, or otherwise affect the life of the railway. Seldom, however, is it the determining factor. Sometimes railways become "wards of the state" simply to promote the wellbeing of one or more other industries. Revenue from these catered-to industries helps underwrite the losses incurred in running the railway. Such ventures are surprisingly long-lived at times. Sooner or later though, the requirements of the market will determine the railway's life or death.

Through the natural operations of the kind of economics we know so well, the needs of the market gain a human voice which finally reaches each man on each job. The needs of the market are translated via a chain of command from owners or managers. Ownership here as elsewhere can be of a very mixed nature. Regardless of the particular form of ownership, downward by means of a board of directors and then through a sometimes thick layer of supervisors the voice of an almost unpredictable market carries and is finally obeyed. A railroader is, in the last analysis working to satisfy the needs of a market, which is a thing without visible form or audible voice. This relationship holds true for all who work at providing the needs of that market. To complicate the structure, the over-riding need for profit is present unless the government underwrites losses. The success of an enterprise is largely determined by its ability to interpret the voice of the market. In the average industry, the command is direct and effective, the market is satisfied and profit is made or loss incurred, without any serious disruption of the chain of order giving.

There is on railways, however, a sort of break in the chain. The break is hardly complete at any one point nor in any one person. It

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Proceedings-Convention, 142.

begins to show itself somewhere around a general manager's office and proceeds from there in a very ragged pattern. Certain of the general manager's rights are, as in other industries, uncontested. However, the closer the command gets to the actual movement of trains and their parts, the more ragged the pattern becomes, until the all-powerful quality fades altogether.

#### Who Does What

The work done by both engine crews and train crews is divided into two main classes of service, yard work and road work. In both cases there are five men working as a team. The yard crew normally takes care of all car movements inside yard limit boards, and it usually consists of an engineman and his helper (fireman), and a yard foreman and his two helpers (yardmen or switchmen). The yard foreman is part of the crew and serves much the same purpose as does a conductor in road service. In the running-trades the foremen perform many of the duties allotted to foremen in industry generally. The way in which their work as foremen differs from what is normally expected of foremen is outlined later. The road crew is primarily concerned with the movement of passenger or freight over the road. The crew is made up of an engineman and his helper, a conductor and his two mates, (trainmen or brakeman).

<sup>1</sup>Editors' note: Present day crews are reduced to three: an engineer and two trainmen. At various points in the following text Morgan refers to a crew of five, which was important on steam but not on diesel-electric engines. Passenger trains now operate with an engineer and brakeman in the locomotive and a conductor and switchman in the tail of the train, but yard and freight trains generally have a crew of three. The duties of the crew remain as Morgan describes them.

**Editors' note:** Each terminal is defined at either end by a board or a sign. Within these limits a yard crew assembles and disassembles, places cars, etc. The road crew takes over once the train is assembled, and takes it out of the yard onto the main line. Similarly, once the train is brought into the station, the yard crew takes over.

**Editors' note:** The yard foreman and conductor perform the same tasks, one on yard crews, the other on road trips. The same individual may bid on either, depending on what seniority may allow.

<sup>4</sup>Editors' note: A trainman works with the conductor, but may also have special duties and so be identified as a brakeman, whose duties include getting off the train to throw a switch, flag or otherwise warn oncoming trains in case of an unexpected delay, derailment, etc. Especially in the old days brakemen had to climb on top of cars to stop trains with hand brakes and were often killed in the attempt.

#### "Student"

THERE ARE SOME VARIATIONS in the routine of "hiring-on" for train service. The general practice, however, is to send the new man out onto the job in care of a yard crew selected for the task by an official. A committee reporting on hiring practices to the A.A.R.S. Convention stated:

Applicants are watched carefully during their probationary period so that any who do not seem likely to qualify as desirable employees can be gotten rid of without the formality of investigation, within the time limit of the contract covering their particular craft .... Student trips should be made with conductors and engineers of known loyalty, and whose attitudes and habits are good .... Then, too, as the men must work largely without direct supervision by officials, when new in the service they should have particular attention from trainmasters and road foremen [of engines]. \(^1\)

Speaking to the P.C.P. Convention Meeting, Mr. H. C. Munson, Superintendent-General Manager of the Western Pacific Railroad said:

There is one question ... and that is what to do about students [that is prospective brakemen and switchmen]. You can't take the man and throw a rule book and a time table at him and say, "Run over there and go to work for Jones. He will show you what to do." ... you should give him a certain breaking-in period so he knows something about what is required of him and certainly so he knows how to conduct himself so he doesn't get run over.<sup>2</sup>

Some roads have a "break-in" officer of sorts and at times he is connected in some manner with the railway Brotherhood (union) concerned.

The new man finds himself in rather strange surroundings. Added to the usual confusion of a new field of work, the student, as

**Editors' note:** The trainmaster is the go-between with the superintendent. This assignment is given to an experienced railroader, who supervises by means of spot-checks, the work of those operating the trains. Road foremen are conductors. Trainmasters are also termed regional managers. 

<sup>2</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 290.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 62-3.

he is termed, faces what he usually considers a hopelessly tangled situation. Part of this is a peculiar attitude displayed by the crew. It is not exactly hostility, but a casual glance would lead one to think it was. Railroaders are very quick to size up a proposed candidate for a job and are very given to acting on first impressions. Seldom is the student made to feel overly welcome, for railroaders are not given to excessive gestures of friendliness. They immediately want to know if the student has had any experience. If he has, the crew feels a sense of relief. Breaking in a new man is a trial for the men on the job and there is a very mixed feeling of pride in demonstrating their knowledge and of being imposed upon by the Company. They know very well, however, that this is a trade to be understood by doing and not by theory. If there were some other way of training men, it would have been discovered long since.

When the crew commences work, it is given a list, or message. The list is for a yard crew and the message is for a road crew but in either case it is simply written instructions of management. In it is expressed the hope of work to be performed. The list is sometimes notated with the word "first." When this is so, the yardmaster hopes to have a certain job done as soon as movement commences.<sup>3</sup>

The crew examines the list. At a glance it is known about how long it will take to do the work. Although the yardmaster usually has a fairly good idea of the length of time it will take, he also knows that many delays can occur. Sometimes a little conversation flows between the yardmaster and the yard conductor (who is often the spokesman of the crew), comparing estimated times. Usually both men have their tongues in their cheeks and little valuable information is conveyed. The tug-of-war is on, with the yardmaster pulling for a larger quantity of quality work and the yard conductor pulling for less quantity with quality as a secondary consideration.

I said earlier that there is little agreement in industry as to what constitutes a day's work. This is also true for a railroader. The

<sup>3</sup>Editors' note: Yardmasters are individuals whose task it is to get the most work possible from the yard crew. There is therefore conflict at most times. The yard crew, working co-operatively, can thwart the expectations of the yardmaster and will do so if the assigned work is not deemed reasonable. <sup>4</sup>Editors' note: The yard conductor is usually called yard foreman, who, while being a supervisor retains union membership. The conductor is the person in charge of the tail (non-engine) end of the train. In the yard the conductor receives the instructions, or wishes, of the yardmaster as to what work will be performed. About one third of the yardmasters then confer with the crew as to the most efficient way to get that work done. The yardmaster may interfere with crews' decisions as to how the work is to be done, but at the risk of argument.

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concept will vary from man to man and one man's concept may vary from moment to moment. When the yardmaster and the yard conductor confront one another, we see the varying concepts at war. Whereas in industry generally a foreman tends to support the plans of higher management, this is not necessarily the case on the railroad. A yard conductor can defeat the hopes and plans of a yardmaster. Usually the yard conductor tries to have some of the work cut off the list unless it is obvious that there is considerably more, or far less, than the eight hours work. If the list is heavy with work, some yard conductors, depending on their mood, will start thinking in terms of overtime. The yard conductor's judgement will quickly tell him the course to pursue. Because of the fact that, by collective agreement, eight hours OR LESS constitutes a day's work, it may pay the foreman to fight for a reduction of the listed work. If the work can be performed in less than eight hours and no more work can be found, the crew gets a "quit," that is they go home when the work is done, regardless of the number of hours they have worked.

Therefore, the pace at which the crew works will mainly be governed by the opportunities for gain of one sort or another. As a rough rule of thumb, it may be said that the crew will hurry if there is a chance of a quit, thereby raising their hourly wage. Likewise, they will proceed slowly if there is a chance of some overtime. If the day is to be about eight hours, a medium-slow pace is adopted. A smart yardmaster knows that when he asks how long it will take to do the listed work, he will be given an answer that suits the crew's best interests in terms of "paid-for" time off, or of overtime. In figuring out angles which will serve their "best interests" crews develop some odd wrinkles. Mr. C.E. McCarthy, manager, Potomac Yard, R.F.&P., Alexandria, Va. tells how one particular wrinkle was nailed flat:

... when we first got the diesel engines the conductor told me he had trouble during the night in keeping track of the locomotives. The engineers would go down the yard and turn the headlights out.

We ... [put] an amber light on top of each engine ... requiring the engineer to keep it lit at night .... and that cured that trouble.

Each man, yard conductor and yardmaster, knows that the other is calculating for his own interest — the yard conductor in the manner

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Editors' note: Quits are common, and probably more work is done when the workers believe a quit is possible than when the whole shift needs to be worked.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 145.

described, the yardmaster in terms of getting as much work done as possible. Occasionally, as in other industries, a man is known to be in the bight. A yard conductor or yardmaster may then sympathise with the other's position and temporarily drop his end of the rope in the tug-of-war, but this attitude is certainly the exception to the rule. Normally each man keeps, as a closely guarded secret, the amount of time and energy he expects to spend or have expended.

In due course, a sort of bargain is made between the yardmaster and the yard conductor. After that the list becomes the subject of discussion for the three men on the crew who work on the ground. Again, more variation. Much now depends on the attitude of the conductor to his mates, his work, and to life. The same applies to his mates. Sometimes the student will hear only a couple of grunts from the yard conductor and/or his mates that terminate in announcing a late hockey score. Somewhere in their apparently mad sentence there is either an instruction or suggestion that such a move be made first. It may or may not be the "first" that the yardmaster has indicated. The "first" marked on the list gets the attention the crew figures it deserves. The condition of their livers may affect their decision.

The two men junior to the yard conductor may be men who prefer to "switch to signals," that is, do as they are told. When this is so, they do not try to help plan the work. They are *free* to "do as they are told" only within certain well-defined limits. These limits are set forth in a later chapter.

The procedure varies from yard conductor to yard conductor. He may outline the whole or part of the plan for the list in word to the crew. His remarks may or may not call forth words from the crew. In any case, as far as the student is concerned, he or they might as well have said nothing, the entire thing is without meaning to him for the language is peculiar to the job. This is true of all industries, of course, but it is a particular stumbling block to the student trainman/yardman. He will train with the various crews and will find variation from crew to crew and day to day.

Each man is governed by his relationship to the other people involved. The yardmaster has to perform to the satisfaction of the General Yardmaster and higher officials.<sup>7</sup> As in other industries,

<sup>7</sup>Editors' note: The general yardmaster is superintendent of all other yardmasters. A general yardmaster superintends one shift and leaves written instructions for the others. Other yardmasters are in turn, at least in theory, the superiors of yard foremen (or conductors). The power embodied in such superiority is not flaunted because of the ability of those "under" to thwart whatever it is the superior may wish.

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there are many methods used in attempts to attach the interests of lower officials to higher officials. When Mr. Fox deals with this topic we hear of a very familiar practice and some of the thinking which lies behind it:

We took [the yardmasters] ... uptown and had a big fat steak dinner ... and had a good heart-to-heart talk .... [The yardmaster's organization] is a good organization and I think we should accept that just as surely as their organization must accept the fact that corporations are formed to make profits.<sup>8</sup>

The yard conductor has to estimate what he can get the crew to do. Where this process differs from the normal industry is in the essential relationship between the yard conductor and the yardmaster, and between the yard conductor and the crew. This essential relationship has a direct connection with the famous Rule Book.<sup>9</sup>

Hovering like an enveloping shadow, the provisions of the rules are everywhere. Only on rare occasions are they mentioned, but their existence is taken into account at all times. The rule book is a remarkable document, a product of over a hundred years of practical running-trades experience. It is almost impossible to imagine a circumstance occurring on the job that is not governed by rule. If the rules were strictly obeyed, as in theory they are, railway transport efficiency would be slashed. ALL CONCERNED ARE AWARE OF THIS, though any official who made that statement publicly would be severely criticized. There are few rules that are never consciously broken, but many more are broken for the sake

<sup>9</sup>Editors' note: Usually entitled *The Uniform Code of Operating Rules*. These books are published by each railway system and present time contain everything connected with the movement of rail stock. How fast, how slow, how far, how long, how much, how to, etc. A general notice on safety in the rule book supersedes all else. Oft quoted in arguments are: "Safety is of the first importance in the discharge of duty," "Obedience to the rules is essential to safety," and "To enter and remain in the service is an assurance to obey the rules." Such rules make it difficult to reprimand workers for delays because they can always say safety is uppermost. From the trainman's point of view, safety is central to survival and many accidents are caused by inadequate attention to safety. Management always harps on this issue in order to protect railway property. For an extensive explanation of train rules see Peter Josserand, Rights of Trains (New York 1957). See also John H. Armstrong, The Railroad — What It Is, What It Does: The Introduction to Railroading (Omaha, Nebraska 1982) for details on technological improvements aimed at reducing accidents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 275.

of efficiency. The reason that this does not result in more accidents is that the rules are very seldom broken unconsciously. When a railroader breaks a rule he simultaneously applies that extra bit of attention to the work necessary to get the work done with a relative amount of safety in a shorter period of time.

When the supervisors as a whole are at a loss, and where their absolute control stops very short, is in estimating the time lost in the observance of the rules. The occasional yard conductor whose viewpoint is in distinct sympathy with the yardmaster's, also faces the same problem. He is never sure of how much time his crew members will cost him by observing the rules.

Within the framework of work performance and rule observance, there are endless variations of thought resulting in endless varieties of action. The phrase, "it looks like" is very apt, for no-one is very certain precisely how the other will act. Some of the men appear to keep silent about anything to do with work for the sole purpose of confounding those who are trying to supervise, or, in the case of the student, learn.

The crew proceeds to the engine and from that moment on, all movements result from obedience to signals given or received. The student, in this case, has to really apply himself to find out what is going on. He may not be spoken to during the entire shift except at "beans." If he is bright, he quickly sees the purpose of the three basic signals, stop, ahead and back. From there he catches on to modifications of these signals for each can be made to indicate a variety of speeds in stopping, moving ahead, or reversing. There are also all the other signals indicating the destination of a car or "cut" of cars. To complicate things even more, for the student, there are signals indicating the condition of a car or a piece of track that is being or is about to be used as well as many other signals. The signals are basic over the entire North American continent but are subject to modification from railroad to railroad, division to division, crew to crew and even man to man.

The crew go about their work and there is little for the student to actually do. Regardless of their attitude toward him, he feels himself a distinct hindrance to a process that flows all around him. Try as he may, he cannot grasp the process in part, let alone wholly. No-one is as lost as a trainman or yardman on his first student trip. It is so devastating a feeling of uselessness that a student often

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Editors' note: Beans means a lunch period, or one might say: "Tom doesn't have enough for beans," i.e., has very little money.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>**Editors' note:** To cut cars is to drop a segment of a train, which is done while assembling/disassembling a train and dropping them at a siding.

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leaves his first student trip with a sense of complete defeat. Whether or not he ever starts another shift will be coloured by many things, including how badly he needs the job. Here is a crew of five men who seldom say anything and who are scattered over a distance of perhaps half a mile. With seemingly effortless ease they move cars around pretty well as they see fit. Each man seems to know exactly where he should be and what he should do at each moment.

Even the supervisors can never be certain that such and such a move will be made at a certain time or in any given manner. It can be seen then, how hopelessly confounded things appear to the student. To help confuse him even more, there are very few moves that cannot be made in a variety of ways. Sometimes a mere whim on the part of one man will determine the opening play of a move and the rest of the crew will follow suit, for, even though the whim may be a poor one, it is most often better to follow an opening play than to try to replay the move. There is a true story about two senior men of a crew who could not agree as to how a specific move should be made. While they fought a verbal battle, the junior man took the engine away and made the move in his own way. The argument was still going on when he returned with the engine. 12

If each move were plotted out in advance and a series of moves adhered to, it would be simply a matter of memory. That is the general theory, but practice differs. Very often a laid-out plan is changed by the man with the switch list if he thinks of a better way to make the move. The prevention of accidents plays a part in making sudden changes. None of this uncertainty ruffles the crew to any great extent. It is part of the life, though sometimes frustrating. The student watches, at a loss to know what to do with his hands, which keep moving in and out of his pockets. He tries to keep someone or at least the engine in sight, but does not always succeed. Amid the

<sup>12</sup>**Editors' note:** In an interview with three former associates of Morgan's, a similar long discussion took place about the rules. As they pointed out, sometimes rules are obscure to those not knowledgeable about railroading. For example, the Rule Book described a sample train order:

(1) No\_1 Eng 401 has right over No 2 Eng 402 M to B.

The following paragraph clarifies the train order:

If the second named train reaches the point last named before the other arrives, it may proceed, keeping clear of the schedule of opposing train as required by rule.

Anonymous, *Uniform Code of Operating Rules: Revision of 1962* (n.p. 1962), 76; interview with Morris Flynn, Clyde Mulhall, and Henry Reimer, 31 July 1989.

noise and the dust the job flows on. The student looks at one of the men and is certain that he is asleep. In brief seconds that same man may be up on a boxcar, winding up a handbrake. The men seem to combine lazy gestures of one sort or another with flashes of speed, using their whole bodies when necessary. With brief motions of finger, hand, arm, foot, head or body, signals are flashed back and forth and all seems to work out in the end.

What defeats many students (and others), is the common phrase, heard on all sides, "It looks like," or, "I guess." If the phrase is not actually used, it is implied. Every signal is preceded by it. Woven into railroading is the idea of motion. Motion emphasizes the constant change that is occurring around us all in all things. The decision to make a certain move always carries an "if." IF commonsense or rules or other factors make the move impractical or unsafe, it is up to one or more members of the crew to prevent the move from being made. The matters of practicality and safety are subject to a wide variation of interpretation. To further confuse the student, the crews often get in each other's way and to get straightened out, will exchange parts of their work. That sort of thing cannot be foreseen.

Above all, the student notes that each man is on his own, though involved in complicated manoeuvers with his mates. He sees moves take place which could not have been planned in advance — spur of the moment necessities, yet seldom is the crew caught off balance. Gradually perhaps, it occurs to the student that here, if nowhere else, the phrase, "I just work here," does not fit too well.

The normal function of the junior man and/or the student working with the crew is simply to mirror the signals initiated by the mate with the work list. Signals passed from one man to another often come from a point out of sight of the junior man. The temptation of the student is to express some of the initiative he may feel and thereby perhaps undo the plan the man with the list has in mind. A man lacking in initiative will have a hard time fitting into the pattern of the railroaders. Until the new man learns better, trouble sometimes develops from his not knowing his place. What is required of him is that he be prepared to follow signals yet at the same time refuse to follow them under certain circumstances. The nature of the work makes him more than just an uninterested order-follower. He gets involved in the shaping and carrying out of the whole plan of the work. Thus, due to inexperience, there are times when he is sure that the signal just given to him is wrong and he will contradict it. Worse, he may be so sure that he knows what the next move is (or what it should be), that, rather than waiting to reflect a signal from a senior mate, he may initiate a signal. If all

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concerned are lucky and are watching closely (should his signal be wrong), no mishap will occur. Otherwise a mishap may occur or the work may be delayed. The initiation rather than the reflection of a signal is the natural result of a combination of feelings. A new man who is on the ball senses an air of equality all around him. He feels, on most crews, a definite sense of participation. He feels the sense of responsibility which flows from the fact that whereas he is supposed to faithfully reflect all signals, he is also supposed to refuse an incorrect or unsafe signal. A sense of responsibility and importance is great food for the ego. A carefully controlled ego is of vast importance in all human situations. It is fairly easy to slowly develop this and control it over the extended period of training on most jobs that involve responsibility. In the running-trades, the new man is expected to show that he has his ego under control right off the bat. Most new men learn this lesson very quickly. It may be that the student brings with him a rather independent point of view when he first breaks in. It is certain that after a time he will either have developed an independent viewpoint or he will be uncomfortable on the job.

During his training period, often only three days in a yard or three road trips, or a combination thereof, for which he does not get paid, he is watched very closely by all five men. They are trying to figure out whether he has what it takes. He may not notice that he is under close observation for all seem devoted to the task at hand. His presence, though, is a matter of concern to all and the corner of an eye is on him at all times. Seldom if ever is a student injured. When he speaks he gets a fairly attentive audience. The primary thing the crew looks for in a student is a sense of interest in the work. They can tell by his questions whether his interest is genuine or otherwise. Empty-headed loud-mouths who lack a sense of responsibility are spotted immediately. By watching and listening to the new man, the crew try to fill out their very rough idea of his personality.

The crew knows that one or all of them is going to be questioned by a supervisor as to whether the student should be hired. The decision is in the crew's hands. A supervisor who ignored their recommendations would be foolhardy indeed. I contend that all a railway company can do for a man who wants work in the running-trades is to offer him a chance to perform before a few crews. The kind of decision the crews make will rest on their conception of the student's desire to say, "I just work here." Because the final planning of the work is in the hands of those who actually do the work, a disinterested attitude is simply not acceptable to the men. The men

are under no illusion of having control over the whole scheme. They are, however, very jealous of the amount of control they do possess. Dr. Cottrell, in his book *The Railroader*, outlines the degree of control which the men on the Brotherhoods exert:

Control over learning is a social fact, and it is through this control that the Big Four [Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen] exert the pressure that gives them preferred status, high income, and security. Break that control, through the installation of an effective technique of *training in service*, or through some political device which prevents full usage of monopoly, and the whole social world of the trainmen [in this context, the running-trades] will tumble about their ears .... [emphasis added] <sup>13</sup>

With control goes responsibility, with responsibility goes interest. The interest, however, will not be wholehearted unless whatever is being done makes sense to the man who is doing it, that is, unless it is meaningful to him. Control, responsibility, interest and meaningfulness are necessary to form the basic framework of industrial democracy. If any one of these elements is removed, the framework collapses. Today an appointed management determines when to run a train and therefore when to have it made up. That management also determines when to spot loads and remove empties in accord with the desires of customers. 14 The men lack the information required to make these decisions. However, when it comes to making the actual moves, "I just work here" won't do. It is not good enough. Therefore, to please both management and his fellow employees-tobe, the student has to quickly learn where the job control starts and ends, where interest in the work as a whole is displayed or covered up to the extent of non-interference.

Each man knows, not as a matter of a constant, nagging worry, but as an ever-present atmosphere which must be part of his thinking, that in theory each shift or trip is his last one. Danger is a constant companion on the job. The machinery is so big and the weights handled so considerable that almost any slip-up can cause a fatal injury. In the informative pamphlet written by Alexander Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them are set forth the findings of an American Emergency Board. The Board's report was made in 1943 and said:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Dr. W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader* (Palo Alto 1940), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Editors' note: To spot a load is to place a car or cars on a section of track.

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There is no question that railroad transportation employees, in the discharge of their duties, expose themselves to the hazards of accidental death and disability .... The evidence before the Board indicates clearly that the men engaged in operating trains are exposed to greater and more serious employment hazards than are other groups of railroad employees and, also, most groups of manufacturing and non-manufacturing workers.

#### Mr. Uhl makes further remarks:

Railroad worker fatalities and accidents are still shockingly high. During the war years, for instance, more that 1,000 workers were killed annually while accidents reached a high point of 48,000 in 1944. Since the war the rate has dropped. <sup>15</sup>

Life is dear to all and therefore the judgement about a student is a cautious one, not established easily. As the crews watch the development of the new man's signals, a feeling of confidence may emerge — the beginning of trust. With experience the signals change from awkward, unsteady, uncertain movements to those made with an easy grace. Acceptance cannot be demanded by the student, it must be earned. Running a bluff is entirely useless for "talking a good job" is seen through as soon as engine movement begins. The way a new man approaches a car, engine or switch for the first time tells the railroader the amount of bluff in the student's talk. The term student is applied not only to the brand-new man. It is also applied to men who have been selected as permanent employees if they have not reached a degree of ability which would be hard to define, but is well known to all experienced men.

Railway running-trades work is by no means the only dangerous occupation. It is not my intention to overstress the factor of danger. I do suggest though, that there is a certain relationship between danger and the established practice of making a man who may have had only three days experience take on many of the responsibilities of a man with perhaps twenty years of railroading behind him. At

<sup>15</sup>Alexander Uhl, *Trains and the Men Who Run Them* (Washington, DC 1954), 93. Dewey Anderson, Executive Director, The Public Affairs Institute, referred to Mr. Uhl as a "skilled research journalist."

**Editors' note:** Uhl gives figures of 477 killed and 16,256 injured in 1948, 293 killed and 12,477 injured in 1950 and 304 killed and 11,894 injured in 1952. Despite these reductions, safety was always a concern of railroaders, perhaps more so for the workers. It is interesting that the most recent issue of the *Yearbook of Railroad Facts*, still does not include statistics on accidents. See American Association of Railroads, Economics & Finance Department, *Railroad Facts*, 1990 Edition, (Washington 1990).

one time the flagging of other trains could only be done by a man running along the track with the necessary equipment. The junior man (in freight service), usually rides the head end and does the flagging. It can be seen that the amount of responsibility resting on the new man was tremendous. Despite mobile radio equipment and other electronic devices connected with safety in use on many railroads today, this, his most important duty, still has to be done. A committee on traffic control reported to the Convention that:

... there is no intention to set aside lightly one of the most protective features of train operation, one which has been deeply imbedded in the rules for many years .... Elimination of the flagging does not eliminate the flagman. On double track, should any difficulty be encountered by a train, the flagman should immediately protect both tracks until he learns what the trouble is. <sup>17</sup>

Flagging is done far less often than formerly, but when required must be done properly. <sup>18</sup> If it is not, the flagman might almost as well never have gone out. Even to follow the precisely laid out rule is hardly sufficient for many reasons, all very well known to the railroader. A lack of judgement can have serious results. Yet the brand-new man is expected, sometimes under the pressure of extreme excitement, almost panic, to coolly and calmly perform this exacting duty. It is undoubtedly unusual to place a person with a minimum of experience in such a position. Mr. F. Diegtel, Superintendent, D.L.&W., Hobokan, N.J., recognized the importance of the task of the flagman and some of the elements that go into making a good job of flagging. He said to the Convention:

My experience includes at least the fact that some men's lives were saved by the flagman being out a sufficient distance .... [Sufficient distance] is determined by the judgement of a good operating man, plus his training and instruction .... <sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Editors' note: The junior trainman may ride in the engine as a part of the tail end train crew (the conductor and brakeman). Now that crews have been reduced, there no longer being a fireman, the junior trainman, subject to the conductor's whim, to some extent fulfils the purpose of keeping an eye on the tracks. The apprenticeship aspect of firing is now gone. The fireman, sometimes out of courtesy, would do the work of the junior trainman but was not in any way obligated to do so.

 $<sup>^{17}</sup>$ Proceedings — Convention, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>**Editors' note:** Flagging or hand signals have been replaced by radio signals, but when radios do not work, the flagman must revert to the flagging or hand rules.

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Opinion spreads rapidly as to whether or not a new man can be made into a railroader. It is remarkable, under the circumstances, that as much tolerance is shown as is the case. With the ability shown by workmen everywhere, the crews quickly decide whether a given man will make it or not. Sometimes the judgement is quite wrong but it is certainly as good and better, on the average, than anyone else's judgement. If railroaders take to a new man they train him in their various ways. If the new man asks intelligent questions the crew will try to explain the apparently confused operation all around him. The student has to "have his head cut in" to be able to sort out and generalize the often contradictory advice given him. Each man he works with has his own peculiarities and ideas as to how certain moves should be made. The number of possibilities is very large. The new man is subjected to varying amounts of pressure to adopt certain ways of doing a job. However, whereas the railroaders may differ considerably in many aspects of the work, there is at least one common point. They all demand of the new man a certain minimum of interest in the job. Of course the desired minimum varies with each man.

Some students wonder why their presence on the crew seems to be such an unwelcome thing. After all, their place on the seniority list (if and when they establish a place) does not lessen in an appreciable degree the amount of work a senior man will get nor does it affect the kind of job the senior man can hold. Though the student may be extremely alert and become an accomplished railroader in a very short period, his abilities net him neither more nor better jobs. In most instances the student is expected to learn the job by watching it being performed and actually doing it rather than someone telling him how it is done. Since the new man is in no way a menace to the job security of the senior man it seems to me that there is only one logical reason why he is treated so coolly. The reason is that the railroaders know that the job can be learned by watching and doing and also know that if the student is sufficiently interested he will learn it that way. If he is not that interested, the railroaders don't want him. The element of danger on the job is too great to have it made greater by students who do not realize the results of a disinterested attitude. Therefore the experienced men

**Editors' note:** A good operating worker is one who, through experience, could sense what was safe and at the same time get over the road. Since road conditions dictate stopping distance and some engineers are known to be more reckless than others, the competent trainman takes these things into account and acts accordingly when flagging.

do not usually become too friendly until the attitude of the student toward the job is clearly one of which they can approve.

It is of course untrue that all railroaders are dedicated men. Not all of them give the attention to the job that is really required. The point here is that this lack of interest or attention is so easily and quickly seen by their mates that it cannot be hidden. The minimum of interest required will vary from moment to moment, crew to crew. There are, we find, men on each railroad whose interest keeps crossing the line of minimum interest but in general sagging below the line. It is within the power of the railroaders to arrange to get rid of these men. It is not a pleasant task but sometimes it is necessary and it is done. Sometimes however, when a great deal of seniority is piled up, these men are permitted to hang on and take their place on the crews according to their "rights." They are known as "carried" men.

Now, if it were true that the actions of any one crew member were, in general, of no consequence to the well being of the work and/or the crew, one would expect certain results. If the action of any one crew member had no effect on the hourly or other rate of pay for the rest of the crew one would expect the same result. Neither is true. His actions, or lack of them, considerably affect both the work and pay of the whole crew. The logic of it is then, that the poorly adapted would never last on the job. "Poorly adapted" can mean one thing to a group of employees and something else again to their employer. In many cases an understanding of what it means to be without a job will influence the men's decision as to whether or not a man is to be classed as unsuitable. This is an entirely human attitude. Being "human" is a difficult thing to define, but in my opinion, it embraces more than simply what is good for business. It is not a case of being anti-employer, but rather a case of being pro-individual human being.

It is true that there is sufficient freedom for each individual to pursue an independent attitude on almost all matters. However, what is required of each man is that he shall in no way allow his feelings about this or that to interfere with good railroad practice. There is a matter of constant concern extended from man to man, crew to crew, as to whether a mate is "here" or "elsewhere," that is, is he thinking about the work or not. It is not a matter of constant fretting, but the concern is known to be there. If each man is reasonably "here" the burden of concern is not felt to be too heavy, but group discipline goes into action the moment a man's interest in the progress of the work ceases. If interest drops and remains below a certain level it becomes intolerable and boycott follows.

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There are certain fundamental differences in getting a job as an engineman as compared with obtaining work as a trainman. The most outstanding difference is in the length of training time. Another difference is in the kind and amount of supervision administered to the student engineman. Still another difference is that whereas conductors have always been promoted trainmen, engineers were not necessarily promoted firemen in the early days. From the files of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers we have evidence that it was not unknown for an engineer to have the say as to who was to run "his" engine during short absences on his part. In an article entitled "Oldest Engineer in America," which appeared in *The Journal*, November 1895, we find the following:

Fifty-five years ago, or in 1840. Brother Smith began running individual market cars .... He engaged in this business until 1843, when he began firing a locomotive on the State road. In the event of an engineer stopping off, in those days, he had the privilege of appointing his substitute. Brother Smith had not been firing long until his engineer stopped off, and made him substitute. <sup>20</sup>

The logic of promoting firemen who learned to run an engine by actually doing it rather than by studying a book soon became apparent. This method of promotion became and remains accepted practice.

An engineman acquires three seniority dates during his period of service. His first applies to the date he hires on for work in the shop, his second, the date he makes his first trip as a fireman (helper), his third, the date he makes his first trip as an engineman. Each date is important for, in the process of being bumped (displaced) or promoted, the date in each sub-branch of engine service puts him in or out of line for certain types of work.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Anonymous, "Oldest Engineer in America," *The [Locomotive Engineers'] Journal*, 29, 11 (November 1895), 958. During the years that this publication was the official organ of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers it had several names. For the sake of clarity I have referred to it throughout as *The Journal*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Editors' note: All workers hold a seniority number, which dictates the work they can hold. At intervals, all work is put up for bid, and each worker submits a "wish list" in the form of bids for preferred work. The regular day scheduled trains are more desirable than intermittent night freights. The most senior worker takes the train run bid for, the least senior may be lucky to hold a midnight yard. Even after this process, however, a worker returning from leave will bid, thereby bumping someone junior, who in turn bids and the bumping takes place right down the line. A rare exception to

Ten years would be a reasonably close guess at the length of training time. The time is spent in three stages of progression. The first is spent as part of the shop staff with duties closely hinged to the requirements of servicing a locomotive.<sup>22</sup> At the same time the student stays clear of the work assigned to the machinist, boilermaker, air brake repairman, painter, etc. Nevertheless the close association of the student engineman with all these tradesmen gives him some idea of the care needed to maintain a locomotive. Much of the student's time is spent with the hostler on railways that use such service and the student is sometimes known as a hostler's helper.23 The hostler's main duty is to move the engines about as required by the shop staff. In this task the hostler's helper serves as a brakeman for the hostler, lining switches, centering turn-tables and being of general assistance. The hostler may well be a fireman or engineer who for health, disciplinary or other reasons, is confined to hostling either permanently or for a given period. Arrangements between the Brotherhoods vary widely in terms of deciding who shall perform the hostler's duties.

this may be the reluctance of someone to bump a well-liked individual who has some good personal reason to hold a certain job. On some lines the yard crews and train crews have separate seniority lists and cannot bid on the other. See the chapter on Seniority on p. 89.

<sup>22</sup>Editors' note: Training entailed starting in the shop, oiling, wiping, becoming familiar with engines and trains. The most senior of the shop staff, at the time of bidding, might succeed in bidding onto a train crew (and could expect to be bumped). This bidding on, being bumped, could occur many times over the space of several years before one had enough seniority to hold a road job. Moreover the same process would go on when becoming an engineer. Similarly, those bidding onto a trainman's job might bid as conductors, (and occasionally work as such), but hold as trainmen, for some time. A train with a good working schedule will be bid by senior workers, even if that means going out as brakemen (and in earlier days firemen). A day freight or passenger train, therefore, will have a very senior crew. Flagging is less desirable for the older workers as it entails getting on and off the trains, walking (in some instances considerable distances) along the shoulder of the tracks, etc.

<sup>23</sup>Editors' note: A hostler originally worked solely in the shops or moving engines about at terminals, and is in this context an engineman in training. A hostler's helper or wiper is a new worker starting out doing the most menial of tasks, i.e., wiping off grease and beginning in the shops. As time passes such a worker may progress out of the shop to fireman, then engineman, having benefitted from the apprenticeship as a wiper, assisting the hostler (engineman).

Many of these remarks apply only to past practice.<sup>24</sup> Allowance is made for wide variance between the practices followed on any one railroad as compared to another. At the moment it would appear that little if anything is being done to provide for a list of qualified enginemen to serve some twenty-five years hence. It can be presumed that automatically-controlled engines are very much in the picture for the near future. If this is so, there is little need for a lengthy period of training for the enginemen and arrangements could be readily made for the few that would be required.

During his term in the shops the student is watched by the supervisors of the shop staff. These supervisors seldom have a background of running-trades service. For that reason these foremen etc. often have the attitude toward their economic inferiors that is commonly found in most industries. Richardson considers this point worthy of attention for he quotes from *Railway Age*:

It was customary ... to have the engineers and firemen work part of the time in the shops; also, in order to give the Master Mechanic "proper position in the eyes of his subordinates," it was the practice to have all instructions pass through him to the enginemen.  $^{25}$ 

With these supervisors, the element of "attitude" is often of paramount importance when they are asked for an opinion as to how so-and-so is getting along. The only really important part of "attitude" is how cheerfully, quickly and willingly a man will jump when ordered about. Reports on the new man will vary depending on how the supervisor feels toward authority as such. He has to consider how the new man responds to his own orders and for that reason his own ego is involved. The reports he makes may well be coloured by how flattered he feels at being obeyed. Such demand for obedience is not new. In a 1907 issue of *The Journal* we find the following reference:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Editors' note: Today, while most running trades workers still receive on-the-job training, classes and even simulators are used in central training facilities. Very few of the foregoing remarks regarding what workers do and how they progress through the ranks is altered even today, although firemen are no longer used in freight service. For details on automated systems, see Armstrong, *The Railroad — What It Is, What It Does*, 113ff. Technological change, as Morgan points out in the following would certainly affect the degree of crew autonomy.

<sup>25</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 101.

... the master mechanic of 40 years ago or thereabouts was quite an important personage, ... who ruled his then submissive band like a veritable czar. <sup>26</sup>

In time the student gets to make that hoped-for trip as a fireman and very often the shop supervisor has occasion to remember it, for it seems to mark a change in "attitude."

When the great day arrives on which the student is finally "set up" (takes command at brake valve and throttle in his own right), the effect on attitude is very marked. He is never quite the same again. Much of what the new "hogger" feels will depend on his actual age. <sup>27</sup> If he has seen much of life his reactions vary widely from those of the youngster.

His actual training as an engineman is done by the various engineers with whom he works as a fireman. Dr. Cottrell underscores the part which training "on the job" plays in this brief and factual comment:

As things now stand the skill of the engineer can be learned only on the job. Judgement involved in starting and stopping from two or three up to ten thousand tons of rolling stock, moving at rates up to one hundred and twenty miles an hour, and the skill required to put that judgement into action, come only under the actual conditions of work

The vast majority of engineers start their "running" careers by operating locomotives in yard switching service. In this capacity much of the work is confined to moving small "cuts" (numbers) of cars. As seniority and experience are gained, the engineer progresses to jobs entailing actual train operation in which surer hands and minds are required. Out of a group of men chosen at random who start as "wipers," (hostler's helpers), the great majority will continue on to the fireman's job. If there were fifty men in the group chosen, it is likely that only ten of them would ever reach the goal of a steady passenger service run. Poor health, often brought on by job conditions, and disciplinary measures taken by the employer, take a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Anonymous, *The [Locomotive Engineers'] Monthly Journal*, 41, 1 (January 1907), 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>**Editors' note:** A hogger is an engineman, also know as a hoghead, derived from the fact that steam engines had a voracious appetite for fuel. Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 105, 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 16.

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steady toll and seriously reduce a man's chance to become a "passenger man." 29

In general enginemen are a cautious, conservative breed who will not risk their "ticket" on an irresponsible man.<sup>30</sup> The engineer must bear responsibility even if he is not actually running the engine. As far as possible, efforts are made to weed out the unreliable types before they get out firing but some of them get by. If their irresponsibility is too marked, one or more enginemen call a halt to their careers.

At this point we see the similarity between the break-in period of the trainman and that of the fireman-engineman. Judgement in the form of acceptance or rejection is usually officially passed by the Road Foreman of Engines whose duties include supervision of both engines and enginemen. He has for guidance his own experience in watching the new man actually run an engine but his own experience is limited in respect to any one man. His mainstay for judgement is the word of the engineers with whom the new man broke in.

For many years prior to the end of the use of steam power, many engineers used what authority they had over their firemen with varying degrees of severity. Among these engineers were men who abused that power. One of the effects was to have a great number of the firemen swear that when their turn came to run an engine and exercise authority over a foreman, they would not be abusive. It is no more possible to say exactly why an engineer would abuse a fireman than it is possible to say exactly why one man abuses another. All we can do is to examine the circumstances in which we find a man being abused by another and look for obvious motives. Deep-seated psychological reasons might very well have been present but we are not able to assess them properly if they were. Being guided by openly visible motives we see that the fireman was intricately involved with the engineer's job because he took care of the supplying of steam, without which the engineer was helpless. To this extent the proper functioning of the engineer's duties were not altogether in his own hands. Now, it is a safe assumption that the vast majority of engineers wanted to turn in a first-class job of work and where they could count on their fireman to help them to do so, all was well. On the other hand, when the fireman fell down

<sup>30</sup>Editors' note: A ticket is the standard form completed after a trip giving the hours, distances, delays and other information. It is then approved or contested by the company. In this context ticket refers to one's pay.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>**Editors' note:** A "passenger man" was one who preferred, and had seniority for, passenger trains and so had a special, higher status.

on the job in any way it was an altogether different story. Who knows precisely why each and every engineer who wanted to or actually did make a "good run" did so? Was it pride in the accomplishment of a job well done or was it the fact that the better run he made the more money he made by the hour? The record of engineers as a whole shows that they are normally very proud of their work on the job but we also know that they liked "good money" just as does anyone else. It would be very risky to state which motive was uppermost in the mind of any one engineer at any one time. Particularly in the early days, it was not necessary to have a "personnel department" to encourage an engineer to connect the importance of his work to the needs of society. The crowds of people at the station "to watch the train come in" told him that he was performing a useful job.

The very great majority of engineers of today who were at one time steam engine firemen have indeed kept the vow which they made to themselves not to harass their firemen. To what extent this is true simply because the relationship between the engineer and the fireman has been drastically altered we do not know. Several factors enter into this changed relationship, the most important of which is the function of the fireman on diesel-powered engines. The power supply is no longer in the hands of the fireman except when some minor breakdown occurs. Even then, should the engineer wish to do so, he could make his own repairs, ignoring the fireman's help, but this practice would be frowned upon. If the engineer chose to make his own repairs it would mean that the train would have to be stopped. If that happened, management would be highly displeased, as would the conductor and his crew for their hourly pay starts to drop as soon as the train stops. Also the engineer's job is greatly affected by the use of diesel power for he is no longer required to be as familiar with the engine's mechanisms as was the old steam hogger. A further factor is the vast increase in the number of safety devices in general service on most railways. This factor makes a big difference when an engineer is letting a student run his engine in order to gain experience.

There are some engineers who believe that the very much softer attitude expressed by the engineer toward the fireman is one of the reasons, if not the major one, that it has been decided that "firemen are not necessary" (except in passenger service). These engineers feel that if they had been harsher with their firemen in seeing to it that they turned in a really good job on what was left of their former duties, that is, the keeping of a lookout for signals and dangerous conditions, it might never have been decided that "firemen are not

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necessary." Who knows? Perhaps this was a heavily-bearing factor in that decision. 31

It is seen then, that whereas the route from the green man's job to that of an accredited engineman follows twists that to some extent involve supervisors other than those with running-trades backgrounds, in the main the would-be engineer gets the nod (or doesn't) from his fellow workers in engine service.

<sup>31</sup>Editors' note: The Kellock Royal Commission made a recommendation on firemen in 1958. It was put into practice on Canadian Pacific lines first, the PGE (now BC Rail) and other lines later. The Commission decided that safety and other considerations were not sufficient to require companies to hire the fifth worker, i.e., the fireman. In the days of steam, firemen helped in the cab when not loading fuel: signalling, lookout duty, mechanical assistance and relief. The Brotherhoods bitterly fought attempts to get rid of firemen. The Commission rejected the arguments of the Brotherhoods, saving that these duties could or should be handled by other trainmen. For a number of years on the PGE the company ran an auxiliary board, which was in effect a spare board to the spare board. Workers on the auxiliary board were literally paid to stay home, sometimes for weeks without a turn. These were workers who would have been firing. With dieselization the railways expected significant economies to be made in facilities and labour. Canadian Pacific estimated that with complete dieselization an annual savings of over \$11 million could be achieved, compared with a net operating income of \$41 million in 1956. See anonymous, Report of the Royal Commission on Employment of Firemen on Diesel Locomotives in Freight and Yard Service in the Canadian Pacific Railway (The Kellock Commission) (Ottawa 1958), 7-18, 25,

When Morgan writes "engineers feel that if they had been harsher" he is referring to the notion of the crusty, irascible hogger who was lord of all he surveyed. Few could suggest to the engineer a course of action. It was the fireman's task to watch the road, be familiar with train orders, special bulletins and do minor repairs. As workers put up with less in terms of harsh treatment whatever their trade, and as the old hoggers retired, younger men coming up treated their workmates with somewhat more consideration.

## "You're Called"

No one is more conscious than the railroader of the fact that though he were to drop dead while off the job, the whole procedure would carry on without a falter. He knows very well that another man, presumed to be his equal, fills the gap in a generally satisfactory manner. This knowledge, however, does not contribute to a feeling of being unnecessary or an "outsider." Whether he is at home, uptown, at the theatre or in the park with his children, when the railroader's watch says 5:30 p.m., it is more than supper-time. It is also the time that some train is supposed to be at or near some town on the sub-division on which he works. Some railroaders go to the extent of putting their pocket watches out of sight when off the job in order to break the spell. Still you find them fairly conscious of the passage of time for it has an inescapable meaning for them. Cottrell makes note of this feature of the railroader's life:

He is a slave to the clock; intense time-consciousness marks the railroader in all his social relationships.  $^{\rm l}$ 

Though many claim to be able to forget the job while at home, few actually do so. It is not that they are constantly worried so much as that there is a vague sense of concern.

Many railroaders are called to work by phone or call-boy. As soon as a call is received a process begins which is rather like a familiarization period.

As he is preparing for duty he is calculating myriad factors, all of which deal with the performance of the job. Arrival and departure of other trains, the possible effects of the heavy rain on a mud bank somewhere on the line, who will be his mates on the trip and hundreds of other matters of conjecture come to him automatically. This continues on the way to the job, so that he finds on arrival that he is ready to join in the next part of the familiarization program with the crew members already assembled.

When reporting for duty, the crew assembles in a very informal manner. Tradition has it that everyone arrives a sufficient period of time ahead of the actual duty-time to perform a sort of loose ritual. By means of various prescribed documents, bulletin boards, train

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, The Railroader, 69.

registers, etc., some of the questions in his mind are settled. At no time are all the questions settled, the air of uncertainty is ever present, it is part of the life. It becomes as normal as breathing to expect any development at any moment. There is usually a good atmosphere between crew members due to certain freedoms permitted as to which job a man shall work. There is a certain air of comradeship while all are gathered discussing various aspects of the job, past, present or future. The talk will move back and forth between the job and personal matters. When it has been determined that the trip appears to be, in prospect, quite routine, talk goes to sports, gardening, children and all the other things in life. At the same time, one ear is reserved for rumour or fact that will affect this trip or the railroad as a whole. There is an almost complete aura of apparent relaxation and no sign of formality.

This is not to suggest that somewhat similar thoughts and actions are not present at like times in other industries. It is, however, to mark the extremities in attitudes reached by railroaders. Should a supervisor appear while the crew is assembled, he may or may not be spoken to by one or more members of the crew. If he is a popular officer it is likely he will be greeted by some of them but much will depend on their individual mood. An unpopular officer will be either ignored completely or will receive a curt, formal and cold acknowledgement of his presence. Although some crew members may have been raised to uncritically kowtow to economic superiors, most railroaders do not feel obliged to speak. Popular or otherwise, it is not unusual for the superior to be taken more or less to task about some ruling or decision he has made. Each man can feel quite free to challenge the superior's edict if, in his opinion, it runs counter to common sense or good railroad practice. Tradition makes it necessary for the supervisor to defend his position.

Normally any supervisor is possessed of knowledge about the job factors that are not known by the average workman. Such things, for instance, as closely guarded company secrets which affect decisions. In railroading, the nature of the industry normally prevents the intrusion of such factors. It would be hard to find an industry in which the thinking of management is so widely known in the lower circles as is the case in railroad operations. It is nowhere written down nor is it even discussed, but it is extremely well understood by management and men that railroading as it is performed in North America, cannot function with men who simply do as they are told. Woven into every fibre of the whole cloth, is the responsibility of each man for the thousands of unsupervised

activities. Uhl draws our attention to this facet of railroading when he says:

Split second decisions must often be made and the nature of the work itself requires that men frequently act without direct supervision.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude is as much a part of the life, as are the cars, engines and tracks. The effect of this independent thinking is more marked in the relationship between company officers and men. The feeling of equality is clearly established. Fawning and boot-licking are almost unknown and when they occur are very carefully kept out of sight. A good supervisor knows that the boot-licker is usually a less-than-first-quality workman.

Before it is time for the road crew to leave the yard office there is often a performance much like that seen between the yardmaster and the yard conductor. The road conductor usually receives a "message" attached to his train orders.3 Like the yard conductor's "list" it is an expression of the management's hope for what they want the crew to do. Although some conductors simply take the message and say nothing, usually the tug-of-war is on again. It always makes sense for the conductor to pull hard on his end of the rope. Due to the odd system of wage payment, there is a sort of piece-work atmosphere. In essence, it is fairly simple. There is a minimum payment due, known as the "one-hundred mile day."4 However, the sooner a crew can take a train to the distant terminal, the more money is made for each man "by the mile." It is clearly to the benefit of the crew to go about their work intelligently for to do so raises their take by the hour. For this reason the crew want as little delay as possible in reaching the end of their run. Stopping anywhere along the road is viewed as a nuisance, though on some roads stops along the way are paid for by means of a complicated system of bonuses. To detail that system would serve no purpose here. Most crews would gladly pass up "switching en route" pay to get aboard the dream train that neither stops nor "pulls a pin" en route. The term "pin" is still in use although its origin goes back to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Editors' note: Train orders are given to the crew, and usually have a note from the dispatcher of any special conditions about the stretch of track on which the crew will travel, such as bad track conditions not mentioned in special bulletins. Since in freight operations the crew does not necessarily have a time schedule indicating arrival at a destination, the dispatcher may indicate that certain cars are a rush order, i.e., a message.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Editors' note: The 100-mile day derives from the fact that steam engines could go about 100 miles before requiring fuel and minor servicing.

the days when men had to step in between cars in order to detach them from one another. In doing so they actually lifted a pin that was thrust through a link. This very dangerous practice came to an end when automatic coupling was invented. The modern device enables the men to stand in a safe place yet perform the same task. If a trip is made "without pulling a pin," it means that the train did not stop to set out cars nor to pick any up. 6

The conductor will point out to the yardmaster that "all this switching en route" will cause an intolerable delay, but the yardmaster will point out that the message is from the dispatcher and not himself, so the row, which is in essence the same as the yardman's, goes on.<sup>7</sup> The row is over what shall constitute a day's work. When possible the conductor will debate with the dispatcher and through using his intimate knowledge of most things on the sub-division he can sometimes have the message revised. Much of the outcome will depend on the nature of the conductor, dispatcher or the chief dispatcher, but usually a compromise is reached. Neither side is sure to win at the outset.

The presence or absence of an official making no difference, the train crew moves out to start work with a mixture of groans, curses and smiles. There are threats to do this or that which will inconvenience the company somehow, but the wise officer knows that it is usually just so much excess air, heated up to sound explosive. It is possible that the railroader has no equal for "bitching" about everything.

Each man now turns to his particular function. The junior (head-end) man goes to fetch the engine and the others to the caboose or such other places as the particular circumstance requires. During this period, the movements of the crew are under the over-all supervision of a yardmaster or like official, who can order stopping, starting, or alteration of plan at will, all within a general framework of rule-observance, keeping in mind the needs of the train

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>**Editors' note:** See the illustration in Gamst, *The Hoghead*, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Editors' note: Switchmen who had it out for a train crew could also cause major delays for obscure reasons, thus reducing the pay of the train crew. Arguments might break out in such cases.

**Teditors' note:** It is the dispatcher's task to tell the crews, by means of "orders" what work is required, i.e., which cars make up a train, where the train is to be spotted, etc. The road crew's orders will state what cars have to be dropped off or picked up *en route*, for instance a car may be switched into a mill, and also what the crew can expect in terms of oncoming traffic, where and which train must go into a siding to allow another to pass, etc. Almost never are the dispatcher's instructions ignored, even if the crew sees a better way of doing things.

dispatcher. In general, the immediate official tries to have the train in such condition (including the necessary papers), that questions about the work to be done are unnecessary, all is ready.

The formula for departure is fairly routine and if proper preparations are made everything goes smoothly. If the cars are uncoupled anywhere the "joints" are made and air connections put together. A test of train-brake performance is made and the train leaves the yard after final considerations are given to certain opposing trains. Particularly recently, the train can be stopped at this juncture by radio-transmitted command of the yardmaster, as long as it has not passed the yard limit board. When that point is reached, the train is under the sole direction of the conductor but the final decision on whether or not to move is made by the engineer for he too bears a great responsibility. His own thinking, perhaps influenced by his fireman and the head-end brakeman, must tell him that obedience to the conductor's signal to move is the proper thing to do at that moment. Both engineers and conductors also have to keep in mind the needs of the dispatcher. His extremely important job entails the arrangement of train movements so that they do not get in each other's way. These arrangements must be made in such a way that time is not lost unnecessarily. Where he has radio contact with the train, the dispatcher might order the train held while it was still within yard limits.

Once "out of town" the crew as a whole experience a sense of relief and a feeling of solidarity with one another. There are no overtones of perhaps having immediate plans disrupted by the command supervisor. The relationships between the conductor and his trainmen and between those three and the engine crew is one of partaking in a co-operative venture. A conductor cannot apply official disciplinary measures to a mate. Under a most unusual circumstance he can "confine" a mate and simply work shorthanded. The conductor may not, however, "confine" a member of the engine crew. If there is any "confining" to do the engine crew have to do it for themselves and before now, engineers have confined firemen and vice versa. It must be understood that confinements are definitely not a regular occurrence but they do happen from time to time.

The co-operative spirit now develops to the extent that the personalities of the crew permit. Should they be well suited to one another in temperament, and know each other well enough to permit some violation of the rules because of confidence in each other, the trip will be pleasurable. The amount of confidence placed in a man is sometimes determined by the way a signal is given or responded

to. Each man develops his own particular style and signals can become as personalized as speech. Occasionally it is possible to detect temper in a more experienced man by the way he gives his signals. Crew members exercise particular caution until that man's temper has cooled off. Over the years, a man learns which of his mates are thoroughly reliable. With them a certain trust enters into the relationship but very seldom does this result in accident. Even if plans do not work too well, the co-operative spirit holds the upper hand and difficulties are endured with patience and goodwill. If the men are not well matched, errors are magnified, cross words may follow and the atmosphere may become tense. If somewhere on the trip one of the crew members makes an error that results in a considerable loss of time he is due criticism. At the end of the trip a post mortem is often held in some place of relaxation. Here the error made earlier will be discussed. If the temperaments are congenial, the erring mate is roundly chided. The important point here is the give and take between the men regardless of position of command on the crew. If either the conductor or engineer was responsible for the loss of time he receives just as much criticism as does the junior man. The junior man stands in no fear of his seniors and no holds are barred in the debate.

It will be remembered that the yard conductor and the road conductor occupy similar positions on a crew. The relationship between conductors and crews is essentially the same. The difference lies in the amount of supervision which can be applied to either conductor. After passing the yard limit board, the road conductor and his trainman, as well as the enginemen, are free of DIRECT official supervision. The officials know that the conductor may be in possession of facts that, were they used against the crew member, could lead to discipline by management. The conductor is not, however, expected to divulge these facts. John Dunlop notes in *Industrial Relations Systems* that "things are different" on the railroads:

Regardless of how these operating rules are set  $\dots$  special rules regarding the relations of managers and workers arise concerning supervision,  $\dots^8$ 

In theory, each time a rule is broken, discipline can be applied. It is however entirely impractical to apply discipline for each and every infraction. Mr. S.J. Massey, Jr., Superintendent, I.C., New Orleans, La. outlined one of the problems when he spoke to the Convention:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>John Dunlop, Industrial Relations Systems (New York 1958), 36.

I certainly don't think we should take advantage of a few miles an hour lover the speed limit but I don't think, on the other hand, we should recognize a margin and say it is o.k. to go 5 miles an hour faster. We should at least tell him we made the observation and what his speed was <sup>9</sup>

Unless an infraction of the rules has had serious consequences, nothing is said. Mr. A.S. Tabor, Superintendent, N.&W., Roanoke, Va. tells the Convention one of the reasons this is so:

I have seen several places on our railroad where there were men who were good fellows, though they hadn't insisted too much on rules observance because they wanted to make everybody happy and stay on the good side of them. 10

Higher management knows that lower management knows of these things, however those in lower management, (unlike the conductor), are expected to make verbal or written reports of certain happenings. 11 As in other industries, a worker's record is kept and if serious discipline is to be applied, the record is taken into consideration. In an address on discipline problems made by Mr. J. E. Wolfe, Assistant to the Vice-President of the C.B.&Q. when he appeared before the Convention, the following points were made:

All divisions of the National Adjustment Board have, more or less consistently, recognized that a previous offence has nothing to do with the guilt or innocence of an employee who has had charges preferred against him. But they do recognize that, in the measurement of discipline, officers of the railroad not only have the right, but the duty and obligation, to consider a past bad record when measuring the discipline to be assessed. 12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 107. <sup>10</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Editors' note: Management comes from the ranks, usually from the train crew rather than the engine crew. Hence, as a road foreman, one usually supervises crews of which one was formerly a member. Moreover, since supervisors retain their seniority and have no guarantee they are going to retire as foremen, they know they may well be back in the ranks with their workmates. A foreman who had made too many officious decisions which adversely affected the crews "under" supervision would face considerable hostility on returning to work as a member of a crew. This is also implied in Morgan's comments on p. 136. Not all roads permit management to retain seniority. <sup>12</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 73.

The sense of solidarity on the crew is heightened by the fact that being a "no-bill" (non-union) is very rare among the men. <sup>13</sup> In the normal circumstances it is entirely likely that the conductor and his two trainmen all belong to the same lodge of the same Brotherhood. <sup>14</sup> At the same time the conductor is "in charge of" the actions of the two trainmen. The engineer and his fireman are very possibly members of the same Brotherhood. The engineer is however "in charge of" the actions of the fireman. The limitations of the conductor's and engineer's being "in charge of" are set forth later.

The fact that the conductor and his two mates could be lodge (Brotherhood) brothers and the engineer and his fireman could be fellow members of a Brotherhood covering those in engine service, tempers the relationships between the men.

The relationship between crew and crew as they meet or overtake one another is worthy of a word. It is important as a factor in drawing a total picture of how elements of the job create specific attitudes among railroaders. The attitude is expressed through the operating Brotherhoods. In discussing the Brotherhood's lack of desire to co-operate with the other unions existing on railroads, Richardson uses "the impact of the railroad industry itself" as a partial explanation. He goes on to say:

Engineers and other operating workers were separated physically and socially from "outsiders," as workers outside the railroad industry would be termed. <sup>15</sup>

The Brotherhoods applied this thinking to workers and their unions in the non-operating crafts on the railways. Many Brotherhood men hold firmly to the belief that because their jobs are of such a nature that only a great deal of experience can make it possible to do a good job, therefore any job which requires much less experience is, by

<sup>13</sup>Editors' note: A no-bill is also a car without a bill of lading. At one time workers were not obligated to pay their dues (unless they had a closed shop) and these were collected by union officers. In the post-WW II period in Canada the Rand Formula has been widely adopted, whereby union dues are automatically deducted from pay cheques of both union and non-union members.

<sup>14</sup>Editors' note: Lodges are the union locals which make up the Brotherhoods. The Brotherhoods were community-based and workers felt themselves to be close, members of the same house, as it were. While trainmen might belong to the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the enginemen could be members of a different union or unions (the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers or the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen).

<sup>15</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 187.

that token, a "lesser" job. The jobs held by "pen-pushers" and "banjo-players" (pick and shovel workers) are considered "lesser jobs." When the "real railroaders" (the operating crafts) cross each other's path while on duty it is a different story. 16

Arrangements to get trains by one another vary considerably. The precise method depends on the amount of automatic equipment used for train control on any particular railroad. Railroad traffic control systems change very slowly. Mr. C.E. Morton, Superintendent, S.A.L., Raleigh, N.C. mentioned this during the Convention proceedings:

 $\dots$  the Traffic Control system is the first basic change in the handling of trains in more than 60 years.  $^{17}$ 

If the older system of train orders is still the method in use, trains may be directed by the dispatcher to meet, wait for, or pass other trains at given points. The dispatcher's duties are many and his responsibilities are indeed grave. Some railroad companies tend to try to load their dispatchers up with other and less important duties. Running-trades men and track workers in particular rightly feel that his duties should be strictly limited. 18 It is unfortunate to have to record that many men, primarily "section" (track repair) men, have lost their lives because of faulty line-ups. On those railways not yet equipped with many of the modern safety devices, the dispatcher literally has the men's lives in his hands. 19 Line-ups show the relative location of trains, the plans for running other trains, and end with the words, "more trains to be (or may be) operated." Again, "it looks like."

If no specific orders are given out, the crews know which trains they have to keep clear of and which trains have to keep clear of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Editors' note: Operating crews consider themselves, and indeed are considered, to be the cream. Everyone else is a "bit player." <sup>17</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Editors' note: Some track workers called road-gangs, section men or Gandy dancers (after the manufacturer of the machinery they worked with) are conferred even less status than other non-ops such as hostlers and shop workers. Often seasonally employed, they live in special trains, moving throughout the warmer season from place to place. For a description of their work, see Donna Young, "The Right Way, the Wrong Way and the Railway': The Experience of Work on a CPR Maintenance-of-Way Gang," MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Editors' note: Literally the lives of the train crew and the track workers are in the hands of the dispatcher, and one mistake may cost lives. The dispatcher is the air traffic controller of the road.

them. Crews are guided by information set forth in various official bulletins. Most of their directions come from the timetable. In general it is true to say that the crews lacking specific orders know that they could be meeting other trains at almost any suitable point and are therefore on the lookout.

To clarify relationships between the members of the runningtrades it is necessary to examine their connections with each other more closely. Running-trades work can be further classified into three groups. First, work which has a precise starting time and place, second, work which has an uncertain starting time but normally starts from the same place and third, spare work which fills in vacancies in groups one and two. The comings and goings of men assigned to jobs with regular starting times and places are of no consequences to the rest of the men as far as earnings are concerned. Crews that have uncertain starting times can affect the earnings of crews doing the same classifications of work. Road freight work, with uncertain starting times is usually called "pool" work, for each pool crew takes its turn on a shared basis. Various duties are performed when other trains are met, all of which the rule book covers. It does not, however, cover the shouted or waved greeting that pass from crew to crew. These have to be seen to be believed. If both crews are in high spirits, the signals, signs and shouts are numerous and constitute a real performance. One would think that they had not seen each other for years, yet they may have met at the same place the previous day when they were going in opposite directions. The comradely greetings are just as loud and hearty for assigned crews as for other pool crews so it follows that the greetings are not necessarily connected with the pay cheque. All this may take place in the middle of the night when spirits are normally rather low. The time only slightly dampens the spirit of the greetings.

A certain tolerance of delay is noticed. There is a common knowledge between all crews that, exceptions considered, each crew faces much the same problems as the other and that each crew does its best in its own enlightened self-interest. Though competition for track exists between all crews on single track railways, it is tempered by understanding and at times, marked patience.

## Seniority

THE RAILROADER enjoys job security through the seniority provisions and the assumption of equality on the job. The importance to the running-trades work is fairly well understood by the public. How seniority provisions affect each running-trades man is not so well understood.

Some will say that seniority may be all very well on railways but the whole idea and apparatus is not something that could be transferred to other industries. It is not to suggest that these conditions of seniority are transferable in their entirety. Whether or not seniority could be transferred to other industries depends on many things. If our economic affairs were arranged so that human psychological needs were given priority, an almost rigid system of seniority could well be introduced. Such an introduction would not necessarily interfere with efficiency in industry.

There may be reasonable grounds for questioning the weight that seniority should be given. This also applies to the assumption of equality. A man's view will be coloured by his fascination with efficiency or lack of it. Now it is granted that industry in North America has left a permanent mark on world economic history through many means, not the least of which is by being efficient. Efficiency, like all else, is destructive when carried to extremes. We have the time-motion study expert whose findings allow others to evolve methods that turn men into machines. That story was told clearly by Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*, wherein as a "comedy" he pointed up the ridiculous side of the matter. The tragic side is now common knowledge to the industrial psychologists. Some of us know of one or more of our fellows whose humanity is being eroded by some industrial process.

The reverse of the coin is the extreme of inefficiency displayed in government departments and industries where staffs become bureaucratic. Although there are notable exceptions, in general it is true that they leave much to be desired in terms of efficiency. Almost every citizen has at one time or another become fed up with the tangles of red tape and the buck-passing tactics of government bureaus. It may be that many foul-ups which have broad effects occur in privately controlled businesses. The type of control in those areas is such that the public does not become aware of the actual

situation. When such things occur in the government owned or dominated areas they are often the subject of official inquiries and the newspapers really have a ball. These factors may account for the widespread opinion that things get fouled up only when the government gets involved with production. It is probable that there are good grounds to question the ability of government agencies to operate an undertaking both scientifically and efficiently.

Whereas we North American people have come to have a high regard for efficiency, we have not lost our regard for humanness altogether. There are those among us who feel that if everything were "publicly owned" and we all "worked for the government," things would be different, humanness would take its rightful place along side efficiency. One way in which this theory may be tested is to examine the attitudes taken by those in charge of labor relations in government enterprise. When that test is made it is found that even where the old attitudes of private owners do not prevail, there is seldom if ever a fundamentally sound and workable compromise in operation. Here, in government-owned enterprise, that never-never land where the old ideas of industrial authority do not fit too well nor yet can be abandoned, the thoughts of the managers flow in one direction and then the other. The managers cannot seem to make up their minds whether the industry is to be managed through the use of authority from the top or whether much more weight should be given to authority from the bottom. An illustration of what I mean is to be found in the Enginemen's Press. 1 In an article dealing with the right (or lack of it) of the Canadian National Railways to eliminate terminals, commonly known as the "run-through" problem, the various currents of thought are to be seen.2

**Editors' note:** We examined every article of *Enginemen's Press* dealing with the problem of run-throughs in 1965 and were unable to find the source of the following quoted text. Unless otherwise stated the quotes are accurately reported from the hearings of the Industrial Inquiry Commission. See notes 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the following pages.

3, 4, 5 and 6 on the following pages.

\*Editors' note: A run-through is a case where a job is to run from terminal A to terminal B. If terminal B is eliminated, the train "runs through" to terminal C. The run-through problem developed after dieselization. Steam engine requirements for refuelling, water and train crew changes occurred about every 125 miles, and wages were based on a 100 mile trip. Diesels were faster and could travel through the division points. J. Lukasiewicz, The Railway Game (Toronto 1976), 103-4, 81n. When the CNR initiated a run-through at Nakina, Ontario 2,800 employees there and elsewhere booked sick 24 October 1964. The situation caused an Industrial Inquiry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, *Enginemen's Press*, 7, 13 (26 March 1965), 4.

The three main characters in this little skit are: Maurice Wright, attorney for three of the operating Brotherhoods, N.J. MacMillan, chief spokesman for the Canadian National Railway, and A.J. MacEachen, Federal Labour Minister. The question under discussion was whether or not a labour contract should be subject to alteration during its lifetime.

Without identifying the source of his thought, Mr. Wright said, "We may well have to come to the time when the law must be changed to permit collective bargaining to deal with manpower problems [during the life of the contract]." Mr. Wright was quoting Mr. MacEachen.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. MacMillan replied that whereas that might be a good idea in "industry generally" — "I do not think that the Canadian National in its dealings with its labor can be regarded as the same as similar situations existing throughout the country between management and labour."

Commission, headed by Mr. Justice Samuel Freedman, to be appointed, and hearings were set up across Canada in early 1965. The Enginemen's Press carried more than a dozen articles on the Commission, which released its report in December of 1965. The report "unequivocally denounced management's 'residual rights' theory ... [which] is premised on the allegation that management has the sole right to resolve ... any labor-management issue not specifically covered in a collective bargaining agreement." See Canada, Report of Industrial Inquiry Commission on Canadian National Railways "Run-Throughs." (Mr. Justice Samuel Freedman, Commissioner), (Ottawa 1965); anonymous, "Freedman Report Heralds 'Breakthrough' In Canadian Labor-Management Relations," Enginemen's Press, 7, 48 (17 December 1965), 1, 4-5. Management was successful nevertheless, for in the period just before Morgan's manuscript was completed (1957-63), employment declined by 35 per cent on Canadian railways.

**Bditors' note:** Mr. Wright quoted a part of the C.N. brief presented by Mr. MacMillan which stated: "Neither the Company nor the unions are obliged under current collective agreements to negotiate, during the period of a contract "terms or conditions of employment" in respect to employees covered by that contract...." (emphasis in original). Mr. Wright continued: "Well, that is what you said, this is the policy of Canadian National, and I am suggesting to you that it may well be that we have come to the point where collective bargaining may be made to cope with manpower problems if amendments were made to the labour relations and disputes legislation so that these problems could be dealt with which arise during the term of collective agreements." Canada, *Industrial Inquiry Commission Relating to C.N.R. "Run-Throughs."* Hearings held at Winnipeg, Vol. 31 (19 March 1965), 3975-5.

<sup>4</sup>Editors' note: Canada, Industrial Inquiry Commission Relating to C.N.R. "Run-Throughs." Hearings held at Winnipeg, Vol. 31 (19 March 1965), 3980-1.

The article notes that this statement by Mr. MacMillan was in direct contradiction to remarks made in the brief prepared on this subject by the C.N.R. The last paragraph of that brief, (presented by Mr. MacMillan), said:

One last point! C.N. is a publicly owned corporation. I would like to make it very clear that I do not think that this fact puts the C.N. in any different position whatsoever from a completely private corporation, in respect of its relations with its employees.<sup>5</sup>

So we see that on the one hand Mr. MacMillan says that the C.N. situation is *not similar* to that which exists in industry generally, and on the other hand Mr. MacMillan says that the C.N. is in a situation *exactly similar* to the situation that exists in industry generally. But two contradictory positions on who is the boss are not sufficient for Mr. MacMillan, for when he was questioned on who has the last word on technological changes he says:

The C.N. will endeavour to obtain the co-operation and assistance of the men in the solution of any problems which might arise of that nature. But if it cannot be resolved in the final result, it becomes the management's responsibility to determine it.  $^6$ 

It seems then that we have a choice as to which Mr. MacMillan we are to take seriously; the one who says that labour relations on the C.N. cannot be handled as they are in private industry; the one who reads from a brief which says that labour relations on the C.N. must be regarded in the same light as they are in private industry or; the one who says that whereas the men on the job should be allowed (and perhaps encouraged) to express their opinions, management must have the last say. Is it any wonder that the situation appears to be somewhat confused?

It is my contention that the major worry of the man on the job is not who owns the tools with which he makes a living; it is rather, what kind of a deal he is getting from those who are considered the

<sup>5</sup>Editors' note: Canada, Industrial Inquiry Commission Relating to C.N.R. "Run-Throughs." Hearings held at Winnipeg, Vol. 30 (18 March 1965), 3845. <sup>6</sup>Editors' note: MacMillan's exact words were recorded: "It is the policy of Canadian National in matters of this kind to endeavour to obtain the co-operation and assistance of the men in the solution of any problems which arise of that nature. But if it cannot be resolved in the final result, it becomes the management's responsibility to determine it." Canada, Industrial Inquiry Commission Relating to C.N.R. "Run-Throughs." Hearings held at Winnipeg, Vol. 31 (19 March 1965), 3916.

managers of those tools. It will depend on the circumstances of the moment whether or not a man who "works for the government" will be able to tell if he is getting a better, worse, or a somewhat similar deal from the government than he would in private industry. Sometimes it is almost impossible to tell the difference between the working conditions in private and government industry. Somewhere between the hard-driving, spirit-destroying work methods of modern mass production and the sometimes sloppy procedures in publicly-owned enterprises lies a reasonable balance. In my judgement, the running-trades have achieved this balance; certainly closely enough for practical purposes.

In the early days engineers were graded into classes according to alleged ability. However, after seniority had taken a central place in work agreements, this rating was abandoned. A strict seniority system can function only when there is an assumption of equality which allows for minor limitations.

There are very real factors about the job which naturally tend to make the workers think in terms of equality with each other. There are junior and senior examinations. Men who have written junior examinations are considered equal to each other. Likewise with the senior men. This "division-by-examination" has its limitations and it has been a very long time since conductors tried to lord it over the junior men. Everybody on the job knows that in a critical situation it is experience and savvy that count; that formal tickets (certificates of competence) do not replace know-how. Ability on the job is highly regarded by the men and this tends to greatly diminish, if not erase, the division caused by formal ranking.

Many, many years ago the term "mate" came into popular use on railways. This usage, as opposed to "helper," "junior" or other terms signifying a lesser position is part of a pattern that points up a general feeling of equality. Another, and perhaps the most outstanding factor is the fact that a man's pay is not calculated on the basis of his experience.

It is not possible to tell a railroader's rank on the crew by his dress, except for those in passenger service. This is never mentioned among the men but it too has a subtle effect. I well remember a conductor who consistently wore "good" clothes on the job. We called him "Cutie." There was also the engineer whose shirt was spotless and his tie correctly knotted. This did not escape general notice. In many different ways the men discourage their commanders from over-dressing.

Hard hats are becoming a very popular form of head-gear in many industries. Some firms use these useful objects in varying

colours so that the net effect is to set off the supervisory staff by means of distinctively-hued hats. This makes for uniformity in the large mass of the people in the plant. By itself it would be a small matter, but as one of a large number of items, all tending to make for sameness, it has a subtle effect.

As automatic devices continue their inroads toward control, the watch carried by each man becomes less important but is far from unimportant yet. Here is another subtle factor that helps to build a feeling of responsibility, importance and equality. A fundamental minimum of quality is required in the time-piece, but no other specifications have to be met. Recently most railroads have permitted the use of a high-quality wrist watch. In general, one man's watch is considered to be as good as the next man's, as far as function is concerned. The watch carried by each man is his personal possession. Periodic inspection by company appointed jewellers is required but such jewellers have no automatic right to perform repairs. The man is entirely responsible for the condition of his own watch. There is no hope of evading some responsibility through not knowing the time. Again, these are only minor items, but they help to build a feeling of oneness with mates and superiors in rank.

We have recently heard of many cases of what might be called "key-chainitis." It seems that the place some men occupy in the scheme of things can be determined by the keys they carry and the doors they can open with them. The railroaders are not separated into layers of importance by this means. They are all obliged to carry the key that is used to open switch-locks. In cases where railroads interchange with each other, some men carry a switch-lock key which is the property of the interchanging railroad. This is one of a number of minor factors that go toward building a feeling of interest in and connection with other roads and their running-trades workers. The only other key of any importance is the coach key often carried only by trainmen and conductors working steadily in passenger service. Extremely seldom if ever would an engineman find that key useful.

The immense advantage of rigid seniority-rights lies in four main directions. First, it is well known by all people that certain ones among them will use questionable means for advancement on the job. Second, seniority so applied provides a necessary ingredient for mental health. Third, a worker is free to "party" with any of his bosses. Fourth, and perhaps most important, he can be honest with his fellow-worker on the job.

The various means used to wangle advancement on the job are common knowledge. They range all the way from simple tongue-incheek over-friendliness to marrying the boss's daughter. The limits are set only by human ingenuity. Levenstein has remarked in his valuable study, Why People Work:

... in the race to get ahead, the broad shoulder and the bony elbow are no longer his principle instruments. The competition takes place more subtly through the tactical word, the ingratiating relationship with the foreman, the subtle conversation with his superiors at the office party, the wiles of one-upmanship. <sup>7</sup>

When seniority prevails to the extent that it does among railroaders, all the ingenuity in the world is of no avail. Your "number" gives you your "turn" and that is that with no "buts."

When seniority is applied as rigidly as it is on railways it provides a necessary ingredient of mental health, for within obvious limits, honest self-expression is a basic requirement of mental health. Through the seniority provisions a man is free to come to the job bringing with him his foulest temper or sunniest smile. The presence or absence of supervisors around any part of the place of work need not affect his real feelings of the moment. He need not hide his ugly temper nor his smile. He simply must not let either mood interfere with a reasonable performance of his duties.

Since preference jobs are obtained strictly by seniority, friendly association is not viewed with suspicion. Such associations might be suspect should a supervisory appointment be in the offing. On those occasions a "number" is of no value. Promotions of this sort are very few compared to the endless stream of jobs which go by seniority. There is no reason to suppose that a worker cannot feel a genuine attachment for a person in a supervisory rank. He can freely ignore their different stations, for all concerned know that his turn is his, regardless of personal attachments. This makes for an honest and human relationship between people on different industrial planes. Heron cautions against phony attitudes when he says:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Aaron Levenstein, Why People Work (New York 1962), 50. Professor Levenstein has had experience as a labor lawyer, editor, and management consultant. He is an Associate Professor at City College, New York and served for two decades as Directing Editor at the Research Institute of America.

 $\dots$  the acceptance of workers into the thinking partnership must never be artificial...  $^8$ 

All of us learn early the proper place of the "white lie." The honesty mentioned between man and man on the job provides room for sufficient colouring of the "truth" so that human feelings are not outraged. Man has not yet, and may never, develop sufficiently to allow his being told the bitter "truth" about himself at all times. Among railroaders it is well understood that beyond those normal limits of human patience, disagreement and criticism are to be expected.

The question of "what does seniority really mean" is a matter of constant debate among the railroaders. Richardson notes:

The New Jersey Central agreement of 1876 was typical of seniority clauses governing promotion and demotion ....

## It read thus:

The oldest engineers in the service of the Company [are] to have the preference of engines and trains when competent and worthy, and in case of a surplus, the oldest in service [are] to have the preference of work.

The two basic parts of seniority are outlined in that agreement. One, preference of jobs when they are available and two, preference of having some job as opposed to none when jobs are few.

Some railroaders say that seniority should mean an exclusive right to the pick of the jobs as well as an exclusive right to all available work even during slack periods. Others say that whereas seniority must entitle senior men to a job in slack periods, it isn't fair that the senior men should always work the best jobs when there is plenty of employment.

Dr. Cottrell notes:

In most trades and professions it is generally true that the older men have the best jobs; in engine service this is a rule without exception.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Alexander R. Heron, *Why Men Work* (Palo Alto 1948), 194. Mr. Heron has held several positions, including Vice-President and Director of Industrial Relations, Crown Zellerbach Corporation; Director of Industrial Relations, Rayonier, Incorporated; Consulting Professor of Industrial Relations, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Colonel in the U.S. Army, with the title of Chief of Civilian Personnel.

<sup>9</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 228.

Progress from run to run is secured through "bumping." Whenever a new man is scheduled, a new job bulletined, or a man is removed from service, a whole series of "bumps" follows. Any qualified person may bid for the job, and the bidder with the longest record of service gets it. In turn his job is opened for "bids," and this continues until stability is reached. <sup>10</sup>

The best jobs are usually those that entail day work and/or that are scheduled runs. It is also held that a properly applied seniority system should mean that a man must work in the most senior capacity for which he is considered qualified. Others maintain that though a man may be qualified for more senior work he should be able to take the job that suits him best even if it is in a junior capacity. In years gone by the railway companies rather leaned toward the latter view and permitted the men to "pass up their rights." In other words, a man did not have to become a conductor or an engineman but could remain as a permanent trainman, switchman or fireman. Today the general practice is to force a man to become qualified even though he may seldom work in the senior capacity. The introduction of regular holiday periods for the running-trades workers encouraged the companies to insist on this up-grading of qualification; present-day holiday schedules sometimes cause pronounced shortages in the ranks of the more experienced men and of course the companies have to fill the gaps as best they may. Mr. A.K. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, A.T.&S.F., San Bernadino, Calif., described to the Meeting the methods used where he is employed:

Each [running-trades] employee has two opportunities to pass that promotion. He is not privileged to pass it up. He must take it. If he fails a second time he is out of service. 11

Whether he will be forced to actually work in a senior capacity or not will depend on the various agreements arranged between the Brotherhoods and the companies. Regardless of a particular man's view on what seniority should really mean, his view does not question the assumption of equality in ability.

In general in North America today, the various provisions of the collective agreements are arranged so that now here, now there, one or the other opinion about seniority is given the lead. Sometimes the matter is handled on a very localized basis and the men deal with it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 16. **Editors' note:** See also note 21, on p. 72. <sup>11</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 292.

to suit their particular group. The assumption of equality on the job keeps the companies out of the matter for as long as the job is manned, it is usually of little consequence to the companies who mans it.

Those who support either school of thought in reference to what seniority really means, can produce valid arguments to back up their contentions. The "older" men say: "Well, and why should not the long years at the poorer jobs be compensated for by a much smaller number of years of steady work at the better jobs."

The "younger" men reply: "It isn't fair."

A very notable thing about this continuing difference of opinion is that as the "younger" men gradually get to be the "older" men, their viewpoint on the matter changes. A simple and perhaps attractive answer as to why the viewpoint tends to change is to chalk it up to a developing selfishness. Selfishness may very well be the major factor in this altering outlook but it is worthwhile to examine other elements of the situation which have a bearing on it. For instance, the younger men have not lived out the long years in a trade where seniority is the golden rule. They have not experienced the many good runs which came their way because they had a "good number."12 They have not come to appreciate as fully as the older men do, the advantage of not having to buck some smooth operator's line, the advantage of knowing that no-one can talk their way into a better job. They have not experienced the feeling of security from unemployment which the older men enjoy. Some of the younger men feel that perhaps it would be better if they were allowed to move up on their own hook. Such a feeling is natural enough in a young. virile and ambitious man. Impatience wears well on youth but when the "snow shows on the roof" and the swelling urge to make a mark has somewhat subsided, the impatience shows the wear and tear of the years. At that point seniority and the "rights" it carries sits very well. At that point it is very comforting to know that a reasonably competent performance on the job guarantees security. Younger men are naturally inclined to gamble with their means of livelihood but the men who have been through the mill are not. The reason the older men cling so tightly to the better jobs becomes more clear as a man's seniority increases. Seniority has such a firm footing and has been the rigid rule for so long that the senior men can truly say. and with some justice: "I went through it young feller, and you'll just have to." Certainly there is envy of the men who work the better jobs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Editors' note: A seniority number comes from the numbered list of workers bidding for jobs. A good number means one has worked for a number of years and can get better runs.

and lots of grumbling, much of it very outspoken, but when they get right down to brass tacks, ninety-nine percent (or more) of the men would not give up the seniority rule. By and large, and in cooler moments of reflection, it is held to be very, very fair and there is much comfort taken in the fact that it cannot be manoeuvered to suit any one person. When full democracy exists, man's standard of living will not be coupled to employment. In other words man will have chosen to operate his whole society on a basis of priority for human needs. In such conditions, those who claim that seniority entitles a man to some sort of a job will not be concerned with the monetary reward of work as they are today.

When men take certain jobs in line with the thought that seniority entitles them to the best job, it does not always suit management. Mr. Hall of the Frisco R. R. expressed some dissatisfaction when he told the convention that:

Our trouble now is that all of the new men are on the night jobs. The old heads took all the day jobs. The night foremen left their jobs [for day work as helpers]. <sup>13</sup>

Shift differential pay is extremely rare in railway running-trades work and the men referred to in the quotation above would feel that even though they had demoted themselves to helpers, they had promoted themselves in the sense that although they were working for slightly less pay, they at least worked in the daytime.

It is well to remember that in time, work will be far less tiresome than it is today. For instance, as the production of shoddy goods decreases, the need for transport will also decrease and night runs will become less frequent. With more and more automatic trains, the need for night workers on railways, as well as in the vast majority of industries, will decrease. In time, with day work the rule instead of the exception, debate over whether the senior man should claim the very best could very well continue but become less sharp.

The very rare exceptions to seniority provisions occur when certain men are selected to handle trains on which V.I.P.'s are to ride. The railway company concerned, interested in prestige, sometimes selects the men who in their opinion are the best. In modern times their fitness has to get by the security risk barrier for they could be momentarily in a sensitive job. Under these circumstances a man may be "run around," that is, he may lose his turn. First by unwritten mutual understanding and later drafted into collective agreements, these run-arounds did not subject the companies to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 69.

penalty pay. Perhaps a man lost his turn but the occasions were so few that the matter was held to be of no account.

It is standard practice to make some re-arrangement of work schedules not less than twice a year. This is known as "change of card." The expression derives from the fact that sometimes at those twice-yearly intervals, the railway issues a new time-card (timetable). Prior to its being issued, a series of meetings is sometimes held at which the Brotherhood men present their views on the proposed changes. Very seldom is any change made in a hurried fashion. Plenty of notice is given and sometimes a protest against a proposal by management is effective and results in a withdrawal of the proposal. As is the case in other industry, the whole atmosphere is one of general distrust. However there is also a feeling of give and take. There is no question as to who is the winner in the long run. Though management consults the men much more than is generally done, they usually have their way in the last analysis.

At change of card, all jobs go up for bid. Since the time and day a train is scheduled for operation is an important work condition, jobs on certain trains become preference jobs. The recognition of seniority provides an opportunity for the men to express their preference in work.

The most senior man has the most complete choice. The junior man has few, if any, choices. All those in between have choices directly related to the value of their seniority number. Two changes of card per year at approximate six-month intervals are not uncommon. Sometimes a seasonal pattern emerges, roughly summer and winter jobs. It is easy to see how a man may feel that he is not tied to a particular job for an overly-long period. Normally he can renew his application and bid back to the same job but his fancy and the value of his seniority number are his main guides. Through a machinery traditionally operated by company and Brotherhoods, jobs are awarded strictly according to seniority.

The assumption of equality of ability is relied upon. The company may be disappointed in the results of the bidding, for there is a natural difference in ability. The bid is fully and finally effective once the job is awarded.

The companies retain the very-seldom-used right to restrict a man's category of service. Perhaps the best way to put it would be to say that when a man has clearly demonstrated that he is unable to handle his assignment, the companies are forced to restrict him to a lesser function. As part of his address on discipline Mr. Wolfe said:

An example would be the restriction to yard service of an engineer who had failed to operate successfully in road service. 14

A man may have "failed" in the sense that his health did not permit him to keep up the pace. Or he may have failed in the sense that it becomes very obvious to all concerned that, if he is allowed to remain where he is, a mishap is sure to occur. Or he may have failed in the sense that he has already had too many mishaps and everybody will feel safer if he is restricted. Restrictions are usually regarded as temporary measures. The Brotherhoods sometimes feel that the restriction imposed is not justified and the methods of counter-action they use are discussed elsewhere.

Though all jobs have a clear resemblance, there are sufficient differences to make a six-month tour something that can be endured if necessary. It is not always necessary for there are almost endless vacancies occurring on the various jobs. Many different arrangements are made between the men themselves as to how these jobs are to be manned.

Sometimes a man is absent from his job for a sufficiently long period of time to consider his job as one which is vacant. Sometimes a new job is created or a job is pulled off in response to traffic patterns. The net result is a constant re-shuffling of jobs because the senior man who wants it takes the newly created job. Alternatively, if the job he was working has been pulled off, a man bumps someone junior to himself. The only man who cannot be bumped is the senior man on any list. It always "looks like" a man will hold this or that job, but a bump is never necessarily very far away.

A man may be absent from the job at the time when bidding takes place for change of card. On his return he can take any job his seniority number will let him hold within the confines of agreements which are often made locally. When he does this, the man he has bumped can in turn bump someone else and the net result is a chain reaction. Richardson describes the process:

Whenever a reduction in the work force is necessary because of a decline in business, the seniority rule works in reverse. Engineers with higher seniority bump engineers with lower seniority. This procedure follows right down to the extra board. Engineers who then do not have enough seniority to remain on the extra board exercise their firemen's seniority, and the process of bumping continues through the ranks of the firemen 15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 73. <sup>15</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 85.

A further advantage for railroaders is the ability to take certain work and leave other work with a relative amount of freedom. This freedom makes it possible to raise his income during certain periods in order to have a backlog to tide him over other periods when he does not desire to work at all. He can also choose to select the level of average monthly income and take some job that pays approximately that amount. He can choose day work or night work to suit personal needs at certain times. Of course this movement from job to job will hinge on the value of his seniority number. Richardson observed the use to which this freedom is put:

... many engineers may not utilize [seniority] completely .... Such considerations as regular hours, being close to home, and conditions of the job cause some to pass up higher paying positions. <sup>16</sup>

In most industries a man may apply for a transfer to another department. His request may or may not be effective. In any case he will likely be interviewed by some supervisor. The supervisor will want to know why the transfer has been requested and this may bring quarrels, which workers like to keep to themselves, into the open. All this is overcome by the freedom of seniority bidding. A railroader ASKS no-one for a particular job he can hold. He TAKES it and there is no investigation, argument or refusal. In speaking of promotion to better jobs, starting at the extra (spare) board through to passenger service, Richardson describes the freedom in the following words:

However, the actual course of promotion was a function of the likes and dislikes of the engineer the same as it is today.  $^{17}$ 

In general the companies are simply made aware, by means of written notice, of the endless changes taking place via the myriad methods of filling vacancies. To quote Richardson again:

These rules [for filling vacancies] vary greatly in numbers and complexity from one railroad to another, making a detailed description difficult and unrewarding. 18

He returns to this point in a later chapter:

**Editors' note:** The extra board is a list of workers who may be called to work on a temporary vacancy, for instance if a crew member books off sick. <sup>16</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 353.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 85.

Between 1887 and World War I, this principle [seniority] was not modified; .... There was considerable variation among the rules on the exact manner in which the bumping was to take place. <sup>19</sup>

These methods are a source of endless argument between the men but the work gets done. Allowance is made in that statement for those railroads that have achieved an almost totally stable pattern of filling vacancies. Except for demanding the right to a man, the companies normally keep clear of this business altogether. They rely on the assumption of equality to obtain the service they want.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 354.

## **Authority**

THE COMPANIES recognize the authority which goes with a job, without regard to who is manning it. A junior man could face a hostile official if he were to refuse a reasonable command of a yard or road conductor or engineman. These three men enjoy an authority supported from two directions; first by the common agreement among all the men that authority based on seniority shall prevail, and second, the concurrence of the company that this shall be the way it is to be.

What takes place in theory and practice often differs. The awarding of the job to a given man by joint consent of men and management does not necessarily mean that the man gives all or even a majority of the orders that have to be given in carrying out the work. Rather it means that if officials want to ask questions, it is to these men that they turn first. Mr. Craven¹ outlines one of the problems in connection with the authority of a conductor; in referring to failure of train conductors to properly supervise the work of their crews he says:

I am sure we will all agree that a conductor who is incapable of taking complete command of his crew is a menace, regardless of how reliable the other crew members may be.<sup>2</sup>

The conductor who swings his weight around is an unpopular fellow indeed. On any job, when the foreman's own importance is his first consideration, his value to his fellow-workers falls. Egotistic behaviour can be expressed by both senior and junior conductors. Senior conductors often pay for their conduct by putting up with less competent mates. No-one wants to work with such a conductor. Though the senior trainmen could hold the better jobs, they pass up the advantages which their seniority affords them in order to avoid working with the unpopular man. The junior men may be forced onto the job or may bid it in order to work a better run despite the handicaps presented by an ego-bound conductor. In such cases the advantages of a preference run outweigh the disadvantages of the conductor's personality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>**Editors' note:** R. A. Craven, Superintendent, C.N., Port Arthur, Ontario. <sup>2</sup>*Proceedings — Convention*, 103-4.

Conductors with less seniority have less choice in jobs as conductors. If self-importance blinds their judgement, the burden of maintaining calm and caution falls to a more level-headed trainman on the crew or to a usually older engineman. Be he junior or senior, the best that kind of conductor can hope for is competent mates who may shun him as far as possible while on the job. This is difficult in freight service for all three men usually use the same caboose. With its limited facilities for common needs such as cooking, etc., the atmosphere is anything but pleasant. If he is extremely lucky he will get mates who can stand his childish ranting and go about their work as though he barely existed. In the caboose they simply jolly him along with a great deal of tolerance. The actuality of the case is that whereas a conductor's bid may give him a job that has prestige, in practice he does not necessarily wield the actual on-going, ever present authority. It can very well, and often does, mean that whereas title to power is held by a given man, wielding of power is awarded by him to a junior. It is not a complete surrender. It cannot be such, for the self-elected commander has to remember that the officials will come to him first. He is hardly in a position to say, "I don't know." The process resembles one in which, while there is an official government, those governed are not without power. If smooth operation demands it, trainmen and yardmen can, and do, pressure their official power-holders into surrendering sufficient authority to a junior so that the work goes well. Much will depend on the ego of the official commander. Most workers do not dare disobey their foreman; the railroader is under no such disadvantage. Many factors, including the rules which are part of his working conditions, put him in this position.

The conductor has another factor to consider as well as what the crew wants. It is part of his duties to be constantly involved in "bringing up" his juniors. School is always open and the relationship almost resembles that of the ordinary school. The pupil may quite readily reach and pass the ability of the teacher. In discussing the difference between kinds of authority, for instance, the difference between RATIONAL authority and one which may be described as INHIBITING, or irrational authority, Dr. Erich Fromm says:

An example will show what I have in mind. The relationship between the teacher and the student and that between slave owner and slave are both based on the superiority of one over the other. The interests of teacher and pupil lie in the same direction. The teacher is satisfied if he succeeds in furthering the pupil; if he has failed to do so, the failure is his and the pupil's. The slave owner, on the other hand, wants to exploit the slave as much as possible; the more he gets out

of him, the more he is satisfied. At the same time, the slave seeks to defend as best he can his claim for a minimum of happiness. These interests are definitely antagonistic, as what is of advantage to the one is detrimental to the other. The superiority has a different function in both cases: in the first, it is the condition for helping of the person subjected to the authority; in the second, it is the condition for his exploitation.

The dynamics of authority in these two types are different too: the more a student learns, the less wide is the gap between him and the teacher. He becomes more and more like the teacher himself. In other words, the rational authority tends to dissolve itself. But when the superiority serves as a basis for exploitation, the distance becomes intensified through its long duration. The psychological situation is different in each of these authority situations. In the first, elements of love, admiration, or gratitude are prevalent. The authority is at the same time an example with which one wants to identify one's self partially or totally. In the second situation, resentment or hostility will arise against the exploiter, subordination to whom is against one's own interests. But often, as in the case of a slave, his hatred would only lead to conflicts which would subject the slave to suffering without a chance of winning. Therefore, the tendency will usually be to repress the feeling of hatred and sometimes even to replace it by a feeling of blind admiration. This has two functions: (1) to remove the painful and dangerous feeling of hatred, and (2) to soften the feeling of humiliation. If the person who rules over me is so wonderful or perfect, then I should not be ashamed of obeying him. I cannot be his equal because he is so much stronger, wiser, better, and so on, than I am. As a result, in the inhibiting kind of authority, the element either of hatred or of irrational overestimation and admiration of the authority will tend to increase. In the rational kind of authority, the strength of the emotional ties will tend to decrease in direct proportion to the degree in which the person subjected to the authority becomes stronger and thereby more similar to the authority.

The differences between rational and inhibiting authority is only a relative one. Even in the relationship between the slave and the master there are elements of advantage to the slave. He gets a minimum of food and protection which at least enables him to work for his master. On the other hand, it is only in an ideal relationship between teacher and student that we find a complete lack of antagonism of interests. There are many graduations between these two extreme cases, as in the relationship of a factory worker with his boss, or a farmer's son with his father, or a "hausfrau" with her husband. Nevertheless, although in reality the two types of authority are blended, they are essentially different, and an analysis of a concrete authority situation must always determine the specific weight of each kind of authority.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Dr. Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (New York 1955), 96-7.

An ideal situation would enable a crew to directly and openly elect their commander for each trip. They are certainly well qualified to do so. Mr. M.A. Nugent, Superintendent of Safety, S.P.R.R., San Francisco, affirms this when he tells the Meeting that:

The yardmen recognize the ability and initiative of these young [yard conductors],  $\dots^4$ 

Mr. Nugent restricts his remarks to switchmen and refers only to "young engine foreman [yard conductors]" whom he has already spotted as those with abilities to become yardmasters. I do not know that he would care to extend his remarks to include trainmen being able to "recognise the ability" of road conductors, particularly if he had not had the opportunity to size up the conductors I have in mind for promotion. It is my opinion, however, that any switchman or trainman worth the powder knows whether his foreman or conductor savvys or not, and this applies whether or not the foreman or conductor has the ability to become a yardmaster or official. Life not being ideal, the railroaders have arranged the next best thing to electing their commander for each trip. They elect, through the bidding process, to work with a certain conductor for a period (normally) of six months and then make the best possible arrangements within the limits thereof. A job may have many attractions for any one man. He has to judge whether or not these attractions can overcome the sometimes unattractive command atmosphere.

If the self-elected, official commander is ego-bound he will retain the greatest possible portion of command for himself. "I raise my hand and a hundred cars start to roll." An ego-bound conductor will be slow rather than quick to notice that one of the cars is derailed or that the whole hundred are rolling on the wrong track or in the wrong direction. An engineman's ego needs watching also. Part of his duties is the proper handling of train orders. Mr. Craven tell of an accident:

... due to the engineman simply telling the other men on the engine what the order contained after having misread it himself.<sup>5</sup>

The seniority provisions can sometimes put a man who usually works as a yard conductor in charge of a passenger train or freight train, or vice versa. His right to command is unchallenged but his abilities have a clear cut effect on the work pattern. This is so well

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Proceedinas — Meetina, 285.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 102.

understood by the men that errors are expected and counteracted as quickly and fully as possible. If the commander's ego is not subject to shrinkage, trouble ensues. The natural solidarity among the men keeps the matter from the hands of the officials if it is at all possible but they will undoubtedly know of it. Compromise is usually worked out among the men.

Now the results of these "job selections" seldom please everyone. If the arrangements on the crew cannot be worked out to a man's satisfaction he can often arrange to bid off the crew and so escape the situation. In other words, he self-selects himself into a circumstance where a self-elected commander is more to his liking.

To clarify the point, let us imagine the following situation. Suppose there were a people who, as a whole population, could move freely from country to country. Suppose they elected a government and then found it not to their liking. Further suppose that they could simply move off to another country where the rulership would be more acceptable. True, they would not have removed a government from office but they would have successfully removed themselves from their source of annoyance. In the case of the railroader, the "government" left behind has its own troubles for its new "people" have disadvantages from the ruler's point of view. The disadvantages connected with supervising a series of green men who are forced to man the job through lack of seniority are obvious. Even if experienced men come on the job the situation is not much improved for they barely (and even sometimes rarely) bother to disguise a dislike of the conductor.

Naturally, the better number a man has the more freedom there is for him in this process. Though the process is involved, it is in actuality, a "left-handed" election of foremen on the job. There is always much speculation at change of card as to who will bid which job. In the back of each man's mind, if not on his tongue, are thoughts of who he will have to work with. This is often a major consideration in bidding. There is a rather subdued air of excitement just before the awards are announced for no one knows for sure what the other men bid until the bids are opened, tallied, and announced.

There is a certain basic similarity of arrangements on all of the railroads but it is rather vague. There are even roads where the craft union is ignored temporarily or permanently and a man could be a

<sup>6</sup>**Editors' note:** Once holding a job, one must work it, until a vacancy occurs. So, a person working with mates who are not agreeable will wait a chance and, as soon as a vacancy occurs (maybe for holiday reasons), "bid off" the crew onto the vacancy.

trainman one day, run a locomotive the next, and reverse again the following day. There are few such roads at present but their numbers may become larger.

As discussed elsewhere, there are barriers against immediate discharge. An illustration of one of those barriers is quoted in personal correspondence with Mr. Hanson, Vice-President, Labour Relations, Union Pacific Railroad. According to Mr. Hanson the U.P.R.R. and the B. of L.E. (representing engine service employees in the "territory Salt Lake City-Butte and Granger-Huntington") have agreed to phrase part of the discipline section of their agreement as follows:

Discipline and Hearings. No engineer will be dismissed or, except as provided in Section (b), have discipline assessed against his personal record without first having a fair and impartial hearing and his guilt established.<sup>7</sup>

Further excerpts from Mr. Wolfe's address shed more light on this topic:

... a consistent policy governing discipline, is predicated upon the theory that present-day railroad officers are fully conscious of the necessity of conducting fair and impartial investigations that will stand the test of review before one or the other divisions of the National Railway Adjustment Board.

They must know that, irrespective of the existing policy, and regardless of the certainty of the guilt of an employe charged with transgression of the rules, if an incurable procedural defect appears in the record, there is a strong likelihood that the management's action will be reversed and the employe will be restored to service with seniority rights unimpaired and probably with pay for all time lost. 8

The reasonable and logical conclusion in the mind of each railroader is that he need not be in terror of the phrase: "go and get your time." The relative security the railroader enjoys does much to colour his personality and his attitude toward the job. He soon learns that, "it is usually the man who fires himself." Mr. M.M. Kirkman, in his book Operating Trains, quotes a President of the American Association of Railroad Superintendents:

<sup>8</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>A. D. Hanson, Vice-President, Labor Relations, U. P. R. R., in a letter to the author, 27 November 1964.

 $\dots$  the offender is gradually but surely working out his dismissal from the service without any agency outside of himself.  $^9$ 

Each man learns that there are maximums of tolerance on the part of his mates and management and that reasonable effort on his part will afford him far more security than is usually found in industry.

This security however is still lacking a certain quality to make it complete. Assume that a man has a seniority number roughly in the middle of the enginemen's list or one-third from the bottom of a trainmen's list. He then knows that, should the number of jobs be cut in half, he will still hang on, though he be perhaps the last man. In time though, there may be just no job and he will have to wait for a recall to service, as would all those who had even less seniority. Many men waited from 1929 to 1939 for such a call. Many men have given up what would normally be called good jobs to return to a poor choice of running-trades work. A recent news report, datelined Washington, D.C., states that 15,000 locomotive firemen have already been eliminated as a result of Arbitration Award No. 282 and that a further 6,000 are expected to be taken off the job. As a matter of speculation it will be interesting to see how many of these men will attempt to re-hire onto the railways as engineers if and when the companies require more engineers. 10

It appears that there is a quality of some sort, lacking in many other occupations, that calls a man back after long periods of absence. Committee No. 2 thought that this aspect of railroading

<sup>9</sup>Marshall M. Kirkman, Operating Trains: Train Service (New York 1903), Vol. 4, 30.

10 Editors' note: There is no citation for the news report in the original manuscript. U. S. Arbitration Award No. 282 arose from the dispute as to whether or not enginemen's helpers (firemen) were required on freight and yard service. The Board decided that they were not required, and in so deciding, handed down a decision much like that of the Kellock Commission in Canada (see note 31 on p. 78). See United States, National Mediation Board (National Railroad Adjustment Board), Thirteenth Annual Report of the National Mediation Board, including The Report of the National Railroad Adjustment Board For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1964 (Washington, DC 1964), 15-8. For a brief description of the events leading up to the decision of the Arbitration Board, see W. Fred Cottrell, Technological Change and Labor in the Railroad Industry, (Lexington 1970), 132-5. The Brotherhoods fought the elimination of firemen and even after the decision was made, they continued to publicize the costs in accidents in the Enginemen's Press. See for example, anonymous, "What Happened when Locomotive Helpers-Firemen were forced off their jobs..." Enginemen's Press 7, 19 (7 May 1965), 2-3.

was worthy of comment, for the report it made to the Convention read in part:

Railroading as an occupation tends to be more satisfying socially than most industrial occupations, particularly those concerned with mass production.  $^{11}$ 

One often hears that after so many years of railroading a man is good for nothing else. Apparently Professor Richardson felt that this is an important point for he said:

As an aid in understanding the engineer and his actions throughout history, the expression, "once a railroad man, always a railroad man," cannot be too strongly emphasized.  $^{12}$ 

So it would seem.

The typical railroader behaves like a free man on the job, even though he may never talk about it or think about why this is so. He may never think of some of his actions as "extensions of human freedom" but he often strains the limits of his acknowledged rights. Very seldom does one hear a railroader telling anyone how free a man he is in relation to others who work for wages. It is difficult to say just why this is so. It may be for lack of wide experience in other industries. Maybe he never faced the punch clock morning and night. It may be because he feels it almost impossible to discuss his work fully with non-railroaders. Richardson observes:

 $\dots$  [the engineer] is likewise an individual who has developed a feeling of separateness from the community and a strong loyalty for the industry, built up because of the nature of his work.  $^{13}$ 

Command in and over the running-trades is a delicate matter. All those who have command have, in the back of their minds, the provisions of the rules and the independent spirits they are trying to control. Opposition to command can sometimes result in threats. By traditional agreement officials may not openly threaten to fire a man. It is indeed seldom that threats are heard. Nobody likes to use ineffective tools and threats are usually laughed off. Quick and lasting discipline is very hard to apply in the running-trades and the commanders never forget it. When instructions from conductors are required they come in the form of semi-fluid suggestion. The con-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 42.

ductor knows that a suggestion made by the junior man may well be the one that gives the best results. In the vast majority of cases the conductor's suggestions are carried out. This is so because it is acknowledged that the suggestion is something that will help to achieve a common, understood end. If the crew are all very experienced men, the commander knows that an inefficient move will be spotted immediately and that he can expect opposition. It will not necessarily be open or effective but it will be there. No matter where the command comes from it is tested for reasonability by the commanded man. His personality will determine what he does in the long run. There is no fear involved in this chain of command for each man knows what is ideally expected of him. No two men will agree exactly as to what this is but there is enough common agreement to serve the practical purpose. Commanders in and over the running-trades neither roar (except for phony effect) nor expect anyone to jump. There is a two-way flow of mutual respect between commanders and men. All concerned know that it is best to have it sound and look like the real thing for the sake of human relations.

Technically speaking all work must be done in obedience to a conductor's wishes *providing* the rules are observed. However in practice the actual command seems to hover in the air, assumed now by one, now by another. Mr. Craven illustrates the point. He says that sometimes enginemen take orders which restrict the movement of the train without first talking to the conductor. This (and other circumstances)

... put more discretion in the hands of the engineman and have had a tendency to cause the conductor to simply depend on the men on the head end to find out where they are going and why .... but I do believe we must still insist on the conductor being the boss. <sup>14</sup>

I feel that Mr. Craven does not intend to use the word "boss" in its usual sense. I am sure that he and all other supervisors know that neither they nor a conductor nor *anyone else* has any means of making an engineer obey *unreasonable* instruction.

At times command is assumed by one or both men in the engine who are aware of something that forbids obedience to a certain signal. A conductor who cannot adjust to these practical facts is in a constant state of disagreement with himself and others. In the ideal situation, a degree of trust develops between all members of the crew, which trust, however, is under constant review. The trust is healthy and not blind.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 116.

To summarize this section on authority, perhaps it would be best to say that in the vast majority of circumstances that relate to running-trades control, command must take into consideration the provisions of the rule book. There are many railroaders who consider that the rule which reads, "In case of doubt or uncertainty, the safe course must be taken" as the most important rule in the book. The "safe course" must be determined by each man in the light of his own judgement. Richardson tells the story of how Charles Minot, General Superintendent of the Erie R. R. tried to make an engineman leave a previously fixed meeting point after Minot had arranged by wire to have the meet changed:

 $\dots$  the engineer declined to have anything to do with the new-fangled approach,  $\dots$  holding strictly to his prior instructions  $\dots^{15}$ 

Even as far back as 1903, Kirkman, a man obviously sympathetic with management, notes:

The surveillance [by company officers] is not offensive, however. 16

If we consider the change in worker-management attitudes towards each other which has occurred since 1903, it must be admitted that if the overseeing was considered "not offensive" in those days it might greatly resemble that which is considered more or less normal throughout industry today. If this is so it would seem that railroaders had, by 1903, obtained a respect from their employers which other workers are only now getting.<sup>17</sup>

The outstanding feature of the railroader's attitude toward authority is the depth of his opposition to it unless it is clearly and unquestionably based on reason. This attitude is becoming more common among many workers, however the railroader is in a far better position to do something about unreasonable orders. This has its roots in the whole tradition of railroading. Rather that being a new-found freedom, it has always permeated the whole atmosphere of the job, except for a relatively short period at the beginning of the trade. The railroader is still able to freely express his opposition to overbearing supervision and make his objection stick. By 1907 this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Kirkman, Operating Trains, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>**Editors' note:** Morgan is referring here to the fact that the railroads were among the first to unionize in North America and were able to develop job rules over a long period of time. See Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, passim.

type of notation was starting to appear in the records of railroad history:

Thus was the autocratic master mechanic of the early days duly shorn of his unbridled authority, and his decline in prestige naturally followed. Of course, he is still with us, but the refining effect of wholesome restriction has made of him a safe and sane officer who discharges his duties usually in a manner consistent with the rules and regulations framed for his guidance, and even in cases where his individual judgement is called upon he exercises the most conservative judgement, for he has learned that peace is highly essential to the successful management of his department .... <sup>18</sup>

The ability to be able to freely express opposition colours the whole personality of the railroader. He feels quite capable of assuming the whole burden of responsibility placed in him. He feels that no-one has the unquestioned right to withhold a certain respect. The result of this attitude is that all authority wielded over him must be well padded. The job calls for a delicate balance between cockiness and caution. Those who cannot develop this balance are not much good on the job. All railroaders have long since developed the attitude that close supervision of each and every move is undesirable. For them tyranny, even of the mildest sort, is absolutely intolerable. Dr. Cottrell's remarks on the modification of the authority structure on railways illustrates this point:

Petty domination by foremen, characteristic of many industries, is reduced to a minimum. <sup>19</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Anonymous, "The Old Time Master Mechanic" *The [Locomotive Engineers' Monthly] Journal*, 41, 1 (January 1907), 117.

<sup>19</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 19.

## "Safety First"

DECISIONS MADE BYTHOSE in higher authority on railroads are affected by a market economy and its need for profit. Mr. P.M. Shoemaker, Vice-President, D.L.&W., New York, is aware of this for he says:

None of us should ever be ashamed to talk of profit. That is why we are in business. 1

The pressure which those in higher authority try to exert is limited in part by the rule book. This book came into being as a necessary part of railway operation as it is conducted in North America. Of the early years of railroading on this continent Richardson says:

Even though operating conditions were relatively simple ... the very nature of railroading (employees not under the direct supervision of management, [etc.]) required some rules ....

The first train rules were very crude and full of loopholes, ....<sup>2</sup>

In the light of the bitter experiences of the day it was clearly necessary to broaden the scope of train rules.

In the early days the work was considered so dangerous that help was hard to get. Mr. Uhl's investigations led him to discover the following passage:

Harper's Weekly on June 30, 1858, caustically observed: "The railroads are insatiable. Boilers are bursting all over the country — railroad bridges are breaking and rails snapping — human life is sadly squandered — but nobody is to blame. Boilers burst themselves. Rails break themselves. And it may be questioned whether the consequent slaughter of men, women, and children is not really suicide." 3

Richardson draws our attention to another condition:

To this was added, by the 1850's, the not infrequent reluctance of the railroad officials to maintain their lines in proper repair. Emphasis in the period of railroad development was all too often placed upon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Uhl. Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 31.

expanding the miles of line owned by the railroad rather than maintenance of equipment and road already in use. [emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

### He goes on to say:

This [hazardous] condition not only evoked public disapproval of the laxity of railroad management, but also was an influential environment force in the development of attitudes among operating employees which were to have immediate bearing on both the type of unionism and the types of protective rules they were to espouse.<sup>5</sup>

Insurance rates were so high that in time some of the Brother-hoods incorporated insurance into the benefits they provided to the men. In fact, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen sprang from an organization of policy-holders. This is borne out by Uhl's notation:

Yet deep as was the dissatisfaction of railroad workers with low wages, long hours and working conditions, early railroad unions chiefly came into existence "as benevolent associations formed by the workers to protect themselves and their families because it was difficult for them to secure acceptance by the regular insurance companies on account of the hazards of their calling." Thus the earliest unions were called Brotherhoods or Orders — names which they still bear. 6

We also have the testimony of an individual running-trades man on how the danger factor of his job affected his chances of getting insurance in 1867. A letter appearing in *The Journal*:

I did not receive a policy simply because I was a Locomotive Engineer, which they classed as "extra hazardous." 7

**Editors' note:** Formed in 1873, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen did not take on a trade union position until Eugene V. Debs gained a leadership role in the organization. See Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton 1983), 240ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 30.

J.C.P., The [Locomotive Engineers' Monthly] Journal, 2, 6 (June 1868), 164.

## Rules, Supervision and Promotion-1

IT WAS SOON SEEN that standard rules for train and yard movements were an utter necessity and they began to be compiled. Kirkman, writing in 1903, says:

 $\dots$  an effective code of train rules is being evolved. It is not yet complete.  $^{1}$ 

The process continues to this day. Although there have been many changes, the hard-core rules have been there since the beginning:

Although alterations have been made in the Standard Code of 1887, its essential details do not vary from those of the present day....<sup>2</sup>

The main changes have been the result of modern electronic devices of one sort or another.

It has been said that each rule came into being as a result of the loss of one or more lives from accident. It may very well be true. When the rule book is compared with books covering the use of vehicles on highways, it is found that there is much in common from the point of view that each appears to be a list of common sense items. Some rules are completely arbitrary for both highway and railway use, for example, driving on the left or right hand side of the highway or the carrying of green flags and green lights on locomotives when required. The fact that the rule is quite arbitrary does not annoy the railroader any more than the arbitrariness of the highway rule annoys the motorist.

Almost from the beginning, individual railways and railways as such were not free to establish sets of rules as they saw fit:

A third step was taken in 1884 with the establishment of a committee to compile a standard code of train rules. In 1887 the findings of the committee were adopted by the American Time Convention (predecessor of the Association of American Railroads) under the name of the Standard Code of Train Rules.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kirkman, Operating Trains, 313.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 248. <sup>3</sup>Richardson. *The Locomotive Engineer*, 247-8.

Not only the operating rules but many other aspects of railway operation came under the eyes of regulating agencies:

Operation and rate setting are controlled under the Act to Regulate Commerce of 1887, as amended, which is administered by the Interstate Commerce Commission.<sup>4</sup>

A qualified person in this field, Mr. Isaiah L. Sharfman, says in his work, The Interstate Commerce Commission: A Study in Administrative Law and Procedure:

It is well-nigh universally recognized that the Interstate Commerce Commission is not only the oldest but the most powerful of the many federal agencies now operative which exercise some measure of authoritative control of economic conduct.<sup>5</sup>

### Richardson makes this significant remark:

All of these functions [of the I.C.C.], while affecting the railroad industry directly, also affect the employees and their relations with the carriers.<sup>6</sup>

Richardson's findings support Mr. Sharfman's observations:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Isaiah L. Sharfman, *The Interstate Commerce Commission: A Study in Administrative Law and Procedure* (New York 1937), Vol. 4, 342.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 33. **Editors' note:** In Canada the transportation system has been regulated through federal acts respecting rates and commodity movements, mainly administered by the Federal Ministry of Transport. Since 1986 Canadian railroads have been governed by the National Transportation Agency under the National Transportation Act, 1986. Canada, National Transportation Agency, The New Transportation Agency of Canada: The New Framework for Rail Transportation (Ottawa 1987); Canada, An Act Respecting National Transportation (Ottawa 1986). Collective bargaining is a provincial responsibility, but the Canada Labour Code requires a final settlement arbitration procedure. The Canadian Railway Board of Adjustment handled grievance cases from 1918 until 1964. The Board, composed of representatives of the railways and unions, met and voted on cases. In 1965 the Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration was created. Financed by the railroads and the unions, a single arbitrator issues decisions. In the early 1970s, the Barrett government established its own final settlement arbitration procedure and so BC Rail no longer is a member of the Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration. Information provided by Colette Bart, Canadian Railway Office of Arbitration and Kevin Rhodes, CUTE. See also anonymous, "One-Man Arbitration To Decide Canadian Disputes," Enginemen's Press, (27 March 1964), 2.

For a number of years prior to 1887, public and group pressure (farmers and workers) for government regulation of railroads had been increasing. This pressure was a reaction to abuses of the railroads in their competitive wars, and to questionable financial manipulations and downright fraud on the part of many railroad officials and promoters.

#### Later in his book Richardson notes:

 $\dots$  the government began to play a more and more important role in collective bargaining through the passage of such legislation as the Act of 1888, the Erdman Act, and the Newlands Act. To these governmental aids was added the contribution of the adjustment boards of World War I.

Mention is made of one of management's reactions to government regulation in a report made to the A.A.R.S. Convention:

It is, of course, most undesirable to allow situations to continue which might provide excuses for organizations representing employees to approach state legislative or regulatory bodies seeking assistance in forcing the provision of modern facilities — sometimes at unnecessary expense. 9

Essential changes in the basic structure of the rules had to be approved by government boards. Mr. Uhl notes that government intervention affected working conditions:

Important by-products of this congressional intervention, however, were measures to counter the appalling accident rates of the rail-roaders during that period. For that reason they must be considered as part of the history of railroad labor legislation. <sup>10</sup>

This placed the rules in a category much resembling formal law. If irreconcilable differences of opinion arose over the interpretation of the rules, settlement could and might be made by government. The railroader who breaks certain rules under certain circumstances is likely to face a court of law. Here, then, away back in the history of the mode of economics existing today on this continent, we have instances of the government taking a hand in the regulation of an industry. Proof that regulation is still required and is still not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 44.

welcomed is illustrated in this quotation from the A.A.R.S. Meeting, at which Mr. Fox, speaking of government-enforced cleanliness, said:

Well that is just about what some of us are up against now with the inspected hogs that are coming from the east .... At first we used a creosote spray which wasn't too expensive, but a couple of weeks ago we were informed we would have to use a caustic lye solution. 11

## Mr. R.L. Gohmert, Freight Claim Agent, W.P.R.R., Oakland, adds:

... all of us have been getting by with the cleaning and disinfecting of pens and cars which contacted sick hogs. Yesterday afternoon one of the stooges from the South San Francisco office of the Bureau of Animal Industry ... presented a letter to the effect that we should ... begin cleaning all cars regardless of whether they discharged clean or dirty hogs. We resisted that. We resist it today, and we suggested that if their headquarters supported that kind of a program, our only defense would be to embargo all hogs coming into this area with the consequence that we would put the packers out of business. <sup>12</sup>

Speaking of regulation by the Interstate Commerce Commission Mr. Uhl points out that:

The carriers have never ceased to chafe under this regulation. Numerous efforts have been made to reduce the Commission's powers  $^{13}$ ...

Railway rules can only be understood in relation to an understanding of the whole process. The job of the railroader is not something that can be done just because all the words in the book are known. This is true, even though each movement is made, subject to some rule or combination of rules.

To understand the function of the rule book in railway operations let us compare it to a national constitution. Both book and constitution outline man's attempt to create rules applicable to more or less ideal situations. Life, however, is life and not an ideal situation.

The essential thing to understand here is the use to which the rule book can be put. Although this may sound contradictory, all movements are in theory guided by rule but seldom are all the rules adhered to. Railway accidents which reach the attention of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 26.

public amount to a tiny portion of the over-all number of mishaps. Washouts, slides and certain track defects often occur on sections of track not under the immediate care of a watchman. In those cases the word accident is applicable, the term "accident" being used in a very strict sense. In all other cases a rule has been broken and, if investigated, some excuse must be offered. In general, much ado is made about safety. In a paper before the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Lexington Society, noted labor lawyer Jacob Kaufman remarked that:

The railroads (as well as the workers) are vitally concerned over the safety of their employees and the public, as well as the protection of their equipment and goods being shipped. This concern over safety will, of course, require the officials of the company to enforce safety rules.

The so-called "book of rules" contains, for example, the following general rule:

"Safety is of the first importance in the discharge of duty. Obedience to the rules is essential to safety. In case of doubt or uncertainty, the safe course must be taken." 14

This is very good theory but in actual practice a blind eye surveys most of the rule violations that do not result in serious loss or injury. Here then, we see an officialdom caught between crossfires. All intelligently self-interested management strives to increase efficiency. Where safety and efficiency lock step there is no trouble. If things are otherwise there is a clash of interests. The official attitude of management toward the rules is well stated by Mr. S.J. Massey, Jr.:

I think the Standard Code is entirely "adequate" — and I use that expression based on a stock answer I give everyone when they come in complaining that "we can't do this and do that and comply with the rules." The best way to find out is to go ahead and comply with them and if it is not practicable, some other way will be found to fix it so it will be a practicable thing to do .... I got after [an] engineer about [breaking the speed limit] and he said, "Well, I can't make the schedule unless I do exceed the speed limit."

I said, "Well, you comply with the rules. Don't exceed the speed limit. We'll adjust the time table in due time. If anyone asks you why you are late, tell them the time is too fast." 15

A stock answer is only needed for stock questions. It is not practical for railway management, high or low, to provide any other answer

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Jacob Kaufman, as quoted by Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 31.
 <sup>15</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 105.

than that given by Mr. Massey. However, if Mr. Massey came up through the ranks he would know as well as any other practical railroad man, just how much use the stock answer is in operations. For railway management to reply in any other vein would be to open up to unwelcome light precisely how deep the division is between the sort of train movement required for top efficiency, due regard for safety, and the requirements of the rule book. This sort of publicity would not be welcomed by either management, the railroaders, or the government.

It is not necessarily concern for the safety of the men which makes management safety-conscious. The report of the Yard Operations Committee put the matter very baldly when it states in part:

Safety is ... of paramount importance because every personal injury ... is likely to bring about delays to the movement of traffic. <sup>16</sup>

The question is, how can efficiency be sacrificed to safety and vice versa? The rule book is an attempt to draw such a line. It is not an outline of a plot to obstruct efficiency but certainly a fulfilment of all its provisions would make a marked difference in the production of service.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 131.

# Rules, Supervision and Promotion-2

How then, is command from the market carried out by those who actually operate the trains and by their immediate supervisors? By a neat mixture of arbitrary orders and obedience to the rules. This is one of the main reasons management takes its junior officers from the ranks. Only they, men who have come up through the ranks, after years of service, know the thousands of ways of manoeuvring through the maze of contradictory instructions from the market and the rule book. Only they can figure out and attempt to rule over an industry torn at its very heart by conflicting interests. Only they know what the probabilities might be under certain circumstances in railroad operations. Mr. O.L. Gray, General Manager, Coast Lines, A.T.&S.F., Los Angeles, observes:

For most of you, being good at your jobs has meant working your way up from the bottom over a long period of time. This is true in most instances of railway officers. <sup>1</sup>

#### Cottrell notes:

Until quite recently "scientific personnel management" has been almost entirely absent in the operation of American railways .... Most operating supervisors on the railroads are themselves a product of the school of hard knocks.<sup>2</sup>

Again quoting Mr. Gray at the Post-Convention Meeting of the A.A.R.S.:

... modern management also has its share of young officers — educated young men especially trained for executive positions.<sup>3</sup>

Wherever that policy has been tried for the immediate supervision of the running-trades its success has been very questionable. A paper entitled, "Responsibility, Authority and Duties of a Road Foreman" was read to the 25th Annual Proceedings of the Railway Fuel and Operating Officers Association. It said in part:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Proceedinas — Meetina, 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, The Railroader, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 254.

... our late General Manager used to [call] a master mechanic a glorified nut-splitter, so you gentlemen are all glorified hogheads or you wouldn't be road foremen and/or be serving in a similar capacity.<sup>4</sup>

Clear market commands, echoed by top management, are not necessarily fulfilled. The reason they are not fulfilled is that there is no guarantee as to how much attention a crew will give to rule provisions. No one ever knows for sure, from moment to moment, and place to place. The railroader can use certain provisions of the rule book, having the force of law, as a weapon which enable him to determine the pace of work. Such use is not subject to penalty and allows the men to counteract the hopes of management for highball train or yard operations. Except on very rare occasions the men do not use the rules in full strength for that purpose. This is not to say that such a practice, used too frequently, would go without attempts at retaliation by management. Men or crews who use these tactics are often subject to close check by a management which is looking for punishable offenses. Management always claims that these close checks have no connection with the practice of working-to-rule.

There is a counterforce in existence, the means of wage compensation. Whereas the rules give top priority to safety, the methods of wage payment pull in the opposite direction. To strike the correct balance between these two forces is the task of the railroader. He

<sup>4</sup>R.H. Francis and J.S. Swan, "Responsibility, Authority and the Duties of a Road Foreman," a paper presented at the *Proceedings of the Railway Fuel and Operating Officers Association, 25th Annual Proceedings*, 12 September 1961, Chicago, Ill., 66. Presumed verbatim and referred to henceforth as *R.F.&.O.A. Proceedings*. Mr. Swan, Superintendent of Motive Power, Power Utility, L.&N.R.R. introduced Mr. Francis as a man who "started at the bottom ... worked on a railroad for 53 years ... [and] filled many official positions ...." Mr. Francis is retired from the Frisco Railroad.

<sup>5</sup>Editors' note: Highball originally was a go ahead signal consisting of a ball suspended on a pole. In this context highball refers to the engineman who cuts corners by ignoring certain rules which, if obeyed, slow down train movement. For instance, by rule a train may not go out on the tracks without the sandboxes being full. In certain weather conditions, sand is not needed, and the engineman who wants to "get over the road" will ignore the sand provisions. Supervisors are always happy with efficient work, but will cite "failure to prepare engines" as a cause for discipline if they are looking for a reason. See also pp. 137-8.

<sup>6</sup>Editors' note: While working-to-rule, perhaps because of a delayed contract, train crews might take a leisurely attitude toward getting the job done quickly, feeling that their rates of pay might increase in the next contract. Unless rules are broken, there is very little management can do to encourage efficiency.

and his mates must know the precise moment to give one or other force the lead. Responding as we all do to the lure of a higher wage, he is tempted to push the counterweight too far at times and incur too much risk. However, he usually cannot make such a move without risking the displeasure of his mates. At most times one or more of his mates is in a position to stop the whole show in very short order. This being so, any one of the men involved is forced to consider what his mates will think of the move. A provision of the rule book makes all five members of the crew almost equally responsible for the vast majority of the things they do in co-operation with one another. The point is illustrated by Mr. Tabor, who spoke in reference to an accident due to failure to flag properly:

In this case we applied discipline to the engineer and flagman. It is a divided responsibility, but they were both responsible.<sup>7</sup>

In application, the "equal responsibility" rule is tempered by applying more harsh discipline to the senior members of the crew, usually the conductor and engineer. The rule is worded so that they are named as the responsible parties, but is modified to include the words:

This does not relieve other employees of their responsibility under the rules.  $^{8}\,$ 

<sup>7</sup>R.F.&.O.A. Proceedings, 117.

<sup>8</sup>Anonymous, *Uniform Code of Operating Rules*, Approved by the Board of Transportation Commissioners for Canada by General Order No. 750, dated 7th day of April, 1951, effective August 26th, 1951. Rule 106 (in part). **Editors' note:** The complete text is:

Rule 106. Trains will run under the direction of their conductors. When a train is run without a conductor the engineman will perform the duties of the conductor.

Conductors, enginemen, and pilots if any, are responsible for the safety of their trains and the observance of the rules and under conditions not provided for by the rules must take every precaution for protection. This does not relieve other employees of their responsibility under the rules.

Marshall M. Kirkman based his 1903 code on the standard regulations of the American Railway Association and those he prepared in 1878. See *Operating Trains*, 327. The code was thus standardized at an early date, although sometimes rules 105 and 106 overlapped. For example, as early as 1902, Rule 105 read: "Both conductors and engineers are responsible for the safety of their trains and, under conditions not provided by the rules, must take every precaution for their protection." St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Company, *Rules of the Transportation Department*, 28.

Very seldom can a man claim that he did not know what was going on and therefore failed to interfere in an unduly risky move. Kirkman notes that excuses are not easily found:

The rules and regulations governing the movement of trains are printed and supplied to every person interested. They are simply and clearly stated. If a rule is transgressed, it should be assumed that the offense was conscious. Ignorance cannot be assumed in so vital a matter.  $^9$ 

In theory the railroader is supposed to be fully aware of all possible consequences of all moves at all times. Again we see the possibility of breakdown in the chain of command even from the conductor to trainman or engineman. In theory if not always in fact, all commands have to pass through the maze of rule provisions firmly entrenched in the minds of all the men. Each man must decide in a flash the amount of attention he must pay to each signal. He must calculate the amount of risk involved if he knows the signal to be contrary to rule. There is no time for reflection, he must know NOW if top speed performance is to be achieved. This is not a newly-developed situation and Kirkman made certain suggestions about what to watch for on the job:

Employees do not always attach the same significance to specific rules. This is also true of signals. Acquaintance with the everyday working of trains teaches that allowance must be made for ignorance, stupidity and thoughtlessness, and trainmen [in this context, all railroaders] strive constantly to protect themselves and their trains ....

The amount of pressure applied against rule provisions is readily seen. Hanging before the railroader, like the proverbial carrot before the donkey, is the prospect of a higher rate by the hour if he is prepared to perform in a given manner. The crew is divided between those who favor safety, more or less, and those who favor speed, more or less. The law of averages takes care of a reasonable balance for seldom do we find five safety or speed artists on any one crew. In any case, an excess of either speed or safety becomes an immediate item of gossip and is quickly communicated to management. As far as possible, the officials try to keep clear of the actual operations. They speak up when the movements get too far out of balance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Kirkman, *Operating Trains*, 306. <sup>10</sup>Kirkman, *Operating Trains*, 307.

The road to supervision over the running-trades men is fairly clearly marked. As in many unionized industries, certain promotions go up for bid while others are obtained by appointment only, although there are variations of the general pattern. In the A.A.R.S. Meeting, the problem of promotion was discussed by Mr. Munson:

We have some problems [regarding] handling ... so-called scheduled positions and promotions. One good illustration ... is the switchmen to ... yardmaster situation .... [T]heoretically, a switchman exercises a seniority and goes in as a yardmaster .... A very bad situation is that of a thoroughly unqualified switchman trying to run a yard. 11

In reference to who should be promoted to yardmaster's rank, it was the opinion of Messrs. Nugent and Munson that in order to promote efficiency the selection of men for those jobs should be left to management. They discussed some of the problems which arise when the Brotherhoods have a significant part in making a selection. Mr. Morton said that on his road (the S.A.L.) selection was made by management. <sup>12</sup>

Undercover factors, such as membership in certain well-known fraternal societies, is without doubt a factor in some cases, but the independent stands a reasonable chance. Promotion from the ranks is the normal rather than the unusual route.

Mr. Uhl's investigations lead him to make these comments:

Railroad workers have furnished the brains for many of the top executive positions in the industry. Thousands of them have mounted from the bottom of the ladder to innumerable supervisory posts such as agents, division superintendents and even railroad presidents .... It is not surprising, therefore, that "top executive positions," as the United States Department of Labor has noted, "are usually filled by men with many years of railroad experience."

Railway management is constricted in its choice of men for advancement. Men who are able to quickly grasp the myriad peculiarities of each road and sub-section are usually doing quite well wherever they happen to be and therefore are not on the market. "Home-grown" officials are the first choice material. This restriction of choice has definite disadvantages from management's point of view. The same factor has an advantage, for the rank and filer. He knows that his choice of advancement, though there are relatively

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 282.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 12.

few jobs as running-trades supervisors, is in reality much greater than in other industries.

Tradition plays a part here also. Long since, management found that the only people reasonably competent for supervisory work were to be found in their own rank and file. Years and years of steeping in the atmosphere of a particular railroad can alone produce the required knowledge. However, the knowledge alone is not sufficient. The choice of supervisors is narrowed again by the fundamental necessities of the relationships between men and management as they are seen to exist on a railway. If it were a simple case of "Do as I say," the choice would be much easier. As said before, this does not apply to the running-trades man. We find the following comment in the report of the Presidential Railroad Commission:

Managerial and supervisory arrangements are different where employees are away from direct and immediate contact with their superiors for long periods. <sup>14</sup>

A lower management official with the mental attitude required for success is a rather rare find. A certain aggressiveness is required in any supervisor but on a railway that spirit has clearly defined bounds. He must achieve a balance between the expression of authority and the need to listen to what might, at first, sound like nonsense. Much of the time of train-masters, assistant superintendents and travelling engineers (road foremen of engines), is spent in what might appear to be gossiping. 15 It is never safe for a supervisor to assume that he is wasting his time, for he could be very wrong. The average railroader does not have a really good command of the language and sometimes cannot quickly and clearly set forth his case. A railroader's suggestion for a change of procedure in handling traffic could easily be one that advances the interests of both men and management (insofar as they are compatible). The smart official listens, weighs, and, in either accepting or rejecting remarks of the rank and filer, does so very cautiously. The supervisor takes in all the information he is offered and carefully sorts the coal from the ashes. The supply of ideas is usually abundant for each man feels free to approach any official with almost any problem. The promotion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Report of the Presidential Railroad Commission, (Washington, DC 1962), 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>**Editors' note:** Morgan is taking a dig at the hierarchy of superintendents and managers who "supervise" the work.

of a bully would be an error for it would tend to destroy the source of much information that management requires. 16

Promotion creates a certain chasm between former mates and an official. Mr. Fox told the Meeting of ways in which this chasm can be taken advantage of:

[We] tried to instill within these men that they are not just another switcher [switchman]; but that they are, in a great many respects, officers of the company, and they are the ones that operate the terminal. 17

Although the reference is to Yardmasters, it applies equally to other promoted men. The gap, however, is not as deep or as wide as in other industry. Crewmen recognize that once promoted, the official must become some sort of "company man." However, should he then chose to be called MR. Smith instead of "Bob" the men would simply snigger at his phony air of superiority. 18

The very significant difference between promotion on a railway and elsewhere is that, again traditionally, the promoted man keeps his seniority number (assuming that he had one). By World War I there were seniority contract provisions covering such matters as re-employment and promotion to official positions. <sup>19</sup> This means that, though he be promoted, an officer can, with due notice, return to the service from whence he came. His right to go back to work in actual train operation is unchallenged. Further, his seniority is held unimpaired regardless of the time spent in supervision. Allowance is made here for the minimal number of railways where promotion to supervisory ranks means a permanent severance of former rank and file connections.

Since only rarely is a railroader a no-bill (non-union), almost certainly the chosen supervisor has a Brotherhood background. This means that he will have spent years with his fellow-workers; years as, at least, a faithful card-packer but as often as not, as an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>**Editors' note:** As noted by the IWW president Bill Haywood earlier in this century "The Manager's brains are under the workman's cap." Cited by David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America*, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Train orders and the like are signed with a person's initials, but trainmen regularly used nicknames coming from some personal characteristic, such as being left-handed. As Gamst observed, "All railroad officials, great and small, related to others in the rail and outside worlds from behind a pair of initials." Frederick C. Gamst, *The Hoghead: An Industrial Ethnology of the Locomotive Engineer*, (New York 1980), 27.

<sup>19</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 352.

officer in his Brotherhood. He will have learned to think of craftworker interest, as opposed to employer interest. Remembering other days, Mr. C.H. Butcher, General Superintendent, Yards-terminals, S.A.L., Hamlet, N.C., said:

We unfortunately have some agreements made years ago that are now costing us plenty. I don't know what these boys were thinking of when they made these agreements. Of course, in those days I was Road Chairman [for a Brotherhood] and I was glad to see them made (Laughter) .... Some of us have to stop and think, "Was I a party to that?" <sup>20</sup>

Actual participation in Brotherhood affairs is suspended when a man is promoted. However it is unlikely that he will entirely forget all he has learned in lodge ranks. This creates a big problem for upper management. It means, in effect, that they are restricted in what they can expect in terms of close supervision. It means that they can never be certain that the supervisor will be entirely candid with them. It is found that those with the driving desire to be supervisors are seriously lacking in other necessary qualities. Crudely put, they are found to be stumbling over their own egos. Since any man who is promoted cannot be certain that he will not be shortly demoted, it is only occasionally that he will give up his seniority number. Once he has done so he has to commit himself to a purely-management outlook if he wants to retain the job. Occasionally there is a feeling in the officer's mind that the job may someday become distasteful to him and that the formerly enjoyed relationships will be too great a temptation. Should this happen he will be able to resign and resume his former duties. There are limitations of course, and when a man has reached a given rank he loses his number. The limitations vary but there is a loosely established pattern.

Another factor which must be mentioned is the officer's reflections on how his behaviour as an official will affect him if and when he returns to service. Quite possibly, during his days as a rank and filer, he participated in a policy of boycott inflicted on men who do not fit into the general atmosphere of railroading. The pressure applied by the rank and file to any supervisor who returns to the ranks after making himself objectionable as an officer can be great enough to drive him away from the railway entirely. Some men can tough it out and simply "remain miserable." With others, the group pressure forces ex-officials to try to get back into the good graces of the men.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 149.

The nature of the work amplifies the pressure, for, particularly in road service, each man is in the presence of his mates most of the time. There is no place to hide from the disapproval. Moving off to another sub-division serves no purpose for the men on the whole road are interlocked by a constantly operating grapevine. The man in disfavour must, like all others, make his intentions in changing jobs more or less an open secret. As a result of the grapevine messages, he may meet a wall of hostility wherever he turns. Even if he is not driven from the railroad he finds that his presence on any crew is resented. Because of the freedom existing in job assignments he may find that the crew he has chosen to work with is constantly changing. If he is a conductor he may be saddled with two relatively junior men. This is a real burden and magnifies his work considerably. Fortunately for the official who "misbehaves" while acting as an officer and then returns to the ranks, he will receive the same consideration from the men as do the students. The men always take into account what it means to be without a job. For that reason a man will be driven from the property only in extreme cases.

These matters are part of the thinking of each supervisor who has been promoted from the ranks. They are inescapable. He sees them working out all around him during his term as an official. They are a matter of concern and tend to colour many of his actions and attitudes. That this is a matter of interest to management is indicated in the discussion between Messrs. Diegtel, Massey and McCarthy:

Mr. Diegtel: Mr. Massey made a statement to the effect that some operating supervisors turn their heads to rule violations.

Mr. Massey: I think you will find that prevails mostly among the men who haven't been promoted too long; who haven't had a lot of experience .... A lot of fellows seem to think that if they call attention to a rule, they might "hit" the guy on this engine or on that engine .... If a fellow wants to get mad about the rules, let him get mad; ....

Mr. McCarthy (Potomac Yard): ... Mr. Massey mentioned the fact that some supervisors are afraid of making somebody mad .... some of the employees are pretty wise .... They may know the rules better than the supervisor [and] they will ... deliberately violate a rule to see whether this youngster will catch it. If he doesn't, they make up their minds the supervisor either doesn't know the rule himself, he doesn't give a damn, or he hasn't guts enough to correct them. <sup>21</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 120-1.

It is not at all uncommon for a supervisor to request a railroader not to tell him something that the railroader would not like passed on to higher levels of management. In this way the supervisor clears himself of not reporting some item to his superiors.

The company is aware that a reduction in rank may mean a rise in take-home pay. Running-trades pay is considered rather good for the qualifications required and some promoted men actually lose money in taking a promotion. Mr. V.C. Palmer, Superintendent, G.T.&W., Detroit, makes this comment:

A common railroad policy is to pay most classes of employees the same beginning wage as employees having years of experience earn .... Likewise the small differential between the pay of brakemen and conductors, between yard helpers and conductors and between some other grades of unionized employees and their non-unionized supervisors, is not sufficient in the eyes of many employees to make promotion attractive. <sup>22</sup>

This subject was raised at the Meeting, at which time Mr. Munson said:

We have all talked from time to time ... [of] the meagre, if any, difference (it might even be in the minus direction) in the salary of an officer and what his subordinates might make  $\dots^{23}$ 

The fact that a man does not face the street if demoted has a bearing on the company's attitude toward his service as an officer. The best the company can hope to do is find a man from the ranks who can fulfil the basic requirements of an official position and show some signs of improvement. He must come from the ranks for the crews can so bamboozle a stranger to railway work that such a person is useless or worse.

Professor Cottrell sees it this way:

The foremen, most supervisors, and many managements are comprised exclusively of those who have risen from the ranks. In each division they are those who have excelled in skill and at the same time have identified their own future with that of the industry and have supported the company as contrasted with labor. Railroad supervisors are organized into a hierarchy very similar to that of the military, and when one crosses the line into supervision he builds a wall between himself and his former companions. It now becomes his job to forestall the techniques which he and his companions have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 58. <sup>23</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 286.

formerly used to "put something over on the company." [emphasis added]<sup>24</sup>

The actual performance of a supervisor's job presents a complicated problem. There are two main obstacles, each of which applies to some extent in other industries. All supervisors know that whether their appearance where the men are working is planned or sudden, the job is done in a specific manner and will continue to be done that way until they leave.

These few words from Mr. Francis' paper are a good illustration of the position into which a supervisor is put:

Not only should [the Road Foreman of Engines] be conversant with the rules but he must assure compliance by the crews when on line.  $^{25}$ 

His advice to the supervisor reminds me of Mr. Massey's "stock answer." One is as practical as the other.

The only practical way to handle the problem of observing the rules is the one which has been worked out over the years. In solving the problem both men and supervisors have reached an unspoken but well understood agreement as to which rule can stretch how far. Only a very green man fails to catch on to this agreement and if he "slops over" he is gently nudged into place. Only in an emergency does the supervisor say anything, although that statement must be qualified by saying that much will depend on the personalities of the supervisor and the men. Further, it will depend on what the men think the supervisor might do with what he sees and hears. As far as seeing the men working as they usually work is concerned, the supervisor might as well stay at home.

As highways have become more common, their use as points of observation has increased. The presence of a highway near the tracks does not escape the crew's attention. It is not easy for management to watch the men in "test tube" conditions. Mr. Massey outlined to the Convention some of the ways checks are made:

**Editors' note:** A condensed organizational chart in Armstrong's *The Railroad*, illustrates the hierarchy from running trades men through assistant trainmasters, trainmasters, assistant superintendents, division superintendents, regional general managers, and assistant vice-presidents, all part of the transportation section of the operating department. John Armstrong, *The Railroad*, 220.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, The Railroader, 34-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>R.F.&.O.A. Proceedings, 69. <sup>26</sup>Editors' note: See p. 121.

If you find they are [speeding] you can go back and put some stakes out at 264 feet apart and put a man with a stop watch at each location and you can definitely take some [disciplinary] action on the basis of that .... You must have the goods there and be able to prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt ....<sup>27</sup>

Prior to the existence of so many highways the common method of testing was to "lay in the weeds" near the track after having gotten to that point by using a small gas-powered rig that runs on rails (commonly called a speeder), or by some other means, such as walking. However, a "line-up" is a necessity for vehicles on the track other than trains. These are broadcast by the train dispatcher. It is very risky to use the track without a line-up, even on double track and few supervisors are sufficiently anxious to test the men that they will risk their lives. Further, the presence of a track vehicle seldom goes un-noticed. A train crew may be advised of the presence of supervisors somewhere on the area by an operator. His main duty is the copying of orders and instructions that are put out for trains by the dispatcher. Little takes place that the operator is not aware of. The track crews, (section men), also play a part in notifying the train crews of the possibility of watching by hidden supervisors. There is more than one sign but a finger drawn across the throat signifies their presence. Should a supervisor be on a train, his presence is made known to all employees who are seen by the train crew. There are a very limited number of places for a supervisor to ride (without being seen) and hopes of secrecy are almost nil.

Mr. Munson notes that an agreement made for handling demotions "looks good on paper" but is difficult to administer. He says that much leeway is given a yardmaster thought to be incompetent. He also says that when their behaviour is "entirely out of reason ... a specific case of gross ... mishandling" is used as a lever to demote him. The demotion is made "in accordance with the contract." Mr. Nelson says that if early and periodic observance discloses poor work habits a man should have "two alternatives, either to go back to his old job or seek employment some other place." Mr. Stapp adds that if they are found to be incompetent they have "quite a tussle" to hold the job. <sup>28</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 282-3. Mr. R.A. Nelson, Assistant to Supervisor of Employment, S.P.R.R., San Francisco; H.E. Stapp, Assistant Superintendent, W.P.R.R., Oakland, Calif.

### "In Case of Accident"

IF MISHAP OR MAN-FAILURE occurs it is almost a certainty that someone broke some rule. The number of times when this is untrue are so few in number that they rate little mention. Among them are certain types of equipment failure (which could not have reasonably been detected beforehand), certain types of derailments and certain circumstances where poor weather conditions are involved. Mr. Diegtel expresses the view of a large number of supervisors or running-trades workers when he says:

I don't think there is a man in the room who doesn't feel there is a definite connection between rules observance and train accidents or who doesn't feel that it is his responsibility to do everything in his power to overcome negligence, which inevitably results in violation of rules and train accidents. I think our discussions have brought out the need ... for very careful review of your own rules; the need for staying just as closely as we can to the standard code rules; the need for uniform understanding; and probably the need for some review of our methods of conducting efficiency tests. \(^1\)

Each man on the crew is well acquainted with the rule that he is jointly responsible for all movements. However, he is not necessarily going to have to shoulder an equal portion of the blame. The circumstances of the moment will quickly tell him his percentage of responsibility. In any case he cannot simply shrug his shoulders. His attitude toward the accident will be influenced by many things, certainly not the least of which is how much he thinks of the man or men mainly to blame. In general, if not always, first consideration is given to the man's ability on the job and on how well he co-operates with others. Often, then and there, a "court of inquiry" is held by the men to reach a joint decision on the "facts" to be presented to management. When a court is not held, each man figures out for himself what he will say to an investigating official. Each man knows that there are only a relatively limited number of reasons why a particular accident could occur. Even if a court is not held there is bound to be a certain rough similarity in the statements made to the investigators. When the men reach a joint decision as to the

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ Proceedings — Convention, 122.

"facts" to be presented to management, ranks close and only very occasionally is the wall of solidarity broken.

The wall of solidarity is that much more rigid when men who are related are on the same crew. It is not generally a rigid rule to forbid very close relations from working on the same crew at the same time. but certainly no encouragement is offered to the practice. Such a rule is not operable within the famous seniority system of the "rails." If a man takes a job by seniority bid he works it until other factors occur, whether he is firing for his father or braking for his uncle or not. In this regard it is as well to point out that common agreement was reached on the part of the companies and the Brotherhoods half a century ago. Its origins are lost in the haze of time and it did not become a matter of written agreement. Rather it was simply a matter of an agreed upon understanding. The men felt that the possibility of being a party to serious injury or death to a close relative was too great. Company thinking is unknown to me but any smart executive would see the advantage of keeping close relatives off the same crew. Some railways apply this agreement more rigidly than others. Mr. I.M. Ferguson, Special Assistant, W.P., San Francisco, made the position of the railroads fairly clear when he told the Meeting that:

We have the policy that any relatives of a person working in a department applying for a position can go to any department other than that particular department or seniority district. Of course, they can always lick you later on, on that, but we initially get them started so that we are not going to have any group of relatives working in a particular area.<sup>2</sup>

Few humans relish taking responsibility for mishap. The solidarity that exists between mates on any one crew has a bearing on how the accident story will sound when told. If the man most responsible is an unpopular mate, this feeling of solidarity weakens but is rarely destroyed. The normal procedure is to arrange a story that protects, to the fullest extent possible, all the men on the crew. However, the rather limited number of possibilities and the still fewer probabilities make the concoction rather a tricky undertaking.

If the officials came "off the street" there would be nothing to it. Railway management knows better than that. As previously mentioned, officials are usually selected from the homeguards who were "raised (or made) on the property." Only they know the ropes well enough to detect the usually well-hidden flaws in a concocted story. Mr. Wolfe, who later became spokesman for the A.A.R. in recent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 297.

negotiations which ended in Arbitration Award No. 282, assures us that the possibility of a concocted story is a matter of prime concern to management.<sup>3</sup> To the A.A.R.S. Convention he said:

Perhaps the *greatest tragedy* in labor relations today, is the fact that certain misguided labor representatives usually, but not always, at the local level, attempt through skilful manoeuvering to withhold the true facts at company investigations ... through misguided zeal in an effort to protect a negligent employe .... [However] a large majority of representatives of the railroad unions do co-operate in the unceasing efforts of the railroad companies to bring about well-disciplined and willing observance of these necessary rules. [emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

All this is not to suggest that all stories are entirely made up. There are many variations and shadings of actualities when it is deemed necessary. Sometimes one of the crew may already be under severe discipline. He may be "packing fifty brownies," that is, he may have been assessed fifty of a theoretical limit of sixty demerit marks.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Editors' note: On Arbitration Award No. 282, see note 10 on p. 110.

<sup>4</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 74-5.

<sup>5</sup>Editors' note: When performance is to be evaluated by the employer, the offending crew member, or more usually the total crew, is assessed demerit marks, called Brownies from the man who developed the system. There is a common misconception among the public that Brownie points are "good," perhaps due to the mis-association with "Brown-nosing," which is getting in the boss's favour. The Brown system dates back to the late nineteenth century, when railroad managers were seeking to impose great discipline on their workers. See George Brown, Brown's Discipline of Railway Employees without Suspension (Easton, PA n.d.), which contains an article originally published in The Railway Conductor in January 1897. Brown's system was originally meant to replace immediate dismissal for rules infractions in the mid-1880s. Brown, a superintendent of the Fall Brook Coal Company's railroad, felt suspension was harmful: "It often happens that an accident, or a 'close' shave ... is the best kind of lesson," Brown's Discipline, 3, 6. The Brown system was quickly adopted by railways and was evaluated again and again by the railway press over the years. See anonymous, "Record Discipline on the New Haven," The Railroad Gazette, XXXVIII, 22 (2 June 1905), 595-6; anonymous, "Brown's Discipline," Railroad Age Gazette, XLVII, 8 (20 August 1909), 305-6. For a thorough early review of when the system was adopted and how demerits were assessed see anonymous, "Brown's Discipline on American Railroads," Railway Age, 63, 1 (6 July 1917), 19-22. Canadian Pacific (West) introduced the system in 1913.

In Morgan's day, when employees broke the rules they were assessed demerit Brownies, and were taken off duty when they had reached 60 points. Points remained on the books for one year, and the employee was A record of that sort may mean suspension or even dismissal if further demerits can be assessed. Should such a popular mate deserve the major share of the responsibility for an accident, a fellow worker whose record is almost or entirely clear may assume responsibility for the accident.

The crew know the whole scheme of things so well that they can guess closely as to what the officials are going to say or do. This knowledge permits them to gauge precisely how much imagination is permissible in any story about "how it all happened."

Railway management is not in the habit of, nor could it afford to, promote utter fools. They do the best they can under the circumstances. The intimate knowledge of a railroad necessary to a supervisor must of necessity be sacrificed if officers are recruited from another railroad. Supervisors hired from other roads are often found to have a flaw which makes them unreliable in some way.

A company officer is certainly not always as harsh as might be the case in other industries. It is not uncommon for an official to be party to a deliberate cover-up of facts if his judgement tells him that this is the reasonable and safe course. His report, or a report based on his report, may finally wind up in the hands of those in upper management where a "dutchman" is somebody from Holland. In railroader's language the term refers to a track condition.6

not allowed to return until the accumulated points were reduced to below 60. Thus if a train is speeding, and a box car is dumped, each person on the crew would be assessed so many demerits, not necessarily all the same amount, but since the rule book states that the safe course must prevail, and since any crew member can stop the train, all would be deemed to some extent culpable. The crew riding with a member who is "packing 50" often rallies round to protect that member from picking up more points by stating less than the total story.

Many arbitration cases centred around the question of whether and how many points should have been assessed. Morgan went to bat for anyone who sought his help in fighting the assessment of points. The Brown system was severely criticized in 1982 when an arbitrator ruled that the employer "cannot rely on a discipline system or code as justification for the selection of a particular penalty." Rather, " ... the obligation upon an employer ... is to establish just cause for disciplinary initiatives." H. Alan Hope (Arbitrator), In the Matter of an Arbitration Between British Columbia Railway and Canadian Union of Transportation Employees, Local 6, 15 and 16 November 1982, Vancouver, BC, 12. The Brown system was replace on BC Rail with a new disciplinary system after this arbitration. See BC Rail, BC Rail: Guidelines Respecting the Discipline of Unionized Employees (January 1987). Other railroads continue to use the Brown system.

<sup>6</sup>Editors' note: A standard rail length was 25'. If there was a break in the rail, the section gang would sometimes scab in a piece of track instead of replacing the whole 25' — this was known as a dutchman.

#### Dismissal and "Out of Service"

At one time it was quite common to abruptly dismiss a man from a job simply because he did not fit its exact requirements. Of late years some sort of compromise is often attempted in trying to fit man and job together. This new attitude on the part of management is partially due to a recognition on their part that human beings are important as persons rather than simply as "hands." The recognition grew out of the advice from psychologists, union pressure, and the high cost of training workers. On the railways, for whatever reasons, instant dismissal or suspension has been the definite exception rather than the rule for a long time. \( \text{\text{1}} \)

Before turning down a student candidate for employment or arranging to get rid of a man who has or is likely to become a burdensome liability on the job, there is much discussion and consideration which is not always openly heard. Much weight is given to the degree of interest a new man shows in deciding for or against employment for him. This also applies to the new man working out his probationary period. Many men are simply and quietly weighing up all the factors themselves. They each have to decide what part they will play in saying yes, no, or nothing in relation to the man's departure. Gradually it becomes a matter of common knowledge and finally one or more men, driven beyond toleration, "turn him in." Management usually acts with caution and questions begin to flow. There is always the possibility of personality clash. If the general consensus of opinion is decidedly against the man, management acts with more or less speed and severity. If warnings do not work, discharge follows, for management knows that it does not have the last word.

As stated earlier, the longer it takes to complete a road trip, the less the crewmen make by the hour. Although yard service wages are computed by the hour, the fact that the standard "100 mile day" which is the basic minimum, is affected by the "8 hours or less" clause, makes it possible for yard crewmen to either raise or lower their hourly pay by means of work performance.<sup>2</sup> To the extent that

<sup>2</sup>**Editors' note:** See pp. 59, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Editors' note: The Brown system replaced dismissal on Canadian railroads in the early 1900s. Anonymous, "Brown's Discipline on American Railroads," *Railway Age*, 63, 1 (6 July 1917), 22.

both the road crew's and the yard crew's hourly pay may be affected by the way in which the work is done, there is a similarity in the way in which their pay is worked out, although the road crew's time is paid for by the mile and the yard crew's time is paid for by the hour. For this reason a fellow crew member who is being "carried," is costing the railroader actual wages and loss of time off. Naturally the decision about the student is much more easily reached. With the other men, memories of certain trips as well as other associations with him are firmly implanted in the minds of mates and are given great thought before a decision is made.

The point I want to make clear is the extent to which humanitarian feeling is applied to a mate who does not "cut the buck" or "railroad." Though the power of the railroaders is unmistakeable and final, it is used only as a last resort and under great provocation. Men discharged during their probationary period usually remain discharged, for management has definite final rights during that time. However, this is not to say that these rights are never challenged. It is neither normal, nor too unusual, for management to be interviewed by representatives of one of the Brotherhoods in relation to a probationer's discharge. The probationer is not normally a member of the Brotherhood but he may ask to join and is sometimes admitted. Even if he is not a member, a Brotherhood may act on his behalf if it is so inclined.

When a man who has passed his probationary period is discharged, his relationship with the company is a sort of estrangement, though the man affected may choose to make it a clear-cut divorce. If the man has been turned in, the battle to be re-instated becomes a sort of rear-guard action. He may rightly feel that he is not very highly regarded among the members, particularly the officers, of the Brotherhood. Seldom is such a man put back to work. Alternately, if the company has initiated a man's discharge for

<sup>3</sup>Editors' note: See note 5 on p. 137. A carried member is one who is near the limit of 60 demerits, which requires more attention to train rules and so reduces the chance of an early quit or better pay per hour worked on extended runs.

**\*Editors' note:** To "cut the buck" formerly meant to build up to full working pressure on steam engines. Railroaders also refer to a "cut of cars," i.e., two or more cars coupled together, to "have his head cut in," i.e., to be able to understand the contradictions between rules, etc. There is an un-stated assessment of each worker of other crew members, "Do they know how to railroad?" Not all are equally capable, and the ones who are less able are tolerated to the extent that they are judged worthy of consideration. It is this same consideration that leads a crew to protect one of its members from the assessment of demerits.

almost any reason, his mates usually rally round in support. Seldom is the support one hundred percent but it is certainly not insignificant. The Brotherhoods, sometimes jointly, unlimber their slow and cumbersome machinery of management. Neither the Brotherhoods, nor the Companies, know how to hurry, and caution is the first command. Both machines manoeuver about and finally reach their permanent positions. The case may drag on for years, often with victory for the Brotherhood, but not often with lost wages paid.

Most men returned to service are very pleased to be back on the job. While under discipline they felt exiled in spite of the second-hand contact with the job through their mates.

There are those who feel that the Brotherhoods try too hard to have certain men re-instated. How hard they do try is determined by how much enthusiasm is shown by the men and Brotherhood officers toward any given case. If the men feel that the man really did have a chance to smarten up and that the employer was as fair as could reasonably be expected, the enthusiasm is much lower but is not extinguished. There are those in the Brotherhoods who speak up for victory in each and every case. There are also those who will speak against re-instatement. Seldom is a case cut off promptly in the lodge records. If it is to die, it will very slowly fade away.

Many times the Brotherhood knows that by all modern, usually-accepted standards, the company was quite justified in dismissing a man. The only loophole then left is compassionate grounds for re-instatement. On these grounds, then, the case is continued. Other things being equal, the case is won more often than not.

It is true to say that compared to any other industry, a far greater percentage of railroaders that get fired return to service. On one of our very largest systems, high office instructions were once issued to "stop firing men who are not going to stay fired." Mr. Wolfe's remarks help to explain why the firing of men is not a common occurrence:

Dismissal is regarded as the last recourse taken after carefully weighing all considerations, and indiscriminate usage should not be allowed to jeopardize the finality of that action.<sup>5</sup>

It is sometimes claimed that for every man returned to service on compassionate grounds, something has had to be sacrificed by someone. It might be only one or more "doubtful" time-claims, or it could be that an agreement is made to re-instate "Bill Jones" as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 74.

opposed to "Jack Smith." There are good grounds to suppose that these horse-trades do indeed take place.

In Canada and the United States, the final decision on whether a man will stay fired often rests with governmental or semigovernmental bodies.

Most of the above remarks also apply to still another relationship possible in running-trades work, that is, "being out of service." Wolfe defines the situation in which being pulled out of service would be considered a reasonable penalty:

This action is taken when the employe's failure to comply with the rules, or other derelictions, are of such a serious nature that officers of the railway company feel the disciplinary action must be more severe [than say, demerit marks].

In this circumstance a man is not fired, nor yet is he allowed to work. Elaborate investigation and trial procedures are usually set forth in the collective agreements.

Earlier Mr. Wolfe observed that:

[Discipline should be administered so as to] instill in him a sense of duty and a desire to assume his share of responsibility in attaining a high standard of transportation efficiency .... Suspension from service, restriction of seniority rights ... may be considered as examples of *punitive discipline*. [The employee] should be required to obey fully and promptly the *rules* governing his department .... In the fair and impartial administration of discipline ... an enlightened railroad officer will not be vindictive. [He will make] judicious and impartial appraisal of the evidence .... [emphasis added]<sup>7</sup>

It is notable that Mr. Wolfe demands obedience to the rules rather than to other human beings.

The procedures for re-instatement are rigidly followed and often the machinery of decision looks and sounds like a crude court trial.

**Editors' note:** Points issued under the Brown system were arbitrarily given, with each individual's case being considered by management. It was not standardized, nor was it included in the *Uniform Code* or union contracts. On BC Rail the Brown system was a "... discipline system ... which was implemented unilaterally by the Railway but which has been in force since 1912." In the Matter of an Arbitration Between British Columbia Railway and Canadian Union of Transportation Employees, Local 6, November 15 and 16, 1982, Vancouver. BC. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 73.

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$ Proceedings — Convention, 71-2.

Dr. Cottrell remarks on the similarity of this aspect of railroad discipline and the normal everyday court:

In "investigations" to establish responsibility the "road" man is represented by counsel; his statements are taken as in court, ... and appeal from decisions made by lesser officials may be taken through the local or regional "griever," representative of his union.<sup>8</sup>

A classic example of the outcome of an out-of-service case is on record. A company decreed that a conductor who had just decided to run passenger trains rather than freight had to shave off his beard. When he refused to shave he was pulled out of service. One year later, beard and all, he took the job running passenger trains. He was paid a minimum day's pay for each day lost.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 19.

# "In the Judgement of Management"

WHAT ABOUT THE DEGREE of judgement used by railroaders as to who should be hired and who retained on the job? Are the men fit to make these decisions? Is this a factor in overall efficiency? What is the record?

Considering what has been said, it will be seen that the rail-roaders have an interest and a definite influence in making effective decisions over (1) who is hired, (2) the degree of severity with which discipline shall be applied and to whom it is applied and (3) who will be discharged, either temporarily or permanently.

These factors in labor relations are normally the sole right of management. It is assumed that management alone has the necessary judgement to properly oversee these three essential elements. This is not true of the railroad industry. Granted, the companies make the initial choice from applications they receive from the public, nevertheless, the nature of the industry demands that the selection of permanent running-trades men be left in the hands of the crews. It is the only practical method. Kirkman, whose remarks apply equally to men in train and engine service, says:

The fitness of men to fill positions in the train service is in the main determined by long observation of their acts by official superiors. [emphasis added]<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kirkman's admiration for management has been mentioned previously. Yet here he admits that it is only "in the main" that this decision is made by superiors. If the decision by superiors was made only in the main, what were the other factors influencing the decision? Further, whatever is considered as the most important as well as the most justifiable by any person, will be regarded as the influence that made any decision possible "in the main." There can be no question but that Mr. Kirkman felt that such decisions were rightfully those of management. He would not be a party to a reduction of their appearance of importance. Any prejudices I express are not those expressed by Kirkman. However, feel free to go find a railroader and ask him what he thinks about how the decision is made.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Kirkman, *Operating Trains*, 18.

It has been demonstrated that the crews have the judgement which is neatly balanced between consideration of both business interests and human interests to successfully carry out the selection of permanent employees. To a limited extent this practice is carried out in some other industries. It is evident that when significant elements of labor-relations are in the hands of the men on the job, logic allows no other conclusion than that they must be thought of as part of management. It is my purpose only to show the extent to which this is true of the railroaders.

Mr. Heron, in his frank and informative book *Why Men Work*, makes some interesting remarks on this subject:

The selection of his working companions is a field that management would be most reluctant to open to the influence of worker thinking. In fact, management has difficulty in thinking of the new employee as a working companion of the older employees. He is management's new employee. He must be chosen because of his skill or aptitude, his intelligence, or his strength. He is "tested" in many good establishments for any supposed indications of his potential ability or fitness for the work involved. His selection is one of the most important tasks of management. Because it is important, it is instinctively regarded as a prerogative of management ....

But what single field could be more important in its effect on worker attitudes and team spirit? To the old members of the working group, the new man is not just a new employee of management. He is a new companion for their working hours. He may or may not measure up to the standards which the group has evolved, in matters unrelated to skill and strength. They may have improper standards but, to be a member of the team, each one adheres to those standards. The customs may relate to cleanliness, vocabulary, co-operation, chewing snuff, or eating garlic.

At first glance it is absurdly impossible to let workers set the standards and choose their own associates. And yet that is exactly what the "closed shop" meant in its original form. The fact that the closed shop had become largely a political device for sustaining the control of the union boss in some unions should not make us forget its origin. In the skilled crafts, the union card was a valid certificate of competency. It was also a certificate of acceptability as a brother in the lodge. From that logical origin, it had become a monstrosity in modern employment, certifying neither to skill nor character, but merely to payment of fees and dues. [emphasis added]<sup>2</sup>

As part of his remarks in regard to rejection of an application for membership in a union where a "union-shop" contract is in force, Mr. Heron says:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 187-8.

The union, the older workers, have vetoed the addition of that individual to the team. Their reasons for rejecting him may be sometimes bad, or petty or unfair. Even so, the basic policy at work is their influence upon the selection of their fellow workers.

Obviously, the thinking of workers on this subject would be more intelligent if the verdict were reached by the immediate group with which the new employee is to work, rather that by the more remote judge and jury, the business agent and the union local. [emphasis added]<sup>3</sup>

In the railway industry we find a situation that has no equal. The men on the job, supervisors included to a great extent, come together to accomplish a given purpose. This has been part of the game for a long while and Kirkman observes that:

A belief that the interest of employer and employe are in the main identical each day grows in strength among railway men. Those connected with the train service are no exception to the rule. Railway managers seek to cement this feeling by careful consideration of the present and future interests of employes and by leading them to regard at all times the permanent prosperity of the company as part of their being and as a matter in which they and theirs are vitally concerned. [emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

This is, of course, a common attitude found in the management of any industry. The difference on railways lies in the fact that the nature of running-trades work, as well as the method of payment for work done, puts more *honesty* into the claim of a common interest between workers and management than is the case in other industries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 189. <sup>4</sup>Kirkman, Operating Trains, 24.

#### A Common Goal

RAILROAD MEN have widely varied backgrounds. Certain people are not attracted to the work, notably the "better educated." Dr. Fromm's remarks are to the point:

... we find that there are many who would, for example, take keen pleasure in being railroad engineers. But although railroad engineering is one of the highest paid and most respected positions in the working class, it is, nevertheless, not the fulfilment of the ambition of those who could "do better." No doubt, many a business executive would find more pleasure in being a railroad engineer than in his own work if the social context of the job were different. <sup>1</sup>

An instance which tends to support Dr. Fromm's point has come to my attention. In British Columbia, a successful executive of a very large communications firm is on friendly terms with an engineer on a large railway that serves the province. During the latter years of the engineer's service, the executive seized every opportunity available to ride with his friend in the cab of the locomotive. Rumour has it that the executive is known to have actually replaced the engineer at the throttle on at least one occasion. It was a matter of bitter disappointment to the executive that illness prevented him from accompanying the engineer on his "last run" which is, of course, the crowning act of an engineer's career. Dr. Fromm's remarks are certainly very true in a general sense but there have always been and are today a few engineers with relatively high educational backgrounds.

There is one very real barrier to becoming a railroader. P.M. Arthur, one-time Grand Chief Engineer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, describes its origin. According to a U.S. Industrial Commission report, he said:

The only reason that I can assign is this, that in 1873 a delegate from San Francisco brought the question before the convention, as they had a coloured man running between Truckee and Wadsworth, on some division of the Southern Pacific road. The question, up to the time, had not been raised, and he brought it up before the convention which resulted in a resolution being passed at that convention prohibiting coloured men from joining the organization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Dr. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York 1955), 299.

I cannot assign any reason for it, simply the judgement of the delegates.<sup>2</sup>

A number of Afro-Americans did fire locomotives on the understanding that they would never be promoted to enginemen. There were also a few who became brakemen. This practice no longer continues on any line. Among the younger, more enlightened men today there is a strong feeling against the provisions in their Brotherhood's constitutions which deny this work to non-whites. Though the bars appear in the constitutions, they carry the rider which notes that where colour-bars are illegal, the constitutional provisions shall be ignored.<sup>3</sup>

Railroaders differ in schooling, religion, political outlook, manners, temper and all known variations of personality. Notable exceptions to general acceptability are tendencies toward theft from fellow workers and homosexuality. These traits are considered intolerable and if present are soon spotted. Discharge follows almost automatically. Perhaps the statement regarding theft should be modified. It is a fairly common occurrence for a yardman to have his locker forcibly broken open, and to have his work clothes taken and worn; often to the point of finality. This borrowing is not considered theft and is grudgingly accepted as part of the life. This semi-permanent borrowing is certainly never reported to higher ups.

"But he is a good man to work with" and "but he's a good railroad man." Behind these sayings stands a philosophy. They summarize an attitude which has proven satisfactory to the men who use them. Railroaders are drawn from almost every segment of society. Sons of doctors, farmers, mechanics, etc. are among those who earn their living as railroaders. Formal educational requirements are at a minimum, although lack of extensive schooling may be a handicap if a railroader is promoted to officialdom. Mr. Munson told the Meeting that:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>United States, Report of the Industrial Commission on Transportation (Washington, DC 1900-1901), Vol. IV, Testimony, 118.

<sup>(</sup>Washington, DC 1900-1901), Vol. IV, Testimony, 118.

3 Editors' note: There are no longer such provisions in the constitutions of the unions. Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from Frederick C. Gamst to R. E. Morgan, 1 June 1981, 3. In the antebellum period, blacks actually did almost all the work on the southern railroads, and even drove trains although prohibited by state laws. Later, blacks were relegated to lower positions by discriminatory policies of the Brotherhoods. Walter Licht, Working for the Railroad, 224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Editors' note: While rule books and other operating materials are written for workers having a high school reading ability, many railroaders have only functional literacy. Where literacy is limited memory can take over. In New

A man does not have to be a college graduate to be a good railroader; or even a high school graduate. Any man with a good head on his shoulders and who is capable of exercising good judgement, will ordinarily make you a good man. [emphasis added]<sup>5</sup>

Five men on a crew are not always able to submerge personality and other clashes. Some men feel quite strongly about their views and talk to their mates about them. Others are very close-lipped.

Experience on the job has taught the railroader that for the practical business of making a living in co-operation with others, the only thing required is a common consent that the job shall be done and that it must take priority over all other matters. Common agreement also decrees that no man shall strike another while on the job. These unwritten rules, that the job comes first and that no blow shall be struck, are enforced primarily by group discipline.<sup>6</sup> Very occasionally management becomes involved in these matters. The magnetic force of a common goal over-rides all other considerations and differences have to be settled off the job. The occasions when these rules are broken are so rare that they are topics of conversation and markers in the remembered history of a railway. These agreements are so well understood that breaking them will result in censure. When such a thing occurs some mate or mates will quickly draw the antagonists back to the need of the moment. As is often the case, the sharp edges of their arguments disappear with time and the conclusion is reached, "but he's a good man to work with." Here is an instance where the nature of the work magnifies a basic idea existing in the minds of most men. Simply expressed, that idea is that a man should be free to think, (and most will add "say"), that which he pleases. It would be fair to say that this unwritten rule is so rigidly enforced among railroaders that it drives home the lesson of free thought, and speech and action for the individual. Action however, is limited, for the individual must go along with the decisions made on how the work shall be done. As long as these decisions coincide with an observance of the rules

Brunswick, one railroad discovered that many employees could not read and so it established literacy courses for its employees.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 289.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Editors' note: Fighting was subject to informal as well as contractual regulation. Use of liquor on the job has long been grounds for immediate dismissal under Rule G of the *Uniform Code*. At one time railroads dismissed men who drank off the job. Today, railroads companies treat alcohol abuse as a health problem which can be controlled, but they do not tolerate intoxication while on duty. See for example, anonymous, A Supervisors Guide on Alcoholism (Montréal 1979).

there is little if any excuse not to go along. If, however, the decision made is regarded as unsafe or is otherwise objectionable because of some rule, democracy on the job provides for "contracting out." Any democracy that does not allow for action to be taken by a minority opinion group, no matter how small, is hardly worthy of the name. If a member of any crew decides that he does not want to go along, he is free to say, "Pick me up on the way back." If he disagrees with the majority decision and is acting on an honestly-held interpretation of the rules and a degree of common sense, he will not be criticized by the officials.

I have dealt on this topic for a considerable period, as I feel it to be of paramount importance for the whole of man's future. It seems to me that we can afford time to settle our personal differences, providing the necessities, (and even to a great extent, the luxuries of life), are continuously made available. When personality clashes, based on philosophy, politics or other things, disrupt industrial production, they constitute a menace to the well-being of all. It is not suggested that any differences cease to be. In general, the more similar we are to the next man, the more we are faceless, formless, non-human beings. Yet the things common to us all: food, clothing, shelter and the need for liberty, must be made secure. Within the context of our present, unplanned economy, with all its disruptions, these things have been made available to the railroader. For sixtyfive years in North America, he has enjoyed greater security and liberty than most other workers. The life of the railroader amply demonstrates that our differences can be worked out. What reason is there to suppose, assuming an even greater quantity of necessities, luxuries, and even greater degrees of liberty are available, that differences of opinion cannot be worked out amicably? What is required is a generally understood common goal. As long as abundant production of goods and services continues, we can settle our differences in a civilized fashion.

All of us know that these differences exist. Most of us rightly fear any scheme that would make us into carbon copies of the next man. I can think of nothing less likely to appeal to the average North American. Any such scheme is unwelcome, undesirable, unhealthy, unnecessary and totally inhuman. We can work together regardless of how we may disagree on so many things. Debates over religion or politics are much less bitter when held after a good dinner. It can be done; look at the railroaders. Conformists are hard to find amongst them, yet the work gets done. Whereas certain differences do not interfere with industrial production, their existence does not matter except to those directly involved in them. I am not saying

that people have to get along, or that there is any hope of being rid of neighbourhood rivalries in the near future. What I am saying is that, providing the necessities of life are available to society, the petty or even lofty philosophical quarrels can be carried on, but will have little affect upon those who are removed from their immediate vicinity.

This lesson on democratic thought processes on the job has been learned by most workers in most industries. It has been my purpose to show only that it has been particularly well learned by the railroaders and that they are satisfied that "it works."

# Firemen — Safety and Efficiency

THE ASSUMPTION OF EQUALITY allows for a certain lack of efficiency due to inexperience and even for "off days" on the part of the old-timer. There is a give and take that is not only admirable but functional. It works. Further, the assumption of equality presents a certain challenge to each new man. He can, within limits set by the unavoidable requirements of the operation, express himself. He can prove to his own and other's satisfaction that he can match up with the reasonable requirements of a reasonable average. He can extend himself beyond this average by evolving more efficient ways of work performance. His ego, however, is held in check by the unwillingness of his mates to move like machines. All the men on the job have a common interest. The drive for efficiency is given recognition but is limited by an unspoken but functional idea of what should and should not be done for the sake of efficiency. No one crew member can do the whole operation, it is necessarily a co-operative venture. At all times each man has to take into consideration the other man's idea of a fair day's work.

Some will say that the reason North American railways are in constant trouble financially is that they are not operated in an efficient manner. Of late years there has been quite an uproar about feather-bedding. To form a scientific opinion as to the cause of the real or alleged difficulties, all the aspects of the problem have to be considered. Much has been and will be written on this topic and it is not my intention to re-hash, or sum-up, the many remarks made. I shall deal only with the criticism that outmoded work rules are the underlying cause of much of the railways' troubles.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Uhl voices similar views when he says:

<sup>1</sup>Editors' note: On engine crews a "feather-bedder" is a worker who "has a soft touch" or can appear to be working. In this context the companies contended that firemen were not needed, and that the Brotherhoods were protesting their removal because they didn't want to lose members.

**Editors' note:** In the following Morgan does not distinguish between operating rules, i.e., those concerning the movement of trains, and work rules, those concerning the rates of pay, hours of work, negotiated by the unions or made mandatory by law. This confusion is in part due to the fact that work rules were often incorporated into the operating rules.

Actually rules for the most part have been painfully worked out between the carriers and the men over the past 75 years in an effort to answer the peculiar problems of railroading. A study of railroad rules, how they first came about, what needs they met, and why they were so important to the men, tells quite a different story from the "featherbedding" charges so frequently made. Most rules involve no "featherbedding" at all, yet so successful has the carriers' propaganda been that the very word "rules" has all but become synonymous with "featherbedding."

Some rules were conceived out of a consideration for human needs as well as common sense. The point is illustrated by remarks taken from a Brief — in the Matter of the Arbitration Between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers ... and the Railroad Officials ... Warren S. Stone, then the Grand Chief Engineer, said:

This is another rule by the adoption of which the engineers do not hope to add to their compensation, but they know that the application of such a rule with its penalties will work as a corrective of loose methods of calling men and getting them out of terminals ... [by] the exercise of a little foresight on the part of the officers in immediate charge, these men could be at their homes, in many cases getting needed rest.<sup>4</sup>

The rule referred to in the quotation could be called the "terminal detention rule." It was for many years the practice of railway companies to require the men in engine service to perform many duties without pay. Among these duties was the preparation of the engine for the trip and waiting in the engine while the companies made many of the preparations for the departure of a train. The terminal detention rule is a two-edged instrument. Whereas its

**Editors' note:** In this arbitration the engineers argued that their claims for uniform rates of pay and rules were supported by the fact that their work involved "Heavy and increasing responsibility," "Skill and efficiency, as indicated by length and severity of apprenticeship required," "Acute mental strain," "An unusual degree of hazard," "Relatively limited period of earning power, fixed by age limitations and by numerous efficiency requirements," and "Increasing productivity of the engineers' services." Report of the Board of Arbitration in the matter of the controversy between the Eastern Railroads and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Charles R. Van Hise, Chairman. (New York, 2 November 1912), 14-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 95-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Warren S. Stone, Brief — in the Matter of the Arbitration Between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers... and the Railroad Officials... (Cleveland 1912), 38-9.

application forced the companies to pay the men for waiting while the train was prepared, at the same time the thought behind it was to reduce this delay to a minimum, for on occasions the trips involved excessive hours on duty. It is true that there are some men today who do not object very loudly to being delayed as long as they are on pay but the great majority would far rather "get out of town" and "get over the road." When all the factors concerning efficiency are brought to bear, there is little case for revising the work rules in any fundamental way. Considering the various handicaps the railways face in terms of competition, the railways have an enviable record. The men, in opposing fundamental work rule changes, are simply trying to maintain a reasonable balance between efficiency, safety, and the vague thing, "a fair day's work."

As far as the "fireman issue" is concerned, I again refer to the balance between efficiency and safety. The number of duties assigned to the fireman varies from railroad to railroad. His major duty is that of a person whose alert interest prevents accidents. If accident prevention is of little consequence, the fireman can be eliminated. If, however, "safety first" is to be meaningful, the fireman is needed.

Some may suggest that to pay the railroader by the hour as opposed to the present method would result in having railway traffic move at a snail's pace. There are such railways and they are able to compete. The possible slowdowns rarely if ever occur. It may be that those who foresee a general slowdown overlook one of the basic facets of human personality — workmanship.

No matter what method of payment is used, whether by the hour or otherwise, it has been found that the reasonable lure of a relatively easy dollar usually loses out when competing with the desire for workmanship which exists in the average railroader and in most men. Any one member of a crew may be inclined to either extreme, perfectionism or carelessness. However, due to the nature of the

<sup>5</sup>Editors' note: At the time of Morgan's dismissal in 1964 he wrote a summary of various demerit marks which had been assessed. On steep grades in slippery conditions, for example, the options might be to sand, causing a slowing down to allow sand to be released, or not to sand, in which delay would be caused by poor progress on a slippery track. In being assessed marks for causing a train to be late he argued that sanding, was the safest way to proceed. Without sanding the train might have slid backwards down the grade causing even slower and unsafe progress. Therefore demerit marks should not have been assessed since safety was of greatest concern to management. Lefty Morgan Papers, A Brief Concerning the Case for Re-instatement of R. E. Morgan into Service with the Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company.

work and the joint responsibility, a tendency can be imposed only momentarily. The average tendency normally prevails for the movement must be a co-operative venture. Should a crew member overlook that "this is how we railroad," he can be, and usually is, spoken to more or less promptly by a mate. Sometimes the whole movement is stopped while a mate is brought into line in true democratic fashion by either his junior or senior fellows. Criticism often flows back and forth over the craft-union line when enginemen criticize trainmen and vice versa.

Those who try to prove the charge of inefficiency among the railroaders overlook the perhaps unconscious efforts of the railroaders to have machines work like machines and men work like men.

## Workmanship and Judgement

THE GRADUAL DISAPPEARANCE of quality workmanship is a common topic of conversation. Many people who consider themselves modern and "with it" say that only dummies work hard and conscientiously. This is particularly true in the ranks of mass-production labour. The same worker who performs in a very poor manner on the job will cry about a lack of workmanship if he himself is affected by it. If he has to hire an electrician or a plumber, he expects "his money's worth." Is such a man necessarily two-faced? We should consider the amount of pressure on him that makes him say one thing one moment and the opposite the next. Are we not all conscious of the even greater pressure applied to people with consistent but popular views?

Workmanship is a quality more "felt" than understood. Many studies have been made but we do not fully understand the role that workmanship plays in the development of each personality. We know some things about it. It is a very old trait in humans, it develops very early in life and it is subject to amazing variations. Some people show workmanship in only one part of their activities, with others it has some effect on almost all they do. It can become an obsession. It can be almost totally ignored. It can be just another facet of a well-rounded personality, given its place with due recognition of its importance.

What does the performance of quality work mean to those who do it? On the one hand, it affords the worker a sense of personal satisfaction. A worker performing any task sets a standard for himself. His satisfaction with his work is directly related to how close he comes to achieving his aim. As a workman's ability improves his standards rise, and that which once satisfied him will no longer do so. From a very personal angle, workmanship sometimes means enough to allow the workman to ignore nasty remarks: "'r' y' lookin' fer promotion?" — "D' y' want the foreman t' kiss ya?"

On the other hand, the performance of quality work serves as a bridge between the individual and those around him. People like to talk about their work. They talk about how they are made to do their work and how they could do it if they had the freedom to set their own standards.

Mr. Heron makes interesting comparisons between work done on the job and work done as a hobby:

When a man works in his flower garden, he is consciously or unconsciously stimulated by his anticipation of enjoyment of the beauty his work will produce. When he is raising his own vegetables, building his own home, repairing his own automobile, the product of his work is to be something he himself will use ....

... When he rebuilds the old hatrack into a floor lamp, he expects the finished product to light his page of reading and beautify his room

In the organization of modern industry and business, probably not one man in a hundred thousand will be the principal user of his own product. Probably not more than one in a thousand will consciously use any part of his own product in any time, in any form. <sup>1</sup>

A given quality in production should give satisfaction to both the individual and those around him. The balance of averages in the every-day world provides a goal of achievement that is "reasonable." The average lies somewhere between the perfectionists and those who couldn't care less. A job of work that is reasonably acceptable is welcomed as a contribution to total social wealth by those with a broad view of man's industrial activity. In the world of art no one, particularly in modern times, cares to draw a line as to what is reasonably acceptable. Some artists appreciate acceptance more than others. As far as we know, many of the great artists were and are indifferent to acceptance of their work.

There is a certain dignity attached to all creative effort. It is felt very strongly by the child who builds a sand-castle or birdhouse. It is felt as strongly, only in a more adult manner, by the designer of a bridge or building. It is felt by every human being who knows that the end results of his efforts are important to him and perhaps important to his world. Tremendous efforts are made by industry to keep this spirit alive. Most of the efforts come to nothing and for very good reasons.

The worker who wants to do a good job is caught in the bind. He may be trapped between the employer who won't permit a good job because of economics, (let's get the things out), and his fellow employees who call him a brown-nose every time he tries to do a good job. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to retain any dignity if one's best efforts are a matter of laughter. The mental health of people demands that their best efforts be welcomed without a smirk. It also demands that they be not hindered in any way from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 119.

expressing themselves fully and freely in terms of creative production in work, art, or whatever.

There can be little dignity or whole-hearted effort in industry if honest and permanent recognition cannot be given to that effort. Neither employer nor union can guarantee employment and therefore cannot guarantee permanent recognition. The employer, no matter how well intentioned, may become an employee (or unemployed) tomorrow. Permanent recognition is afforded to the railroader, however, to a far greater extent than in other industries, due to the job security feature offered by the seniority system and other means of job protection.

Unions today may have more to say than previously over who will be retained in employment and who will receive recognition for quality work. It is difficult to say how long this will continue to be the case due to the inroads of automation. There are still unions which set standards in both quantity and quality of production. To set standards which do not call for the highest quality and greatest quantity in production is to do a disservice to both society and to the individual men involved. Point two of the list shown below sets a reasonable limit on quantity.

Employer influence is more often found in the area of restriction of quality. Union influence is often evident in the field of restriction of quantity. Heron makes the following interesting observations when he examines some reasons for union policies which tend to restrict production:

- 1. A fear of the reduction of total work available, of the number and stability of jobs, through technological advance, or high productivity of workers.
- 2. An instinctive reaction against past practices where employers, through the powers they once held, exacted unreasonable amounts of work.
- 3. A desire to increase the price of specific types of work by restricting the supply of production.
- 4. An honest regard for the safety of the worker.
- 5. A sincere interest and pride in the quality of the product or service; a sense of responsibility which cannot be fully discharged without a generous provision of supplementary jobs.
- 6. A pride of craft and status which seems to demand recognition through the provision of subordinate workers.
- 7. A subversive desire to curtail the efficiency of an enterprise or an industry.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 116-7.

Workers who are not prepared to work to these standards are often made to conform through the use of scorn and ridicule. Such tactics, while useful and sometimes necessary, can create hard feelings.

Broadly speaking, however, as things are, neither employer nor the union man has much choice. Each is forced by conditions around him to behave in the manner he does, otherwise the employer would be out of business and the union man out of a job.

Production standards set by the worker for himself may exceed or fall short of quotas set by either employer or union. Locked up tightly in each man's head is his estimate of what he can do. There are certain conditions under which he will do his best. Among those conditions are circumstances where he feels that his effort is honestly appreciated and considered worthy of attention, although attention is not necessarily demanded or expected.

A desire to express workmanship is present in us all. Interest in a job and workmanship are tied together. Some people have found their niche in the world of work, some are still looking, others have given up the search. The railroader is under constant pressure to do his work in such a way that the result is a relatively high showing of workmanship. In pursuit of this, as in all other things, the achievement of balance is a mark of maturity. The extreme one way is perfectionism and the other way, sloppiness. This balance, like the other balances he maintains, has become a way of life on the job.

How does running-trades work stack up against the needs for personal satisfaction and social recognition? Rather well, I think. Recognition of effort is certainly common among the men on the job. Its performance calls for the odd tricky move that requires a maximum of judgement. It is fairly common to hear an honest compliment for work well done. The wise official knows the status that each man enjoys as a worker on the job. In general the official's attitude toward the worker tells the story of how he feels, based on what he hears or perchance sees.

Not all compliments are made sincerely. A compliment from a boss is taken with a grain of salt by the experienced worker. A railroader who receives a compliment from management will likely consider its source, for management is divided into two rather distinct groups. Dr. Cottrell provides an accurate description of them:

The railway supervisor is par excellence a railroad man. Railroaders insist that only those who are "bred in the bone" and have "coupling grease on their elbows" ever know anything about railroading.<sup>3</sup>

#### Dr. Cottrell also says:

Railroaders seldom, if ever, consider those operating the legal and financial services connected with railroading to be "railroaders."

Each of the two groups serves the needs of the market in a particular way. The lower official's complaint is accepted more or less at face value by most men. Not so remarks from the higher brackets of management whom the railroader seldom sees. The wage payment system used, plus the tradition that has grown up around railroading, combine to put the railroader in such circumstances on the job that he is encouraged to give of his best, or at least a reasonable imitation. Because "getting over the road" is rewarded both financially and otherwise, the desire to do so is constant.

Further, a measure of self-confidence and a feeling of personal worth have always been a part of the railroader's feeling about himself. Part of the text in Bulletin No. 6 reads:

Self-reliance was the main-spring of action in those distant days.<sup>5</sup>

On a declining scale, this continues to be the case. The railroader also learns what attitudes he can reasonably expect from others. Worth and responsibility are usually found together. Individual responsibility exercised within a co-operative framework is one of the outstanding characteristics of the job of the railroader. Individual responsibility is carried right through to its logical conclusion. It would serve no purpose other than to annoy an official if a railroader pleaded, "I did it because he' tole me to." Such an excuse is not regarded seriously. The railroader is simply reminded that he read, wrote-up, and claims to understand the rules. Each man is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Cottrell, The Railroader, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>James Hermon French, "Early Railroad Times." *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society*, Bulletin 6 (Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Boston Mass.), 54.

**Editors' note:** According to a note at the beginning of the article, the paper was read shortly before French's retirement in 1900 and originally appeared in *The Railroad Employee* in 1910. It illustrates railroading in the 1850-1900 period.

held responsible for his own actions and is not free to blame anyone else.

When a man is held responsible for his own actions his only protection is the ability to use good judgement in deciding what to do. As I have tried to make clear, the railroader has to decide what to do about applying the rules during most of the time he is on duty. It is little wonder then, that the saying, "The whole job is judgement" is so often heard. As Mr. Massey said:

And you can't kid me about these enginemen, either, and their judgement of speeds. After a man gets to be an engineer, he is not going to be very far wrong about the speed at which he is running. He knows how fast he is going.<sup>6</sup>

The amount of judgement used in any one day, let alone over the whole history of railroading on this continent, is well beyond calculation. It is to the credit of the railroaders that this judgement exists when we remember that the rules slow them down and their pay system calls on them to speed up. The balance between efficiency and safety is a difficult one to establish for at every moment one or the other takes on added importance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 107.

## Co-operation, Control and Interest

THE RECORD OF THE ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS of the combined forces of labor and management in the operation of railways marks their degree of efficiency. Considering the vast outlay of capital required for remodelling, experimentation and modernization, especially the major move from steam to diesel power, the record of management could be worse. As for labor, it is a matter of record that in no other field has productivity per man-hour risen to the extent it has in train operation. In this regard Mr. Uhl says:

In many ways the railroad industry's productivity is superior to that of the nation as a whole, for while national productivity per man-hour increased about 80 percent, railroad productivity for operating employees more than doubled between 1935 and 1951, almost tripled during the war years when freight and passenger traffic increased enormously.

In a study, *Productivity Trends* 1935 to 1951, the Bureau of Labor Statistics [U.S.] declared that accompanying improved technologies and equipment was an advance in the efficiency of railroad labor. "As mechanization has increased," said the report, "greater training and increased quality and skill of railroad personnel have been called for, not only to produce the expected increase in operational and maintenance efficiency but to protect the investment in machinery and equipment."

... Railroad workers, of course, cannot claim that this increase in their production per man hour is entirely based on their own efforts. The carriers point to the new and improved equipment which is now available in railroad transportation such as diesels, new rolling stock of greater capacity, power maintenance equipment, modern signals and traffic control equipment as well as modernization of office equipment and clerical procedures. Indeed the carriers in their answer to the productivity argument of their workers are apt to imply that the greater part of the rewards for these improvements should go to their stockholders.

Nevertheless, there is much evidence that the workers' productivity has gone up tremendously, even when there was no new equipment available, through the heavier loading of cars and the use of large trains, both of which mean more productivity by the men involved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 90-1.

Similar observations are made in the *Locomotive Engineer*, November, 1964:

Productivity of railroad employees has been increasing faster than productivity of workers in most other industries, according to a recent U.S. Department of Labor study ....

The railroad workers' productivity gains from 1961 to 1962 brought their average annual rate of increase between 1957 and 1962 to 6.1 percent, compared with an annual average of 4.4 percent in copper mining, 3.7 percent in recoverable metal; 3.7 percent in canned and preserved food; 3.2 percent in beet sugar processing and 5.5 percent in cement.

Iron and coal mining and gas and electric utilities were among the few industries which maintained higher average annual gains for the period.

It is expected that the increase in railroad employee productivity for 1963, when tabulated, will be between 6.5 and 7.0 percent ahead of 1962, and that the increase this year will be even greater.<sup>2</sup>

It is doubtful if a match for general co-operation can be found in any industry, despite the differences of opinion between management and men. Mr. Shoemaker suggests ways of fostering this spirit of co-operation:

No one needs to be ashamed about making friends with the local chairman on his division .... [I]f you start out from the base line [thinking] that anyone connected with labor or a labor movement is a so-and-so you can bet with confidence the other fellow thinks the same of you.

Many, if not most, of our labor people want to know more about the problems of their individual railroads .... Most of these men have pride in their own railroad; they are anxious to know more about it. $^3$ 

Over the long years, patterns of labor-management relations have developed and to some extent hardened. On a great many occasions when railway management wants to make a consequential move that affects the running-trades, a conference is held between management and the representatives of the men. Even though the wishes of the men are seldom decisive, the fact that they are asked for an opinion is of consequence in the labor-management relationship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Anonymous, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 98, 48 (27 November 1964), 5, quoting a "recent" study of productivity made by the U. S. Department of Labor. *The Locomotive Engineer* is the official weekly of the B. of L.E. <sup>3</sup>*Proceedings — Convention*, 17-8.

The ideal situation for any management would be for them to have complete control of all phases of the operation if at the same time they could get the freely-offered suggestions for the improvement from the rank and file plus an interest in the job. In general, management thinking allows for credit to be given only to themselves for improvement in product or image. If a beneficial alteration is made, it is, according to the publicity given out, the result of an idea-man or a clever executive having exerted himself. Very often this is the case, but as often it is not. The idea-man and executives do not work in a vacuum. Many of their brain waves come from polishing up a process that had its start on a shop floor or like-place. They are paid to be alert and observant, to take general impressions of industrial processes and figure out ways and means of improving them. Of late years, due to the use of practical psychology in management, the more "progressive" firms give credit to the rank and file when it is due. Mr. Heron attributes the following testimony to Joseph C. Spickler, Marshall Field & Co.:

... testified from experience that the employee trained to suggest and make improvements in his job will accept and develop more improvements than can be suggested to him by management.

According to Mr. Heron, Mr. Spickler suggests among other things that:

 $\dots$  every employee can develop worth-while ideas, and enjoys the right of expression and recognition that goes with "bottom-up" management;  $\dots^4$ 

This attitude of management is still the exception to the rule.

Management leaves the impression with the public that brains and inspiration are the sole property of the front office. Many firms are victims of their own propaganda. With the idea in mind that management alone has interest in efficiency, every attempt is made to reduce all jobs in the plant to the level of a moron's ability. The main road to that end is the removal of the element of judgement from each job. Speaking of the duties of a locomotive engineman running in Centralized Traffic Control regions, a committee on traffic control reported to the Convention that:

So far as he is concerned, he has but one simple duty and that is to observe the aspect of the signal as he approaches and obey the rule

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 174-5.

which that aspect prescribes. This is his one supreme duty; his only duty.5

A further passage near the end of the report reads:

The engineer is only supposed to do just exactly what the signals tells him to do and no more ....6

The steps being taken which attempt to reduce the railroader to that level were outlined earlier.

The extent to which control is exercised, judgement used and responsibility taken by the worker will determine the degree of interest he will take in what he does on the job and what is going on in an industry as a whole. A reduction of control, judgement and responsibility granted to the worker automatically reduces his interest in the whole operation. Management may not understand this. Perhaps they really do understand but feel that theirs is the only safe course. If that is so, there appear to be grounds for that conclusion. They have seen many occasions where workers have kept themselves on a payroll while at the same time knowing of a method of eliminating the job in part or totally. But why should the worker be expected to eliminate his own job and livelihood, thereby acting against his own short-term interest? The worker is surrounded by a world of management that certainly protects itself at all points. If management sacrifices a short-term gain, it is usually in terms of gaining in the long run.

This whole picture is what gives an apparently reasonable basis to the idea that management has a corner on brains. In actual fact, what it really has is a corner on future plans. The worker is not consulted and often not considered when major moves that affect his welfare are afoot. He knows little of the long-range plans of management or even if such plans exist. All he knows is here, now, today. Is it not sensible and logical that he should protect himself here and today, by feather-bedding if necessary?

Due to this mixed up, uncertain and unpredictable situation, the product of a market economy, both management and labor take those steps that benefit them most. In the long run, management certainly appears to have the ability to think in long-range terms, but this is so only because their control over the future, while certainly limited, is far greater than that of the individual worker.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 29. <sup>6</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 42.

A practical method of taking complete control of the actual work of the running-trades has yet to be instituted. So long as this is so, the men will retain an interest in the work, though on a diminishing scale as control methods improve. Mr. Fox is satisfied that some improvements have taken place:

The old saying is, "A terminal is a place where the switchmen rough-handle you."

I am glad to see that we, ... are finally ... waking up. We have some perfect examples of retarder yards scattered through the country now.

Here in North America is an industry that has not yet had to face, as have other industries, the problem of how to awaken an interest on the part of the worker toward his job. The words written in attempts to solve this problem would fill whole libraries. In the early days of railroading on this continent it is recorded by Kirkman that an attempt was made to use an army-like system of control.8 This and other variations of discipline were tried and failed. Finally the modern form appeared and has lasted, for it serves the purpose, at least to a point. It did not, however, evolve overnight, nor has the evolution ceased. At the moment, as has always been the case, there is a continuing difference of opinion as to where the field of management starts and ends. Resulting from this difference we see constant invasions on the part of both Brotherhoods and individual employees into the fields management considers its private domain. Likewise management makes raids into the fields that are considered by the men as their own.

Control is linked to many factors but primarily to planning and secondarily to ownership. Railroaders are never under any illusion about someday becoming the owners of such vast enterprises. For them the question is one of planning. The extent to which a worker is left in control of planning out his work has a great bearing on his attitude toward work.

**Editors' note:** Retarder yards are designed with a hump over which cars are uncoupled and allowed to pass down the grade until they pass through retarders to slow their speed. Also called hump yards.

**Editors' note:** Kirkman noted that wearing uniforms was a growing requirement on railroads and said "... the innovation was on the whole a good one and in the interest of trainmen. Men in the [train] service are governed with the strict discipline of military life."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Proceedings — Meeting, 271.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Kirkman, *Operating Trains*, 20.

Part of planning the work is deciding whether or not to go to work. It occasionally happens that a decision not to work, made by the railroader, will prevent a crew from working for there may be no-one to replace him. To the extent that this is so, his decision to work or not to work affects the totality of the work done. His presence or his absence therefore affects the planning of the work. Any worker, anywhere, may decide (at some risk), to stay home, but for the railroader the results of such a decision differ for the following reasons.

At all times a man has the sole right to decide his fitness for work. He may book "off" if the supervisor will permit him to, and if not he may book "unfit." Give and take play a part here also. Great freedom is guaranteed in being absent from the job as long as it is "within reason." As the volume of traffic recedes, the freedom rises. Being off or unfit "too much" might call for investigation and compromise would again appear. A man may also book "rest" for specified periods at home or distant terminals. While on rest he may not be disturbed without penalty except in emergency. An example of a rest clause is taken from *The Journal*. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul agreement of 1883 stated:

When an engineer has been in continual service sufficiently long to require rest, under no circumstances, except in emergency, shall he be called for service until ample time has been afforded him to recuperate. <sup>10</sup>

Little if any agreement can be reached as to what constitutes an emergency. Over the long years the companies have learned not to abuse the term too much. The men, in return, respond, many even anxiously, to an emergency call. Calls for duty specifying that a railroader shall appear as soon as possible are kept to a minimum. They are regarded as a rather unwelcome challenge and when they are received the contract provisions (or traditional procedures) concerning time allowed for getting to work are let go by the board. 11

<sup>9</sup>Editors' note: Booking off means a worker does not wish to work, perhaps for health reasons but more likely personal. Booking unfit means that the worker is unwell and the company has to accede to the request. If the reason is actually personal and the dispatcher will not accept the booking off, the worker may book unfit. This is tricky however, because if found out, the worker can be disciplined.

<sup>10</sup>Anonymous, The [Locomotive Engineers' Monthly] Journal, 17, 5 (May 1883), 249-50.

<sup>11</sup>Editors' note: Union agreements stipulate how much rest time an employee may take before being called, say eight hours. That means that

Any irritation felt about being given a short call is directed more at the feeling of obligation to make ready for duty "on the double" and perhaps having to cancel previously made plans, than at the call itself. As a matter of fact, the average railroader accepts even a regular call for duty as a sort of challenge. I do not suggest that this is necessarily a conscious reaction on his part. Unlike many challenges which face workers in industry, there is a certain honesty about the one that faces the railroader. In other industries a supervisor may approach a man with a challenge (which is not necessarily phony), knowing that should this man fail him, there are other means of getting the job done without much of a hitch. However, when a railroad official says: "We are counting on you," he means just that, and the men know it. 12 What the railroader has to guard against are challenges made to him by officials which have the effect of breaking the rules if carried out. These are never put in writing. Despite the many modern devices in use, railroading is still a challenging occupation. Is there anyone who does not recognize the importance of challenge in the field of work?

If a man temporarily tires of the whole thing for any reason, a leave of absence is normally readily granted. More often than not the Brotherhood in which the leave-taking man is a member has a say in the granting or refusing of leave. At the bottom of each seniority list are found the men who hang on, hoping for steadier work at better jobs. The assumption of equality goes into operation. In theory and practice a man can leave the social assistance rolls. on which he may have been living for six months, and go directly to

the train gets in, the worker books rest for eight hours, and at the end of the sixth the company can call for work at the end of the eighth hour. This is not so bad at a distant terminal, but since rest at home is more inviting. the worker may try to book more than the stipulated eight hours. Once "off rest" the worker can get called at any time, the only proviso is the two hours notice. After checking with the company and finding it "looks like" there will not be a call for a number of hours, the worker may try to do something personal, although a call may still come. This is very hard on families. For example, the man's rest is up, the wife wants to go out, but the husband knows that at any time he may be called. They don't go, he doesn't get called - maybe for 24 hours. At some terminals the wives organized auxiliaries and in that way were brought more into touch with the problems of their husbands (see various issues of The Enginemen's Press).

<sup>12</sup>Editors' note: A short call is one that is less than the stipulated two hours. The dispatcher begs, cajoles and pleads, and makes a case for the call. The worker who is called (if a decent sort of person!), will do everything possible to cut the time. There is also an "as soon as possible" call, which

if accepted meant being on pay from the time the call is accepted.

a well-paid assignment in train or engine service. It all depends on the volume of traffic and other significant factors. He could also spend the following year on social welfare.

The saying "I just work here" is very expressive and indicative of mood. It is quite improbable that many who use it are fully aware of its precise meaning. It is somewhat difficult to give it an exact interpretation for it is subject to constant change. In essence, the man is saying that he feels he has little control over what takes place on the job. If we are to believe what they say, there are workers who want no interest in the job whatever, other than the pay cheque. If they are not interested in the job they are not interested in controlling the job. If they are not interested in controlling the job they are not interested in the freedom which control implies. Freedom is a relative quality. After seeing the degree of freedom enjoyed by railroaders, a new man (who had formerly been closely supervised in other occupations) wonders if the phrase "I just work here" applies to this work. The experienced railroader knows precisely when to apply the phrase and when it is entirely unacceptable.

For instance, the building of a new station to replace an inadequate shelter is part of the total service supplied by the railway. Many railroaders would be inclined to say that this does not concern them. It is not normally they, but the public, who wait for trains in sometimes unsuitable buildings. In regard to that part of the railway's service, a railroader may say, "I just work here." However, in the actual movement of trains or the performance of yard work, such a saying or the expression of that attitude in any way, would be absolutely unacceptable. Therefore in the main it does not apply.

There is a direct relationship between the amount of enjoyment a worker gets from the job and the degree of freedom he has on the job. This applies to the freedom he has from supervision and also the freedom he has to control the work process. Freedom and boredom do not go together. The problem of boredom which besets industry as a whole is almost non-existent in the running-trades. Any psychologist can tell you of the danger of boredom and the personality problems it can create.

It is fairly easy to become bored with certainties. The railroader commences each shift or trip with uncertainty dogging every move or mile. There is a certain rhythm of movement on a railway. It consists of regularly scheduled departure and arrival time of trains, set times for yard "tricks" and the probability of running extra trains at particular times. <sup>13</sup> Every attempt is made by both management

<sup>13</sup>Editors' note: Tricks refer to unexpected and unforseen movement of cars or engines.

and labor to regulate those movements but it is never quite possible. The primary reason is that in the last analysis the railway must respond to the needs of an almost unpredictable market. The railways are forced to match the flexibility of competitive common carriers. Richardson records the fact that:

The railroad is the creature of its customers and it must pattern its activities to suit their demands.  $^{14}$ 

The cumbersome units used, as well as the limited number of tracks, are a great disadvantage. Still, the attempt must be made. Although there are certain advantages to regular schedules for the company, the balance must always tip toward flexibility.

The men, not facing the challenge of the market directly, push the balance the other way. The compromise is made here in much the same spirit as the many other compromises made, a sometimes bitter give and take. In all, there is some uncertainty about the certainties and definite certainty about the uncertainties. "It looks like" has real meaning. It clearly fits the circumstances better than any other phrase. The effect of the uncertainty is to dispel boredom, yet at the same time it has few visible effects on the men or their work in terms of tension.

A reasonable quantity of quality work will be forthcoming if the men on the job are interested. Interest in the job depends primarily on the amount of control and responsibility in the hands of those doing the work. The nature of running-trades work places that responsibility and control with the men.

Mr. Heron dwells at some length on this point:

If the opportunity to share in the thinking and planning is an influence to enlist the interest of the foreman and supervisor in his work, what can prevent it from being an equally potent influence on workers who have no interest in their work? Herein lies the potential which may have been overlooked. Management has definitely moved to include the foreman in the interesting function of thinking and planning. It may have neglected to encourage and equip him to include his supervision unit of workers in the thinking and planning of their unit task. [emphasis added]

## Author Heron suggests that management:

... may well learn to share those responsibilities far beyond the foreman level. They may be on the way to a new, dynamic relationship

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 216.

in which workers will take interest in jobs they understand, jobs about which they are encouraged to think and plan, jobs which they themselves can "manage."

#### Heron continues:

People working for themselves have almost complete freedom to think, and to express their thinking in their work. People working in the traditional small enterprise, not directly affected by mass employment or mass organization, usually have this same freedom. In thousands of larger enterprises this freedom has been preserved or newly created. Wherever workers have free access to information, free opportunity to think about their work, and free channels through which to make their thinking effective, they give living demonstrations of why we work ....

In reverse, the specific examples of unwillingness to work ... [will probably be found in] the organizations where workers have been firmly and frankly discouraged from expressing their thoughts about the problems which management considered its own. [emphasis added]

#### In writing of certain union demands, Heron notes:

More significant than the material benefits promised has been the opportunity to break down the hated barrier between the working province of the mass and the thinking province of the masters. <sup>15</sup>

Clinton S. Golden and Harold J. Ruttenberg tend to support this view. Writing in 1942, they said:

Workers organize into labor unions not alone for economic motives but also for equally compelling psychological and social ones, so that they can participate in making the decisions that vitally affect them in their work and community life. <sup>16</sup>

The nature of the railroader's work also provides uncertainty and a lack of boredom. When coupled together, control, responsibility, uncertainty and lack of boredom produce enjoyment of work. Those who enjoy their work feel free while on the job. Freedom provides a sense of place, worth and justice. The more a worker feels he has these things, the more satisfied he is. That satisfaction guarantees the production of a reasonable quantity of quality work.

<sup>15</sup>Heron, Why Men Work, 78-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Clinton S. Golden and Harold J. Ruttenberg *The Dynamics of Industrial Democracy* (New York 1942), 3.

As has been pointed out, railroads are operated under the eye of governmental boards. This has been the case almost since the beginning:

Between the years 1868 and 1886 more than 150 bills were introduced in Congress seeking to control the railroads. While these bills were unsuccessful, it nevertheless became more and more clear that the railroads simply could not be operated as the private domain of their owners and that they were too important in the economic life of the country to be left to their own devices. <sup>17</sup>

When it became necessary, from a certain point of view, to regulate the prices for hauling commodities, the railway rates became subject to limitations of various sorts:

Creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission by Congress in 1887 was largely the answer of the Federal Government to the arrogance of the men who managed the nation's railroads in the 1870's and 1880's. The main job of the Commission was to protect the public against rate discrimination and other economic abuses of railroad finances. <sup>18</sup>

According to the American Association of Railroads, these regulations have put railroads at a serious disadvantage in the competition with other means of transport. The North American public have become so used to the cry, "We wuz robbed!" that it pays little attention. The man in the street will only sympathize if the ill-treatment appears to him to be obvious and obnoxious.

I am not an expert in company structures or financial arrangements. Therefore I do not say that the railway companies' moans about discrimination are true or false. The public in general has come to distrust any cry that is based on an appeal for more dollars. They are very aware of the power of that dollar and the extent to which the some people are prepared to go to get hold of it. The public is both unable and unwilling to listen to endless protest by lawyers and statisticians. Whether or not the public should be willing to consider these arguments, the fact remains that they are not. Let us give the railway companies the benefit of some of the doubt. They have, after all, as they see it, the primary duty of protecting the stockholders' interests. It may be that they are getting the short end of the stick. However, for many long years in times past, they had the long end of the same stick. The importance of this aspect of business is stressed by Mr. Shoemaker:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 25. <sup>18</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 44.

Many of us seem hesitant to talk about the profit motive .... A railroad is fundamentally no different a business than ... any other kind of business enterprise in this country .... We expect to treat our employees fairly, and we are in business to make a profit. That is the obligation we owe to our stockholders. <sup>19</sup>

In our world of rapidly-changing technology, we constantly face the choice of either keeping on with the old methods which have become comfortable or pushing on to newer ways. These changes are always uncomfortable for those whose whole life-pattern may be disrupted. Society has so arranged things that there are now fewer abrupt breaks or sharp edges. Where possible, cushions are provided to ease the shock necessarily felt by workers being permanently laid off or by businesses threatened with extinction.

The question is always before us: Shall we push on regardless of whose toes are trod upon or shall we try to keep up the old ways regardless of social requirements? The case for the movement of certain commodities by truck has been well made. To me it is conclusive. Though the evidence of pro-truck witnesses may well be biased, I am prepared to trust the evidence of my own experience. I am not overlooking the conditions on the highways that these trucks create. The solution to that problem may require the building of separate highways for truck traffic.

In the supplying of public needs, logic demands that the most economical and suitable means be used. Regardless of investor or job-holder, the sensible method of transporting goods to a given point is the only one with a reasonable case.

All employers have, as they see it, a right to ask employees to campaign for support of their particular industry. It is often obvious to both employer and employee that if the industry is radically curtailed, both will have to make drastic changes in their lives. While many employers have only monetary interest in their businesses, this is not necessarily so. Many employers have committed a whole life to a fuller understanding of one industry. Drastic industrial changes have far more than financial meaning for them. Much the same applies to a large section of managerial people. Some have come all the way from the bottom and eat and breathe locomotives, toothpicks, combs or pianos. To these types, owner and/or manager, change of a basic sort may well be unwelcome.

Far more does this apply to the wage-worker. He has a routine of work habits that are a real part of him. They help a great deal to make the daily round a little easier. However, like some owners or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Proceedings — Convention, 18.

managers, some would welcome a change almost no matter how drastic. Not so the average railroader, his way of life is so ingrained. so much a part of his being, that he does not want to consider another way. This thinking was clearly illustrated by an article which appeared in the Enginemen's Press, dealing with the "runthrough" problem on the C.N.R. When the C.N.R. announced its policy of "terminal elimination" at Biggar, Saskatchewan, the men responded by "booking off sick." The town of Biggar would have been directly affected by such a policy. Mr. James N. McCrorie, a sociologist of the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union, made a survey of the situation and (the article says): " ... pointed out that railway workers frequently regard their work as of central importance in their lives." Mr. McCrorie was cross-examined at a hearing held by a government-appointed commission which was charged with the duty of recommending a policy on the "run through" problem. At the time Mr. McCrorie said: "I have a gnawing feeling that the kind of experience which the railway workers at Biggar are undergoing is beginning to gnaw at one of the fundamental values that these men hold, namely, their work." [emphasis added]20

There is a certain logic in the view that the railroader and his employer have a common purpose. The railroader knows that if he gets even a short quit in yard service he can go home before his eight hours are up but remain on pay for the full day. The employer knows that the total work required at that moment was done in the most efficient manner. The road crews know that the sooner they can get their train to the distant terminal safely, the more money they have made per hour of work. The employer, in the case of a fast run, can make greater use of the rolling stock and hence advance the interests of the company. In the past it was fairly simple for employers of railroaders to enrol them in such organizations as "Ship by Rail Association" etc. because the railroader felt that he had a joint and obvious interest in keeping the industry going and growing. This common interest was real at least to the extent that both men and companies benefitted when the work was done efficiently. The feeling of having a joint interest with their employers is, however, gradually lessening. Uhl finds the interest shown by railroaders worthy of comment:

Thus we find that railroad union leaders have taken an active part in suggesting ways and means by which the railroad industry can develop a more competitive spirit in fighting for the nation's freight and passenger traffic than it has in the past. And we find, also, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Anonymous, "CNR Run-thrus Destroy Worker Job Attitude And Morale, Says Survey," Enginemen's Press, 7, 14 (2 April 1965), 4.

certain impatience on the part of railroad labor with what it regards as defeatist, dilatory and uneconomic attitudes of many of the carriers in permitting their industry to lose ground.<sup>21</sup>

#### Dr. Cottrell notes the same thing:

All railroaders realize that there is terrific wastage in the slow change now permitted; yet all see some threat to their own position as the present rate of change involves them in new competition, both with new devices — automatic machinery, pipe lines, buses, trucks, and air lines .... Together they fight for lower taxes, for more "equitable" regulation of buses and trucks, for avoidance of wage cuts, for more adequate pension systems, and for other changes that will tend to preserve railroading.<sup>22</sup>

A deeper analysis of their actual interest will of course, make plain the contradiction of interest between employer and employee, but it is well hidden. The phrase "actual interest" is used advisedly for, as I see it, actual interest means the over-riding interest of human beings co-operating humanly with all other human beings. Such a relationship demands that industry be carried on in a scientific fashion, that the amount of labor in each stage be reduced to a minimum and that men be free to have time to find out for themselves what their capabilities are. If man's time is taken up in performing unnecessary jobs, the amount of time for free thought and experimental trips into all sorts of human activities is limited. None of us will live forever, we need all the time we can get to find out who we really are before we go.

For reasons mentioned above, we often find railway companies and railway Brotherhoods making common cause against some competing form of transport. The row over piggy-back transport is only one of a series of such joint efforts. It is only logical from the short-range point of view to make such efforts. The reasons they are not logical from the long-range and social viewpoint have already been stated.

The reasonable and rational answer to this conflict between railroads and other means of transportation is the amalgamation of much of railway transport into a single scheme of co-operative effort. It should not be controlled in such a way as to stifle experiment or local ideas of change. Rather the control should be as widespread as is technically possible with regional diversity where required. The

<sup>22</sup>W. Fred Cottrell, The Railroader, 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 92.

head office of railway transport must not have the power to ignore recommendations from smaller units.

When things are so arranged that financial reward to shareholders is not a consideration and the fear of unemployment does not ride with the railroader, we will find out scientifically what part railways should play in transportation. It may be that they will haul only a limited type of goods. It may be that only very practical men will rise to executive office, men who must have come up from the ranks. It may be that most trains will be without any crews whatsoever. In that case the railroader who wishes to work will have to retrain for other activities if he cannot "hold" such jobs that will still require direct human control. All concerned will be that much better human beings for being relieved of the performance of useless and pointless work. If it is wrong for a worker to featherbed a job, it is quite as wrong to consider concern for profit as anything but featherbedding. Neither is necessary. Both make for unhealthy mental outlooks.

### Summary

HAVE WE THEN ESTABLISHED A CASE for the claim that the running-trades offer an example of industrial democracy? Or, alternately, have we merely demonstrated a case for a somewhat slightly-less-than-complete control by management?

I think the first question can only be answered: "Yes." As for the second question, it is admitted that the twisting and overlapping of controls in their constant shifting make the enquiry difficult, but the answer must be "No." If there is doubt, logic and the weight of evidence must tip the unbiased scale in favour of the real existence of fundamental, though badly warped, democracy on the job.

Now my interest is always the study of humanity. All the various things that a man does, from art to railroading, are only parts of his total existence, both as a part of the mass and as an individual. It is now generally agreed that the conditions in which a man lives have a great bearing on his total personality. I have tried to show how the peculiar conditions under which a railroader makes a living become a very decided factor in how he thinks while on the job. Cottrell's studies led him to much the same conclusion:

Apprenticeship and working conditions constitute a specialized environment to this group [railroaders], an environment which creates personality in some degree typical.<sup>1</sup>

How then, does the railroader think? First, quickly, or he may not get a chance to reconsider. Second, accurately, for the same reason. Third, in an analyzing manner, but the analysis often stops short of considering society. I do not mean that he has no political feelings or leanings. He has. However, perhaps even unconsciously, he views a basic alteration in things as they are with some suspicion. It is my firm conviction that nowhere in any industry can be found men happier in their work. They are very aware of its many disadvantages. Few or none of these have been discussed here for any such discussion would not be of value in my attempt to clarify the relationships of the railroader on the job. Anyone may learn of the disadvantages through reading the many Brotherhood papers or talking to a railroader. In any case, they very much resemble the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Cottrell, *The Railroader*, 13,

normal disadvantages found anywhere when a person depends on a wage for a living. It is enough to say that regardless of how the job may be cursed for all its inconveniences, actions speak louder than words. It is a matter of record that once enough railroading has seeped through his pores, the railroader does not quit, despite threats to do so. Dr. Cottrell notes some of their laments:

"Get off the road as soon as you can" ... "Don't go into railroading; its a dog's life." ... "Every year it gets worse .... it's dog eat dog .... a slave's life .... not fit for human beings," ....<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Mr. Uhl quotes an old-timer:

... I've heard of the call of the wild, the call of the law, the call of the church. There is also the call of the railroads  $\dots^3$ 

I contend that there is enough personal satisfaction in the performance of the job to counteract the pull of other employment. Personal satisfaction is most hard to come by in many jobs. It has great meaning for many human beings. The fact that travelling and adventure, not to mention "good money" are parts of the work has been considered. Their attraction is granted and although they may well be of more than minor importance, my logic leads me to job control as the major factor in satisfaction.

We find then, that the railroader is a relatively satisfied worker. Until recent years, when the work-rules dispute centering on the displacement of the firemen has come to the fore, actual strike action by the running-trades has been almost non-existent. There have of course, been strikes, but when one considers that railways have always been twenty-four-hours a day industries with very large number of workers employed, the actual number of strikes has been relatively small. Cottrell observes:

With the exception of the "outlaw" switchman's strike which took place in the early nineteen-twenties, there have been few labor difficulties which led to strikes among the operating brotherhoods.<sup>4</sup>

There are two main reasons why there have been few strikes in the running-trades. First, the remarkable patience shown by the men. That patience is explained, in my opinion, by the result of relative satisfaction on the job. Second, the provision by governments of a complicated machinery of dispute-settlement. Govern-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Cottrell, The Railroader, 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Uhl, Trains and the Men Who Run Them, 4. <sup>4</sup>Cottrell. The Railroader, 9.

ments will not tolerate the vast disruption a rail strike would cause. Railroads are as yet too important a thread in the industrial pattern to permit such development.

Employers as a whole are jealous of the relationships between employer and employee existing on railways. They wish that their staffs were as co-operative. Instead they find that they no sooner escape the threat of one official strike than another looms, not to mention the threat of wildcat stoppages. Official union leaders are forever on the jump, settling an unending series of squabbles.

Nowhere in the whole industrial scene in North America is union leadership in the same position as it is in the official Brotherhoods of the railways. In the past it has often been hard to distinguish between the statements of Brotherhood leaders and those of management. As I write, a show-down over working conditions has been narrowly averted. Relative peace looms, but some very touchy issues have been left hanging on the slender thread of a weakening collective bargaining procedure. The words of the Brotherhood leaders today often differ greatly from past utterances. Their number may be up and the next step could almost be complete state control, temporary or permanent.

Many of today's railroaders blame their own leadership for their troubles. No such shifting of blame will serve any good purpose. The leadership of railroad unions reflects the precise thoughts of the railroader himself. The powerful chief executives of the Brotherhoods are usually older men, men of another era. They are hard to remove, for the Brotherhood constitutions are built to provide a bulwark for their continuation in office. In the long run though, if the feelings run deeply enough, these officers can be removed. There is sufficient democracy in the constitutions to make it possible.

No, the whole atmosphere of Brotherhood thinking is geared to co-operation with management. This is an exact reflection of how the railroader feels toward his job. Richardson explains this feeling:

[The engineer] tended to establish his own social system in which the railroad industry became his real community .... Finally, the engineer's close tie to railroading as a way of life allied him as much or more closely with the management of his industry than was the case with [other] workers .... $^5$ 

These excerpts from the preambles of the constitutions of the Brotherhoods tend to support Professor Richardson's (and my own) view:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer*, 139.

The interests of the employer and employee being co-ordinate, the aim of the organization will be co-operation and the cultivation of amicable relations with the employer, and to guarantee the fulfilment of every contract made in its name by the use of every power vested in it. <sup>6</sup>

... the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen has been instituted ... having as one of its aims the desire to cultivate a spirit of harmony between the employer and employe. <sup>7</sup>

Persuaded that it is for the interests both of our members and their employers that a good understanding should at all times exist between the two, it will be the constant endeavour of this organization to establish mutual confidence, and create and maintain harmonious relations.<sup>8</sup>

There are no similar statements in the Constitution of the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen but I have been assured, in a letter from President G.H. Harris, that:

I feel that such a preamble was never felt to be necessary since, in order to do other than strive for amicable relations in our industry, would be to do a dis-service not only to management, but to the employees we are so proud of representing .... We have always hoped for, and continually strived for, better relations between the carrier managements and this organization.<sup>9</sup>

The railroader goes along with the thought of management that railways should be left free to dominate the economy much as they did in the great days of Jim Hill the Empire Builder. Such domination would only assure the railroader's place in the scheme of things. What could be better than a secure future in a job well liked with enough freedom to try to improve conditions?

All such narrow thought from men and management, whether wilfully or otherwise, ignores the need for change. Change presses upon us at every point. This becomes more apparent each day. The combined pressure of a market economy and the technological developments attached thereto demand a reduction in work force and a trend toward monopoly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Preamble, Constitution of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, (Cleveland, Ohio 1962).

<sup>(</sup>Cleveland, Ohio 1962).

Preamble, Constitution of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (Cleveland, Ohio 1954).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Preamble, Constitution of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (Cleveland, Ohio 1939).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Personal letter, G. H. Harris, President, Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 13 April 1965.

RAILROADING AS A "WAY OF LIFE" has fostered in the railroaders two main points of view. First, a harmful, narrow, blind loyalty to old ways on the part of both management and men. Considering short run interests *only*, logic supports that point of view. Present management is dealing with present shareholders, present workers are dealing with present jobs. If neither men nor management see any logical, creative way out of their troubles, can they be blamed for hanging on? For both, the near as well as the distant future appears to offer little hope of continuing in the old ways.

Second, it has fostered a viewpoint that is creative and constructive. That viewpoint is often expressed by the actual railroader and his immediate supervisors. The two views are contradictory but so is the situation that produces them.

The only logical explanation of the railroader's thinking is to be found in an understanding of his reactions to the people and tools with which he works. All the relationships between the railroader and his job that I have tried to clarify thus far combine to create this "feel" for railroading that "gets in the blood."

The railroaders, as do workers in many other industries, draw a more or less distinct line between the different parts of management. Again, my purpose has been to show only the extremity to which this is carried by the railroader when compared with other industrial workers. The railroader's attitude toward management is a part of a set of attitudes that extend over a wide area. The railroader feels a sense of loyalty to certain segments of society: his immediate fellow-railroaders, his immediate supervisors, fellow-railroaders on other properties, the company, railroading industry, officials above his immediate supervisors, and society as a whole, in that order. Again Richardson notes this conception of being a distinct group:

The requirements of his work and the emotional appeal of railroading as a way of life developed in the engineer a feeling of separateness from workers outside his own group and even from his community. He developed a social world of his own made up primarily of fellow workers. His community became the railroad, and his fellow citizens were primarily his fellow workers. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 105.

What other line of work produces the lifetime loyalty seen in many railroaders, many of whom can remember when it was common to hear a man say, "My train," or "My engine?" It was not difficult for an engineer to feel that the word "my" had real meaning when he could look up (or down) and see his own name printed in bright colours just underneath his cab window. There are men who are still running engines on the Canadian Pacific Railway who well remember seeing the name MATT CRAWFORD proudly displayed on the cab of the engine number "unknown" while it pulled trains on the Shuswap Subdivision. The name JACK HARTNEY appeared on C.P.R. engine 2038, which engine was known as the President's Engine. In 1918 the C.P.R. posted a bulletin in which instructions were given to apply the approved design, a shield which included an engineer's name, to thirty-three engines. C.P.R. Vice-President Sir George Bury intended the application of the shield to serve as a "badge of efficiency." The practice was not long-lived however, for it caused a great deal of discontent among the engineers.

Where else can one find clubs formed around a core of experiences in making a living? These clubs are formed by railroaders. The old-timers go to them regularly, sometimes even daily. Between checkers, cards and pipe, trips are re-run, mates are recalled, blunders and triumphs of management are re-hashed and present and future railway prospects discussed. Each day millions of tons of freight are moved, thousands of passengers are carried, thousands of yards of ballast laid, mountains of snow plowed — in story. Their memories are vivid, their minds bright. A lifetime of alertness and interest is behind them. Many would love to do it all over again.

At one time there were "boomers" — men whose sole loyalty was to the industry as a whole. The tradition of the boomer is still well within memory although almost dead as a practice. The boomer roved from side to side and end to end of North America, following the rising and falling traffic volume. A wheat rush in the north or mid-west or a fruit rush in the south had equal drawing power. Some boomer employment records would drive an industrial psychologist up the wall, to a vacation, or to a long rest at home. The boomers were a group of free spirits who plied their trade wherever the need rose or a fancy called. Some of them were equally at home in either train or engine service. The continent-wide basic pattern of rules

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Editors' note: Ballast is the crushed rock beneath the ties, which must be regularly replaced by maintenance-of-way gangs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Editors' note: Boomers are railroaders who know no allegiance to a particular railroad, but who hire onto any line just to railroad.

gave them a sense of belonging wherever they went. Naturally that sense was not over-developed in the boomer but in choosing employment his actions differed from those workers who drift from craft to craft.

Modern employment practices, with pension schemes etc. ranking high in esteem, tend to kill off these foot-loose characters, although to a greater or lesser degree the boomer spirit exists in the great majority of railroaders. The subdivisions on their own property which they have not yet worked present a sort of challenge. So does the railway thousands of miles away. For these reasons they are very aware of "foreign" railways, even though the urge to be a boomer may be rather weak. Almost all trains are made up of cars that are the property of, or used by, many different roads. The advertising and slogans painted on the cars have their effect. The railroader cannot help but wonder just how much things are the same yet different on the railways whose cars are in his constant care.

Trains are constantly crossing national boundaries. At the points where the crews meet they discuss craft matters. They compare rule interpretations, time cards, dispatcher dispositions and all the things that make up railroading. They easily see the tremendous similarity in men and in general conditions on both sides of the border. They rightly suppose that they would feel very much at home in the neighbouring country.

Although loyalty to his own pike becomes a part of him, the railroader feels a kinship with all other railroaders and railroad systems. He feels a part of a vast network of similar thought that covers all of North America. Loyalty to his immediate fellow-railroaders lessens when he stands to lose a better "turn" or a bigger pay cheque. Loyalty to his immediate supervisors exists through a bond born of a common experience, a shared participation in a satisfactory, creative enterprise. Although the supervisors may wear a white collar now, they still smell smoky. This bond, of course, does

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Editors' note: A pike is a railroad.

**Editors' note:** A turn refers to the order in which jobs come in. Workers are called in the order in which they are available. If a train were very important however (say carrying a dignitary), the dispatcher might jump one worker to favour another but this is rarely done. A worker who has been overlooked can file a grievance. Jockeying can take place, however. Workers on the spare board work according to the list on which they are posted as they come in. Thus worker A, coming in from a run at 9:00 pm, would book 10 hours and be available for 7:00 am. Worker B, coming in at 10:00 pm, might book 8 hours and be available for 6:00 am and so "scoop" worker A. Usually the second worker will determine how much rest worker A has booked, and book enough so as to not be called before worker A.

not apply to those supervisors who have not come up through the ranks. Mr. Francis makes this point very clear when he says:

There is one thing that I have given a lot of thought to, have studied a lot, and that is that a road foreman is the only man on the railroad that can get out and instruct an engineer successfully. An engineer will have respect for other officers but he will not have the respect for an officer who cannot tell him how to run the engine. An engineer is a peculiar breed. If you can't enlighten an engineer, you would just as well not ride with him and not talk to him.

Very much the same sentiment applies to those who oversee the work of other railroaders.

When his take-home pay or working conditions are affected, the railroader's sense of loyalty to other railroaders on other properties diminishes though it is not extinguished. Company loyalty is more prevalent among and acceptable to the railroader than is the same sentiment among industrial workers generally. Loyalty to railroading as an industry should, I think, need no further discussion.

The railroader is courteous but cool to officials well above the rank of their immediate supervisors. There is no firm hand, no relaxation, no rapport. The railroader concedes that those in top management are not necessarily lesser men as units of an economic machinery, nor as humans, but they are not "cut-in." In the semi-closed world of the railroader the measurement of all things is four feet, eight and one half inches, the width of a standard gauge track. The needs of society as a whole are wider than that.

In discussing loyalty to a company as mentioned above, the crucial point to make clear is the precise relationship between the railroader and those who properly can be called "the company." It may seem strange in any analysis of business relationships to exclude the owners thereof from consideration. They are excluded for this is an analysis of function rather than an analysis of legal niceties. As Mr. O. L. Gray says:

Today's stockholders — they are the owners you know — have indicated their co-operation in management's program by *allowing* men who know the business to run it with as little interference as possible. [emphasis added]<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>R. H. Francis, R.F.&.O.A. Proceedings, 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>**Editors' note:** Cut in means that a person does not know how to railroad, to do the work. See note 4 on p. 140.

<sup>8</sup>*Proceedinas — Meetina.* 255.

From this it can be properly assumed that except for the interest in profit, the function of ownership seems rather limited. It is not possible to determine at a given moment who are the actual owners of a company whose stock is traded daily. From a fundamental point of view, ownership can be ignored.<sup>9</sup>

To clarify the matter of the function of ownership, let us suppose that a watch was found on a park bench. If the watch runs we have evidence that it has had a reasonable amount of care. We have no evidence that the care was administered by an owner whose main interest in the watch was to make it pay. It is reasonable to suppose that the watch has indeed had such an owner. It is quite reasonable to make that supposition but it is not conclusive evidence. If that supposition is made it is evidence that we are used to coupling ownership and cars. This has been the accustomed relationship for a long time. Another reasonable supposition is that even if the legal owner is never located the watch will continue to run as long as it is given reasonable care. One is forced to the conclusion that if a thing is to be of value, it must be cared for but it need not be owned.

Some will quarrel with the above remarks about ownership. There is evidence that we all agreed that there should be a place for reasonable doubt. Our whole court structure is based on just that. Would you like to face a court where scientifically demonstrable evidence cannot be presented or "reasonable doubt" excluded? I suggest that a place of equal importance be given to reasonable doubt and be applied to many of the ideas many of us hold about the effects of present economic relationships. Discovery is what has brought man to where he is from his lowly beginnings. Without enquiry, there can be no discovery. Enquiry begins with reasonable doubt.

That part of the company that can properly be called management has in essence three main functions. One, the selling of the company's product to the public, two, the actual, on-going management of the commodity's production and three, arranging for staff to carry on the production. Insofar as the *running-trades* are concerned, management is confined almost entirely to the function of

<sup>9</sup>Editors' note: Morgan is making the point that shareholders, although ostensibly owners, are not considered relevant by the workers. This is a question of the relationship between ownership vs. control. Clearly it is control which counts.

<sup>10</sup>**Editors' note:** The remark about cars refers to a theme of Morgan's. He argued that, if on your block there were a number of automobiles and if you were assured you could use one at any time, then you would not bother to own one.

selling and to the over-all planning. The actual management of the final phases of production is performed by the railroaders themselves. The amount of control over the job has been outlined earlier. The amount of control exercised by the men of the running-trades over the selection of permanent staff has been fully described. The only logical conclusion is that the running-trades themselves must properly be classed as part of management. As a result, the normal quarrel with management as a whole is very measurably diminished. Being part of management makes it somewhat harder to think and say, "I just work here." Being part of management provides a sense of satisfaction. Being part of management and being relatively satisfied naturally encourages conservative thought. Conservative thought brings conservative unions with conservative leadership. In summarizing Part Two of his book, Richardson says:

... emphasis [has been placed] on those environmental influences of the railroad industry which played such a powerful influence in the development of a particular type of unionism in the industry ....

In discussing further aspects of the B. of L.E., Richardson sets up a list of six items of policy. Fourth on the list is:

 $\dots$  the conservatively oriented principles and objectives of the Brotherhood  $\dots$  [included a] desire to emphasize the mutual interests of labor and management.  $^{11}$ 

Although Richardson's remarks are part of an analysis of the B. of L.E., they also apply to the other Brotherhoods. The exception that should be noted is that the other Brotherhoods have from time to time shown some slight desire to co-operate with each other for short periods, in the pursuit of specific objectives, whereas the B. of L.E. is particularly noted for its "go it alone" policy.

If we are to assume that in the near future no widespread, fundamental change is to occur in the relationships between workers, management and owners, the following development will likely take place on the railways. Satisfaction with the job, produced by its relatively democratic control, will diminish in inverse ratio to the introduction of devices that abolish the need for judgement. The more of one, the less of the other. Even now, where such devices have not yet become prevalent, arrogant, anti-partnership management is doing much to remove some of the control which has been managed quite well these many long years by the running-trades themselves. The harder such managements push in that direction,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Richardson, The Locomotive Engineer, 231.

the lower the degree of interest that will be taken in the work. It becomes more difficult to obtain co-operation from the men, more ground is cut from under the Brotherhoods and the more likely railroaders are to become union men. If the introduction of automatic devices or go-it-alone management continues long enough and/or if go-it-alone management moves far enough into the area of work control normally held by the men, and these developments certainly seem probable, then interest in the work will fade out. Railroading will then be just another job. The element of partnership will have disappeared.

Unless the spirit of partnership is re-established the men in the running-trades will take another reading on what they want from the Brotherhoods. Their review will end with the Brotherhoods being transformed from their present role as co-operators with management to the role of militant unions at constant loggerheads with the companies. The Brotherhoods will either accept the new and possibly unwelcome role or they will be abandoned by the men, to be replaced in their entirety by organs more in line with the current requirements. At that time the railroader as we know him will have disappeared.

There is no foundation to support the theory that men and management must clash at all times. Industry cannot manage itself, whether it is busy supplying a market or simply arranging the production of things because we want them. The quarrel with management is based on the different needs of owners and producers. Someone must manage though, and present day management is really in the bight. A look at some of the writings of current management should be sufficient to change the mind of any critic who claims that they are all dark-of-the-night plotters who live only to crush the worker. In writings such as those which appear in Fortune magazine, one can find many a plea for sanity in production. Another example of such opinion is to be found in The Railway Age, 1951, under the title: "Personnel Relations Opportunities in the Railroad Field."12 If one can be unbiased and give credit where it may well be due, one can find a plea for human relations in industry. However, such pleas are badly discoloured and distorted for they are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Editors' note: The author of the article worked his way from trainmaster and superintendent to president of Western Pacific Railway. In the article he argued that "There is tremendous room for improvement in the operation of American railroads ... " and recommended " ... greater attention towards the development of a more skillful, better trained, and fully satisfied work force." Frederic B. Whitman "Personnel Relations Opportunities in the Railroad Field," The Railway Age, 131, 9 (5 November 1951), 81.

fitted into the contradictory pattern of conflicting interests. Many of those writers are to be congratulated for some of the sensible suggestions showing through the welter of nonsense that conflicting interests create.

Management will always receive credit from men for reasonable, thoughtful alterations in industry. The worker will tell you that "you can't stop progress." In desperation though, the worker will try to do exactly that. He has no room to manoeuvre, no place to turn. Even if he is not in love with the job, it may be irreplaceable. The prospect of joblessness is not easy to bear and in trying to solve the problem the worker may become unreasonable.

It is a wonder that as much sanity exists in the ranks of management as is the case. Each day sees the conflicting interests thrust and parry, stab and retreat. There was and is so much of this that modern industry has had to create a special branch of executives known as "industrial relations," staffed with highly trained and intelligent people. The battleground has shifted to the industrial relations office but the sword points keep coming through the manager's wall. Though the attacks and retreats vary in size, intensity and frequency, the intelligent manager sees that the gap between the two forces is narrowing to one issue, that of complete control of production. Someday the final engagement is bound to occur. Meanwhile, the heavy hand of the state is raised to part the antagonists for fear their quarrel will wreck the society the state protects. If full state intervention occurs, the antagonists will be shackled so that they cannot reach each other. The industrial relations office will serve no purpose. The manager's fate will not be improved much. He will then have to please not only whatever be left of ownership rank, but a government bureaucrat who might know nothing of the industry. Bureaucrats often win their spurs in circles other than the industries to which they are appointed.

If management is to be allowed to show its talents, it must be granted certain conditions. It must have freedom from responsibility for establishing working conditions. It must have freedom from the sometimes irrational designs of private or government ownership. It must have equal rank with planners. It must have the complete confidence of the work-force it guides. In return for such conditions, management must show itself willing to assume certain responsibilities. It must be able to show with reasonable argument why and how it thinks a given process should be done. It must have enough patience and tolerance to have its decisions over-ruled by the work-force if a case has not been presented which convinces those who do the actual work. The patience and tolerance will pay

off in the long run for, if the management's ideas are sound, scientific and human, they will emerge triumphant. It is better that mankind stumble and reject even the obviously correct than that it be ordered simply to do thus and so. The process of learning to make decisions may be slow but it is sure, and it will speed up with experience.

Does the pattern of a railroader's thought fit here? The competent railway official is able to find the balance between the flexibility demanded by a market economy and the human needs of those who respond to it. The railroader accepts a wise decision. The competent railway official knows that most railroaders are quite reasonable men who have in the past accepted conditions that could have been improved. The railroader knows that a good official will not interfere with his job conditions except under extreme pressure. The competent railway official does his best to warn the owners of top management when they plan a move that will upset the railroader, harm the equipment or the industry. The railroader knows this. The competent railway official retires to the ranks from whence he came when bull-headed authorities become irrational. The railroader has seen that happen. The competent railway official has the confidence of the men on the job. The railroaders have a say in who becomes an official and how long he remains one.

In the manner described earlier, the railroader elects his foreman in a round-about, restricted, but effective manner. The better his number the more effectively and quickly he can change "government." In a still more restricted manner he "elects" his lower officers. If they cannot work with the men, they do not last. An interesting description of various kinds of authority is given by Mr. Francis:

Formal authority originates [from] above ... [and is granted] by virtue of position in the table of organization ... but if this is the only authority he has he is headed for gradual failure.

Power to command or act by virtue of knowledge and confidence [is based on] knowing the job ... the people, and having an ability to perform the duties involved in supervising .... [This] causes the employees to feel that the boss really knows what he is talking about ... [and] what he is doing. This kind of authority originates within the supervisor himself.

Power to act or command through the influence of character, as manifest in the opinion and respect of others. Stan Musial has ... no formal authority [over] sand-lot teams, but the boys will bat the way he tells them because of their opinion and respect [for] Musial.

Authority achieved through the respect of those who follow has longer life, but ... must be earned. No President, no Board of Directors, Superintendent or Master-mechanic can confer this kind of authority .... It must come from below, from the men. With this kind of authority

there is less need for discipline, for order giving, for using one's formal authority.

Certainly a blend of all three kinds of authority is desirable, in fact, it is the mark of the most successful managers today. That supervisor who is heard to say that his boss doesn't give him enough authority to get the job done is probably lacking in authority of knowledge and competence and authority of character as manifest in the respect and opinion of others.

# Mr. Francis concludes his analysis by saying:

A road foreman [of engines] who can sell his ideas to the men and have men come to him has a very easy job. The men hold his job for him; all he has to do is treat them right. [emphasis added] 13

Mr. Francis presents a valid analysis of authority. It is quite proper for him to suggest his solution of supervisory problems in terms of a divided authority. That kind of authority works well enough until a question arises on which there can be no compromise. There are questions, questions on which boards of directors and workers on the job are in total conflict. In such a situation Mr. Francis' ideal supervisor would undoubtedly turn to upper management for the last word. Obviously upper management's decisions are not democratically made.

It is not my intention to point to the railroader as a sterling, flawless character. That would be quite unrealistic. As men they have their share of human faults. However, as I tried to make clear earlier, we all have to live as best we may with our faults and the faults of others. The best we can hope for is to create a society that will encourage the development of the better traits and discourage the others. The faults cannot be ordered or preached out of existence but they can be tolerated and allowed to wear themselves out against the stones of science and reason. Who knows with absolute certainty that any habit is a fault? We have had many different ideas about fault and virtue in the past. If we all co-operate in supplying man's needs and desires, there will be plenty of time to discuss and perhaps reach a reasoned decision on this or that presumed fault.

As well as providing time for debate on the nature of fault and virtue, co-operation in industry has many other benefits. Certainly not the least among them is the provision of time for creative activity for each human being. Creative work is a dire need of all humans. The satisfaction of that need would not necessarily increase the supply of material wealth available, that is not its purpose. It has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>R.H. Francis, *R.F.*&.*O.A. Proceedings*, 68-71.

but one purpose, the fulfilling of the creative urge that is part of each of us. With many of us that urge has lain unused since our childhoods. As we grew up and our lives became riddled with do's and don'ts and the creative urge was forced into a back seat.

It would be safe to say that at no time is any person's creative urge totally destroyed. It makes itself felt in many different ways which are not necessarily constructive. If we try to ignore the creative urge, true to its nature it creates dissatisfaction. Sometimes the dissatisfaction is so wide-spread that it produces a general feeling of uneasiness and we get cranky and sour on life. At other times the dissatisfaction is concentrated on one facet of life and we spend a great deal of time and energy in trying to correct shortcomings such as inadequate educational facilities, poor housing, racial conflicts, ad infinitum.

Now to the extent that a man's work is able to absorb these creative urges, his attitude toward work is greatly affected. The importance of our attitude toward our work can hardly be overstressed. Those factors that go to make up a healthy human attitude toward work are as follows: interest, responsibility, pride, challenge, judgement and respect for authority which is competent and democratically elected. These can be added to or re-arranged but none, I think, left out. If a healthy human attitude toward work is to exist the work must be creative in nature, the doing of something useful, and its management must be arranged in such a way that it provides for participation in control by all those involved.

The problem of how a healthy attitude toward work can be attained in situations where the nature of the work itself is mainly uncreative (such as in mass production) has been outlined elsewhere.

I contend that, despite its many shortcomings, railroading in North America provides for more of the factors required for a satisfactory human relationship to work than any other industrial activity.

As well as providing this satisfaction it also provides an object lesson on the value of tolerance. The railroaders may disagree violently on many things but they can work together.

The railroader lives his working life under a simple acknow-ledgement of, commonly agreed upon, common sense rules. It is not obedience to the whim of authority of a small group, it is a discipline by common agreement. The very best railroader stands erect, quiet, capable, clear-eyed and self-confident.

Is this not a worthy man? Can we not so arrange our world? It is practical to do so. The first practical step is to agree to enlarge the

scope of democracy in industry until it is even more the dominant factor than it is in the life of the railroader on the job. For over sixty-five years the railroaders have been showing us how democracy on the job affects production, attitudes, and the self-reliance of human beings. They have also shown us the practicality of leaving the details of work organization in the hands of those who know how to do so, and actually do, the work to be done.

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