



ROYAL COMMISSION  
on  
WORKING CONDITIONS  
in the  
POST OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT

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*The Honourable André Montpetit*  
*Commissioner*

1966

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Seen by  
L. B. PEARSON

Issued by the Honourable Mr. Justice André Montpetit,  
of the Superior Court of the Province of Québec, in  
respect of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into  
Working Conditions in the Post Office Department.

In a report submitted today, the Honourable André Montpetit presented his findings in respect to the Inquiry he was commissioned in September 1965 to carry out concerning the working conditions in the Post Office Department.

His terms of reference were "... to inquire into the Post Office Department concerning grievances relating to work rules, codes of discipline and other conditions of employment applying to non-supervisory operating employees, exclusive of salaries ... and keeping in mind both the welfare of employees and efficient operation of the postal service, to report thereon and to recommend such changes in existing practices as may be in the public interest."

As agreed by the interested parties, two advisers were named, one to represent the employees and one to represent the Government.

The Commission began its work on September 6th 1965. It met with the Deputy Postmaster General and the national leaders of the Staff Organizations, namely, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Letter Carriers' Union of Canada, and the Railway Mail Clerks Federation of Canada. It travelled across the country from Victoria B.C. to St. John's Nfld. The Commission received 227 exhibits and heard representations from more than 500 employees or their representatives. The Transcript of Evidence covered 12,683 pages.

The Commission held hearings with Postmasters and District Directors in each locality visited and completed its hearings in May 1966.

Detailed questionnaires were prepared for the attention of the Departmental Headquarters so that senior officials would become fully acquainted with the grievances presented and would be in a position to review each problem and give a well informed opinion, bearing in mind not only its own responsibilities and authority but also that of other agencies such as Treasury Board, the Civil Service Commission, the Departments of Public Works and National Health and Welfare.

During April and May 1966 the Commission held hearings with the national leaders of the Staff Organizations and reviewed each major problem area with Departmental Headquarters.

The Report contains 282 recommendations and 288 pages of discussion of the many grievances submitted by the non-supervisory operating employees.

In his chapter on General Impressions and throughout the Report Justice Montpetit emphasizes the need for management at all levels to enter into consultation with its employees before making major changes, the importance of good communications between employer and employee, the need for good human relations and the effect of morale on productivity. He points out there must be an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding in order to bring about a spirit of full co-operation and mutual assistance. He also makes it quite clear that the new concepts are not meant to deprive management of its right to manage but rather to maintain an efficient postal service while keeping in mind the welfare of the employees.

The Commissioner reminds employees that they have not only rights but also responsibilities. He mentions that some of their demands are not realistic.

Great importance is attached to the creation of local joint committees of postmasters and union representatives to review working conditions in many fields and to discuss proposed changes as they affect each local group of employees.

The rapid expansion of our economy has created problems for the postal service. A "mail explosion" has occurred which has created innumerable problems for management. One important factor, the flow of work, must be analysed carefully right across the country since it affects so many conditions of work, e.g., hours of work, evening and night shifts, week-ends and holidays, use of casual and part-time employees, etc. The Commissioner suggests that outside consultants should be hired to carry out a study in depth so as to regulate peak load periods and even out the work-flow to permit the use of full-time employees as much as possible.

Justice Montpetit recommends that greater importance be attached to Personnel Administration and that the responsibility should come directly under an Assistant Deputy Postmaster General. He commends the Department for having had a survey carried out in this field by the Civil Service Commission and agrees generally with the findings of the survey which are now being implemented by the Department.

The Commissioner expresses surprise that little mention was made of mechanization and automation by the postal clerks who will be the first ones affected regarding job security, job classification and seniority.

A good deal is said about the application of seniority rights in the Department. The rules have been set by the staff organizations within certain limitations laid down by the Department. Seniority is a factor for the selection of vacation leave, preferred assignments, bidding on work shifts or the choice of letter carriers' walks. Because of the different methods of application of seniority rights by the three staff organizations concerned friction exists especially regarding the transfer to inside jobs of surplus railway mail clerks. The Commissioner believes that staff organizations should give serious consideration to extending the principle of seniority to cover all classes within a predetermined geographical area to allow greater flexibility and rotation between classes and between post offices. This should result in better opportunities for on-the-job training, appraisal of staff, and promotions, which should generate a better esprit de corps among all employees.

In its 42 chapters the Report deals with every aspect of major importance, such as:

1. The code of discipline: must be amended following consultations with the Unions' representatives. Fines or salary reductions as disciplinary measures should not be allowed.

2. Grievance procedure: has not been adequate in the Department to the surprise of the Commission. Essential that it be well regulated at all steps, including final and binding arbitration before an independent arbitrator or adjudicator acceptable to all concerned or by a three-man board composed of a totally impartial chairman, and two representatives chosen one by the Department and the other by the Unions.
3. Appeals before the Civil Service Commission: should be handled differently.
4. The number of pay days in a year: hope is expressed that the Government will finally take action on this matter and pay all its employees every two weeks.
5. Acting pay: should be paid after five days instead of 60.
6. Night premiums: to remain at 15¢ for the time being but to be paid to all employees (except part-timers) for all work performed between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m., without distinction.
7. Promotions: more opportunities should be given to a greater number of employees.
8. Vacation leave: the Commissioner has made suggestions to remedy the present situation whereby postal employees may wait as long as 15 years without having a summer vacation with their family.
9. Week-end work: should be stopped wherever possible, especially mail delivery on Saturday to private homes, wicket service where operating costs exceed revenue, and processing of mail unless a serious delay would occur.
10. Two mail deliveries per day: the proposal is rejected because it would cost the taxpayer over \$15 million per year with only a small minority receiving any real benefit from it.
11. Classes of mail: should exclude trade samples, and low priority should be given to householders, circulars and all classes other than first class mail.
12. Casual and part-time employees: too numerous in many large post offices; a better control must be established; the same applies to overtime.

13. Environmental and physical working conditions: strong recommendation is made that greater authority be delegated to the Department to take care of minor problems.
14. Political activities: should be allowed at all times, outside working hours. Employees who so wish should also be given leave without pay to run as candidates in any federal or provincial election.
15. Training and development: must be greatly improved.
16. Permanent personnel establishment: department must be given greater latitude provided an adequate management and financial post-audit system is developed.
17. Check of the letter carriers' walks: recommended that the present system of checking letter carriers' walks be changed and that expert checkers be employed for this sole purpose and that all 7,200 walks in Canada be reviewed.
18. Special problems of the railway mail clerks: the Commissioner finds the Department eminently fair in its treatment of surplus railway mail clerks. However, the conditions of work of the regular railway mail clerks need to be improved.
19. The Methods and Standards Division: is considered by the employees as an extension of the time and motion studies, is criticized for not consulting with employees at greater length before implementing changes. However, no recommendation is made to stop these studies since they form part of management's responsibility to improve methods of work.
20. Observation galleries: no better method has been found in Canada or in other countries to protect the mail during processing. The Department states that galleries are used only in suspected or actual cases of theft and not for the normal supervision of employees.
21. Investigations: certain precautions should be taken and are recommended.

Justice Montpetit reviews some of the major fringe benefits, i.e., pension plans, sick leave credits, longevity pay and surgical-medical insurance plans. No major recommendation for change is made

since these affect not only postal employees but also all other civil servants. These benefits seem to be as generous or even more generous than those found in industry. The Commissioner recommends that staff organizations do a greater amount of research to justify their own recommendations in order to better understand the implications of their demands.

Mr. Montpetit believes it is important that the Government carry out a thorough study on the desirability of the Post Office Department becoming an independent self supporting Crown Corporation so that it will be in a position to discuss this matter with the Unions in the light of all the facts and implications.

The Commissioner has hopes that the proposed legislation on Staff Relations in the Public Service and on employment in the Public Service (amended from its original present text) will help to improve relations between the Department as an employer and the employees and will ensure the adoption of better working conditions for all postal workers.

The Commissioner in his closing remarks draws attention to the fact that not all the suggestions made by the employees were acceptable and that in many instances he agreed with the position of the Department although he did not as a rule see the need to put this in the form of recommendations.

Justice Montpetit expressed his confidence that ways and means will be found, with the help of his recommendations, to give employees fair and reasonable working conditions while keeping the postal service at its present high level of efficiency.



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REPORT

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

INTO WORKING CONDITIONS

IN THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

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Commissioner

The Honourable André Montpetit.

October 1966

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1966

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL IN COUNCIL,

May It Please Your Excellency,

The undersigned begs to submit to Your Excellency the  
Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Working Conditions  
in the Post Office Department.

Respectfully submitted,

*André Montplaisir*

Commissioner

This fourteenth day of September,

One thousand nine hundred and sixty-six

ORDER IN COUNCIL

P.C. 1965-1590

Certified to be a true copy of a Minute of a Meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 1st September 1965.

The Committee of the Privy Council, on the recommendation of the Postmaster General, advise that Mr. Justice Andre Montpetit, Montreal, Quebec, be appointed a Commissioner under Part I of the Inquiries Act to inquire into the Post Office Department concerning grievances relating to work rules, codes of discipline and other conditions of employment applying to non-supervisory operating employees, exclusive of salaries; in doing so, to consult with officers of the Department and of organizations representing employees; and, keeping in mind both the welfare of employees and the efficient operation of the postal service, to report thereon and to recommend such changes in existing practices as may be in the public interest.

The Committee further advise:

1. that the Commissioner be authorized to exercise all the powers conferred upon him by section 11 of the Inquiries Act;
2. that the Commissioner adopt such procedures and methods as he may from time to time deem expedient for the proper conduct of the inquiry and sit at such times and at such places as he may decide from time to time;
3. that the Commissioner be authorized to engage the services of such counsel, staff and technical advisers as he may require at rates of remuneration and reimbursement approved by the Treasury Board; and
4. that the Commissioner report to the Governor in Council with all reasonable despatch, and file with the Dominion Archivist the papers and records of the Commission as soon as reasonably may be after the conclusion of the inquiry.

R. G. Robertson,

Clerk of the Privy Council.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction .....	1
Foreword .....	xi
PART I - THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT AND ITS EMPLOYEES .....	1
Explanatory Note .....	3
Chapter 1. - The Post Office Department - Field Operating Services ...	4
Chapter 2. - Non-supervisory Operating Employees .....	9
1. Postal Workers .....	10
Postal Clerks .....	10
Mail Despatchers .....	11
Mail Handlers .....	11
Postal Chauffeurs .....	11
2. Letter Carriers .....	11
3. Supervisory Letter Carriers .....	12
4. Railway Mail Clerks .....	12
Chapter 3. - The Staff Organizations .....	13
PART II - GENERAL IMPRESSIONS .....	15
Chapter 4. - General Impressions .....	17
PART III - COMMON PROBLEMS OF A GENERAL NATURE .....	27
Chapter 5. - Collective Bargaining .....	29
Chapter 6. - Consultation .....	35
Chapter 7. - Delegation of Authority .....	41

	Page
Chapter 8. - Manpower .....	44
1. Establishments and controls .....	44
2. Staffing and turnover .....	48
3. Part-time employees .....	50
4. Casual employees .....	55
5. Christmas help .....	59
6. Special manning problems .....	61
Chapter 9. - Classification of Positions .....	63
Chapter 10. - The Work Week .....	68
1. Hours of work and shift schedules .....	68
2. Week-end work .....	74
3. Overtime in general .....	78
4. Meal hours .....	80
5. Coffee breaks .....	84
6. Wash-up time .....	85
Chapter 11. - Pay and Allowances .....	86
1. Pay cheques .....	86
2. Acting pay .....	88
3. Night differential .....	90
4. Boot allowance .....	92
5. Clothing .....	94
Chapter 12. - Seniority .....	99
Chapter 13. - Leave .....	105
1. Vacation leave .....	105
2. Sick leave .....	110
3. Special leave with pay .....	112
4. Leave without pay .....	114

	Page
Chapter 14. - Proficiency Examinations .....	115
Chapter 15. - Competitions and Promotions .....	118
Chapter 16. - Discipline .....	129
Chapter 17. - Grievance Procedure .....	134
Chapter 18. - Appeals to the Civil Service Commission .....	138
Chapter 19. - Investigations .....	142
Chapter 20. - Observation Galleries .....	144
Chapter 21. - Political Activities .....	146
Chapter 22. - Training and Development .....	149
Chapter 23. - Directives and Instructions .....	156
Chapter 24. - Environmental and Physical Working Conditions .....	162
1. General .....	162
Standards of environmental and physical working conditions .	163
The implementation of standards .....	165
The division of authority and responsibilities .....	166
2. Accidents .....	167
3. Safety programs .....	170
4. First aid and medical facilities .....	173
First aid .....	173
Medical facilities .....	174
5. Equipment and supplies .....	176
6. Dust .....	181
7. Construction of post offices, air-conditioning and lighting ...	183
Construction of post offices .....	183
Air-conditioning .....	184
Lighting .....	185

	Page
8. Transportation .....	185
9. Parking .....	189
10. Smoking .....	191
Chapter 25. - Preferred Assignment for Cause .....	193
Chapter 26. - Some Major Fringe Benefits .....	195
1. Superannuation and death benefit plans .....	196
2. Accumulated sick leave credits .....	204
3. Longevity pay .....	206
4. Surgical-medical insurance plans .....	209
PART IV - PROBLEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO POSTAL CLERKS .....	211
Chapter 27. - Wicket Clerks .....	213
Chapter 28. - Guarantee Fund .....	219
PART V - PROBLEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO LETTER CARRIERS .....	223
Chapter 29. - Walks and Checks .....	225
Chapter 30. - Mail Sorting .....	230
Chapter 31. - Delivery of Mail .....	233
1. Maximum weight .....	233
2. Relay boxes .....	234
Number of relay boxes .....	234
Transportation of mail to relay boxes .....	234
Snow clearing .....	235
3. Rates .....	236
4. Parcel post .....	238
5. Second and third class mail .....	238
6. Two deliveries a day .....	240
7. Changes of address .....	241



	Page
8. Interpretation of regulations .....	241
Address labels .....	242
Mail to "occupant" .....	242
Apartment buildings .....	243
9. Miscellaneous .....	243
Suspension of delivery notification card .....	243
Enquiries .....	244
Classification of mail .....	244
Chapter 32. - Mailmobiles .....	245
Chapter 33. - Overtime for Letter Carriers .....	248
Chapter 34. - Dogs .....	252
Chapter 35. - Seasonal Changes of Uniform .....	254
PART VI - PROBLEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS .....	255
Chapter 36. - Job Security .....	257
Chapter 37. - Hours of Work and Overtime .....	259
1. Hours of work .....	259
2. Overtime .....	261
Chapter 38. - Mileage Allowance and Layover Time .....	264
1. Mileage allowance .....	264
2. Layover time .....	265
Chapter 39. - Dead-heading .....	268
PART VII - SOME SPECIAL PROBLEMS .....	271
Chapter 40. - Public Relations .....	273
Chapter 41. - Methods and Standards .....	274
Chapter 42. - Personnel Administration .....	278
Closing Remarks .....	287

	Page
Appendices .....	289
A. List of places and dates of the hearings of the Commission and of briefs submitted .....	291
B. National Headquarters - Functional Chart .....	298
C. District Organization Chart .....	299
D. Post offices grades 17, 18 and 19 - Organization Chart .....	300
E. Post offices grade 16 - Organization Chart .....	301
F. List of staff post offices grades 14 to 19 inclusive .....	302
G. Table of wages and salaries for non-supervisory operating classes .....	303
H. Position Guide - Assistant Deputy Postmaster General - Personnel Administration .....	304
I. Position Guide - Director, Staffing .....	306
J. Position Guide - Director of Personnel Classification .....	309
K. Position Guide - Director, Programme Co-ordination and Employee Services .....	311
L. Position Guide - Director, Staff Relations .....	313
M. Position Guide - Chief, Personnel Administration - Major Post Offices .....	315
N. Position Guide - District Personnel Administrator .....	317
O. Chart of Present Organization - Personnel Branch .....	320
P. Chart of Proposed Organization - Personnel Branch .....	321
Q. Geographic distribution of employees in the Post Office Department - as of March 31, 1966 .....	322
List of Recommendations .....	323
Alphabetical Index .....	357

INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

At the time of the settlement of the strike in the latter part of July 1965, which had interrupted postal service at many locations in Canada, the Canadian Postal Employees' Association (now known as the Canadian Union of Postal Workers), the Federated Association of Letter Carriers (now known as the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada) and the Canadian Railway Mail Clerks' Federation requested an inquiry into the working conditions of postal employees.

The Government agreed with this request.

On the first of September 1965, on the recommendation of the Committee of the Privy Council, His Excellency the Governor General approved Order in Council P.C. 1965-1590 quoted at the beginning of this Report.

A few remarks are necessary concerning this Order in Council.

(1) When this Order was approved the matter of adjustment of salary rates for postal service employees was resolved for the moment.

Evidently for this reason the Committee of the Privy Council decided not to give the Commissioner any jurisdiction over the question of salaries as such.

(2) Apart from this restriction, it seemed evident to the Commissioner that the reference made in the Order in Council to "other conditions of employment applying to non-supervisory operating employees" was specific enough to include those conditions which could have financial or budgetary implications.

The Commissioner therefore, considered them within his sphere of authority. He believed not only that he had the right to study these problems but also that it was his duty to do so. Furthermore, he did not believe it appropriate to take into consideration subtle distinctions between "conditions of employment" and "working conditions". He accepted these words as synonymous.

(3) Another restriction became evident immediately, a restriction which was bound to affect the nature of the report required of the Commissioner.

The Order in Council clearly stated that the inquiry should deal with "grievances".

This Report will therefore, not contain remarks or observations on all working conditions of postal employees, but solely on grievances presented at the hearings.

(4) The expression "non-supervisory operating employees" covers, on the whole, all postal employees who, while under the control of their immediate supervisors, have an active part in the receipt, handling, conveyance and delivery of mail.<sup>1/</sup>

(5) Finally, the Commissioner believed that "the efficient operation of the postal service" has to be considered keeping in mind both "the public interest" and the "welfare of employees".

In his opinion, the public, while expecting a prompt, efficient and reliable postal service throughout the country, would not want this to be done at the expense of the postal employees.

Before the selection and appointment of the Commissioner, it had been agreed that while he alone would assume responsibility for the Report, he would be assisted in the performance of his duties by two advisers, one appointed by the Government and the other by the three staff organizations mentioned above.

Mr. Paul A. Faguy, at the time Director General of the Emergency Measures Organization, and Mr. Roméo Maione, then Assistant Director of International Affairs of the Canadian Labour Congress and now with the United Steelworkers of America, (Toronto) were appointed.

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<sup>1/</sup> Additional information on the composition and duties of these employees will be found in Chapter 2 of this Report.

The Commissioner would be remiss in not saying here and now how much he appreciated the unfailing help received from his advisers.

We worked together as a team and they both played a very active role in the inquiry. They always displayed sincerity and impartiality and the Commissioner profited greatly from their opinions, advice and experience.

Our most sincere thanks and gratitude to both of them.

The Commission began its work on September 6, 1965.

After a few preliminary meetings with the Deputy Postmaster General and a number of national officers of the staff organizations concerned, we travelled across the country and listened to all the representatives of the local branches of these organizations who wished to be heard.

In every town visited, we took the opportunity to meet the District Directors and the Postmasters of the area to discuss some of the problems or grievances submitted.

This part of the Commission's inquiry was concluded on March 18, 1966.<sup>1/</sup>

This procedure enabled the largest possible number of employees to state their points of view through their representatives or delegates.<sup>2/</sup>

However, it also gave rise to a problem: if several of the complaints made were similar or related, the remedial action suggested differed sometimes from one district or locality to another.

During the most recent meetings the Commission held with the national officers of the staff organizations,<sup>3/</sup> we attempted to obtain a firm statement of their position wherever there were differences of opinion.

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<sup>1/</sup> Appendix A lists the localities where the Commission held hearings, and the branches of the staff organizations which made presentations and of the briefs received.

<sup>2/</sup> More than 500 employees appeared before the Commission and the Transcript of the Evidence takes up more than 12,500 pages.

<sup>3/</sup> April 12, 13, 14, 1966.

We were not completely successful!

To ensure a complete study of all aspects of the problems, the Commission sent the departmental headquarters detailed questionnaires covering 65 different problem areas. This gave the Department time to reflect on each major problem and consult within the Department or with the control agencies. This technique was found, by all concerned, to be most useful.

During the weeks of March 28, April 18, May 9 and 16, the Commission, having received written replies to the questionnaires, reviewed all these subject matters with departmental headquarters.

Departmental headquarters stated its viewpoint openly and without the least bit of reticence on the significant problems raised by the employees. From time to time, as expected, it had to take into consideration that in the government hierarchy some policies and solutions are not within the control of the Post Office Department but rest with Parliament, the Cabinet, Treasury Board, the Civil Service Commission or even with another department.<sup>1/</sup>

The Commission then scrutinized all briefs, evidence, exhibits and information obtained. Here again it was a team effort.

The Commissioner and his two advisers analysed the viewpoints of all concerned in complete freedom. The advisers took a definite stand on each problem and informed the Commissioner accordingly as was their duty to do so.

As mentioned earlier, this Report must not be interpreted as reflecting the opinions either of Mr. Faguy or of Mr. Malone.

The Commission considered carefully the desirability of hiring outside consultants to help in arriving at more specific and detailed recommendations.

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<sup>1/</sup> The Commission discusses this aspect in greater detail in Chapter 4, "General Impressions".

It rejected this possibility because it became convinced that its role was to give an outline of the basic principles which, it believed, should be adopted by the Department, which should then see to their application in accordance with the most effective procedures.

At this point, the Commissioner would like to make two points quite clear.

(1) In some quarters, the Commission was criticized for having held private meetings and having sat in camera.

This decision was not unilateral but was taken with the consent of the interested parties, i.e., the national officers of the staff organizations, the Deputy Postmaster General and the Commission itself.

As the inquiry progressed, this stand proved to be both wise and useful. In order to carry out successfully an inquiry such as this, unique in its nature, the Commission had to let each person express himself in his own way. It was a golden opportunity to "get it off one's chest".

This certainly would not have been the case if every statement and remark had been written up in a newspaper or broadcast on the radio or television. One had to keep in mind that certain working conditions could involve individuals. On many occasions this was the case.

Some were surprised that the Commissioner allowed employees to present grievances or make suggestions which exceeded the Commissioner's mandate.

The latter readily admits that such was the case, but in turn is surprised that this attitude was questioned. After all, an inquiry is not a trial.

The Commissioner did not believe it to be his duty, while listening to the remarks and demands of all types of employees, to raise objections on his own authority and then settle the matters himself. He assumed that people would trust



him enough to know that, in his recommendations, he would confine himself strictly to the terms of reference of the Order in Council while allowing himself to make a few comments on questions exceeding his jurisdiction.

(2) The second clarification deals with quite a different matter.

During an interview with the Deputy Postmaster General, in September 1965, the latter stated that the Department had undertaken in recent months, or would soon undertake, a review of a number of specific problems affecting working conditions of employees. This review might, within a short period, mean modifications or changes to which the employees would probably react favourably.

We discussed, among other things, the implementation of new policies dealing with examinations, discipline and the grievance procedure.

The Commission enthusiastically welcomed these proposals and fully supported, beforehand, the adoption of any reform which would result in the improvement of the employees' working conditions.

Consequently, in several chapters of this Report, reference will be made to these new policies which are prompted by a firm resolution of the Department to improve its management practices in all possible fields. We leave it to others to decide whether or not the work done and the discussions held have influenced departmental headquarters in making further progress along these lines.

Before closing this introduction the Commissioner wishes to thank especially Mrs. Helen Roney, the Commission's secretary, for her zeal, devotion and kindness, and Mr. William J. Parker, whose services were made available by the Department of National Defence and whose studies, research, and work greatly facilitated the Commission's task.

In these acknowledgments we must mention the Royal Commission on Health Services in whose offices the Commissioner and his advisers worked for ever

twelve months and its staff who, under the direction of Mrs. Jessie Armstrong, have been most helpful. We must also mention Mrs. Suzanne Richard who acted as my private secretary.

The Commission was well received wherever it went and was always treated with great consideration. We could always rely on the unfailing cooperation and assistance of the representatives of the staff organizations concerned, of the Post Office administrative staff at all levels, and also of officers belonging to other departments, commissions and boards.

FOREWORD

## FOREWORD

Near the end of April and during the month of May 1966, the Government tabled four Bills. The first one in particular is of paramount importance to postal employees and all civil servants.

We are referring to Bills C-170 ("Public Service Staff Relations Act"), C-181 ("Public Service Employment Act"), C-182 ("An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act ") and S-35 ("Canada Labour (Safety) Code").

We obviously cannot ignore these Bills. On the other hand, at this time, we must admit openly that these Bills leave us rather perplexed.

It is very unlikely that they will be adopted as submitted. As we all know, Parliament entrusted a parliamentary committee with the preliminary study of these Bills. This committee is inviting staff organizations and employees' unions to appear. It is more than probable that having heard these groups and the appropriate government agencies, the committee will submit recommendations, some of which will mean amendments to the proposed Bills.

We cannot foresee the nature and extent of these amendments and since we do not wish to delay the presentation of our Report unduly, we have decided to refer to these Bills in our Report in their present form.

This approach will mean that the reader must be on his guard. Maybe some of our remarks may prove unnecessary or even erroneous because of amendments accepted before the final adoption of these Bills. We have no choice in the matter.

Whatever happens, these new Acts will inevitably change the background and atmosphere of staff relations in the public service in general and in the Post Office Department in particular. We not only stress this several times in the Report but also submit recommendations which perhaps Parliament will be good enough to consider.

PART I

THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

AND ITS EMPLOYEES

## PART I

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

For a clear understanding of this Report and of the accompanying recommendations, but without losing sight of the limited scope of the Commission's mandate, Chapter 1 is devoted to a brief summary of the framework and structure of the field operating services which the Department has set up across the country to meet its commitments.

Chapter 2 deals with the duties of the non-supervisory operating staff inside this framework and structure. There again we shall not go into detail since in other parts of the Report we shall have to discuss many special aspects of the work of these employees.

Chapter 3 says something about the different organizations to which employees belong.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

#### FIELD OPERATING SERVICES

Section 3 of the Post Office Act<sup>1/</sup> reads as follows:

"There shall be a department of the Government of Canada called the Post Office Department, with headquarters at Ottawa, over which the Postmaster General appointed by commission under the Great Seal of Canada shall preside."

Section 4 adds:

"(1) The Governor in Council may appoint an officer called the Deputy Postmaster General, who is the deputy head of the Department and holds office during pleasure.

(2) Such other officers, clerks and employees as are necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the Department shall be appointed or employed in the manner authorized by law."

Sections 5 and 6 deal respectively with the powers of the Postmaster General to administer, superintend and manage the Canada Post Office and with the regulations he may make for its efficient operation as well as for carrying the purposes and provisions of the Act into effect.<sup>2/</sup>

Thus, -- and we could not express it any better in so few words, --

"The operations of the Post Office are many and varied -- forwarding personal and business correspondence, distributing information, transporting goods, facilitating financial settlements, widespread distribution of advertising and promotional material, and other services. These familiar tasks, woven into the fabric of our daily existence, affect local life, social interests and business operations in every neighbourhood. The Post Office, in performing them, is more than a vast public utility. It is a unifying force throughout the country."<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> R.S., 1952, c. 212, as amended.

<sup>2/</sup> In other parts of the Report we shall quote from these two sections.

<sup>3/</sup> The Royal Commission on Government Organization, Volume 3, Report 17, The Post Office, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962, p. 309.

To fulfil its responsibilities the Department has set up an internal and field organization well structured at the central<sup>1/</sup> as well as at the district<sup>2/</sup> and local levels.<sup>3/</sup>

First, let us look at the field operating services to which the non-supervisory operating staff belong.

These services are under the immediate control of the Assistant Deputy Postmaster General who "Conducts the normal field operation of the postal service to the Public".

He is "Responsible for the formulation of policies, procedures and regulations pertaining to the establishment, management, operation, maintenance and closing of Post Offices, Postal Stations, Postal Agencies, Sub Post Offices and Postal Routes".

He also has the responsibility to "Ensure that postal authorities in the field operate within these policies, procedures and regulations and that assistance is provided when required".<sup>4/</sup>

His principal assistant in this field is the director of postal service.

Together, with the help of various superintendents, they assume responsibility for services such as "Service Requirements", "Delivery Requirements", "Methods and Standards", "Quality Control", "Organization and Establishment", etc.<sup>5/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>2/</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3/</sup> See Appendices D and E.

<sup>4/</sup> Canada Post Office, Personnel Manual, Vol. 2, "Organization".

<sup>5/</sup> See Appendix B.



The Department has divided the country into 14 districts, four in the Province of Ontario, two in each of the Provinces of Quebec and Alberta and six in the seven remaining provinces.<sup>1/</sup>

Heading each district is a director responsible for the management and operation of the postal service in the area under his jurisdiction. He must operate within departmental policies, directives and regulations.

He directs all activities relating to the handling of mail and its transportation. He develops certain practices and procedures or submits proposals for changes in policies to Headquarters. He manages the supporting services such as administration, investigations, personnel and public relations.

In other words, the director develops and maintains the necessary controls over all aspects of the postal service in his district.

A director has several immediate assistants at the district headquarters.<sup>2/</sup>

In each district there are a number of staff post offices, postal stations, semi-staff post offices, revenue post offices, sub post offices.

The staff post offices are the most important. There are approximately 375 in Canada, divided into 11 grades (grades 9 to 19) according to the work load, the postal revenue, the requirements of the postal service, etc.

Each of these post offices is headed by a postmaster who, except in the case of staff post offices grades 19, 18 and 17, reports to the district director.<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The Province of Prince Edward Island is included in the New Brunswick district.

<sup>2/</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3/</sup> Five cities amongst the staff post offices enjoy a special status. These are Montreal and Toronto (grade 19), Vancouver (grade 18), Winnipeg and Ottawa (grade 17).

These post offices do not come under the jurisdiction of the district director of their areas. Each one is autonomous and is managed by a postmaster who reports directly to the Assistant Deputy Postmaster General. This postmaster has also immediate assistants who work at the main city post office. See Appendix D.

The Semi-staff Post Offices number approximately 1,400. They are classified into groups (31 to 34 inclusive) determined by the volume of work and, to some extent, revenue. These are also managed by a Postmaster.

Revenue Post Offices are those where the revenue does not normally exceed \$3,000 per year. They make up groups 1 to 30 inclusive. There are about 6,655 of them. The postmasters of these post offices are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Post Office Act and their salaries depend on the revenues of these post offices.

The person in charge of a Sub Post Office usually operates another business at the same time. Sub Post Offices are considered to be branches of a main Post Office and there are about 2,249 of them. The Postmaster General appoints the person in charge, who is often called a "Sub Postmaster". He is paid a commission out of postal revenue.

The employees of Revenue and Sub Post Offices are hired and paid by the person for whom they work. They are not part of the non-supervisory operating staff dealt with in this Report.

This short summary would be incomplete if we did not point out that in certain areas of the country the Department still operates railway post offices. This service is performed by railway mail clerks who belong to the group with which we are concerned.

Besides the field operating services it should be noted, because it will be referred to several times, that the Department has a personnel service managed by a director who reports directly to the Deputy Postmaster General.

This directorate is divided into various sections such as "Employment", "Staff Development and Training", "Headquarters Personnel Office" and "Pay and Benefits".<sup>1/</sup>

These few remarks are sufficient to illustrate to what extent the Post Office Department, under existing circumstances, has had to be set up like a large business concern with offices or branches scattered throughout the country.

Therefore, the Post Office, as a Department, has truly a special status which explains to a high degree the problems referred to our Commission.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Appendix B, and the Canada Post Office, Personnel Manual, Vol. 2, "Organization".

## CHAPTER 2

### NON-SUPERVISORY OPERATING EMPLOYEES

A number of classes of employees are included in this category.

(1) There are the postal clerks. Under this general term, we group postal clerks 1 and 2, mail despatchers, mail handlers and postal chauffeurs. These employees together number approximately 12,200.

(2) There is the letter carrier group which, including supervisory letter carriers,<sup>1/</sup> totals approximately 10,400.

These postal clerks and letter carriers work in staff post offices.<sup>2/</sup>

(3) Railway mail clerks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 still carrying out postal service in railway post offices number approximately 350.

(4) There are some 129 maintenance workers and 3,100 part-time employees who, in staff post offices, carry out some of the duties of postal clerks or sometimes of letter carriers.

Therefore, in the field operating services these non-supervisory operating employees make up a staff of more than 26,150 people.

(5) To this total must be added the so-called "casual" employees who work in staff post offices as postal clerks or letter carriers and whose number varies from month to month and reaches approximately 1,000.

All of these non-supervisory operating employees are of course governed by the Post Office Act but only the postal clerks, letter carriers, railway mail

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<sup>1/</sup> Hereafter, unless otherwise indicated, we shall not specify that the term "Letter Carriers" includes "Supervisory Letter Carriers".

<sup>2/</sup> 65% work in post offices, grades 14 to 19. See Appendix F.

clerks and maintenance employees are civil servants, coming under the provisions of the Civil Service Act.

Likewise, only the above-mentioned categories, as well as part-time employees, are considered as being in the regular employment of the Department on a permanent basis.<sup>1/</sup>

Briefly, the duties of postal clerks, letter carriers and railway mail clerks, and the main qualifications required to perform the duties, are as follows:

1. Postal Workers

Postal Clerks

Postal clerks receive, sort and forward the mail.<sup>2/</sup> As required, they handle mail bags.

Sorting and forwarding duties require special knowledge on the part of the postal clerk. He has to memorize a great many mail destination points. Most of this knowledge must be on an instant recall basis because he is expected to work at such a speed that he does not really have time to ponder or refer to the printed information made available to him.

Some postal clerks work as wicket clerks. They are in daily contact with the public. They carry out various financial transactions with which they must be familiar and for which they are accountable.<sup>3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The problems raised by postal clerks and letter carriers concerning part-time and casual employees are considered in the Report.

<sup>2/</sup> The word "mail" as used here and subsequently must be understood in an extremely broad sense. Thus, it includes all categories of letters, packages or parcels of various dimensions, newspapers, periodicals, magazines, pamphlets, folders, and even circulars and samples.

<sup>3/</sup> The distinctions made by the Department between the duties of postal clerks 1 and 2 are discussed in Chapter 9.

### Mail Despatchers

Mail despatchers are responsible for the loading of mail bags in their proper sequence and in accordance with a schedule drawn up for the forwarding of mail bags by a direct or indirect route. They also look after the unloading of these bags. They must have a thorough knowledge of distribution and know something about timetables and points of connection. They normally supervise staffs of different sizes. They maintain records and write reports.

### Mail Handlers

Mail handlers help despatchers load and unload mail bags. In sections other than the despatching section, they receive, open and empty bags. They move mail trollies and binnies. When required, they perform what the Department calls "simple" sorting duties.

### Postal Chauffeurs

Postal chauffeurs <sup>1/</sup> operate post office vehicles. They load and unload them. They deliver mail, particularly parcels of certain dimensions which are not carried by letter carriers. Postal chauffeurs place mail in the relay boxes along letter carrier routes and make letter box collections.

## 2. Letter Carriers

Before starting out on their walks letter carriers prepare mail for delivery according to the line of travel indicated. This requires them to handle mail bags, to sort the mail into a case by placing it in order of delivery, to bundle and tie it, to list registered items and to take out, before leaving, the C.O.D.'s and shortpaid mail. They must then deliver their mail from door to door, obtain if necessary receipts or collect the amounts due according to the

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<sup>1/</sup> There remain only 36 full-time postal chauffeurs. The Department now makes use of the services of independent contractors who have their own employees.

nature of the mail. They are accountable on a daily basis for this mail.

### 3. Supervisory Letter Carriers

Supervisory letter carriers replace letter carriers on their rotation days off or replace those on annual, sick or special leave. As required, they check letter carrier walks and write reports accordingly. Sometimes they supervise a group of letter carriers or assist with the training of inexperienced employees.

In their daily work, postal clerks and letter carriers come under the supervision and immediate orders of postal officers 1, 2 or 3 who, one might say, are their foremen.

### 4. Railway Mail Clerks

Generally speaking and without making any distinctions with regards to classification grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, railway mail clerks load and unload mail bags and carry them between the storage and the postal trucks. In the railway post offices they open and dump bags, cancel, sort and tie up the mail according to one or more procedures. They distribute all or part of this mail along the route. At the railway stations they take possession of other incoming mail and give it the same treatment so as to be able to deliver it to in-between points en route or at the terminals. They keep records of mail received and forwarded.

From this summary we conclude that the non-supervisory operating employees of the Post Office Department, except for mail handlers who do not sort mail, carry out work which may be classed as semi-skilled and which it is difficult to compare with any other work in the civil service, industry or business.

This conclusion will become even more obvious as we discuss the conditions under which these employees carry out their daily work.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> See Appendix G for a table of salary rates and scales of these employees as of the 1st August, 1965.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE STAFF ORGANIZATIONS

The vast majority of postal employees referred to in the preceding chapter belong to unions. However, they do not all belong to the same staff organization.

Thus, usually, most of the postal clerks in Staff Post Offices and some assistants in Semi-staff Post Offices are members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

As of June 1966, this Union had a membership of 11,400, or approximately 93% of the potential membership. These members are divided into 520 separate locals.

The vast majority of letter carriers are members of the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada.

In June 1966, this Union numbered 8,871 members out of a possible 10,400, or slightly more than 85% of the potential. These members are divided into 187 separate locals.

For some time now neither the Canadian Union of Postal Workers nor the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada has accepted into its ranks Postal Officers grades 1, 2 and 3 and part-time or casual postal employees.

Most railway mail clerks are members of the Canadian Railway Mail Clerks' Federation. Also included are some surplus railway mail clerks who are now employed in some other capacity.

These three organizations are affiliated with the Canadian Labour



Congress. In addition, the Canadian Railway Mail Clerks' Federation is affiliated with the Civil Service Federation of Canada, whose representatives appeared before the Commission on May 19, 1966.

The national officers of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada and the Canadian Railway Mail Clerks' Federation have formed a joint committee named the "Postal Workers' Brotherhood". This should help them to present a united front in the forthcoming negotiation of collective agreements with the Department.

There are also about 1,000 postal clerks, mail handlers, letter carriers, part-time or casual employees who have retained their membership in the Civil Service Association of Canada from which the Commission received representations.

In Montreal and Quebec at the beginning of 1966, a group of part-time employees organized a local of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Before concluding, it should be noted that the president of a sixth organization, i.e., the Canadian Postmasters' Association, met the Commission at Regina, Saskatchewan. It is mostly composed of rural postmasters and assistants attached to semi-staff post offices.

The problems raised by this Association exceed the terms of reference of the Commission's mandate and cannot be included in any recommendation made by the Commission.

We hope that the Post Office Department will, as soon as possible, find the time and the means to look into the problems of the rural postmasters and their assistants and to solve them if possible.

PART II

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

## CHAPTER 4

### GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

(1) A large number of the post office employees' grievances are, first and foremost, human relations problems.

Except in one or two districts, the attitude of some supervisors and postmasters towards their employees leaves much to be desired. These people have only a vague notion of the importance of maintaining good relations with their staff. This is one of the main reasons why the national leaders of the staff organizations do not share the opinion expressed in the Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization that "morale is very high" in the Post Office Department.<sup>1/</sup>

The action of those in authority has and always will have a tremendous influence on the reactions of employees and on their productivity. Complaints arising from their behavior can be sometimes difficult to explain, but real or imaginary, they should be studied carefully and the necessary remedies applied or explanations given to reduce the seriousness of misunderstandings or to clear them up.

We heard too often of postmasters or supervisors who consider themselves almost infallible or who, under the pretext of maintaining at any cost their conception of order and discipline, obstinately refuse to change any decisions taken at a lower level.

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<sup>1/</sup> Volume 3, Report 17, paragraph 17, p. 342.

The forthcoming collective bargaining will only increase the implications and consequences of the sayings and doings of all supervisors at every administrative level. It will be important to think much more carefully before taking action in order to avoid provoking too many recourses to the grievance procedure, and creating unnecessary difficulties and troubles for headquarters.

Hence a well-conceived policy of consultation and of exchange of viewpoints at all levels becomes essential.<sup>1/</sup> The dialogue must not become a mere formality to which one has to submit and which is considered more or less a waste of time or mere idle chatter. Nor must it become a one-sided conversation. One is not taking part in the dialogue if he refuses to consider the pros and cons of another person's opinions and persists in seeing only his own viewpoint. In other words, it is essential that there be absolute good faith on both sides and that it be expressed in a climate of frankness and loyalty without fear of reprisals.

A senior member of the Whitley Council in the United Kingdom said: "When in doubt consult!". We would hasten to add: "Do not hesitate to have doubts". The same person also said that for every act of negotiation there are ten of consultation.

We are firmly convinced that a well-conceived method of communication between the administration and the national, regional and local leaders of the staff organizations and also between supervisors and employees will create eventually in the Department an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding and ensure a spirit of co-operation and helpfulness which will benefit everyone.

Such a policy will help to raise the employees' morale. It is a well known fact that good morale increases efficiency and productivity, is thought provoking, that it stimulates initiative, and brings more satisfaction in the fulfilling of responsibilities.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 6, "Consultation", for specific recommendations.

The Department did not conceal its concern over morale. It was quite evident that it did not wish to spare any effort to have the Department adjust itself to new concepts of co-operation.

These new concepts are not meant to deprive management of its right to manage. They are conducive instead to ensuring the full co-operation of all of the staff in the improvement of working conditions and the maintenance of an efficient postal service.

We hope that the Department will succeed in convincing its district directors, postmasters and supervisory staff not only to accept these concepts, but also to put them into practice without reservations. It is true that the anticipated results will be obtained only if each and everyone, in every field service, makes an effort to accept them. Instructions and directives are somewhat like laws: however good and progressive they may be, they are often only as good as the people who have been entrusted with their enforcement.

Also, we hope that the employees' representatives will prove to be willing to participate in this evolution already started. These representatives have not only rights but also duties and responsibilities. Some are rebelling to the point that they are alarmingly unwilling to compromise. In everyone's best interest, they will have to learn to be more conciliatory, more understanding, and more reasonable. They will change their attitude if they have the very definite impression that they are receiving all the consideration they are entitled to as employees' representatives. There are always two sides to a coin. And if there is any area where it is important to know when to make allowances, and agree, at the opportune moment, to acceptable compromises, it is in the field of consultation, especially when it is inspired by a true desire to co-operate.

We believe that under these terms staff relations in the Department will become what they ought to be, and that the Department, together with the staff organizations and the employees themselves will ensure that they remain cordial and frank.

(2) We were impressed with the difficulties which the Department often faces, depending on the nature of the working conditions. It is not always master of the situation. Solutions sometimes are not within its control. This type of situation is not very helpful in its relations with employees.

These employees are among a large group of civil servants and, as such, are subject to certain Statutes which fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament and over which the Department has no control. This legislation affects several aspects of the terms and conditions of employment of these civil servants and binds the Department to such an extent that it cannot either ignore them or modify them to meet needs which are reasonable or even desirable, as far as it is concerned. Also, the Department does not have the authority necessary to satisfy its employees' requests on matters which are governed by the Civil Service Commission, Treasury Board, any other department, or central agencies.

This is the price the Department has to pay when a system remains at the same time centralized and decentralized. This is too often the cause of frustrations and employees complain bitterly every time their employer is forced to stand aside and leave the responsibilities to others.

(3) It must be recognized, however, that there is a vast sphere of activities where the Department has complete control. It can be credited with excellent achievements and plans which show promise. On the other hand, there are quite serious gaps which should be corrected without delay.

a) In line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, the Department has, for the last two or three years, been attempting to keep up with the times and to utilize modern management techniques. Accordingly, Headquarters has delegated many of its responsibilities and authorities to district directors and postmasters. These in turn have delegated to their immediate assistants, and others in lower positions, duties and responsibilities which they had never assumed before. In fact, the Post Office Department has adopted a far more advanced decentralization policy than many other departments.

This policy was and still is sound. However, such a drastic change of attitude was not accomplished smoothly and without difficulties, especially since several members of the management staff in the field did not have enough training to assume these duties on short notice. The Department had two choices: either wait until everyone could carry out his new duties in an almost perfect manner and thus delay the long-term program -- or put it into practice immediately and take the risk of having to correct inevitable hitches of varying degrees of importance. The Department chose the better alternative.

b) Other important factors came into play.

The rapid expansion of our country has had repercussions on the whole postal service; the almost unforeseeable increase in the volume of mail, the rapid development of several large centres, the movement of population, the necessary recourse to more modern means of transportation, the difficulties of recruiting labour in some places, the competition of large industries with regards to wage levels and general working conditions, the increase in night work, the make-up of a larger number of shifts at unusual hours, etc.

All of these factors have influenced the Department's day to day relations with its employees. They caused certain problems to which the Department did not always give serious consideration because it did not care to agree to any concession which might affect in any way the speed and efficiency of the postal service.

If we had to explain this conduct we would be inclined to ascribe it to a state of mind rather than to a considered and intentional policy. There are some senior employees in the higher grades in the Department who have been promoted from the ranks but still have the attitudes which were prevalent at that time. They did not keep up with the times and, consciously or unconsciously, they refuse to do so. They are living in the past. They have a decided tendency to sacrifice the morale and welfare of the employees to their idea of an unequalled postal service.

This lack of moderation, or this attitude, which prevents people from seeing the tremendous possibilities of a policy of a happy medium, has caused strong resentment amongst employees.

c) We have noticed serious deficiencies in personnel administration at all levels.

These may be due to the enormous difficulties which most departments experience in recruiting really competent men for this type of work which has become highly specialized. Whatever the reason may be, the Department is in dire need of such men. Many personnel officers in local offices have not been trained adequately for personnel work. We do not cast any doubt on their sincerity and desire to do their best. These people, whether



because they have to perform too many incidental or secondary duties or because they see their function as that of disciplinarians or schoolmasters, do not, at times, fulfil their responsibilities in this area of work which covers so many different kinds of activities.

We deal with this vital problem of Personnel Administration in Chapter 42 of our Report, since we were astonished when some representatives and branch delegates admitted not knowing the name of their own district personnel officer.

(4) It is normal for an organization as large as the Post Office Department not to always recognize its own deficiencies.

To cope with this problem it is suggested that the Department not only continue but also intensify its program of staff rotation in order to benefit from different opinions, even though we are aware of the difficulties and opposition that this approach might arouse. It is equally essential to bring new blood into some of the key positions of the post office organization. A few strong personalities, unfamiliar with the ways and customs of the postal service, should bring about changes and stir those who do not see a need for such changes.

The Department can derive great benefit from the program instituted by the Civil Service Commission for the rotation of administrators as part of a better career planning program. It must strive to obtain closer co-operation or more effective and prompt action from those other agencies which are responsible for the physical and environmental working conditions and for the general atmosphere in the working areas.

We would like these agencies to co-operate fully and assist the Department by delegating the necessary powers, and the financial means not now available, as and when required.

The implementation of collective bargaining with its accompanying discussions and negotiations, together with the institution of a grievance procedure, will help resolve a good number of the problems. A progressive and understanding attitude on the part of everyone concerned will do the rest.

Our Inquiry would not have been called had all the privileges mentioned in the preceding paragraphs been granted to employees at the right time.

Our Commission was greatly impressed by the Department's efforts to give the public the best possible service. On the other hand, the employees showed, by their attitude and statements, that they too are anxious to work in a progressive postal service and that they are proud to provide such a service.

(5) The need for rapid and almost instantaneous service continually came up in our discussions with Management. From the moment a piece of mail arrives, every effort is made to deal with it speedily - except for certain types of circulars. The people of Canada certainly are well served by the Post Office Department and we cannot but commend both the Department and its employees.

This preoccupation for speed, however, must not sweep aside every other consideration. Even though we are sure that the people of Canada want an excellent service, we are also just as sure that they do not want this at the expense of the employees' welfare.

Better schedules for mail handling could be put into effect in certain localities in order to improve hours of work and shift schedules, to facilitate transportation and parking, to prevent, at least partially, the constant recurrence of peak periods in the evening, to reduce weekend and night work and, finally, to restrict and bring to normal proportions the use of part-time and casual employees.

In this connection, a vast field of study presents itself: the flow of mail.

An even flow of work through the various post office operations would facilitate the settlement of many of the more serious grievances. We do not hesitate to recommend that outside consultants be hired to study thoroughly the complex problem of workloads and employment of full-time staff wherever possible. We believe that such a study would lead to greater efficiency and probable savings, while still providing an excellent service to the general public and improving the morale of the employees.

(6) We should admit we were surprised that little mention was made of mechanization and automation by the postal clerks who will evidently be the first ones affected. Possibly they see this problem only far in the future. We believe this is a problem of prime importance which should be looked into immediately by all interested parties, since its effect will be very serious not only on job security but also on job classification, seniority, etc.

We conclude this review of the most vivid impressions received during our Inquiry and anticipate that they will be read and understood without prejudice and animosity. It is hoped that they will reflect the confidence we have that, with the good will of the Department and the co-operation of the staff organizations and of the employees themselves, their working conditions and the Canadian postal service will continue to improve.

PART III

COMMON PROBLEMS OF A

GENERAL NATURE

## CHAPTER 5

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Of all the problems raised before the Commission collective bargaining in particular deserves high priority, not only because of the number of times it was brought up, but also, because of the vigour, zeal and enthusiasm exhibited by the employees in presenting it and setting forth the undeniable advantages which would be derived from collective bargaining in the improvement of their working conditions in the Post Office Department.

It is the firm hope, we might even say the constant desire, of postal employees to obtain from Parliament recognition of their right to have collective bargaining and conclude collective agreements with the Department.<sup>1/</sup>

In order to achieve this goal, local branch representatives of the staff organizations, and their national officers, put forward several suggestions which, we believe, should be summarized and commented upon.

To their way of thinking, the solution is easy. Working from the viewpoint that the transformation of the Post Office Department into a Crown Corporation, or into a department with a special status, does not give rise to any insurmountable difficulty but in itself is desirable as much for them as for the Canadian public, they therefore recommend the adoption of amendments to sections 53, 54 and 55 of the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation

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<sup>1/</sup> Bill C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act) had not yet been tabled when we finished our hearings with the staff organizations.

Act.<sup>1/</sup> This would mean then the full application of this Act to postal employees with the granting of all the rights they are bent on obtaining, i.e., - free discussion initiated on a voluntary and equal basis of all their working conditions, followed by conciliation, if necessary, and possible recourse to strike action in case of a deadlock.

We must recognize that Bill C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act) satisfies these aspirations only in part.

On the other hand, even if it is too early to pass final judgment on this Bill it seems to contain the machinery and procedures which, even though complex, should at least be put to the test.

(1) The scope of Bill C-170 is general. It applies without distinction to all departments listed in Schedule A to the Financial Administration Act,<sup>2/</sup> including the Post Office Department, as well as to an impressive number of commissions, agencies, offices or boards directly or indirectly under the control of the Federal Government excluding, for the time being, those portions of the public service of Canada to which the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act applies.<sup>3/</sup>

The designation of the Post Office Department as a Crown Corporation is therefore not foreseen by this Bill. However, this is still possible.

It was impossible, during our Inquiry, within our limited terms of reference, to touch on more than one aspect of this difficult question.

Notwithstanding this and taking into consideration:

- a) Bill C-170 for the Staff Relations in the Public Service;

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<sup>1/</sup> R.S., 1952, c. 152, as amended.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., c. 116, as amended.

<sup>3/</sup> See Bill C-170, section 4.

b) the basic reforms which the Post Office Department intends to adopt or which it has already put into force;<sup>1/</sup>

c) the reforms which the Department of Public Works is carrying out at present in the decentralization and improvement of its service;

d) the plans of the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Labour for the improvement of working conditions, which we have been told, are about to be formulated;

we believe that the designation of the Post Office as a Crown Corporation is premature.

This does not mean that we do not agree with the views expressed by Mr. Justice J.C. Anderson in the final report of the Commission of Inquiry on Pay Rate Increases for Group D Employees.<sup>2/</sup>

The Government should proceed with a serious and thorough study so that it may make its position clear, once and for all, on the advisability of giving the Post Office Department the status of a Crown Corporation. Due consideration should be given to the national interest as well as to the economic and social implications of such a change.

(2) Bill C-170 recognizes the right of membership to staff organizations and the freedom to exercise it; it also protects this right. It sets up the rules and certification procedures to be carried out by the Public Service Staff Relations Board and, undoubtedly, these will enable the staff organizations concerned to act as bargaining agents for postal workers, letter carriers and railway mail clerks grouped into one or more units.

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<sup>1/</sup> In the following chapters we refer to several of these reforms.

<sup>2/</sup> Pages 15 to 18.

Once these formalities have been settled, the staff organizations will be in a position to take up with the employer<sup>1/</sup> for study and discussion all but a few working conditions affecting the employees they represent.

Thus, and this by no means exhausts the list, the negotiations will relate to salary rates, hours of work, overtime, premiums or special allowances for abnormal working hours, rights to leave, seniority, standards of discipline, the grievance procedure, the collection of fees, trade union security (including the Rand Formula) and other conditions.

Without going any further into these forthcoming negotiations, and since the postal employees discussed the Rand Formula so often, it appears to be a desirable proposal for the Post Office Department. As already noted<sup>2/</sup> only a very small minority of these employees do not belong to any of the staff organizations concerned. It is only fair and reasonable that this minority, without being forced in any way to exercise its right of membership, should contribute to the maintenance of the unions and associations that work unceasingly to obtain better working conditions.

Previously we referred to a few restrictions in bargaining.

They are those set forth in Bill C-170, section 56 (2), which reads as follows:

"No collective agreement shall provide, directly or indirectly, for the alteration or elimination of any existing term or condition of employment or the establishment of any new term or condition of employment,

- a) the alteration or elimination of which or the establishment of which, as the case may be,

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<sup>1/</sup> According to Bill C-170, section 2 (o), the expression "employer" means Her Majesty in Right of Canada as represented by the Treasury Board.

<sup>2/</sup> See Chapter 3, "The Staff Organizations".



would require or have the effect of requiring the enactment or amendment of any legislation by Parliament, except for the purpose of appropriating moneys required for its implementation, or  
b) that has been or may be, as the case may be, established pursuant to any Act specified in Schedule B."

Schedule B referred to includes the Public Service Employment Act, (Bill C-181), the Government Employees Compensation Act<sup>1/</sup> and the Public Service Superannuation Act.<sup>2/</sup>

Some of the subjects which seem to be specifically excluded from bargaining are "...the standards, procedures or processes governing the appointment, appraisal, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off or release of employees..."<sup>3/</sup> These exclusions obviously point to the government's firm intention of leaving with the Civil Service Commission the same jurisdiction it now has in these matters.

In comparison with the private sector, these restrictions will therefore limit discussion in certain specific cases, some of which are reviewed in this Report and are also the subject of recommendations.

After careful consideration and based on our hearings, we are under the impression that, on the whole, postal employees will agree to give this new legislation a fair trial even if they would still prefer to come under the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act.

(3) They will adopt this attitude largely because Bill C-170 does

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<sup>1/</sup> R.S., 1952, c. 134, as amended.

<sup>2/</sup> R.S., 1952-53, c. 47, as amended.

<sup>3/</sup> Bill C-170, section 70 (3). It should be noted that the reference to the "release of employees" relates only to release because of incompetence.

give them a choice between binding and final arbitration and conciliation followed by the right to strike.<sup>1/</sup>

Everyone is aware of their preference in the matter.

It is hoped that employees will use discretion and moderation in exercising this right and will not lose sight of the serious problems and difficulties which any interruption in the postal service, however brief, imposes on the public.

Finally, we hope that the staff organizations, as well as the postal employees, will be satisfied at having obtained, at last, official recognition of their right to participate in collective bargaining and to reach agreements. We hope also that they will not only prepare themselves accordingly and call for the assistance of experts they may need, but will show, as will the employer, a spirit of good faith and co-operation.

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the staff organizations concerned willingly agree to give a fair trial to the methods and procedures of collective bargaining which are contained in Bill C-170 entitled "Public Service Staff Relations Act" if this Bill should remain in its present form.
2. That the appropriate authorities proceed very shortly with a thorough study of the advisability of according the Post Office Department the status of a Crown Corporation, taking into due consideration the national interest as well as the economic and social consequences of such a change.

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<sup>1/</sup> We have been given to understand that the "employer" has no intention of claiming that postal employees fit into that class of employees "...whose duties consist in whole or in part of duties the performance of which at any particular time or after any specified period of time is or will be necessary in the interest of the safety or security of the public". See Bill C-170, section 79 (1).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONSULTATION

With a few exceptions, postal employees recognize that management, whether at the national, regional or local level, is quite willing to meet with their representatives. This is about as far as it goes.<sup>1/</sup>

The atmosphere in which discussions begin or are carried out during meetings was rather sharply criticized. Many references were made to the unsatisfactory results which too often follow.

Without going into all the details, we were told that in some post offices there is no real exchange of views, that discussions lead nowhere or that decisions are made in advance and prove unalterable.

It was said that authority was too centralized. There were complaints about some district directors or postmasters refusing to exercise their discretionary powers outlined in directives and instructions and who frequently prefer to refer back to Headquarters. Hence there were unnecessary delays, which employees said were exasperating.

Finally, along the same lines, they criticized several local and district personnel officers. They contended that in some places no one knew these officials and that these officers ignored the employees. The personnel officers were taken

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<sup>1/</sup> We referred to this problem in Chapter 4, "General Impressions".

to task for not trying to establish a closer relationship with the employees and for concerning themselves almost constantly with disciplinary or administrative matters.<sup>1/</sup>

The Department without agreeing with all these grievances recognized that there was undoubtedly some basis for these allegations.

A few reasons or explanations came to mind.

Until now, the Department has not set up a properly organized system of consultation, or communication and exchange of views with its employees. It has let matters take their own course and has not made a clear-cut distinction between questions which should form the subject of consultation and other matters which logically belong to an appropriate grievance procedure.<sup>2/</sup> It did not put forth the necessary effort to convince its own district and local officials of the need and advantages of such a system. It did not strive to progress rapidly but adopted a wait and see attitude.

A change in attitude is essential. The Department has realized this and its officials expressed their desire and firm intention to correct this situation. The decision taken on the 2nd February 1966, at a meeting with the Union of Postal Workers, proved that from now on the Department not only will advise the Union in advance of any major change which it intends to make affecting the working conditions of postal workers, but also will seek the Union's viewpoint before implementing any major change. This decision can only bring favourable results, provided that the exchange of ~~views~~ is carried out in an objective manner.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 42, "Personnel Administration".

<sup>2/</sup> See Chapter 17, "Grievance Procedure".

Our Inquiry, however, has convinced us of the advisability of adopting a similar policy at the local level in the field operating services.

In the majority of Staff Post Offices, problems are often raised affecting the working conditions of employees as a whole or as a group. For example, this is the case in matters dealing with:

- a) changes in the establishment of shift schedules;
- b) the beginning and the end of the "Christmas Rush";
- c) the shortage of full-time staff;
- d) the rearrangement of some letter carriers' walks;
- e) equipment and supplies, etc.<sup>1/</sup>

Usually, the solution to these problems rests either with the postmaster himself, or with the postmaster after being authorized by the district director or with the latter's participation.

It is not suggested that things be done differently. The setting up and maintaining of a procedure, intended to facilitate a frank and productive exchange of views between district directors or postmasters and their staffs, does not imply a restriction or a curtailment of the rights of management. This procedure is solely intended to enable employees to express themselves freely concerning the conditions in which they work and, if need be, to make specific suggestions.

It should be remembered that these employees are the main parties concerned and that they are the ones who must live every hour of their working day in accordance with the directives and orders issued.

Before a postmaster makes a decision or even before he implements, in consultation with the district director, a general policy dealing with the working

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<sup>1/</sup> It is probable that these working conditions and others will, before long, be governed by collective agreements.

conditions, he would be wise to meet with the employees' local representatives, to inform them and discuss his intentions, in order to obtain their reactions and take them into consideration, as much as possible. We believe that this procedure must be extended to the study and discussion of all other questions of the same kind which the employees' representatives want to bring up on their own.

WE RECOMMEND:

3. That, starting immediately, two local joint committees be set up in every Staff Post Office, grades 14 to 19 inclusive, one for the postal clerks and the other for letter carriers.
4. That these committees, depending upon local conditions, be composed of an equal number of representatives of the postal clerks or letter carriers and of representatives of local management.
5. That these committees hold meetings at least once a month.
6. That all questions of general interest dealing with local working conditions of postal workers or letter carriers be the subject of discussions, negotiations and recommendations in these committees.
7. That Headquarters issue precise instructions to district directors and postmasters to make available to these committees all the information available which might help solve the problems under review.
8. That, in order to facilitate these consultations, an agenda be drawn up of a permanent but flexible nature and that minutes of these meetings be taken, written up, approved and distributed to all concerned.
9. That the local joint committees be kept informed of the concrete results obtained from their discussions, of the progress made, or the difficulties encountered.
10. That, in cases of disagreement, the representatives of the local branches on these committees be allowed to report back to their members and that these branches, through their officers and with or without the assistance of their area representatives, make representations to the district director or postmaster in post offices, grades 17, 18 and 19.
11. That, where disagreements are not settled, reports be sent to the national officers of the organizations.

12. That the same type of local joint committees be set up in every Staff Post Office, grades 9 to 13 inclusive, if such is the wish of the majority of the employees in these Post Offices.
13. That the same procedure apply in the case of railway mail clerks at the district level.

We do not want to make these recommendations more precise but prefer to leave it to the parties concerned to adapt them to local conditions.

Our remarks are sufficiently clear to indicate the importance of the problem.

These matters are discussed in several other chapters and we shall point out a number of specific problem areas where it would seem both advisable and desirable to make use of joint committees.

There is one other main point which should be noted. During interviews with some district directors and postmasters, we discovered, to our surprise, that they knew nothing about some of the local or regional grievances.

There may be two good reasons for this: either the employees - and some have admitted it - believed, rightly or wrongly, that it was a waste of time and effort to refer these grievances to the district director or postmaster, or, tired of getting nowhere, they decided, in the light of past experience, that the district director was incapable of settling these grievances and so forwarded them directly to their national officers.

We disapprove of this practice because it undermines the very foundation of the role and authority of the district directors who, on the whole, do not deserve such treatment. It also means referring to the national officers of the staff organizations and to the Post Office National Headquarters problems which, very often, should be resolved at the local or district level.

Our recommendations are meant to correct these gaps by setting up permanent channels of communication. With a few exceptions, only far-reaching questions of general application should be referred to National Headquarters.

There is no problem in regard to a dialogue at the national level since all concerned, departmental representatives and the national officers of the staff organizations, expressed their hope that they would be able to improve the new policy of consultation and to make it more effective.

WE RECOMMEND:

14. That two national joint committees be set up at Ottawa, one for postal workers and one for letter carriers.
15. That, as far as possible, these committees be set up and operate in the same manner as the local joint committees.
16. That all matters of general interest dealing with working conditions of postal workers or letter carriers, on a national basis, be the subject of discussions, negotiations and recommendations in these committees.
17. That railway mail clerks benefit from the same advantages in accordance with a procedure adapted to their own conditions of work.



## CHAPTER 7

### DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Earlier in our Report <sup>1/</sup> we referred to the tendency of Departmental Headquarters to delegate a good deal of its authority to its district directors and postmasters, particularly in the field operating services. This policy of decentralization which the Department initiated gained even more impetus after the Report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization was published. The Post Office Department, perhaps more than some other departments, had become aware sooner of the harmful effects of an over-centralized operation.

This policy is sound. The Department must continue to gradually intensify its decentralization.

As already noted, there are some district directors and postmasters who are reluctant to assume certain delegated responsibilities and are inclined to shirk them by referring back to Headquarters for a decision. This is unfair to both the Department and the employees. We reiterate that there are far too many detailed problems of a purely regional or local nature which are referred to Headquarters.

There are, on the other hand, such fields as finance, personnel, supplies or equipment, etc., where decentralization is less advanced due to restrictions set by some control agencies which are themselves still highly centralized.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 4, "General Impressions".

They are, at the present time, studying their respective policies and are planning to delegate some of their authority within their own administrations.<sup>1/</sup>

In these areas, district directors and postmasters find themselves in a quandary: they are responsible for the efficient management of complex operations without having all the authority required to do the job properly. They have to contend with restrictions over which they have no control, e.g., expenditures for the repair or improvement of post offices or of certain types of equipment.

We hope that, with the emphasis on general decentralization and the setting up of an adequate grievance procedure, the appropriate authorities will ensure that regional and local managers, once informed in a more formal manner of problems of this nature, will have the authority to take corrective action on their own initiative.

The Department is aware of the difficulties and problems created by decentralization. It is trying to be more orderly and methodical in its delegation of authority. It is also establishing a better management reporting and audit system. However, as the attempts to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Government Organization on financial management have shown, the setting up of such a system requires time and effort. It requires special training of managers so that they will clearly understand their role in a decentralized administration and will make proper use of new techniques.

The Department is seeking a system which will allow every district director and every postmaster, within headquarters' objectives, to understand their

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<sup>1/</sup> We are referring here particularly to the Civil Service Commission, the Treasury Board, and the Department of Public Works.

duties and to utilize all administrative resources required to meet these objectives. Once this system is set up, field managers will be held accountable for the exercise of their authority through management audit reports.

We seriously considered recommending that greater, and particularly more realistic, financial responsibility be delegated to district directors and post-masters. We are not doing so at this time because the Department states that such delegation must be subject to the management reporting system which is now being developed.

WE RECOMMEND:

18. That the Department take early action to ensure that its field managers are fully conversant with the extent of their authority, duties and financial responsibilities.
19. That the Department consult with the staff organizations, either at the national or local level, to determine work areas where difficulties have been encountered due to insufficient delegated authority and that it take corrective measures accordingly.

## CHAPTER 8

### MANPOWER

Both the Department and the postal workers are concerned with the problems of maintaining a staff adequate in number and competence in post offices.

These different viewpoints are discussed in this chapter.

#### 1. Establishments and controls

(1) Postal employees from almost all parts of the country are of the opinion that the Department does not have enough full-time employees and that the personnel increase is not proportional to the increase in the volume of mail received, processed, dispatched and delivered. They complained that the number of supervisors in Staff Post Offices is inadequate.

The Department, without claiming that its control policy could not be improved, first wants to make its position quite clear. We think this is valid and summarize it so that it will not be judged too harshly.

The Department warns against those who are looking back several years and who make deductions and venture to make comparisons without first qualifying them sufficiently. For these people it underlines the following facts:

- a) Several methods and procedures have been adopted, since 1954, which save time in mail handling;
- b) more recently, it is making greater use of mechanical equipment which reduces the amount of handling of postal items and parcels;
- c) it has made staff changes to make better use of available manpower;
- d) patrons who constantly use postal services are more careful today in

preparing their mail, and thus save an appreciable amount of time for the administration and employees;

e) mail-processing time is dependent not only upon mail volume but also upon its composition.

Nevertheless, the Department admits the necessity of adopting a better procedure for maintaining its personnel at the level required by districts and local offices. It is working on such a project and expects that a new "management audit" system which is discussed further on in this chapter, will correct several of the present shortcomings if not all of them.

(2) The method used until now by the Department takes two factors into consideration: that of forecasting and that of actual needs which sometimes exceed the forecast.

a) Every year, in May, the Department fixes its staff requirements across the country for the following fiscal year (April 1 to March 31).

Each staff postmaster then attempts to make an estimate of the required manpower. This is not an easy task as anyone who has had to forecast a year in advance, events over which he has no control will know. In accordance with departmental directives, the postmaster evaluates the probable increase in the work load in his office and takes into consideration the personnel at his disposal.

Once these estimates have been studied and scrutinized by the district directors and reviewed by the Department, Treasury Board comes to a decision. Then, subject to Cabinet and Parliamentary approval, the Department knows the amount available for staffing. Afterwards a pool of unallocated positions are allocated to directors by the Department enabling them in basic postal classes to meet, to a certain extent, personnel requirements in the Staff Post Offices in their districts, during the year.

b) At the district levels there are monthly establishment reviews.

At the end of each month postmasters report to their district director on the number of part-time employees they hired and the amount of overtime performed by full-time employees. <sup>1/</sup> If all this information indicates the need for additional permanent employees the district director can submit an official <sup>2/</sup> requisition.

Headquarters reviews each requisition and analyses the statistical data and other pertinent information. If it considers the requisition justified, an increase in the personnel establishment is authorized.

c) Headquarters, on the other hand, makes frequent checks and audits by means of monthly budgetary reports from postmasters and district directors. <sup>3/</sup> Sometimes the Department submits supplementary estimates to Treasury Board following developments which could not have been foreseen at the time the main estimates were prepared.

The Department meets with some difficulties because as a rule, it is not given the authority to hire new employees simply because it "foresees" an increase in mail volume. The "actual" volume of mail handled and the revenue received are the main criteria used. We are under the impression that the Department, too often, must wait until the situation has settled definitely. However, we believe that it deserves to be granted more latitude!

The appropriate authorities must grant the Post Office Department a.

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- <sup>1/</sup> In some localities the number of part-time employees seemed abnormally high and overtime out of proportion. This aspect is discussed further on in the Report.
  - <sup>2/</sup> Under Directive ADPMG-PSB, No. 242, dated June 22, 1965, district directors may approve new positions in basic postal classes. The Department intends to extend this right as new criteria are established.
  - <sup>3/</sup> The Department has set up a special unit whose main function under the direction of a senior officer is to be responsible for staffing problems.

special status and more flexibility in its administration if they wish to avoid a great many problems which will prove to be more and more serious with the recognition of collective agreements. It is essential that the Department be able to cope with personnel shortages at the local and district level, on very short notice, subject to reasonable post-audit controls.

(3) The setting-up of the new management audit system which is nearly completed will be a valuable help.

Through such a system the Department will be kept constantly posted on the work loads in each post office, and on the categories of manpower (full-time, part-time or casual) employed and on the overtime required. Thus, supervisors in the field operating services will know immediately if there is a need for additional personnel. As soon as this system has stood the test of time the Department intends to delegate to its representatives, its district directors and its postmasters in grades 17, 18, and 19, greater authority to meet with this requirement.

WE RECOMMEND:

20. That the appropriate authorities recognize the need for a special status for the Department with much greater flexibility so that it may at the local and district levels cope with any shortage in personnel on short notice, subject to a reasonable post-audit control.
21. That the Department put into operation the new management audit system as soon as possible, so that it may be better informed of its personnel requirements.
22. That once this system is found satisfactory the Department delegate to its district directors and its postmasters in grades 19, 18, and 17, wide powers so that they may be able to cope with the need for additional manpower.

## 2. Staffing and turnover

Employees think that the staff turnover rate in the Post Office Department is very high. They see this as an indication of general dissatisfaction and of unsatisfactory working conditions which are becoming less and less comparable to those found in industry.

The following tabulation shows the turnover of personnel for every fiscal year, from 1956-1957 to 1965-1966:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>	<u>Separations</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1956-1957	20,267	2,258	11.1
1957-1958	20,745	1,894	9.1
1958-1959	21,295	1,324	6.2
1959-1960	22,140	1,661	7.5
1960-1961	22,750	1,374	6.0
1961-1962	23,471	1,264	5.4
1962-1963	23,860	1,281	5.4
1963-1964	24,248	1,328	5.5
1964-1965	25,215	1,680	6.7
1965-1966	26,171	1,915	7.3

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Source: Questionnaire received from the Post Office Department, May 6, 1966.

The average turnover of 6.7% for 1964-1965 and 7.3% for 1965-1966 does not seem excessive nor too alarming.<sup>1/</sup>

Several employees stated that 50% of the postal clerks and letter carriers have not yet reached the maximum of their salary, indicating a disproportionately high turnover. Statistics show that 5,656 letter carriers and postal clerks are in this category, or 33.4% of the total strength. If we take into account that the staff increased by 2,455 during the last five years, most of them being letter carriers and postal clerks, we cannot conclude that the turnover rate is generally high in these particular classes.

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<sup>1/</sup> The turnover rate in the Civil Service as a whole is 11%.



The problem, however, is acute in some regions as shown in this second table:

Location	Total Staff	Annual Turnover Rate	Annual Turnover Rate
		April 1964 to March 1965 per cent	January 1965 to May 1965 per cent
Quebec, P.Q.	565	3	10
Victoria, B.C.	284	7	10
Regina, Sask.	299	9	10
Ottawa, Ont.	922	9	10
Toronto, Ont.	3,771	9	11
Hamilton, Ont.	480	7	18
Burlington, Ont.	67	19	18
Downsview, Ont.	94	20	18
Don Mills, Ont.	88	15	19
St. Catharines, Ont.	108	11	20
Sarnia, Ont.	87	13	20
Sault-Ste-Marie, Ont.	79	15	21
Windsor, Ont.	284	8	22
Niagara Falls, Ont.	74	13	23
Oshawa, Ont.	99	28	27
Port Credit, Ont.	52	25	46
Oakville, Ont.	55	21	48

Source: Letter received from Mr. A. de Gaspé Taché, Assistant Director of Personnel, Canada Post Office, Ottawa, October 5, 1965.

These figures not only show an abnormal rate of turnover in these cities, but also indicate a noticeable increase in this rate the last few months indicated.

The reasons for this cannot be pinpointed definitely, but we suspect that employee turnover in the Post Office increases in those regions where wages are the highest and working conditions the best.

The Department must examine this problem. It could have costly repercussions and be the cause of a loss of valuable time in recruiting, training and productivity. Each employee resigning from the service should be interviewed in order to find the real reasons for his departure. Once this information has been obtained the Department will know exactly what the situation is and will then be able to concentrate on each local condition to overcome these difficulties. But it is obvious

that only wage increases and better working conditions will put an end to the high turnover rate in these areas.

The Department must adopt effective measures to minimize any delay in recruiting replacements as soon as vacancies occur. It has recently received approval from the Civil Service Commission to hold continuing competitions in those areas where recruiting is difficult, and the postmaster now has the authority to examine all sufficiently qualified candidates where an eligible list is not already in existence, and hire on the spot the successful candidates for full-time positions.

WE RECOMMEND:

23. That the Department interview each employee resigning from the postal service and determine the real reasons for his departure.
24. That the Department in areas where there is a high turnover rate use all means available to secure the necessary personnel.

3. Part-time employees

(1) The Department states that it employs in post offices a sufficient number of full-time employees to take care of the normal mail volume. But this volume is not always normal. There are "peak periods".

In most post offices these peak periods occur in late afternoon or early evening following street letter-box collections or the arrival of mail from surrounding smaller post offices, etc. The Department, and rightly so, wishes to process this mail so that it will be dispatched to its destination as quickly as possible. It hires part-time employees for three to five hours per day, often five days a week.

The Department claims it cannot do otherwise. To maintain a permanent staff the year round based on peak-hour needs would be a waste of manpower, time, and money. There is not enough mail to be handled immediately before and immediately

after these periods to keep the number of full-time employees, who would be needed to do this emergency work, busy for eight consecutive hours. The Department adds that if it were to make an exception to this policy, a greater number of full-time staff would be required for the night shift because mail which has to be processed in time for morning delivery reaches the post office only in the evening. At the moment, such a measure does not appear desirable to the Department from the simple point of view of normal postal service operation.

The Department claims that whenever possible it employs full-time rather than part-time employees.

To prevent any abuse the following orders have been issued:

- a) Part-time employees may not take over from each other without a break. In other words, there must not be any "continuing" or "back-to-back" part-time operations. The Department does not allow a part-time employee to work from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., and another to be assigned to similar work from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. In such a case the services of a full-time employee must be retained.
- b) Two part-time employees may not be hired to work at different periods of the day or night if the total number of hours of these two employees are considered full-time, i.e., the equivalent of an eight hour shift.
- c) A part-time employee may not be employed if there are eight hours of work to be done and there are eight hours available before the next operation.

These directives appear reasonable. However, that they are not taken into consideration in some post offices and, as in the case of the "so-called casual employees" which is discussed in the next section, we believe that a thorough check is needed, bearing in mind the importance of defining clearly the term "peak period", particularly in the processing of mail for local delivery.

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1/ There is one particular city where mail which was processed and sorted by a large number of part-time employees between 6 and 10 p.m. remained in the office until 4 a.m. the next day before being despatched to postal stations within that city for local delivery.

We do not wish to deprive part-time employees of an essential livelihood, but it is our responsibility to give our attention first of all to full-time employees.

If it is true, as alleged, that in some districts or localities part-time employees are granted special or illegitimate favours against departmental policy, we would be remiss not to call attention to it. If on the other hand our information is inaccurate, we shall be pleased to know.

Our recommendations do not go too far.

Over and above the annual survey on part-time help requirements, when budget and manpower estimates for each post office are prepared, the Department analyses these requirements as follows:

- a) every time a postmaster requests additional staff;
- b) whenever departmental records show that part-time employees frequently go beyond their normal authorized work period;
- c) every time it initiates a production control programme in an office;
- d) every time a complaint is received from the Union of Postal Workers or the Letter Carriers' Union.

The "detailed check" which we recommend is different from a routine inspection. It must be carried out thoroughly so that if our impression is correct the Department will be that much more enlightened.

Through its new monthly report system on post office establishments, which the Department intends to make available either to the local joint committees or to local branch representatives, full-time employees will be kept informed of the situation with regard to staff strength.

These monthly reports will also enable representatives to follow up more closely on those part-time employees who, under certain circumstances and to avoid overtime work by full-time personnel, are hired as casual help and paid as such.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Such is the case when a large quantity of mail is received which must be processed to meet a deadline.

(2) Some postal clerks maintain that part-time employees are replacing them on day shifts, thereby compelling them to work on evening or night shifts.

The Department claims to be unaware of this situation. It does not condone such a practice, and if it exists on a continuing basis considers it contrary to its policy. It is ready to review each case brought to its attention and to discuss it with the staff organizations. The monthly reports on establishments will surely be of help in revealing and rectifying such irregularities.

(3) These same postal clerks request that part-timers not be authorized to replace them unless they have successfully passed examinations.

The Department does not believe that such a measure is necessary. Nevertheless it is looking into its feasibility and is considering the re-establishment of the part-time Postal Clerk 2 classification, and to require the holder of such a position to write the same examination as the full-time sorter.

In all fairness to part-time employees we must say that the Department, on the basis of reports received from senior operating officers, considers them efficient and conscientious.

(4) Postal workers complained that the Department does not make use of part-time help for week-end work.

The latter refers to an official complaint from the national directors of the Union of Postal Workers. This protest was the reason for issuing a ruling on April 27, 1965, prohibiting the hiring of part-time employees on Sunday in medium sized post offices. The Department did not apply this restriction to post offices in large centres because there is a real need for part-time help in those areas to help the full-time staff handle the work load, taking into consideration that these post offices operate on a slow-down production basis during the week-end.

These explanations are acceptable.

(5) We met a few groups of part-time employees who were members of the Civil Service Association of Canada. Representatives of a new group belonging to

the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Branch 976, comprised of casual employees from Montreal, Quebec City and surrounding areas, submitted a brief in February 1966, at Ottawa. The majority of these are female employees. The others are men who work as part-timers to increase their income.

Some of the problems mentioned by these employees are not very different from those raised by full-time employees. These problems are dealt with further on in the Report. But there are a few, however, which are peculiar to part-time employees:

a) These people complain strongly that they suffer a loss in salary on their return from two (or more) months absence due to illness.

We hope that this problem will be resolved once the Bureau of Classification Revision of the Civil Service Commission has completed its study on position classification. It is hoped that every part-time employee will be paid according to the actual duties he performs on his return to work.

b) Part-time helpers claim the same leave rights as full-time employees.

Civil Service Regulations make no provision for the granting of leave to part-time employees paid on an hourly basis except for vacation leave entitlement and paid statutory holidays.

There is no need at present to grant part-time employees the same sick or special leave recognized for full-time employees. We are of the opinion, however, that a reasonable allowance should be paid to them as is done for vacation leave.

c) Part-time employees believe that short breaks in service should not affect payment of the 4% gratuity paid in lieu of vacation leave.

At present, if an employee is continually employed for 30 or more days during the year in which he was appointed or in the year during which he ceases to be employed in the postal service he is entitled to a cash gratuity equal

to 4% of the basic and overtime pay received during that period. In the case of re-employment he must once again be employed for 30 days before becoming eligible for vacation leave or for the 4% gratuity.

As short absences due to illness do not constitute a break in service it is best not to intervene.

d) Part-time employees criticized the lack of sufficient notice concerning their hours of work and shift changes. The Department claims that it has just as much right to decrease the number of working hours when the mail volume is less than had been forecast as it has to extend these hours when the opposite is true.

There should not be any major change in work shifts for part-timers unless there are, at the same time, changes made in the shifts for full-time employees. Part-time employees should then receive one month notice, if possible, as do full-time employees.

e) Sometimes, the production of part-time sorters is measured by means of a token which they themselves leave in their sorting trays. The supervisor counts these tokens when the employee has completed his tour of duty. In this way continuous production record can be maintained in each section and the work flow can be planned more effectively while checking on the progress made by the staff.

This is an excellent tool for the supervisor provided he uses it properly and does not see it as a means to favour one employee in particular.<sup>1/</sup>

#### 4. Casual employees

The Civil Service Regulations authorize a deputy-head to appoint persons to fulfil duties of a casual nature.<sup>2/</sup> It adds that, "except with the approval of

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<sup>1/</sup> Recommendations concerning part-time employees appear in the next section.

<sup>2/</sup> Section 88 (1).

the Commission, a casual employee shall not be employed for a period in excess of six months, but no person shall be employed as a casual employee for any period in excess of twelve months"<sup>1/</sup>.

The Department is still taking advantage of these provisions. It employs an impressive number of casual workers. In its Personnel Manual<sup>2/</sup> it states that casual employees may be employed on a temporary basis in the following cases:

- a) to assist full-time staff in emergency situations;
- b) to replace regular staff on leave;
- c) to replace regular employees when there is no eligible list from which a continuous replacement might be assigned.

The Department has two main categories of casual workers: those who fill in for regular employees on annual, furlough, or sick leave, and those who are hired during peak periods. Such periods are considered emergency situations. The Department states it will not tolerate casual employees working on a continuing basis. In such cases it replaces them by full-time employees.

Protests have often been heard against too great a number of casual employees who work regularly and enjoy preferential treatment; no night work, free week-ends, etc. It was alleged that many of these employees are not replaced even after months and months of continuous full-time work and that their employment affects seniority rights, the choice of annual vacation time, and the obtention of more desirable working hours. Finally, it was stated that this

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<sup>1/</sup> Section 88 (2).

<sup>2/</sup> Volume 1 under "Casual Employees".



has a strong detrimental effect on the morale of the regular employees and that the employment of casuals is simply a means of obtaining cheap labour.<sup>1/</sup>

These protests particularly when referring to an excessive use of casual employees appear to be justified in some areas.

Several postmasters have respected neither the letter nor the intent of the Civil Service Regulations and the Personnel Manual. Rather than go through the lengthy and complex procedure of competitions and hire full-time employees they have used casual employees. Evidently, it is easier to recruit casual employees directly than it is to prove the need for full-time staff by means of different information and statistics and then having to wait for approval by either the district director or headquarters. Possibly these postmasters have found that it is easier to control the hiring of casual employees, to change their working hours at will, and, if need be, to lay them off.

It would be needless to conceal the fact that the hiring of casual employees and part-timers may give rise to favouritism or nepotism.

It is essential that the Department adopt a firm policy to the effect that the hiring of all casual, part-time, or any other employees not coming under the Civil Service Act, from now on, will be done through the National Employment Service. Such a practice is followed in other departments.

Although the Department cannot discontinue altogether the use of casual employees the problem caused by their continuing presence in too many offices has reached disturbing proportions. The Department has realized this. It has set to work already: in one of the largest post offices it has just increased, in an appreciable way, the number of full-time employees in order to reduce the number of casuals and avoid paying excessive overtime.

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<sup>1/</sup> These employees, while working as letter carriers, earn \$2.02 an hour (which corresponds approximately to the hourly rate for letter carriers at the minimum of the class) and if they work as postal clerks, \$1.57 an hour (which represents less than the minimum of this class). Oshawa is an exception to this rule where because of recruiting problems wages are \$1.75 an hour.

It is important to clarify this whole situation.

WE RECOMMEND:

25. That the Department, with the co-operation of the local joint committees, make a survey of the number of part-time and casual employees on strength in each staff post office.
26. That detailed instructions be given to postmasters and to district directors to supply these committees with all information necessary for the preparation of these surveys and their study.
27. That the Department act immediately whenever these surveys indicate that neither the letter nor the intent of the Civil Service Regulations or of the Personnel Manual dealing with the hiring and retention of these employees are respected, and that they seek to replace them with full-time employees.
28. That in the future each postmaster in a staff post office display monthly reports on the number of part-time and casual employees in his office together with the number of hours during which they have worked.
29. That the Department, at the national joint committee level, attempt to come to an understanding with the staff organizations as to the meaning and extent of the words "peak period" and "emergency situation".
30. That the Department make constant checks on the utilization of part-time and casual employees in staff post offices to ensure that postmasters do not hire them to fill gaps in the permanent establishment.
31. That the Department develop a method to keep itself posted, as well as the district directors, on all cases of abuse in that field.
32. That the Department examine the possibility of resolving the above-mentioned problems by determining ahead of time the percentage of part-time employees who may be allowed to work in post offices in proportion to the total number of full-time employees assigned therein.
33. That, to ensure that the letter and intent of the Civil Service Regulations are respected regarding the possible review of the situation after six months of employment for casual employees, the Department be at all times in a position to determine the accumulated total of actual periods of casual employment.

34. That these statistics be made available to the Civil Service Commission to enable it, if need be, to decide if it should extend the use of the services of casual workers who have reached the normal six months of employment.
35. That, in the future, all recruiting and hiring of part-time and casual employees be done through the National Employment Service.
36. That the Department institute without delay a monthly report system on its staff strength and that these reports be made available to local joint committees.
37. That part-time employees be granted an equitable allowance for sick or special leave with pay under the same conditions as are applicable to full-time employees.

We cannot understand why the Department pays its casual workers, who have the experience required and who are regular replacements for postal clerks on leave, at an hourly rate less than the minimum of the initial salary for this group. Furthermore, we fail to see why this is also the case for casual employees who are regularly called back for recurring emergency situations.

It is beyond our terms of reference to recommend that these rates be adjusted upwards. We sow the seed, however, not only because we believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work but also because we feel that such an adjustment would help prevent further abuse.<sup>1/</sup>

#### 5. Christmas help

During the Christmas period there is always a heavy increase in the volume of mail. To dispose of this mail the Department hires a large number of extra personnel referred to as "Christmas Help".<sup>2/</sup> Christmas helpers assist with either

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<sup>1/</sup> Section 2 (m) (v) of Bill C-170 (Public Staff Relations Act) does not consider as a public service employee "a person employed on a casual or temporary basis, unless he has been so employed for a period of six months or more".

<sup>2/</sup> Appointments and certain conditions of employment are governed by the Civil Service Act and Regulations.

sorting duties or delivery of mail and go out with the carriers delivering mail.

(1) The staff organizations maintain that this help should be hired earlier and in larger numbers. The letter carriers insisted that they should have one full-time helper available from the first week of December who should be retained until the backlog of accumulated mail has been delivered.

The Department does not set a fixed date for the hiring of Christmas help. The decision in this matter is left to the district directors and individual postmasters who hire on the basis of local and district needs. In the Montreal Post Office some Christmas helpers may be hired in the last days of November for dispatching mail to foreign countries or to other distant centres throughout Canada. Helpers for city delivery are hired at a later date. In a number of other large post offices, Christmas help is not hired sometimes until the beginning of December.

The Department submits that normally a letter carrier does not need a helper prior to December 12, because the volume of mail has not reached such proportions that it cannot be delivered without extra help. However, should there be a noticeable increase prior to that date, individual postmasters have the required authority to hire helpers immediately.

In several offices the postmasters consult with the representatives of local branches prior to fixing the hiring dates for Christmas help. We approve of this policy. This is an excellent means of avoiding discontentment.

(2) Some letter carriers suggested that helpers should refrain from sorting mail and be used only to deliver mail. The Department believes it is preferable to have the letter carriers do part of the delivery and to supervise their Christmas helpers on the street because it keeps complaints concerning misdelivery to a minimum because patrons apparently become apprehensive about the

proper delivery of mail if they do not see the regular letter carrier on the street. If this is so, it is necessary to have Christmas helpers assist in the sorting of mail so that the regular carrier will be available for street delivery.

(3) It was suggested that Christmas helpers were not subject to the same disciplinary measures as full-time employees. Obviously the same measures cannot apply. However, these helpers are released if they do not perform their duties to the satisfaction of the postmaster or legal action taken if warranted.

WE RECOMMEND:

38. That the Department continue to make a close study each year of the need to extend the period during which Christmas helpers are required, taking into account more particularly any large increases in the volume of mail in recent years.
39. That wherever possible postmasters consult with local joint committees before fixing the hiring dates for Christmas help and before making changes required during this period.
40. That postmasters be less hesitant to use their authority to assign sufficient Christmas help to clerical staff and letter carriers as soon as required.
41. That neither the postal clerks nor the letter carriers be held responsible for infractions or errors committed by Christmas helpers over whom no adequate control is possible.

6. Special manning problems

(1) We heard criticisms against the presence of close relatives in the same post office. Such a situation evidently gives rise to numerous problems including the upholding of and the respect for authority, and insinuations of favouritism and nepotism are not among the least.

The Department deeply regrets such abuses. It tries to stop them as soon as it becomes aware of them but it does not want to refuse employment categorically every time it happens that an employee comes under the supervision of a

close relative.<sup>1/</sup> It points out that neither the Civil Service Act nor the Regulations prohibit the appointment of near relatives in the same Civil Service unit, provided that these appointees have the necessary qualifications.

The Department should not allow this type of situation to arise in areas under its jurisdiction.

We believe that it will be above suspicion if it agrees with our recommendation to recruit its part-time or casual employees through the National Employment Service.

(2) It was said that the Department has employed too many female employees. These employees constitute only about two per cent of the full-time staff. The Department does not have full liberty of action in this matter. The Civil Service Act and Regulations give equal rights to men and women and the latter are not excluded from any competition provided they fulfil the conditions stipulated in the competition posters and that they possess the physical strength required.

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<sup>1/</sup> The Commission asked the Department to provide a list of the post offices where postmasters or supervisors have close relatives under them. We did not receive such a list because the Department does not have any up-to-date statistics on this matter.

## CHAPTER 9

### CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS

(1) Post Office employees consider that their duties are not clearly defined. They want a more precise and more detailed description. They believe that not only would this indicate the need for pay adjustments but also would prevent some postmasters from assigning them tasks unrelated to their normal duties.

Our Commission agreed to discuss these problems while admitting that they affect pay rates. In this matter we have followed the principle accepted by the Bureau of Classification Revision of the Civil Service Commission which is now assessing the duties of each position in the Civil Service and creating new classification groups without looking at the salary rates.

One basic problem for postal employees is the fact that there is no real direct and clearly acceptable comparison between their jobs and those in the private sector. Some parallel might possibly be drawn between specific tasks, i.e., between one or more parts of the postal employees' job and one or more parts of a job in the private sector. There are no jobs on the outside with an identical range of duties.

It is one thing to compare the postal employee with the bank messenger, the warehouseman, the delivery man, the meter reader, the collector, the employees of the direct mail order services, or of the distribution agencies and manufacturing services, it is another to find a complete similarity of the full scope of duties.

However, if we look at certain more or less abstract factors to

evaluate the satisfactory performance of certain duties, it is possible to compare certain requirements such as education, training, responsibility, integrity, degree of supervision, initiative, mental and physical effort, risks of accidents, hours of work, shift schedules, the aptitude at times to adapt oneself to different working conditions (e.g., weather conditions), and finally, contacts with the general public, diplomacy and tact.

By allocating points to each one of these factors in relation to its importance to the total job requirements, we can find an acceptable basis for comparison, and facilitate job evaluation at each level and between classes.

We know that the Bureau of Classification Revision is considering the adoption of a point rating scale for postal positions. We hope that this method will lead to a better understanding by all concerned of the scope of their duties and responsibilities. These point rating scales will certainly enable the staff organizations to understand the basis of comparison with outside jobs and between the various classes within the postal service.

We can only suggest that the Bureau of Classification Revision and the Department consult with the staff organizations at the earliest possible date so that they can take advantage of their comments and suggestions.

WE RECOMMEND:

42. That a point rating scale be used for the classification of all non-supervisory operating positions in the Post Office.
43. That the staff organizations be consulted, as soon as possible, by the Department and the Bureau of Classification Revision of the Civil Service Commission in the revision of the postal employee classes at each step in the revision process.



(2) We should consider three particular problems which must be resolved very soon.

a) It now takes seven years for a postal clerk to reach the maximum of his class, five years for a letter carrier, a mail handler and a postal chauffeur, and four for a dispatcher and a railway mail clerk.

These time limits are not too realistic.

We are convinced that postal workers, in general, acquire their maximum knowledge and productivity requirements in a shorter time.

WE RECOMMEND:

44. That postal employees reach the maximum of their salary in three years.

b) The immediate integration into one class of the postal clerks 1 and 2 cannot be postponed any longer even though a point rating scale will eventually be developed and accepted.

The postal clerks 1 perform a variety of duties in smaller post offices, whereas the postal clerks 2 tend to specialize and perform, day in and day out, similar but less varied types of duties in larger post offices with a higher volume of production. These postal clerks 1 have a need, most of the time, for a greater range of knowledge than a postal clerk 2. He also regularly assumes a wider scope of responsibilities in his daily tasks. And yet, a postal clerk 1 is paid less than a postal clerk 2.

This is a serious anomaly created by the simplification of the present system of classification of postal clerks which apparently does not take into account the great variety of duties which postal clerks 1 have to perform.

WE RECOMMEND:

45. That postal clerks 1 and 2 be immediately integrated into one and the same class, pending the acceptance of an appropriate point rating scale for both classes.

c) Several branch representatives wanted to omit from the statement of duties the well known phrase "other duties as required". It should be noted that the word "related" is not always used. Some employees, while admitting that these were exceptional cases, have asserted that in some offices this wording had been invoked to have them clean floors, wash windows or serve as maintenance men.

The Department must make every effort to provide in position descriptions detailed information reflecting as accurately as possible the essential duties and qualifications required. It should, moreover, make a general reference to certain duties which the employee may incidentally be called upon to perform. It is better to give more details rather than less in the outline of duties.

WE RECOMMEND:

46. That the words "other related duties" be used in job descriptions for the Post Office and that mention also be made of all the duties which are recognized as forming part of the regular duties of the employees even if these duties are not considered part of the normal daily duties.

(3) At some localities it was recommended that supervisory letter carriers be grouped in three distinct classes:

- a) block rotation supervisory letter carriers;
- b) holiday relief supervisory letter carriers;
- c) sick relief supervisory letter carriers.

Employees contend that the last two classes require greater knowledge, responsibility, and versatility and that they should receive a higher remuneration than the block supervisory letter carrier.

Strangely enough this proposal did not seem to be acceptable to a good many as our inquiry progressed. We prefer not to comment on its merit. We hope that the point rating system will determine if there is enough difference to justify the establishment of three distinct classification levels.

(4) Some clerks suggested that a special allowance be paid to those who have sorting knowledge of more than one geographical zone.

We shall not insist on this point since it may well be that this knowledge requirement might disappear after the adoption of the proposed departmental policy for proficiency examinations.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 14, "Proficiency Examinations".

## CHAPTER 10

### THE WORK WEEK

The field operating services of the Post Office are a year round, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week operation, thus giving rise to different problems mentioned by employees and which concern hours of work, shift schedules, week-end work, overtime in general, meal hours, etc.

#### 1. Hours of work and shift schedules

(1) The Deputy Postmaster General has the authority, with the approval of the Civil Service Commission within certain reservations, to fix employees' hours of work and spread them on a weekly basis.<sup>1/</sup>

Postal clerks and letter carriers work a 40-hour week.<sup>2/</sup> Because of the many requirements of the postal service, the Department requires employees to work during the day or partly during the day and evening or at night. For these reasons it is difficult to spread 40 hours over five consecutive working days. Some employees such as letter carriers and wicket clerks do not work on Sundays but their second day off during the week is not always a Saturday or a Monday. Other employees working on Saturdays or Sundays, or both, do not have consecutive days off between Monday and Friday.

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<sup>1/</sup> Civil Service Act, section 68 (e); Civil Service Regulations, sections 9 to 11.

<sup>2/</sup> Railway mail clerks have their own schedule of working hours which we discuss in Chapter 37, section 1.

However, the Department claims that, as far as possible, it gives its employees two consecutive days of rest each week and even three days when there is an interval of six to ten working days between days off. It makes every effort to reduce staff on week-ends and to use a rotation system so that the great majority of employees can have Saturdays and Sundays free.

The number of shifts varies between offices. There may be eight to ten, each with a different schedule. The Department claims that, as much as it would like to, it cannot spread the work any differently and thus avoid abnormal working hours for a good number of employees. In many cases it states it has no choice. It must take into consideration the times of arrival and departure of the mail. However, it has no control over some of them. The Department does not control the timetables of airplanes, boats and trains. As for highway services the Department must consider the large distances to be travelled and the stops which are required. Decisions are also affected by public transport timetables. The Department is convinced that the postal service could not be as rapid or efficient if it adopted the suggestion of many employees that there should be only three shifts in each post office with regular schedules.

Headquarters was asked about the possibility, in some localities at least, of changing the arrival times of the highway services to coincide with the starting time of the first day shift.

We were told that the highway services had been instituted bearing in mind the speeding up of the delivery of mail to the public. As the letter carriers' tour of duty begins at 8.00 or 8.30 a.m., the mail must reach them in time to be handled and sorted by walks before they leave. If the arrival time of the highway services were to coincide with that of the day shifts serious delays would result.

The fixing of working hours and the composition of shifts and their schedules create enormous problems for the Post Office Department. We feel, however,

that the Department has, to some extent, lost sight of the human side of the problem and wonder if it has considered sufficiently the effects of constant evening or night work on the family and social life of an employee.

One rather curious fact is that most industries and the Government pay higher differentials for night work (from 12 midnight to 8 a.m.) while, in fact, the evening shift (4 p.m. to midnight) upsets the normal life of a worker to a greater degree. His absence from home from late afternoon to about midnight cuts him off from his wife and family at a time when his presence is almost essential. This shift work prevents him from taking advantage of the moments when home life is at its fullest and, often, most agreeable. It leaves him no time except during holidays, to relax, to see friends, or take part in outside activities of any kind.

We do not claim to have found an ideal solution. Again reference is made to the formula we have already recommended: in each staff post office, a detailed examination of the hours of work and shift schedules should be started through the local joint committees, as soon as possible.

This on the spot examination will logically lead to the analysis of different suggestions which we have not studied because of the lack of time. Offhand, many of them seemed to have interesting possibilities. Here are some examples:

- a) a change in some highway services schedules;
- b) the adoption of a shift rotation policy with intervals so spaced (two months, perhaps) to allow an employee to adapt to changes in his daily life;
- c) an alteration of present shift schedules;
- d) the elimination of evening work, the establishment of schedules from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., from noon to 8 p.m., and if necessary, from midnight to 8 a.m., part-time employees being called to deal with any overflow of work in the evenings;

e) a new "days off" policy allowing the employee, if he so wishes, to take only one day off a week for a certain time and accumulate the other day off and thus be able to take four, five or six consecutive days of rest from time to time.

The local joint committees, with the co-operation of the Department, district directors and postmasters, will surely discover acceptable ways and means of assigning hours of work which, without being a detriment to the postal service, will not disregard the welfare of the employees.

(2) As a long-term solution the Department, deriving benefit from all the suggestions and recommendations received from the local joint committees, will have to undertake a thorough study of the work flow in the post office from the beginning to the end of daily operations.

To achieve the desired results this study should not be limited to the single problem of the distribution of working hours and shift schedules. It should cover problems of handling different classes of mail, priorities, transportation, etc.

We see the need for the services of outside consultants to carry out such a study. We also see the necessity for the prior acceptance of three main basic principles while not losing sight of the interests of the postal service:

- a) most of the work must be done during normal working hours by shifts with regular schedules and full-time staff;
- b) night work, and especially evening work, must be reduced as much as possible;
- c) week-end work must be eliminated or reduced to a minimum wherever it is not essential.

(3) Some other points were raised.

a) While admitting that civil servants in the field operating services of other departments also have a 40-hour week some postal clerks recommended the adoption of a  $37\frac{1}{2}$ -hour week. In their view their work and that of clerical workers is not so different as to justify such a distinction.

With the exception of the wicket clerks, most of the work performed by a postal clerk does not appear to us to be of a clerical nature. Their duties more closely resemble those of an industrial employee. As the national leaders of the Union of Postal Workers did not make any such suggestion in their brief, we prefer not to intervene but to leave it to those concerned - if they see fit - to raise this point at the forthcoming collective bargaining negotiations.

b) Some employees referred to the system of broken days in shift schedules which means they have to work two half days during the week to make up their 40-hour week.

The Department uses this system in localities where the post office closes down on one-half day a week on the same days as the shops and businesses in the area are closed. As far as possible, it tries to spread the tour of duty over two weeks, one of 44 hours and the other of 36. We suggest that employees, in centres where hours are not so scheduled, study the feasibility of such a system and to request that it be adopted if they think it advisable. There is no reason to believe that the Department will have any objection.

c) In a few post offices employees are assigned to shifts varying between day, evening and night during a period of five to ten days.

We do not support this practice even if it is unusual and even if the Department, in these cases, gives an employee at least 8 hours rest before resuming work.



- d) The Department admits that, at times, some employees do not have 8 hours rest before being recalled to work. We disapprove of this practice also.
- e) On different occasions and on less than twenty-four hours notice the Department changes the employees' rotation days off after the shift schedules have been posted. This is done, it says, only in special circumstances; for example, in the case of the sudden and unforeseeable absence of an employee belonging to a small shift. The Department cannot always replace the latter by a casual and must at once recall the employee from his day off; in the case of railway mail clerks where the nature of the work makes it impossible to hire a casual employee, the Department has no alternative but to recall immediately a railway mail clerk on his day off so that he can be available before train departure time.
- f) The employees urge that they be authorized to leave work at 10.30 p.m., at the latest, on Christmas and New Year's Eve. They also suggest that all inside postal operations be stopped on these two holidays.

According to the Department it does all it can to let its employees go as early as possible on Christmas and New Year's Eve and that on these two days it requires only the attendance of a very minimum number of employees. It emphasizes, however, that in some areas December 26 and January 2 are normal delivery days and therefore it cannot reduce its staff too much.

The Department ought to do more. It is not impossible to make, beforehand, the necessary arrangements so that all staff can be released at 10.30 p.m. at the very latest on Christmas and New Year's Eve. Often at the risk of giving a less complete service in these areas it can limit itself to a very minimum number of employees on these two days. The patrons in these regions will understand.

WE RECOMMEND:

47. That local joint committees in each staff post office be authorized to start as soon as possible a detailed examination of working hours and shift schedules, to study all the possibilities for improvement and to make the recommendations having due regard to the requirements of the postal service.
48. That the Department, on the other hand, make a thorough study of the flow of work from the beginning to the end of daily operations.
49. That, for this purpose, the Department call on the services of outside consultants and recognize the validity of the basic guiding principles set out in this Report.
50. That hours of work be fixed as much as possible to coincide with the normal operation of public transportation.
51. That the Department make an effort to discontinue broken days in shift schedules as well as the assignment of employees to different shifts over short periods.
52. That employees be allowed a minimum of 8 hours rest, plus travel time, between each shift change.
53. That no member of the staff be obliged to work after 10.30 p.m., at the latest, on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
54. That the Department reduce to a strict minimum the number of employees required to work on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

2. Week-end work

Employees stated that scheduling of work over a five-day week, Monday to Friday, with a few exceptions, would solve many problems, particularly in grades 14 to 19 post offices.<sup>1/</sup>

According to employees week-end work over an extended period has a depressing and adverse effect upon their individual, family and social life, is most detrimental to the recruiting of desirable and qualified personnel and is one of the reasons for the high rate of personnel turnover in many cities.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Appendix F.

As expected, they compared their lot with most public servants who are not required to work on week-ends. They emphasized that most businesses and all chartered banks now close on Saturdays, as well as a large number of provincial and municipal services.

Letter carriers do not believe that patrons are that concerned about receiving mail on Saturdays and a good number of wicket clerks think that no one has nor can have any serious objection to closing post offices on Saturday by noon at the latest. Finally, postal workers recommend the setting up of special week-end shifts composed of a very minimum number of employees who would process first class mail only.

The Department admits that these suggestions from its employees would make working conditions more normal and attractive but it does not believe that they are either practical or acceptable.

a) The Department fears, as a foregone conclusion, a strong adverse reaction from the public.

It quotes, as a precedent, the protests caused a few years ago by its decision to curtail postal service on statutory holidays. One must admit that this reaction was shortlived, as was the case when mail delivery was reduced from two to one delivery per day.

It emphasizes that in many cases, mail items such as registered mail, postage due mail or C.O.D.'s, whose delivery requires personal contact according to the regulations, can only be delivered on Saturdays because it is the only day when the patron is at home.

The Department admits that it is the practice for a good many firms to close on Saturdays, but it does not consider this is practised to the extent that it could allow the Department to ignore its obligations towards all those businesses, whether small, medium or large, which remain open on that

day and which depend upon the maintenance of postal service at least on Saturday mornings.

b) The Department maintains that it cannot process first class mail only on week-ends.

This is a thorny problem because indirectly it brings another one concerning methods used sometimes by some postmasters during the week for the handling of third and fourth class mail. These methods have been questioned several times by the employees who believe that the Department, if it processed these two classes of mail as they are received during the week, would avoid its accumulation for the week-end. The Department denies using such methods and rejects the employees' allegation.

c) The Department also believes that a noticeable reduction of service on Saturdays would result in patrons seeking other means of communication, such as telephone, Telex or express services, resulting in a loss of revenue which would not compensate for the savings made because of the curtailment of service on Saturday.

Some conclusions can be drawn from these opposing points of view.

(1) Basically we are concerned here with a right of management.

The Department has the responsibility for all final decisions respecting the scheduling of work, the assignment of duties and the setting up of week-end work schedules. Everything considered, it is up to the Department to adopt the most reasonable measures. It is possible that employees do not see these measures in the same light and that they choose to contest their validity and timeliness. But, in the absence of the Department's concurrence in the viewpoint of its employees, we believe that the employer should have the last word and that he must be able to rely on the co-operation of its personnel.

(2) On the other hand, once these measures are applied, employees who are

called upon to work either on Saturdays or on Sundays should receive additional remuneration to compensate them adequately.

(3) Notwithstanding the above, the proposals put forward by the employees deserve a more thorough study than circumstances allowed us to do.

WE RECOMMEND:

55. That postal employees, subject to their right to put forward their points of view and discuss the pros and cons with the Department, should recognize that it is justified in organizing work on week-ends as it sees fit.
56. That the appropriate authorities, on the other hand, agree to pay additional remuneration to all employees required to work on week-ends even if this work is part of their normal scheduled weekly hours.
57. That the rate of such additional remuneration be negotiated under the proposed collective bargaining negotiations.
58. That the responsible authorities conduct a thorough study of the consequences of the adoption of a policy aimed at curtailing postal service on week-ends.
59. That this study include amongst other things:
  - a) the possibility of cancelling all letter carrier delivery on Saturdays to private homes, and limiting this service to the bare minimum on that day to businesses and commercial establishments;
  - b) the possibility of closing down wicket service on Saturday afternoons and of closing it down completely in those areas where operating costs consistently exceed revenue;
  - c) the possibility of suspending postal operations between the midnight shift on Friday and the evening shift on Sunday at those locations where this is practical, i.e., where no serious delay in mail delivery would occur;
  - d) the possibility in those offices where it would not be practical to curtail Saturday delivery and wicket service, of employing a minimum staff for the sale of money orders, etc., sorting, preparation and delivery of only first class mail matter along with C.O.D.'s and registered mail and the dispatching of mail of these classes.

### 3. Overtime in general

The Department pays its employees extra remuneration for "authorized" overtime.<sup>1/</sup> Usually extra pay is calculated on the following basis:

- a) for overtime beyond normal daily or weekly hours - time and a half;
- b) for work on a statutory holiday which falls on a normal working day - normal day's pay, plus time and a half for every hour worked on that day;
- c) for work on a statutory holiday falling on an employee's day of rest - three times his hourly rate for every hour.

The formula for "authorized" overtime as the Department applies it seems consistent with that of industry in general where each hour of overtime brings compensation in the form of extra pay.

(1) There is almost complete lack of agreement among employees on this subject. Some of them disagreed with the way overtime is allotted while others objected to being forced to work overtime.

The Department first of all asks for volunteers. If not enough volunteers are available a choice is made on the basis of the reverse order of seniority. It states that no employee with a valid excuse is made to work overtime and that disciplinary measures are never taken against anyone who refuses to do so.

This practice seems fair and we cannot understand why it should give rise to serious difficulties. The Department said it hopes that the staff organizations will, as soon as possible, state their own respective positions with regards to the allocation of overtime among employees, bearing in mind the operational requirements of the service.

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<sup>1/</sup> We are commenting here only on the general practice. In Chapters 33 and 37 we deal with the problem of overtime for letter carriers and railway mail clerks respectively.

(2) Employees ask that they be given at least four hours notice before being requested to work overtime. The Department has no objection but points out that this is not always possible, for example, when there is an unforeseeable delay in the arrival of the mail.

(3) Some consider that the Department should guarantee a minimum of three hours work every time they are called to work overtime. The Department claims that, to its knowledge, no employee is required to work overtime for less than two hours. It intends to notify postmasters to abide by this policy.

There must be a misunderstanding. There is a difference between overtime worked immediately after normal working hours and overtime which requires an employee to return to work after he has left.

In the latter case, we agree with the employees' request. If they are asked, unexpectedly, to leave their homes and return to the office to work overtime, we believe that a minimum of three hours pay is justified.

(4) Four other points need clarification.

- a) Some employees complained that the 30 minutes worked every day prior to the official starting time during the Christmas period is not counted as overtime. The Department states that postmasters must count this as overtime.
- b) It was suggested that new employees during their probationary period should be paid for overtime like other employees. This proposal is reasonable. The Department, however, maintains that it usually does not require these employees to work overtime.
- c) Another point for discussion is the departmental policy of not asking part-time and casual employees to work overtime. The Department claims this is not its policy. It maintains that it does call on these employees to work overtime when necessary. However, it does not want to see female part-time employees work after midnight. We agree.

d) We understand that payment for overtime which at times was delayed is now made, normally, not later than the fifteenth day of the following month.

Therefore we need not pursue this matter further.

WE RECOMMEND:

60. That the Department and the staff organizations, through the national joint committees, clarify the methods and procedures to be followed in the granting of overtime and its sharing among employees.
61. That a minimum of three hours overtime be guaranteed to any employee who, having already worked his normal shift, is asked to return to work after he has left the office.
62. That part-time, casual and new employees on probation be paid overtime for each hour they are required to work beyond their normal working day.

4. Meal hours

All employees of the Post Office are entitled to a meal break of at least half an hour during their daily eight hours of work.

(1) Several maintain that the meal break is not long enough and that sometimes they have had to eat while working because of pressure of work or inadequate transportation facilities.

Headquarters do not appear to be aware of these grievances and state that, in line with directives issued, postmasters have the responsibility to ensure that employees have a completely free half hour for their meals.

We must say that during our visits we actually saw employees eating while they were working. Of course, they may be many reasons for this, not all of which are necessarily the fault of the postmasters.

However, we believe that the Department should clarify its directives or make them more definite and make sure through the postmasters that they are fully understood and adhered to by immediate supervisors. Employees, on the other hand,



must remember that they have a right to stop all work during their meal break. If they are prevented from doing so, against their will, they should take the means at their disposal to obtain recognition of this right.

(2) There have been several other observations made about the meal break, one of which seems to deserve special comment. Employees complained about the time set for the meal break.

The Department usually tries to schedule the break between three and a half and to four and a half hours after the employee arrives at work. This is not always possible. For example, it is the practice for letter carriers to deliver about two-thirds of the daily volume of mail on the morning run. However, quite often, either the letter carrier has so much mail that it takes him longer to deliver it or there is no public transportation when he is ready to return to the office at noon. Evidently, some letter carriers are unable to have their meal until five or six hours after they start work.

There appears to be only one corrective measure. Although we do not believe that the majority of letter carriers will agree we think it is worth mentioning. Some suggested stopping delivery at a set time in the morning. This would mean that letter carriers would eat their meal at more convenient hours but it would probably mean that they run the risk of finishing work much later in the afternoon.

There are other post office employees who have to wait more than four and a half hours before eating their meals.

The Department reduces inconvenience to a minimum by staggering breaks to the best of its ability. It does not see how it can adopt a fixed rule to solve this problem which differs in every office. It states that changes made are not put into effect until the representatives of local branches have been consulted. This last statement offers interesting possibilities. We will return to it in our recommendations.

(3) It was suggested that the half hour lunch break be included in the normal hours of work.

Such an arrangement would be tantamount to introducing a  $37\frac{1}{2}$ -hour work week. According to the Department, this would cost the public several million dollars a year since a large number of additional workers would have to be engaged. We believe that this question should properly be held over until the forthcoming collective bargaining negotiations take place.<sup>1/</sup>

(4) A fourth proposal is that the half-hour lunch break should be extended to one hour.

The Department has no serious objections. Even now it allows some groups of employees a break of one hour. However, it did not fail to point out that some other groups would gain no real advantage from this proposal or might even lose by it. Therefore, if the lunch break were extended a good number of letter carriers would have their working day extended by half an hour. Postal clerks on evening shifts would perhaps have difficulty in finding public transportation if they left the office half an hour later. Evidently, some of them would lose part of their night differential pay.

This prospect makes us cautious and we believe it is preferable to let the employees themselves decide the merit of this proposal, having regard to local conditions, and if they see it as an improvement discuss the matter with the Department.

(5) The suggestion that the lunch break be abolished in lieu of extra pay is rejected.

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<sup>1/</sup> All federal employees attached to operating services work a 40-hour week. Only those in the administrative services work  $37\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

We cannot see this proposal at all. It is inhuman and antisocial to allow an employee to do a day's work without proper food or rest. The Department reacted in the same manner.

(6) Meal breaks present two other problems.

The first concerns only the letter carriers.

Although the Department has advised us of its intention to eliminate all "straight through" walks, it is always possible that the carrying out of this decision may be delayed. We are concerned about the letter carriers who have this type of walk and who cannot find a suitable place to eat their lunch. We are making a recommendation which should resolve this problem.

We are also making a recommendation regarding the second problem, which concerns mainly postal clerks who lose valuable time by having to punch the clock before and after their lunch break, either because of the large number of employees waiting in turn or because of the distance they must travel to reach the time clock.

WE RECOMMEND:

63. That the Department clarify its directives concerning its employees' right to a meal break of at least one full half hour during their eight hour day.
64. That the Department, through its postmasters, ensure that employees' immediate supervisors understand and conform to these directives.
65. That employees deprived of a meal break against their will take advantage of all avenues of redress open to them.
66. That the meal break be as near halfway through the working day as possible.
67. That any change affecting an employee's meal period be put into effect only after consultation with him and, if agreement cannot be reached, with representatives from his local branch.
68. That through local joint committees discussions be initiated to decide locally whether the lunch break should be one hour instead of half an hour.

69. That, from now until all "straight through" walks are eliminated, the Department ensure that letter carriers assigned to these walks have a suitable place to eat lunch and, if such a place is not available, that it take all the necessary measures to solve the problem including transportation of letter carriers by taxi if necessary.
70. That the Department after consultation with the local joint committees install more time clocks wherever deemed essential.

5. Coffee breaks

Many aspects of coffee breaks were discussed.

(1) The Department was criticized for considering coffee breaks merely a privilege rather than a right. The rest period, commonly referred to as a coffee break, has become such a part of our way of life that it has all the characteristics of a right, the use of which if not abused, benefits both the employer and the employee.

It is preferable to give it formal recognition and avoid the possibility of frustrating grievances.

WE RECOMMEND:

71. That coffee breaks be recognized as a right rather than just a privilege.

(2) Employees requested that coffee breaks be extended from 10 to 15 minutes, contrary to the general practice in the private sector.

Even if employees, in some post offices work some distance from facilities where coffee, tea, beverages and food are dispensed, we do not concur with the above suggestion.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Chapter 24, section 5, "Environmental and Physical Working Conditions", where we comment on the need for additional amenities.

WE RECOMMEND:

72. That, until further notice, coffee breaks remain limited to ten minutes but that the Department ensure that all employees can derive benefit from it.

It was said that in some post offices coffee breaks are given at poorly selected times. The operational requirements of the postal service evidently have a bearing on the timing of coffee breaks.

WE RECOMMEND:

73. That, as far as possible, coffee breaks be taken near the middle of each half shift, whether it be day, evening or night.

6. Wash-up time

At some localities, postal employees requested that the Department allow them during normal working hours a period of five to ten minutes to clean up before meals and before leaving the office.

We have observed that these employees are exposed to dust and that they often handle mail bags that are not altogether too clean.

The Department does not deny it and simply points out that this will be a matter for collective bargaining in due course. We agree but think that the Department should be willing to discuss this problem immediately with the staff organizations to arrive at a mutual understanding, especially where washrooms need a good deal of improvement regarding size, space, location and number.

WE RECOMMEND:

74. That the appropriate authorities recognize, in principle, that some post office employees are entitled to five minutes wash-up time before meals and before leaving the office.
75. That the Department discuss relevant controls with the staff organizations, through national joint committees.
76. That once a firm rule is established, Headquarters refer any decision of a local nature to postmasters and district directors.

## CHAPTER 11

### PAY AND ALLOWANCES

#### 1. Pay cheques

(1) The employees' main grievance relates to the number of pay periods in a year.

There are now 24 pay days per year. Postal employees, like all civil servants, receive their pay cheques near the middle and the end of each month.

This method of payment has some serious disadvantages, especially for lower paid workers whose budget is tight and committed ahead of time. Reference was made to the problem facing an employee who has to go through three week-ends between pay days and it was suggested that salaries be paid every two weeks.

We realize that Treasury Board not the Department has jurisdiction in this matter. We are aware that the Board has for some time been studying the possibility of such a change.

This change creates technical and administrative difficulties which become more serious when one considers that Treasury Board is, and quite rightly so, considering the change for the whole of the Civil Service. These difficulties are not insurmountable and must give way to the common good of all employees.

#### WE RECOMMEND:

77. That, from now on, postal employees receive their annual salary every two weeks, in 26 fixed periods per year, instead of 24.

(2) It was also requested that if Treasury Board decided to agree to

the necessary change, the Department would make every effort to issue these cheques every second Thursday at the latest, because a good number of employees who work late in the evening could have difficulty cashing their cheques if received on Friday.

We support this request.

(3) It was alleged that pay cheque stubs did not provide enough information. They referred to annotations for overtime and night differential pay which leave employees uninformed as to the exact period of work covered by these pay cheques.

We are assured by the Department that recent procedural changes have resolved this problem. If, despite these changes, some employees are still confused they should obtain the necessary explanations from their personnel office - this is one of its functions.

(4) Many employees would like to receive their pay cheques in advance when they go on vacation leave.

We are told there are difficulties to overcome. Because computers are used for the preparation of pay cheques, the employees' request cannot be granted if cheques are not already prepared, since it would upset the established program and risk delays and other difficulties in the general distribution of these cheques. We do not have sufficient knowledge to assess the validity of these objections.

This request is most reasonable if the cheques are on hand.

WE RECOMMEND:

78. That postmasters do not fail to give pay cheques to employees a few days ahead of their vacation leave, if cheques are on hand.

(5) On many occasions employees have criticized the decision of Treasury Board not to grant the benefit of the raise in pay announced on August 1, 1965, retroactive to October 1, 1964, to former employees who terminated their employment between these two dates.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> This decision is based on Order in Council P.C. 1964-133, dated January 30, 1964.

If we consider:

- a) that the agreement by an employer to pay a new wage rate retroactively to his employees without distinction is equivalent to recognition on his part that the former rates have proved insufficient from a certain date, and
- b) that postal employees laid off, superannuated or deceased (through their estate) actually receive the increase retroactively,

we cannot understand why all employees, without distinction, who terminated their employment between October 1, 1964, and August 1, 1965, were not also granted the increase.

We do not have the authority, under our mandate, to make any recommendation whatsoever on this matter.

(6) At the beginning of our investigation we were informed that a small number of employees because of a simple mathematical error, for which they were not responsible, had oversubscribed certain payments to the Unemployment Insurance Fund and were not reimbursed.

We are told that Treasury Board has now approved the refund of these amounts and that all employees so affected have been reimbursed or will be soon.

## 2. Acting pay

Section 13 of the Civil Service Act reads as follows:

"Where an employee is required to perform for a temporary period the duties of a higher position than the one held by him, the Commission may in accordance with the regulations authorize the payment to him of acting pay during such temporary period; and during the time that the employee is being paid acting pay he has and may exercise the power and authority of the person holding the higher position."

The Civil Service Commission has laid down in its Regulations<sup>1/</sup> that acting pay may not be paid to an employee required to perform the duties of a higher position than the one held by him for a period of less than two months.

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<sup>1/</sup> Sections 38 to 40.



The Department has further restricted the scope of this provision.

According to the Departmental Personnel Manual<sup>1/</sup> acting pay shall not be paid to an employee who replaces someone in a higher position, even for more than two months, when the regular incumbent is absent on special or vacation leave. It is also laid down that an employee who temporarily replaces several others in higher positions is not entitled to add together the replacement periods towards the minimum period of two months.

Employees protested these regulations and suggested that in their case acting pay should take effect as soon as they take on duties for which a higher salary is approved. To support this claim, they referred to the current practice in industry for operational employees. They referred to certain methods being used by some postmasters to avoid paying acting pay.

The Department claimed it was completely unaware of these methods. It even offered to investigate any abuse which is brought to its attention and to remedy any legitimate grievance.

The Department did not wish to express a firm opinion on the employees' recommendation that acting pay be paid immediately the higher duties are assumed. Instead, it pointed out that the Civil Service Commission in 1962 did not consider it advisable to modify its policy in this regard.

This may be true, but we are far from convinced that the reasons given at that time and which might be given today with regard to several classes of white collar civil servants are well founded in the case of post office employees. These employees, in fact, have very limited promotion opportunities. Only a very small number can hope to obtain a promotion because of the additional knowledge, experience, or training acquired in the execution of the duties of a higher position. Furthermore, we are doubtful that a postal clerk, a letter carrier or

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<sup>1/</sup> Under the heading "Pay" (Acting Pay).

a railway mail clerk who temporarily assumes a higher position is, in all cases, performing only part of the duties of that post.

WE RECOMMEND:

79. That by one or more amendments to the Civil Service Act and Regulations or any other document it be recognized that a post office employee is entitled to acting pay after he has performed the duties of a position higher than the one he holds for five working days, whether consecutive or cumulative, and for as long as he holds such a position.

3. Night differential

Full-time postal workers receive a night differential of 15 cents an hour which, with certain exceptions, is paid to them for each complete hour of work done between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m.<sup>1/</sup>

(1) They requested that this differential be increased either to 25 cents an hour or to 15% of the salary.

In some other departments, the night differential is 8 cents an hour between 6 p.m. and 12 midnight and 12 cents an hour between 12 midnight and 6 a.m.<sup>2/</sup> The differential rate in the Post Office Department is thus the highest in the public service. It is even higher than that generally paid in private industry.

This rate, admittedly, has not changed since 1954 and is less generous than 12 years ago when employees received eight hours pay for seven hours night work. But this is an anomaly which neither common sense nor logic justifies correcting by raising the rate of 15 cents an hour to 25 cents. We would only be making the situation more abnormal.

However, there is a compromise formula which is rather interesting and appears more reasonable to us.

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<sup>1/</sup> Order in Council, P.C. 1954-24/290, March 4, 1954.

<sup>2/</sup> Treasury Board Minute 609965, December 12, 1963.

This formula involves the adoption of a variable percentage of the wage as the determining factor in the differential rate. In other words, it means

- a) that the parties to a collective agreement recognize that the so-called night differential can vary according to whether it seeks to compensate the employee for hours worked either during the evening or at night, and
- b) that the parties agree on the percentage of the wage which in both cases seems most equitable to them.

The problem of studying the possibilities of this formula more thoroughly should be left to the staff organizations.

(2) Full-time employees also suggested that, from now on, the Department pay the night differential, to each and every individual without distinction, for every hour of work done between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m.

At present an employee does not collect his full differential unless he starts work at 5 p.m. or later, and before 6 a.m. If his shift starts before 5 p.m., he is not entitled to a differential until after 7 p.m. Or again, if his shift begins at 6 a.m., he does not receive any differential for the first hour, i.e., between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.

The night differential is intended to compensate an employee for prescribed abnormal hours of work. As mentioned above, in other departments as well as in the industry, the right to a night differential is recognized and consistently respected. We are unable to understand the reasoning on which the Department can base its policy.

(3) There is one last point.

Casuals and some part-time employees complained about not being entitled to the night differential. Elsewhere in this Report we explain the kind of work these employees perform and the situation in which they find themselves.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>/ See Chapter 8, "Manpower", sections 3 and 4.

If we were to abide by the facts and circumstances which, in accordance with the letter and intent of the law, authorize the Department to hire casual help (even for a short time) and if our recommendations in favour of these people are accepted, we do not see why these employees should continue to be denied this differential since, like full-time employees, casuals may be required to work in the evening or at night.

Payment of the differential to part-time employees is a different matter.

These employees are almost permanent supernumeraries whose work, as a rule, lasts only four hours a day, five days a week. They seek this kind of work precisely because they know that it will be only part time. This suits them and they accept it for different personal reasons. They also know beforehand, as a general rule, that they will not start work before a certain time in the late afternoon and that they will finish fairly early in the evening.

In their case, therefore, we do not believe that a differential is appropriate as it is in the case of casual employees.

WE RECOMMEND:

80. That the rate of the night differential remain unchanged for the time being.
81. That the staff organizations study the possibility of adopting a new formula to establish the night differential on the basis of a percentage of the basic salary.
82. That the staff organizations, if they think it advisable, discuss this new formula during the forthcoming collective negotiations.
83. That all full-time employees be entitled to the night differential of 15 cents for each hour of work performed between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m., without exception.
84. That casual employees, like full-time employees, receive the night differential.

4. Boot allowance

In his second Report<sup>1/</sup> Mr. Justice J. C. Anderson recommended that "the

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<sup>1/</sup> Commission of Inquiry into the Increases in Rates of Pay for Civil Servants in Group D, (p.3).

boot allowance of the postal service on a semi-annual basis, for such full-time employees as now receive this allowance, be converted into the sum of \$60 annually and added to their pay."

The Treasury Board endorsed this recommendation on August 26, 1965.

Postal employees who are entitled to the boot allowance complained about this recommendation because, as indicated by Mr. Justice Anderson, it is subject to deduction for income tax and pension purposes. They have asked to revert to the former practice which, while granting an allowance, somewhat less generous, was paid twice annually and was not taxable. The rate was based on prevailing market prices for boots and the allowance was intended strictly for their purchase.

The employees claim they gained very little from this change and although they had accepted it at the time, have now come to regret it.

If this were a fundamental problem, we would hesitate to intervene but such is not the case. We also wish to emphasize that our viewpoint should not be interpreted as an expression of reproach to the Commission of Inquiry into the Increases in Rates of Pay for Civil Servants in Group D.

WE RECOMMEND:

85. That the Department revert to the practice in effect prior to August, 1965, for the payment of the boot allowance and that this amount not be considered as part of the basic salary.

Postal clerks and mail handlers do not receive any boot allowance. Many of them are required to handle heavy bulky mail bags regularly. They believe they are entitled to safety boots for their own protection and claim a special allowance.

The Department contends that these employees are not normally required to lift, move or carry mail bags except in small staff post offices and that the percentage of on-the-job accidents due to such handling is minimal.

WE RECOMMEND:

86. That the Department consider the provision of free safety boots for those employees who have to handle heavy and bulky mail bags on a regular basis.

5. Clothing

If anyone had asked us at the end of our Inquiry to state which problem throughout the country had given rise to the greatest number of suggestions, different if not dissimilar, we would not have hesitated to say that it was the problem of uniforms and clothing of all kinds.

A few examples will be enough to show both the dimension of this problem and the perplexity in which we find ourselves.

Some letter carriers described their uniforms as a "get-up" and criticized the quality of the material, the cut, and after a few months of wear, their shoddy appearance. Others complained about the shirts, summer and winter caps, and the inadequacy of waterproofing in the coats and capes. In other instances, full-time and part-time postal clerks have complained about aprons, smocks or coveralls.

No one can expect this Commission to be able or to want to decide on the choice of clothing for the post office employees, on the attractiveness of the colour, the quality of the material, shirt cloth, or on the substitutions, changes or alterations which may be required.

However, we were made to understand:

- a) that in 1951, the Department, the Union of Postal Workers and the Federated Association of Letter Carriers had agreed to set up a joint committee called "The Uniform Committee";
- b) that this committee is composed of representatives of each of the groups concerned;
- c) that the committee has held regular meetings since then;
- d) that its first and foremost function is to look into and find the best

possible solutions related to all clothing problems.

It is best, therefore, to refer to this committee all suggestions made. We acknowledge that this committee is far more capable of dealing with these suggestions since it has the knowledge and competence required.

WE RECOMMEND:

87. That post office employees through their local branches communicate to their national Headquarters all problems and suggestions of the kind referred to in this Report concerning uniforms or clothing.
88. That the national leaders submit these problems and suggestions, if they see fit to do so, to the joint Uniform Committee.
89. That this committee study these suggestions and make recommendations which it considers fair and reasonable.
90. That the Department, insofar as possible, conform to these proposals.

These recommendations take care, for all practical purposes, of most of the proposals received.

There remains, however, a few proposals on which we would like to comment in detail for the benefit of all concerned.

(1) Until now letter carriers are being provided free-of-charge in addition to their boot allowance with:

- a) peajacket or overcoat (also known as "Weather Jacket");
- b) sackcoat (also known as "Tunic");
- c) trousers, both summer and winter;
- d) shirts;
- e) cloth cap, both summer and winter;
- f) straw hat;
- g) ties;
- h) waterproof cap cover;

- i) waterproof cape;
- j) waterproof coat;
- k) waterproof leggings;
- l) rubber boots or rubber shoes;
- m) vests (colder northern regions only);
- n) windbreakers (Prairies only).

We do not question the need for all this clothing. Moreover, the Department stated that it proposes:

- a) to issue shortly new types of uniforms and winter coats;
- b) to add to the scale of the issue woollen scarves and fur hats at the beginning of the 1966/67 winter season;
- c) in the coastal regions, to issue a new type of waterproof rainsuit which will be better adapted to weather conditions.

We have nothing to add to this list or to these proposals. In line with our recommendation we leave it to the joint Uniform Committee to take care of omissions, if any.

(2) At some localities, letter carriers suggested better methods of distribution of clothing, i.e., that the Department use a network of warehouses located in some larger cities. The Department does not agree because it would mean the setting up of an elaborate and expensive organization which would be unrealistic because it would result likely in the over-stocking of clothing and of other various items in post offices in the larger centres.

The Department has now included penalty clauses in its contracts with suppliers for unwarranted late deliveries and is satisfied that these clauses will bring excellent results and will eliminate the delays encountered in the past.

(3) It was suggested, but only by a few letter carriers, that on initial appointment they be issued with a complete uniform by the Department



and then provided with a clothing allowance to meet future needs. The Department points out that it buys from wholesalers at a reasonably low cost, and that the letter carrier will have to pay substantially more. Moreover, the Department is fearful that, should this proposal be adopted, the letter carriers after a while might not be as well nor as uniformly clothed as they are at present.

(4) Some letter carriers recommended that the Department pay the cost for minor repairs and for the cleaning of their uniforms. This practice is not recognized, generally, outside the Department. However, we think the Department should continue to bear the costs of repair and cleaning in the case of accidents on the job.

(5) Many employees working inside post offices feel that the issue of protective clothing is inadequate.

The Department does not agree claiming that protective clothing may be replaced when worn out as it does for uniforms and shirts of letter carriers.

(6) Wicket clerks in daily contact with the public claim they are not provided with a suitable jacket and that it creates a poor public impression. They request, firmly and with persistence, that they be issued with a more presentable type of jacket.

The Department states that the joint Uniform Committee has recommended the adoption of a new style nylon cotton jacket for wicket clerks, to be issued beginning with the fiscal year 1966/67.<sup>1/</sup>

(7) Postal clerks and letter carriers have asked to be measured by a qualified tailor in their locality. We do not think that this is essential provided precise instructions are given on the relevant requisition forms and care is taken in the tailoring.

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<sup>1/</sup> We hope that this new jacket will be made in an attractive colour.

(8) Railway mail clerks do not receive a clothing allowance. Without agreeing with all their requests, one appears reasonable, i.e., the free issue of coveralls by the Department. The nature of their work and because they have to handle mail bags and creep through dusty and narrow openings (creep holes) prompt us to agree with this suggestion.

WE RECOMMEND:

91. That the Department supply coveralls to railway mail clerks.

## CHAPTER 12

### SENIORITY

The Post Office Department is one of the few departments where seniority is recognized as a major factor in some of its functions and personnel policies: selection of vacation leave periods, preferred assignments,<sup>1/</sup> bidding for shifts, shift schedules or for carriers' walks, and promotion within the railway mail clerk classification.<sup>2/</sup>

This policy and the details of its operation are the result of agreements between the Department and the staff organizations. Any innovation results always from consultation and discussion. No changes are made unilaterally.

We approve of this policy as a whole. It implies the recognition of certain rights and privileges because of an employee's length of service. Decisions become more acceptable since they no longer depend on managerial decisions, undue influence or mere whims, but on a system which has been approved and accepted by both sides. It improves human relations by creating a more peaceful atmosphere, free from bitterness or resentment.

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<sup>1/</sup> Wicket clerks, directory clerks, assistants to supervisors in the letter carrier sections, clerks in the customs sections in some offices, and some other positions in larger staff post offices are classed usually (there are exceptions) among these positions. In such cases, except where the employee lacks the ability or knowledge required, seniority, based on continuous full-time service in the particular classification, is the deciding factor.

<sup>2/</sup> We also deal with seniority in Chapter 15, "Competitions and Promotions".

These seniority rules have never had any legal basis until now. For the Department it is a moral obligation. Theoretically the Department can ignore them wholly or in part or repeal them. With the advent of collective bargaining these rules will be discussed from different viewpoints, including the possibility of making them part of a collective agreement. The staff organizations will evidently try to increase the scope of these rules. We have heard so often about their plans in this matter that we must discuss two of them at least.

(1) Several employees complained that, in some offices, local management had not allowed them to bid for a position which they considered a "preferred assignment", claiming that the position was not of this nature or that these employees did not have the necessary qualifications.<sup>1/</sup>

The first objection appears easy to solve although we must admit that "preferred assignments" vary from one district to another. For example, the position of wicket clerk is not always considered a "preferred assignment" while, in some places, the work of a mail handler is.

WE RECOMMEND:

92. That the Department agree to determine definitely, through local joint committees, what positions should be designated as "preferred assignments" in each staff post office.

The second objection regarding qualifications does not present too serious a problem either.

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<sup>1/</sup> This second pretext has been invoked more often.

The introduction of barrier examinations which we will discuss later<sup>1/</sup> will make it possible to identify, ahead of time, the aptitude of candidates for "preferred assignments" and to use seniority as the deciding factor, when employees are successful in these examinations.

In addition, if future collective agreements contain one or more clauses based on the seniority rules, now in force, any employee who thinks he has been wronged will be able to take advantage of the new grievance procedure.<sup>2/</sup>

(2) The staff organizations urge the application of the seniority principle in promotions. They are faced with two major obstacles:

- a) Bills C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act) and C-181 (Public Service Employment Act) leave entire jurisdiction in this matter to the Civil Service Commission and, as in the past, held to the merit principle in this field;<sup>3/</sup>
- b) the bargaining certification of staff organizations will probably exclude postal officers grades 1, 2 or 3 and will, at the same time, exclude these organizations from any discussion on the methods of promotion to these positions.

(3) Although, as a rule, employees are satisfied with the present seniority system, it must be admitted that methods of application vary greatly from one group to another:

- a) letter carriers base their seniority on continuous full-time service, in their particular class, regardless of location;

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 15, "Competitions and Promotions".

<sup>2/</sup> See Chapter 17, "Grievance Procedure".

<sup>3/</sup> See Chapter 15, "Competitions and Promotions".

- b) postal clerks, mail handlers and dispatchers, in their particular class, but only within the postal establishment;
- c) railway mail clerks, effective the date of promotion to their class and by district.<sup>1/</sup>

These different interpretations are a continuous cause of friction among the staff organizations and the Department is concerned. It believes, and rightly so, that it cannot act as a mediator and settle the disputes between the staff organizations. This is the responsibility of their respective leaders. We support the Department's approach of not interfering in the internal problems of the staff organizations of its own initiative, and of its policy to study all suggestions that these organizations wish to submit through their elected representatives.

During our Inquiry, one particular instance of friction arose which we cannot ignore.

Some years ago, all interested parties made an agreement concerning the large number of railway mail clerks who, gradually, had to be transferred to other employment.<sup>2/</sup>

The Department, realizing that these clerks were the victims of circumstances beyond their control, decided that surplus railway mail clerks should be entitled to the same pay and, after consultations with the staff organizations, to keep their earned seniority whenever they were transferred to other positions in the postal service.

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<sup>1/</sup> We noticed that junior employees have a viewpoint different from that of the more senior employees. This is understandable.

<sup>2/</sup> The curtailment of the railway postal service and the marked increase in services by air and highway services have resulted in a decrease in railway mail clerk positions from 1,400 in 1957 to 347 in 1966.

Thus, a railway mail clerk whose position is abolished may use his seniority to replace an employee with fewer years of service. If it is not possible to assign him to a position in the railway mail service, he assumes other functions in a post office in the area in which he resides or he is assigned as a "supernumerary". In both cases he receives his full salary. Some other specific rules apply but all are meant to keep these clerks in the postal service making sure, at the same time, that they do not unfairly displace other employees: if a railway mail clerk is assigned to a class to which he once belonged, his seniority dates back to his first appointment to that class; otherwise, his seniority dates back only to his date of appointment as a railway mail clerk.

Obviously, this has caused some friction, for instance, a railway mail clerk has been able to take advantage of 25 years service to have his name placed on the seniority list ahead of a postal clerk with 24 years service.

The Union of Postal Workers now objects strongly to this compromise, which it sees as preferential treatment for the surplus railway mail clerks and it wants these employees to forego all accumulated seniority rights when reassigned to different functions in the postal service. Needless to say the Railway Mail Clerks' Federation does not agree, especially when the railway mail clerks were initially postal clerks. This point takes on particular importance when the leave schedules for summer holidays are being drawn up.

The Department suggested different solutions, none of which appears acceptable to either side.

This problem will resolve itself, in part, if the system recommended by our Commission is adopted, i.e., that each employee have his regular share of annual leave during the summer months.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter 13, section 1, "Vacation Leave".

In the meantime, we suggest that separate seniority lists be drawn up for each class. The surplus railway mail clerks will thus appear on the railway mail clerks' list and not on the postal clerks list, even though they may be working inside the post office. If necessary, temporary help could be hired as replacements. This measure seems to be relatively inexpensive and most acceptable. We hope that both sides will agree with this measure willingly.

(4) The staff organizations and the employees should give serious consideration to the possibility of unreservedly extending the principle of seniority to cover all classes within a predetermined geographical area, e.g., within 20 to 100 miles depending on the local conditions in the area. Such a policy would facilitate greater flexibility of movement between classes and between post offices, a more comprehensive rotation and a greater number of transfers, while helping generally in the training and transfer of surplus employees in different functions and also in the application of seniority rights. This policy would help also to promote a better esprit de corps among the employees.

(5) Some employees feel wronged because the Department, in calculating their seniority, starts counting only from the date they were made permanent or from the date they first passed their sorting examination. A fair and reasonable formula would be to calculate seniority from the first day of continuous service.

(6) To facilitate the control of seniority, we urge the Department, in each staff post office, to have a list posted of all employees showing the effective date of their seniority.



## CHAPTER 13

### LEAVE

#### 1. Vacation leave

Vacation leave for post office employees is governed by the Civil Service Act and Regulations.<sup>1/</sup>

Each full-time employee is entitled to three weeks leave for the first 20 years of service and to an additional week after 20 years.

The Union of Postal Workers recommended that this leave be increased to four weeks after the first year of service and the Letter Carriers' Union recommended four weeks for letter carriers with 11 to 20 years service, five weeks for those with 21 to 25 years service and six weeks for those with 25 years service or more.

These two recommendations appear rather excessive. Perhaps if they were made more realistic they might be studied again and discussed with the appropriate authorities at a suitable time. We do not want to anticipate the final outcome. We note simply that the number of weeks of vacation leave to which post office employees are entitled compares favourably with the current practice in industry in Canada.

However, another aspect of vacation leave deserves immediate consideration.

In the Post Office Department, vacation leave schedules are spread over three thirteen week periods. These 39 weeks are made up of the 36 consecutive weeks between April 1 and December 1 and three weeks in March.<sup>2/</sup>

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1. Civil Service Act, section 63; Civil Service Regulations, sections 42-46.
  2. For the railway mail clerks, the period of vacation leave stretches over forty-eight weeks, December being excluded.

Once the postmaster has decided how many employees can take their leave in each of the three periods, employees choose their weeks by order of seniority.<sup>1/</sup>

Each employee can take from one to three consecutive weeks each year. If an employee first chooses a period of less than three weeks, he has a second choice after all other employees have stated their own choice. An employee who prefers to take one week at a time is also given a third choice. Those who are entitled to a fourth week can bid for it separately.

This system has been strongly criticized, especially by employees who work in staff post offices, grades 12 to 19, and who have relatively very little seniority.

These people, usually younger, find it impossible to choose a period of vacation leave during the summer months when their children are out of school, the climate more temperate and most workers are on holiday.

Such a situation may last 15 years or more. It is not surprising that these employees are dissatisfied.

We believe that the present system must be changed even if this means disregarding seniority rights to some degree. We are confident that after careful consideration most of the older employees will accept this point of view and agree to sacrifice a small part of their seniority rights for the benefit of their fellow workers.

At times there are circumstances where positive action, not always pleasant, must be taken to correct a situation deteriorating to the point of becoming intolerable.

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<sup>1/</sup> To do this the postmaster in accordance with departmental instructions, considers the operational requirements of the service in his area, the estimated volume of work and the necessity of having a sufficient number of qualified staff available.

A group of employees is not necessarily justified in refusing to make any concession because it has had to wait 10 to 15 years or more, before being able to choose its holidays during the months of July and August.

Several suggestions were put forward.

In some large centres, it was proposed that all employees should take their holidays in June, July and August while the volume of mail is at its lowest and that students, for example, be engaged as "casuals" for these three months to meet some of the immediate requirements of the postal service.

It was also suggested that the period of vacation leave be spread over 25 weeks instead of 39, from April to September, in the hope that a number of the employees with the greatest seniority will choose the months of May, September or October and leave the months of June, July and August available for some of their less senior fellow workers.

We also studied the possibility of adopting a system of selecting vacation leave either on a rotational basis over two or three consecutive years or by sharing available weeks during the same year.

These various proposals are difficult to reconcile.

Under the circumstances and considering the urgency of the problem, we think it is advisable to recommend a general formula, as a happy medium, which should at least be put to the test.

Basically, this formula has two purposes.

First, to give all employees more latitude in their choice of annual vacation period and to extend it from 39 to 48 weeks, from January to November inclusive.

Secondly, to recognize, in this 48-week period, 13 "preferred" weeks between June 15 and September 15.

Once these two principles have been accepted, it would seem reasonable, according to their preferred choice:

- a) that employees with 20 or more years of service choose, in order of seniority, their holiday period either during the "preferred" weeks or outside this period;
- b) that if these senior employees choose not to take their holiday during the "preferred" weeks, they should then be entitled to take them all at once, as four consecutive weeks;
- c) that if these employees choose to take their leave during the "preferred" weeks they should abide by the present system and take three "preferred" weeks and one "non-preferred", i.e., outside the period June 15 to September 15;
- d) that employees with less than 20 years service should be divided into two groups according to seniority so that, every two years, each group is entitled to at least two "preferred" weeks, the third being taken outside this period if necessary;
- e) that employees with more than 15 but less than 20 years service, who might, between now and the next five years (to be reckoned from the date of our recommendations being put into effect), be deprived of the right of taking three consecutive "preferred" weeks should have the right, if they wish, to take four weeks holiday as long as they take these weeks outside the "preferred" period.

This formula does not disregard seniority. It only makes its application less rigorous in order to reach a definite and acceptable solution to the problem of vacation scheduling.

Far be it for us to claim that our suggestion could not be applied differently without losing sight of the dual purpose involved. The "preferred" period could well be only one week but every year, or it could be extended to three weeks every three years or two weeks every year. However the latter alternative, it must be realized,

would entail an extra staffing expenditure every year of nearly two million dollars. The Department would have to hire casual workers for some 20,450 weeks at the probable rate of \$2 an hour<sup>1/</sup> and would have to keep more supervisors on the job.

This does not mean that the formula we have proposed will not entail some extra expenditure. The Department very likely will have to hire a certain number of casual employees. We hope that the staff organizations and their branches will not oppose this. In some localities this policy might mean an interesting summer job for students who must find remunerative work if they are to continue or complete their studies.

These proposals deserve serious consideration by both the Government and the staff organizations. It is quite possible also that the best answer might be a combination of these various alternatives.

WE RECOMMEND:

93. That the official period of vacation leave be spread over 48 weeks from January 1 to November 30 inclusive, each year.
94. That during this period the weeks between June 15 and September 15 be designated as "preferred".
95. That employees with 20 or more years service be allowed to choose their holidays, by order of seniority, either within or outside this "preferred" period.
96. That if these employees choose their holidays outside the "preferred" period they be entitled to take them all at once, in four consecutive weeks.
97. That if they do not so choose they hold to the present system and take three "preferred" weeks and then one "non-preferred" week, i.e., outside the period June 15 to September 15.

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<sup>1/</sup> This information was obtained from the Department.

98. That employees with less than 20 years service be divided into two groups according to seniority so that, once every two years, each group will be entitled to at least two "preferred" weeks, the third week being taken outside the "preferred" period if necessary.
99. That employees with more than 15 but less than 20 years service, who will thus be prevented for the next five years from taking full advantage of their present entitlement to three consecutive "preferred" weeks, be entitled as a bonus, if they so request, to a 'fourth week' holiday in addition to the present three, with the express condition, however, that they take all four weeks during the "non-preferred" period.

We have drawn the Department's attention to a misunderstanding which seems to exist with some postmasters who allow some supervisors' names to appear in the employees' vacation leave schedules.

The Department has promised to clear up this misunderstanding.

WE RECOMMEND:

100. That the Department, once more, remind the district directors and postmasters that the employees' vacation leave schedule is and must remain for the exclusive use of full-time non-supervisory operating employees.

2. Sick leave

The postal service requires that employees work steadily every hour of every working day. If a postal clerk, wicket clerk or letter carrier is absent for any reason whatsoever, he must be replaced immediately, because the mail must be processed and delivered at all cost.

This is why the Department is so concerned about the problem of absenteeism attributed in part to the possible abuse of sick leave. Sick leave is granted in accordance with the Civil Service Regulations.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Sections 47 to 54.

Headquarters has issued directives accordingly and one in particular states that a postmaster may "... temporarily withdraw, for a specific period, the privilege of casual leave from an employee who appears to be abusing this privilege".<sup>1/</sup> The word "appears" in the above quote should be deleted. Penalties should be considered only in clear-cut instances of abuse.

Some supervisors investigate employees' absences at unexpected hours or without using any discretion or judgment.

Headquarters does not approve of this approach and is ready to deal severely with supervisors who make use of these methods indiscriminately. It has recently changed its policy and it now tolerates the checking of absences by home visits or any other method only if the employee's record indicates serious possibilities of abuse.

The Department obviously believes that this method of supervision is necessary in certain cases. We are skeptical about its practical effectiveness: how can a supervisor with no professional medical knowledge determine, beyond reasonable doubt, whether an employee is sick or not?

WE RECOMMEND:

101. That, in future, only in obvious cases of abuse should absence on sick leave be checked, and that home visits be made at a reasonable hour. In all cases and no matter who is contacted, discretion and good judgment be used.

The Department should set up a different control system which would make it easier, following interview with the employees concerned, to distinguish between questionable and genuine cases. This system would help to forestall objections from the employees themselves and quite possibly would restrain the staff organizations

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<sup>1/</sup> Personnel Manual, "Leave - sick".

from protesting when disciplinary action is taken and would leave the staff organizations in a better position to have recourse, if necessary, to the grievance procedure in cases of reprehensible checks.

On the other hand, some employees should consider the possible consequences of outside work which may not only affect their regular work but also become the direct or indirect cause of absences unwarranted in the eyes of the Department.

The morale of an employee plays a part in his use or abuse of sick leave. An employee who is happy in his work reports for duty unless he is really unable to do so, whereas the employee who gets little satisfaction from his work finds all kinds of excuses to justify a real or imaginary illness.

WE RECOMMEND:

102. That the Department carry out a detailed study of the normal use and abuse of sick leave.
103. That it draw up a chart to pinpoint its occurrence and work out a system to identify at a glance those employees who are about to abuse the privilege or who are already doing so.
104. That the Department start an instructional programme to teach supervisors their responsibilities and duties in this area.
105. That the Department notify each employee when he has taken five days of casual sick leave out of the permissible seven days, not to threaten him but to do him a service, and that for this purpose Headquarters draft a form letter with appropriate wording for use by the field offices.

3. Special leave with pay

The Civil Service Regulations<sup>1/</sup> provide that a deputy head may grant an employee special leave with pay for a period not exceeding one week:

- a) where there is illness or a death in the employee's family;
- b) where the employee is to be married;

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<sup>1/</sup> Sections 55 to 58.



- c) where circumstances not directly attributable to the employee prevent his reporting for duty;
- d) under such other circumstances as the Civil Service Commission may approve.

Postal employees made the following suggestions:

- (1) That where there is a death in the family, special leave be always granted for a minimum period of one week.

We do not support this suggestion because it could give rise to serious abuses. The policy of the Department should be maintained. The latter, under the circumstances, grants special leave from the day of death to the day of the funeral inclusively and allows travelling time if required. If required it also grants additional special leave during the year following the death to the employee concerned who is an executor of the estate.

With respect to the official definition of the word "family" we propose that the appropriate authorities consider the possibility of extending the meaning to include the next of kin of the employee's husband or wife, such as a brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

- (2) That the right to special leave may be requested and granted in maternity cases where an employee must deal with special problems caused by the hospitalization of his wife.

The Department states that special leave granted where there is illness in the family covers unexpected illness and that, usually, maternity cases do not fit in this category. It has no objection to granting special leave in the case of a premature birth or in special circumstances when the employee must arrange for the care of his children on short notice.

A broader interpretation should be given to subsection (c) of section 55 of the Civil Service Regulations. The Department, where "circumstances not directly

attributable to the employee prevent his reporting for duty" or remaining at work, would have greater discretion and could take into account the unexpected and imponderable demands of nature.

(3) That special leave be granted an employee on the wedding day or ordination or vow taking day of one of his children. The Department holds that these events are not unexpected. We do not disagree that this is normally so and since employees already are eligible for many types of special leave with pay, we are not making any formal recommendation.

4. Leave without pay

The Civil Service Regulations give deputy heads the authority to grant leave without pay under specified circumstances.<sup>1/</sup>

Although the staff organizations admit that the Department has always been co-operative in granting leave without pay to employees selected as delegates to their respective national conventions, they request that this leave no longer be considered a privilege but an express right.

This request appears reasonable to us.

WE RECOMMEND:

106. That the Civil Service Regulations be amended to allow postal employees who are official delegates to conventions of their organizations leave without pay as a right.
107. That a reasonable number of such delegates be selected depending on the postal districts they represent.
108. That travel time to and from the convention be included.
109. That at least one week's prior notice be given by the staff organizations in each case.

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1/ Sections 69 to 74.

## CHAPTER 14

### PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

The Post Office Act empowers the Postmaster General to make regulations under which employees must take proficiency examinations, and if unsuccessful have their salary or rank reduced.<sup>1/</sup>

The Postmaster General has exercised this right. Until now,<sup>2/</sup> employees performing sorting or wicket duties, supervisory postal officers 1 and 2, mail despatchers and railway mail clerks<sup>3/</sup> have had to submit to examinations on a regular basis.

Nearly everywhere we went we heard bitter criticism about these examinations. We shall merely refer to the more frequently heard complaints.

Employees criticized the Department for its policy requiring employees to pass these examinations, year in year out as long as they are employed by the Department or until the employee has reached the age of sixty. They blame the Department for not giving enough consideration to their daily performance and for attaching an exaggerated importance to duties which employees seldom have to perform. They disapproved of the pass marks required, as being too high or even unfair. They objected to the time and place the examinations are given which sometimes have a bearing on the outcome of an examination. Finally, they rebelled against the penalties imposed for failures, especially the small salary adjustments made after a second attempt has proved successful.

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<sup>1/</sup> Section 6 (o).

<sup>2/</sup> The Department has recently adopted a new proficiency examination procedure which, according to the latest information at our disposal, is supposed to come into effect in the near future.

<sup>3/</sup> Departmental Personnel Manual under the heading "Examinations", p. 1.

Needless to say, many ways and means to improve the system were suggested including the outright abolishment of these examinations.

The great majority of employees concerned did not support this rather drastic measure. They are not opposed, in principle, to the continuation of an examination policy but are disturbed by the procedures and methods of the system.

The new departmental examination policy and procedure, which is formulated on basic principles quite different from the previous ones, will undoubtedly be welcome.

Generally, the new procedure will:

- a) determine beforehand the knowledge requirements;
- b) provide for the training of a sorter in line with the knowledge required and according to a predetermined degree of accuracy;
- c) limit examinations to a period of five years and thereafter make them mandatory only where necessary;
- d) advocate counselling methods intended to correct an employee's shortcomings in case of failure;
- e) authorize the imposition of penalties only where there is no improvement;
- f) cancel these penalties and restore the salary or classification level of the employee as soon as he passes his examination.

This new policy was the subject of preliminary consultations and discussions with the national officers of the Union of Postal Workers. We are told that the latter took advantage of these talks to urge the Department to make certain changes in the procedure. They succeeded in doing so to an appreciable extent.<sup>1/</sup> This is a good example of the vast possibilities of a real dialogue.

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<sup>1/</sup> We learned recently that the Railway Mail Clerks' Federation, informed by the Department of its new examination policy, has also submitted its viewpoint and suggestions.

Since the Union of Postal Workers itself, at the beginning of May 1966, forwarded the text of the new departmental examination procedure to each of its branches across the country, it is not necessary for us to deal with it in greater detail. As far as we are concerned, the new procedure appears to be an acceptable solution to the main problems raised by employees and we share the favourable opinion expressed by the national leaders of the Union in a letter enclosed with the draft new examination procedure.

WE RECOMMEND:

110. That postal clerks and railway mail clerks who have to take departmental examinations comply with the new policy adopted by the Department so that it might be possible in time to assess its true value.
111. That, if need be, the Department discuss with the staff organizations any change in this proposed policy which might prove effective, necessary or reasonable.

## CHAPTER 15

### COMPETITIONS AND PROMOTIONS

In the course of a year the Department appoints quite a number of Postal Officers 1 and 2. Generally, they are selected among the non-supervisory operating staff, either by so-called "closed" competitions, or without competition when the Department deems a competition unnecessary.<sup>1/</sup>

Closed competitions come under the Civil Service Commission's jurisdiction. However, it may delegate its powers to a deputy-head "in relation to the selection of candidates for a position".<sup>2/</sup> This procedure is followed in the Post Office Department.

When the Department holds a competition it appoints a rating board composed of three members. This board studies candidates' files, evaluates the information provided in their application and the efficiency ratings given by their supervisors. If necessary, it conducts a personal interview with each candidate. It may even subject applicants to an examination. In other words, it tries to assess the qualifications of applicants by all of the means at its disposal.

The Department was greatly surprised to learn that these competitions and the promotion system as a whole were criticized more bitterly than anything else.

(1) A good number of employees claim that promotions are "fixed" beforehand, i.e., the employee wanted by a supervisor, or in some cases, by a postmaster at the smaller establishments, is first earmarked, then trained or put to the test

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<sup>1/</sup> In either case, anyone who is not selected and deems himself aggrieved has the right to appeal before the Civil Service Commission.

<sup>2/</sup> Civil Service Act, section 39.

in different occupations or duties which are likely to prepare him properly and to enhance his knowledge and experience. Thus, the competition becomes a mere formality since only the "privileged" employee is really able to fulfil the prescribed requirements and to write the examination successfully. In brief, the chances are far from being the same for all employees!

These are serious charges. It would have been necessary to make a detailed enquiry into each complaint to ascertain their absolute accuracy. Time was not available. We might then have found that distinctions were necessary. We might even have discovered evidence of exaggeration or prejudice. In any case, we would have retained more or less the same impression but, regardless, some impression would have remained. It was humanly impossible to be otherwise: no one exposed to such a stream of protests, on several occasions and in different areas, could not but believe that there is at least some justification for these complaints.

We want to be clearly understood.

After interviewing officials at Headquarters, district directors and postmasters in the larger offices, we are certain that none of them, be it directly or indirectly, has ever encouraged such dealings let alone taken part in them. In any organization the size of the Post Office Department, those who, at the national, district or local level, have the final word cannot always be aware of and know everything, especially when the interested parties do not lodge an official complaint and do not request a detailed investigation.

Nevertheless, an unhealthy and intolerable atmosphere of suspicion and distrust regarding competitions and promotions exists at present in more than one post office and the Department must, at all costs, take immediate steps to adopt measures which will prevent such discredit to persist.

WE RECOMMEND:

112. That lists be posted in every staff post office, showing future probable or possible promotions to postal officers 1, 2 or 3.
113. That employees be invited to enter their names on these lists.
114. That steps be taken to give each employee whose name appears on the list equal opportunity to carry out duties or tasks to enable him to improve his promotion possibilities.

If the Department agrees to these recommendations, not only will it be protected from all reasonable reproach, but it will create, right from the start, an atmosphere of confidence. These precautions, moreover, will help to put forward its plans for the institution of a new appraisal program for its non-supervisory operating staff, and a barrier examination aimed at serving as a screening device in future competitions.

(2) It comes as no surprise, under the circumstances, that employees also lashed out against the rating boards. They claim the Department does not always appoint adequately qualified persons to sit on these boards. Many of them rebel against the presence of the applicants' immediate supervisor. Others feel there exists an atmosphere of favouritism, or they complain that the production of confidential reports, unknown to the applicants, is tolerated.

Let us examine these facts one by one.

a) No task is more thankless than that of a rating board. Even if its selection is made with utmost honesty and impartiality it lays itself open to criticism, be it only from one unsuccessful candidate. It is impossible to arrive at an infallible process or a magic formula in such a subjective sphere of activity. We will not attempt to develop such a formula. But here again we believe that Headquarters acts, and wants to act, in the best interests of everyone, and should not be held responsible for judgments made



in good faith, in its selections.<sup>1/</sup> As to wilful bias, favouritism or unwarranted influence, it bluntly disapproves of these practices and at the same time is unable to believe they occur.

b) There is one aspect in the composition of rating boards which troubles our Commission, i.e., the presence on the board of the immediate supervisor of one or more candidates. The Department insists upon this. It claims that it is the supervisor who knows best the requirements of the position advertised. We respect this point of view. We do not believe this justifies his appointment as a member of the board. The supervisor, undoubtedly, must have his say. Nothing prevents him from appearing before the board, from giving testimony, expressing his views as to the individual merits of the candidates, and even from making his own recommendations. Between that and his appointment as a voting member of the board, there is quite a difference. We feel that his presence can only give rise to unfavourable comments and lead to insinuations of injustice, unfair promotion, or mere complacency. Why not avoid these comments? Besides, would not the supervisor himself stand to gain in prestige and authority? Not having taken part in the selection, nobody will be in a position to blame him for having unduly influenced the board during its discussions.

WE RECOMMEND:

115. That the Department refrain from appointing as a member of a competition rating board the immediate supervisor of one or more applicants.

c) In all our discussions dealing with rating boards, we felt that too much weight was given to the capacities applicants had shown in the past, such as

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<sup>1/</sup> Many railway mail clerks suggested that an official from the district office should always sit on the board. These people said that too often the board, entirely made up of officials belonging to local post offices, does not possess adequate knowledge of their duties and responsibilities. The Department must always make sure that a rating board has a thorough knowledge of all factors which must be taken into consideration in the assessment of applicants' qualifications.

mail processing knowledge, speed of operation, etc., to the detriment of their aptitude to become leaders of men.

WE RECOMMEND:

116. That in promotions more consideration be given to a candidate's leadership abilities.

d) We disapprove of a rating board making use of any confidential reports which applicants have not been allowed to see and discuss. We cannot conceive of a rating board not listening to both sides of the story.

WE RECOMMEND:

117. That all reports available to the rating board, be they called "confidential" or not, be shown to the applicants concerned and that these applicants be granted the right to question their content if they so desire.

e) Some employees suggested that their staff organization appoint one member of the rating board. We reject this suggestion because this representative will always be in an awkward position. How will he make a selection between several members of his own staff organization without the risk of offending them all, save one? Until feelings cool off, it will be sufficient to invite a representative of the staff organization to sit in at the meetings and discussions of the board as an observer. We think that his presence will reassure more than one candidate and will put a stop to a good many protests, justified or otherwise.

WE RECOMMEND:

118. That, until further notice, a representative of the staff organizations concerned sit in at meetings and discussions of the rating boards, as an observer.

(3) After expressing their disapproval so bluntly for the present system, the employees showed their marked preference for the seniority principle as a promotion factor over that of merit, which is the sole criterion recognized for promotion in the Public Service. The national leaders of the staff organizations assured our Commission that they intend to get this idea across during forthcoming collective bargaining negotiations. However, none of them explained how far they would be willing to go in giving up, in whole or in part, the benefits and advantages which many of the present laws provide them, as civil servants, in order to achieve this goal. This must be considered seriously, and we hope the staff organizations will examine all aspects of the question before abandoning anything.

The Department is in favour of the status quo and considers, moreover, that the granting of promotions is a management prerogative.

Even if it is true that in the private sector the promotion system is discussed usually within the limits of certification held by a union, we are concerned here with a universal dispute, which will not be settled very soon and which leads to many compromises when one has to write it into a collective agreement. Few employers accept the seniority principle as the sole and exclusive factor for promotion. In the great majority of Canadian contracts that the Commissioner has scrutinized during the past 15 years, he has noted a compromise is accepted where the number of years of service may become a decisive factor, provided the employee possesses the necessary qualifications or that his qualifications are rated at least equal to those of other candidates. Unions feel, and rightly so, that this compromise does not often favour the senior employee and leaves him very little chance of appealing successfully before an arbitration board. Our labour jurisprudence, to date, will show instead that the trend has been for an arbitration board not to reverse an employer's decision unless the latter has committed a gross error of judgment or has acted in bad faith.

In spite of these objections, we personally have always preferred a compromise. It is to the advantage of both the employer and employees that senior vacant positions be filled by competent employees first of all, with seniority becoming a decisive factor whenever candidates have the required general aptitude. We believe that if too much weight is given to seniority, it could destroy the sense of initiative for many or curb ambition in the younger employees. At worst, it could discourage these employees and make them look for a job elsewhere. Finally, nothing proves that experience gained through the years while performing certain duties provides the older employee with all the qualifications essential to assume other more or less related responsibilities. And above all, nothing - and this is often the case - will guarantee that this employee possesses thereby the leadership qualities to which we referred previously.

We wanted to discuss and take a definite stand on this matter which was mentioned so often and which employees said should be treated in the Civil Service as it is in the private sector. Considered as a compromise, we agree with the seniority principle but we do not see it as absolute in either one of these areas.

Actually, these considerations are of a rather secondary importance considering the legislation proposed by the Government.

Bill C-181 (Public Service Employment Act) stipulates that appointments to the Public Service shall be based "on selection according to merit", as determined by the Civil Service Commission, "by competition or by such other process as the Commission considers is in the best interests of the Public Service".<sup>1/</sup> In determining the basis of assessment of merit, the Commission, subject to certain reservations, may "prescribe selection standards as to education, knowledge, experience, language, age, residence or any other matters that, in the opinion of the Commission, are necessary or desirable".<sup>2/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Section 10.

<sup>2/</sup> Section 12.

In referring to Bill C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act), we see that "no arbitral award shall deal with the standards, procedures or processes governing the appointment, appraisal, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off or release of employees, or with any term or condition of employment of employees that was not a subject of negotiations between the parties during the period before the negotiating relationship between them was terminated".<sup>1/</sup>

These three references and other passages, together with the one quoted previously,<sup>2/</sup> lead us to conclude that the Government does not wish to consider employment and promotions as negotiable and wants to retain merit as the basic criterion.

(4) A few other related grievances were heard.

- a) Some employees complained that internal competition notices are not posted in a prominent place. It is the practice to post these notices in the office order book. The postmaster has the responsibility to ensure this is done. We have noted that employees leaf through this book almost every day and we do not see any need to take additional precautions.
- b) It was suggested that the time limit for making application in a competition be extended from 15 to 30 days. It was alleged that employees on holiday had missed opportunities to compete because they were not notified. The Department believes the time limit adequate in itself. We believe that this time limit should be 20 working days since employees can be on leave for that many days.
- c) It was requested that the Department adopt a common entrance examination for all classes of employment, increase the minimum educational requirements at the same time, and ensure a better calibre of employees.

The Department is looking into the desirability of raising educational standards for future applicants. However, it has doubts on the advantages to be gained by the introduction of a common entrance examination. On the

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<sup>1/</sup> Section 70 (3).

<sup>2/</sup> See Chapter 5, "Collective Bargaining".

basis of its experience it feels that examinations must be tailored to meet the needs of district or local postal service. Moreover, if the employees' request for standardization is aimed at improving staff flexibility among various positions within the same post office, the Department believes that to achieve such results such standardization must be accompanied by some lessening of the rigidity on seniority within each class.

We are impressed with this viewpoint but once more do not know how far the staff organizations want to go in making concessions on seniority. It can only be left to them to resume, at the proper time, the study of this request with the Department. In fact, the Department sees no objection to the above suggestion.

d) Some letter carriers, who qualified by competition as postal clerks alleged they were not allowed a choice of the section in which they wished to work, and that their names had even been removed from the eligible list following their refusal to fill the first vacancy available.

This is not in accordance with the departmental policy. If a candidate decides not to accept an appointment to a position offered him in a particular section he is passed over only temporarily, and his name is not struck off the eligible list. His rank in the order of priority on the list is maintained as long as the list remains valid and he is always offered the next vacant position.

e) It was proposed that surplus railway mail clerks be excluded from supervisory clerical and postal officer competitions and that these competitions be restricted to postal clerks. The Department is not prepared to exclude either active or surplus railway mail clerks, or anyone else, from promotional competitions. This is a fair and reasonable attitude which we support wholeheartedly.

f) It has often been said that postal clerks had a distinct advantage over letter carriers in promotions and that railway mail clerks were favoured over both classes.

The Department recognizes that there are more opportunities opened to postal clerks than to letter carriers due to the greater number of supervisors for the former class. It admits that railway mail clerks, on account of their more extensive knowledge of mail distribution and routing procedures, enjoy a definite advantage but it acts according to its own rules and considers all applications for promotion no matter who applies. We might well ask ourselves if charges of favouritism would not become even more numerous, if the Department agreed to accept distinctions between categories of employees.

g) Some people feel that when they are unsuccessful in a competition they should be informed of the reasons for their failure to qualify, so that they may correct their weaknesses.

Departmental regulations do make provision for this.

After the results of a competition have been announced each applicant, at his own request, may consult either the Chairman, or a member of the rating board. This person is empowered to inform the candidate of the weak points which affected his rating and to advise him what he should do to improve himself. We feel that few employees make use of this prerogative. We hope, in view of the Department's new plans and following our recommendations, that a greater number of employees will seek to understand the whys and wherefores behind everything and will be encouraged to move ahead.

WE RECOMMEND:

119. That the staff organizations, if they deem it appropriate, discuss with the Department the advantages of introducing a common entrance examination in the Post Office Department for all entrance classes and at the same time raise the minimum educational requirements.

120. That unsuccessful applicants in competitions consult the rating board on the reasons for their failure and thus be informed of their shortcomings taking into account the basic requirements accepted by the rating board for the said competition.



## CHAPTER 16

### DISCIPLINE

No one can dispute the need for the adoption of a code of discipline in the field operating services of the Post Office Department. There, as elsewhere, the employer must ensure that not only order and efficiency are maintained, but of necessity must be concerned with the protection and security of the mail. But disciplinary measures must at all times remain fair and logical. Furthermore, and this is essential, they must be applied with common sense and discretion.

These aspects of the problem were the subject of numerous comments. Before discussing them we should say that

- a) during January 1966 the Department informed the Commission that it intends to alter drastically its policy on disciplinary matters, and
- b) Bill C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act) opens the door to negotiation on "standards of discipline".

(1) Of all the existing disciplinary measures the one most opposed and discredited is the system of temporary salary reductions, commonly referred to as "the fine system".

Two examples will suffice.

An employee who is absent without leave is liable to a deduction of \$10.00 from his monthly salary for the first offence, \$30.00 spread over three months for the second offence, and \$60.00 spread over six months for the third. A letter carrier who loses his post office official key (which costs approximately 25 cents and is only a pass-key) may have to pay from \$5.00 for the first one to

\$25.00 for the third one.<sup>1/</sup>

Basically employees object to working with reduced compensation even if only for an hour or so. Undoubtedly such is the result of the system of temporary salary reductions. They would prefer to be placed under suspension. These employees claim that the Department will retain a better sense of proportion in the suspension of an employee knowing that he will have to be replaced.

The Department made a point of explaining the origin of this system. A number of years ago, an employee had to work one or more additional hours at the regular rate of pay as a penalty for a minor offence. Following protests from the staff organizations the Department agreed to abolish this system and to suspend the offending employee for various lengths of time. Shortly after this, around 1959, the present system was adopted, apparently by mutual consent, to lessen the severity of the suspension.

Among the numerous changes which the Department intends to incorporate in its revised code of discipline is the abolition of the system of temporary salary reductions. We are in agreement even if a suspension becomes more costly to the employee than a temporary salary reduction.

WE RECOMMEND:

121. That, as proposed, the Department abolish the system of temporary salary reductions in matters of discipline.

(2) Another criticism of the present code of discipline was that it is not sufficiently realistic.

This criticism should be qualified.

If the Department is to be blamed it is not because it has not attempted, at the Headquarters' level, to convince local supervisors of the advisability of

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<sup>1/</sup> We shall see in Chapter 17 that the imposition of such "fines" can be a cause for grievance.

being humane when taking disciplinary action, but rather because some postmasters and their immediate assistants, as well as a few district directors, cared little whether or not departmental directives were being implemented as intended.

We find in the Personnel Manual,<sup>1/</sup> this instruction to supervisors:

"Discipline is a basic responsibility of supervisors. A supervisor should regard any misbehaviour by an employee as a challenge to be met with all the supervisor's skills in the broad area of human relationships. He should be alert to the danger of taking only negative action as punishment for a particular incident instead of giving adequate thought to the type of positive action which may help the employee to improve the quality of his services. Under the constant pressure of time, there is usually an inevitable tendency to take punitive action against the employee as the quickest and least time-consuming treatment of the problem. More constructive types of treatment such as counselling, and closer supervision require not only more time but more skill, and therefore they make greater demands on the employee's supervisor."

And it goes on to say that when a supervisor considers:

"... that the negative action of punishment is inevitably necessary on certain occasions, there is a problem of reaching a reasonable balance between flexibility according to the particular circumstances and consistency within the local office and across the country..."<sup>2/</sup>

Then, referring specifically to "The chart of irregularities and applicable penalties" attached to its code of discipline, the Department clearly states that the chart provides merely a general "guide" and that "the proposed penalties should not be regarded as automatic". It also states that "there is always a need for the employee's superiors to exercise discretion" and that "local officials always have the authority to excuse an irregularity for valid reasons or to recommend a lesser penalty than the one suggested in the chart..."

The Department could hardly express more clearly the intent governing the implementation and daily application of the standards of discipline. Obviously, it has not been too well understood. The Department is well aware of this now and

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<sup>1/</sup> See "Discipline", section 4.

<sup>2/</sup> See "Discipline", section 5.

has developed a plan based on a more positive approach which most likely will be more readily understood by supervisors and other persons concerned.

Without going into detail - detail which the Department intends not only to make known to the staff organizations but also to discuss with them - the plan provides for various types of disciplinary measures, such as appropriate counselling as the first remedial action, and if unsuccessful, verbal or written notices or reprimands, demotion or possible suspension, and as a last resort dismissal.

This new procedure, as long as all interested parties co-operate, may well ensure considerable progress towards better relations between the Department and its employees. We hope that employees will agree to give it a fair trial.

WE RECOMMEND:

122. That the Department complete the preparation of its new code of discipline as soon as possible.
123. That as soon as it is ready this code be discussed with the national officers of the staff organizations through the national joint committees.
124. That once the code has been revised it be put into effect immediately.
125. That both the Department and the staff organizations make the necessary arrangements to see that the code is clearly understood by all interested parties.
126. That all levels - district directors, postmasters, their immediate assistants, supervisors, as well as employees - make an honest effort to ensure that the new code of discipline is put into practice according to the letter and intent.

(3) Employees also object to the practice, far too widespread in several post offices, of placing on the employees' personal files, notes, remarks or warnings of all kinds, without their knowledge.

These objections might appear of minor importance but this is not the case. The Department has the right to consult, at any time, the personal file of an employee for any reason whatsoever. It is thoroughly reviewed when an employee is being considered for promotion.

We believe that nothing should be placed on file without the employee being told and given the opportunity, if he believes he has been wronged, to take the necessary steps either personally or through the grievance procedure.

The Department does not go far enough, since it does not feel compelled to inform an employee when disciplinary action is not taken immediately, and when it merely places a note on his file. This disregards the consequences to which we have referred previously.

WE RECOMMEND:

127. That no remark, note or warning be placed on the personal file of an employee without his knowledge.
128. That an employee be required to sign these remarks, notes or warnings and to state whether or not he agrees with their content.
129. That any employee who believes he has been wronged under such circumstances be given the right not only to complain to the appropriate person but also, if he so wishes, to make use of the grievance procedure.

(4) Postal employees object to the departmental policy of retaining for an indefinite period, in their personal history file, all references to errors, infractions or offences committed throughout the years.

This is certainly not current practice in industry.

WE RECOMMEND:

130. That all errors, infractions or offences placed on the personal history file of an employee be removed after two years, as long as that same employee does not repeat the same error, infraction, or offence during these two years.

## CHAPTER 17

### GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

An organization the size of the Post Office Department, which employs a non-supervisory staff numbering more than 25,000, should have adopted a well defined grievance procedure sufficiently flexible to deal as fairly and expeditiously as possible with individual or collective grievances of its employees or with disputes on the interpretation or application of its regulations and directives.

The Department, to date, has not been equal to the task.

From time to time, the Department has approved of certain suggestions by some of the more enterprising local branches of the staff organizations. In one large centre employees produced as an exhibit a grievance procedure which had been in use for a short time. We were told that local management had agreed to the need for setting time limits of various lengths, and for identifying beforehand the successive steps for the hearing of grievances.

But these are exceptions to the rule.

It must be recognized that the lack of action by the Department, on the whole, has been detrimental to the maintenance of good staff relations. This lack explains the unhealthy attitude of many employees and the tendency of several representatives of local branches to overlook the possibilities of any discussion at the district level and instead to refer their grievances directly to their national Headquarters as soon as a settlement is unduly delayed.

We should not dwell on this particular aspect or on other criticisms which apply to circumstances which are different today.

Bills C-170 (Public Service Staff Relations Act) and C-181 (Public Service Employment Act) contain several provisions related to grievances and make certain recommendations which we would not have hesitated to formulate unnecessary.

Unless we are mistaken these Bills recognize three categories of grievances and three procedures to deal with them.

(1) With the impending acceptance of collective agreements in the Public Service, there are those grievances which deal either with the interpretation or the application of these agreements or with disciplinary action resulting in dismissal, suspension or financial penalty.<sup>1/</sup>

These grievances are presented at each level, up to and including the final level, "in the grievance process provided for by this Act".<sup>2/</sup>

If these are then not dealt with to the employee's satisfaction, they may be referred to a final and binding adjudication.<sup>3/</sup>

(2) For all practical purposes, the second category covers all grievances which:

- a) do not fit the first category;
- b) relate to the conditions of employment of an employee who feels aggrieved by the interpretation or application of any provision of a statute, regulation, directive or other document prepared or issued by the employer or as a result of any incident or special problem; and

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<sup>1/</sup> Bill C-170, section 91.

<sup>2/</sup> Bill C-170, sections 90, 91 and 99.

<sup>3/</sup> Bill C-170, section 96.

c) are not controlled by an administrative procedure for redress provided in another Act of Parliament.<sup>1/</sup>

However, in such cases there is a fundamental difference. These grievances also go through the various levels (up to and including the final level), but they are not subject to final and binding adjudication as are those in the first category.<sup>2/</sup>

(3) The third category includes grievances which the legislator has decided to deal with in still another way. For example, these include grievances which, as before, are submitted as appeals to the Civil Service Commission. Civil servants are entitled to appeal in cases of a promotion denied, a demotion, or a dismissal for incompetence.<sup>3/</sup>

We are under the impression that the staff organizations and postal employees will be satisfied with these new provisions since they represent such a long awaited innovation. They will be especially pleased that the right to have recourse to boards of adjudication (even if it is somewhat restricted) has finally been granted and that they will be able to select one of the members of the board whose decisions will be final.<sup>4/</sup>

We anticipate, nevertheless, certain reservations, some of which perhaps will disappear either following amendments suggested by the Parliamentary Committee or information given by Treasury Board and the Department, or possibly following the recommendations made hereafter.

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<sup>1/</sup> Bill C-170, section 90.

<sup>2/</sup> Bill C-170, sections 90 and 95.

<sup>3/</sup> We shall deal with these appeals in the following chapter.

<sup>4/</sup> We are somewhat surprised that Bill C-170 completely disregards the possibility that the Department and the staff organizations could agree on the selection of a Chairman who would not be one of the semi-permanent adjudicators referred to in section 92.



(1) Thus, we are concerned about the implications and the extent of the regulations which the Public Service Staff Relations Board may make under section 99 of Bill C-170 (Public Service Staff Relation Act).

We fail to see how these regulations will succeed in standardizing the grievance procedure in the Public Service. The Department and the staff organizations must be free and have the required authority to adopt a grievance procedure adapted to facts and circumstances which make the Post Office Department beyond all doubt a unique department.

(2) The number and types of grievances which are subject to final and binding adjudication appear to us to be too restricted.

All actions that the Department has the right to take against an employee should form the basis of grievances in this category. This could be under any Act or under its regulations, directives or instructions, and which, directly or indirectly, may in future affect the working conditions of this employee, such as promotion, demotion, or transfer. If such were the case, not only would employees be treated more impartially but this would put an end to the habit of some supervisors to note on an employee's file, without his knowledge, the least little error or trifling matter.

WE RECOMMEND:

131. That the Department and the staff organizations be given the authority and be free to adopt a grievance procedure which really takes into consideration all aspects and problems which make the Post Office Department, beyond a doubt, a special and unique department.
132. That postal employees be given the right to have recourse to final and binding adjudication for any grievances arising from any action taken against them by the Department and which is not settled to their satisfaction.