

The Second Division consisted of the regular members and in addition Referee Peter R. Meyers when award was rendered.

(Brotherhood Railway Carmen of the United States
(and Canada

Parties to Dispute: (

(Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad Company

Dispute: Claim of Employee:

1. That the Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad Company violated Rule 29 of the controlling Agreement when they unjustly, arbitrarily and capriciously dismissed Carman B. J. Steelman July 21, 1983 for alleged violation of Bulletin No. 32.

2. That the Houston Belt and Terminal Railroad Company be ordered to compensate Carman B. J. Steelman for all wages lost account of their violation of his rights under Rule 29, including loss of all overtime.

FINDINGS:

The Second Division of the Adjustment Board, upon the whole record and all the evidence, finds that:

The carrier or carriers and the employe or employes involved in this dispute are respectively carrier and employes within the meaning of the Railway Labor Act as approved June 21, 1934.

This Division of the Adjustment Board has jurisdiction over the dispute involved herein.

Parties to said dispute waived right of appearance at hearing thereon.

Claimant, Carman B. J. Steelman, has been employed by the Carrier for over ten years.

Based on the testimony of Special Agent E. G. DeLeon, the Claimant was dismissed from service on July 21, 1983, following an investigation at which he was found guilty of being under the influence of and in possession of intoxicants on company property at approximately 9:45 p.m. on July 7, 1983, in violation of HB&T Mechanical Employees' Bulletin No. 32. The Claimant was returned to service on February 16, 1984, after a period of approximately seven months' suspension.

Bulletin No. 32 reads:

"To All Concerned: The use of alcoholic beverages, intoxicants, drugs, narcotics, marijuana or controlled substances by employees subject to duty, when on duty or on company property is prohibited.

"Employees must not report for duty, or be on company property under the influence of or use while on duty or have in their possession while on company property, any drug, alcoholic beverage, intoxicant, narcotic, marijuana, medication, or other substance, including those prescribed by a doctor, that will in any way adversely affect their alertness, coordination, reaction, response or safety."

It is undisputed that the Claimant was on the property on the date and time alleged. However, the Claimant denies being in possession of or under the influence of intoxicants.

The Organization argues that the Carrier changed the Rules arbitrarily and illegally. This argument is based upon the fact that Bulletin No. 32 was amended on February 18, 1983. The Organization contends that under the old Rule G, the Claimant could not have been disciplined for his activity on the date in question, as he was on his rest hour.

The Bulletin No. 32 that went into effect on February 18, 1983, changed the Carrier's Rule G, which had previously stated:

"The use of intoxicants or narcotics is prohibited. Possession of intoxicants or narcotics while on duty is prohibited."

The Organization claims that this new Rule was put into effect without proper notice to Employees and without following the proper provisions of the Railway Labor Act.

The Organization also contends that the Carrier did not hold a fair and impartial investigation, as two interrogating officers were used to interrogate the Claimant and the witnesses, and the Claimant was forced to testify first at his investigation.

The Organization also argues that the Carrier failed to prove the charges against the Claimant with substantial evidence.

Finally, the Organization argues that the discipline was not assessed based upon the facts developed at the investigation.

The Carrier's position is that the transcript of the investigation clearly supports the charges and the discipline assessed the Claimant. The Carrier contends that a Special Agent approached two men standing next to a car and passing a bottle between them. The Claimant was observed by the Special Agent to be staggering and found to have bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, and smelling of an alcoholic beverage. Moreover, the Special Agent testified that the Claimant was in possession of a bottle of beer and even offered the Special Agent a drink.

The Carrier states that the Claimant's guilt is without question, as he admitted to being on the Carrier's property on the date and time that he was observed by the Special Agent, DeLeon. Moreover, the Carrier contends that the only relevant issue is that the Claimant does not agree with the Special Agent that he was under the influence of and in possession of the alcoholic beverage.

This Board has reviewed all of the evidence and testimony in this case, and it finds that there is substantial evidence that the Claimant was in possession and under the influence of an alcoholic beverage on the date and time in question. The Claimant admits being on the property at the time and location involved and having a conversation with the Special Agent.

Moreover, the record is clear that the Claimant was aware of the change in the Rule, and that it was against the Rule for the Claimant to be in possession of intoxicants on company property. Consequently, the procedural objections regarding improper notice and institution of the new Rule are without merit.

Since this Board does not determine credibility, on the basis of the record before us, there is substantial evidence to reasonably conclude that the Claimant was guilty of the offense charged.

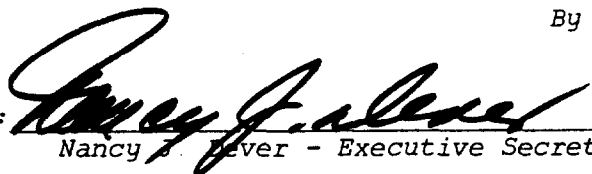
Although the Claimant was originally terminated, the Carrier reduced that termination to a seven-month suspension based upon his previous record of service. Hence, the Carrier obviously took into consideration the ten years of seniority of the Claimant and reduced the penalty accordingly. This Board does not see any reason to disturb the Carrier's action in this case. The Claimant was found guilty of a serious offense, and his discipline was substantially reduced by the Carrier taking into consideration his long service.

AWARD

Claim denied.

NATIONAL RAILROAD ADJUSTMENT BOARD
By Order of Second Division

Attest:


Nancy J. Lever - Executive Secretary

Dated at Chicago, Illinois, this 30th day of October 1985.