

NATIONAL RAILROAD ADJUSTMENT BOARD
THIRD DIVISION

J. Glenn Donaldson, Referee.

PARTIES TO DISPUTE:

**BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY AND STEAMSHIP CLERKS,
FREIGHT HANDLERS, EXPRESS AND STATION EMPLOYES**

**CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND AND PACIFIC RAILROAD
COMPANY**

STATEMENT OF CLAIM: Claim of the System Committee of the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employes for an adjustment in rate of pay, under the provisions of Rule 69 for Switchboard Operators.

1. Effective June 21, 1948, increase the Chief Switchboard Operator position at Des Moines, Iowa, from \$213.32 to \$223.32.
2. Effective June 21, 1948, increase three (3) Switchboard Operators from \$208.32 to \$218.32.

EMPLOYES' STATEMENT OF FACTS: There is in evidence an Agreement between the parties to this dispute bearing an effective date of August 2, 1945.

June 21, 1948, the Wire Chief in the Relay Office, Des Moines, Iowa, addressed the following instructions to the Chief Switchboard Operator:

"Miss Hanifen, Chief Opr. PBX

City

Effective at once, the Telephone Operators at Des Moines will be required to give out such general information to the public as they may be furnished from time to time relating to train arrivals, departures, etc., when the calls are too numerous to handle through the ticket offices. Such conditions do not arise very often but when they do, telephone operators are expected to assist as far as practicable. Ack.

W. L. Ellis
MWC."

Prior to June 21, 1948, the public received information on trains from the Information Clerk located in the Depot Ticket Office, rate \$250.32; however, effective June 21, 1948, information on trains was transferred to Switchboard Operators in line with instructions issued by the Wire Chief.

POSITION OF EMPLOYES: The Carrier violated the Clerks' Agreement when it issued instructions on June 21, 1948, assigning increased

when it closed at 3:00 P. M. Since September 1, 1949, it has been open from 8:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. daily, except Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Prior to September 1, 1949, it was not open on Sundays and holidays. The City Ticket office has three city (Bell system) telephones.

The information furnished by the telephone operators is generally such as "No. 7 on time." "No. 14 fifteen minutes late." There is an occasional inquiry as to what time a train may arrive at another point on the Rock Island. In many, if not all, instances, it is more convenient to the operator to give such brief information than to have the telephone line held by the inquirer and the operator be thereby obliged to watch the line and ultimately make the connection to the ticket office, and when the conversation has been concluded, to disconnect the line. It is assuredly as simple, if not considerably more so, to say to one who telephones our Company and inquires about a train—"No. 7 on time," than to say "I will connect you with the ticket office but that line is busy now. Do you wish to hold the line?" Later the operator may say—"You may now have the ticket office. Thank you for waiting."

Generally the public does not know with whom they must converse to obtain desired train information. Therefore, when they telephone our Company at Des Moines and the telephone operator responds, they may make their inquiry of the telephone operator, and it is surely simpler for her to furnish simple information when the telephone lines to the ticket offices are busy than it is for her to have the line held. There is nothing unreasonable in our request that under the circumstances we have outlined, the telephone operators furnish the information mentioned above. We have made clear that the operators are not being asked to quote rates, routes, to accept or handle reservations, or furnish information concerning arrivals and departures on other railroads, nor are they required to give information to the public when the ticket office telephones are not busy. Likewise, they are not required to develop information concerning the on-time movement of trains, but only to give such information as may be furnished under the conditions mentioned above. Such general, elementary information has been given by telephone operators at other points.

We might mention that the technical advances made in telephonic communications are such that a given volume of traffic may now be handled with the automatic telephone with much less effort than when we did not have the dial telephone. We have the telephones arranged at Des Moines so that it is not necessary to contact the telephone operator if one desires to dial an outside number. All that is necessary is to dial the telephone and the number is obtained without the Rock Island telephone operators' response or assistance. This, of course, is a material change from conditions that existed in the past when it was necessary for those desiring an outside telephone number to contact the telephone operator and give her the number and have her make the necessary connections.

Rule 69 clearly specifies that the compensation for a position need be adjusted only when there is a sufficient increase in the duties and responsibilities of a position or change in the character of service required. If there has been any increase in the duties and responsibilities, there has not been a sufficient increase to warrant an upward adjustment in the pay rate. As we have shown above, in actual operation, the giving of brief information concerning passenger train arrivals and departures many times reacts to the convenience of the telephone operator. This would result in a decrease in the duties rather than an increase. Assuredly the giving of the type of information which is being given under the circumstances does not add any responsibilities to the telephone operators' position. We therefore urge that there has been no duties and responsibilities added to the telephone operators warranting an increase in pay rates.

(Exhibits not reproduced.)

OPINION OF BOARD: Evidence of record reflects that there has been an increase, and a sufficient increase, in the duties and, in particular, the

responsibilities of the positions of Chief Switchboard Operator and Switchboard Operators to warrant an upward adjustment in compensation thereto under the provisions of Rule 69. The question is not controlled by the number of words used or count of hand motions, as implied by the Carrier. The added responsibilities require accurate and timely familiarity with train schedules and train movements even though they may be infrequently called upon for such higher service.

No yardstick is provided in said rule, however, to permit Board measurement of the increase due. Further, no wage data is supplied by the parties whereby we could pass upon the reasonableness of the 4 to 5% salary increase requested. While percentage-wise, a much larger salary reduction was made in 1926 when information work was taken out of these positions, we do not feel justified in judging the increase now requested by the earlier action for two reasons. First, the job content of the positions changed radically since 1926, and secondly, clerical work in addition to information work was withdrawn from the position at that time which could account for a substantial part of the decrease.

The Organization has discharged its burden of proof to show that an increase in compensation is due and the first paragraph of its claim is sustainable. It has not carried the burden, however, in connection with the amount of the increases. Accordingly, we must remand the case to the property for further negotiations, retaining jurisdiction so that if accord is not had, the case may be resubmitted with accurate wage data upon which a finding can be made.

FINDINGS: The Third Division of the Adjustment Board, after giving the parties to this dispute due notice of hearing thereon, and upon the whole record and all the evidence, finds and holds:

That the Carrier and the Employees involved in this dispute are respectively Carrier and Employees within the meaning of the Railway Labor Act, as Approved June 21, 1934;

That this Division of the Adjustment Board has jurisdiction over the dispute involved herein; and

That an upward adjustment in the rate of pay for claimants is called for under the provisions of Rule 69 of the Agreement. That remand with retention of jurisdiction is required in connection with the determination of the amount of such increase.

AWARD

Claims sustained to the extent indicated in the Opinion and Findings.

NATIONAL RAILROAD ADJUSTMENT BOARD
By Order of Third Division

ATTEST: A. I. Tummon
Acting Secretary

Dated at Chicago, Illinois, this 27th day of September, 1951.