

Biography of Richard E. (Lefty) Morgan

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DOCUMENTS

Biography of Richard E. (Lefty) Morgan¹

Gail R. Pool, Jim Stanley, Donna Young

"INFORMAL PARTICIPATION in the Railway Running Trades" was written by R.E. (Lefty) Morgan for the 1977 Learned Societies Conference in Fredericton NB.² This paper was extracted from a much larger study of railway enginemen and their work written in the early 1960s.³ The ideas expressed in this document were

¹Gail R. Pool is Professor of Anthropology at the University of New Brunswick. Jim Stanley, a former railroader, is pursuing a Law degree at the University of New Brunswick. Donna Young conducted MA research on maintenance-of-way gangs in British Columbia, and is now pursuing her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. This biography draws on interviews with people who knew Lefty, the UBC Library Special Collections, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, the National Archives of Canada, and Lefty Morgan's personal papers in the possession of Mrs. Margaret Morgan (referred to below as the Lefty Morgan Papers). The authors particularly thank Mrs. Morgan for giving up many hours of her time, as and also are grateful to the late Morris Carrell, Stewart Cooper, Merle Bottaro, Ruth Bullock, George Brandak (UBC Library, Special Collections Division), Moe Flynn, David Frank, Bill Jukes, Myron Kuzych, Jim McKenzie, Martin Meissner, Clyde Mulhall, Jack O'Brien, David and Sheila Patterson, Henry Reimer, Kevin Rhodes, John Smith, and Dave Stupich.

²Richard Ernest Morgan was a name he adopted in the work camps of British Columbia in the 1930s. The nickname 'Lefty' was given to him because of his extreme left-handedness rather than his political views, but is not unfitting. He was born on 14 December 1914 in White River, Ontario and died 6 April 1987 at his home in Deep Cove, North Vancouver.

³Richard E. (Lefty) Morgan, *A Practical Example "Right under your Nose"*. There is no date on the longer manuscript, but many letters in his files written in 1964-65 requested information from various railway unions and for permission to quote excerpts from books.

Gail R. Pool, Jim Stanley, Donna Young, "Biography of Richard E. (Lefty) Morgan," *Labour/Le Travail*, 27 (Spring 1991), 215-229.

grounded in his many years of work as a railway engineer (1956-1978). Lefty's first steady work was as a cowboy north of Squilax near Kamloops, BC. These early years left a lasting impression,⁴ and as he moved from herding cows to trucks and then trains, he became increasingly interested in the organization of work. He maintained that workers could control in a real sense the pace, conditions, and organization of their own work. In order to show this was the case, Lefty wrote extensively about the labour process in the railway running trades. In addition to his own experience as a worker, he drew on many studies written by and about railway operators, engineers, and related trades.⁵ Lefty's ideas went well beyond the running trades, and reached toward ways of creating practical democracy to free people from a hierarchical, often dehumanizing, society and its workplace. He had a quick mind and was able to see the fallacy of an argument. He loved people and always was ready to pursue his ideas with any person who happened to come along. Often he picked up hitch-hikers with whom he would talk seriously about how society does and should work. Much of his concern for people stemmed from his belief that we have allowed others to make decisions for us. As he said in another manuscript:

This is not something which can be tackled without consideration but there is no doubt in my mind that *it can be done*. Two main things are necessary — power and determination. Much depends on power, who has it, what they do with it. When combined together in a common purpose we ordinary people have the power to live in almost any sort of world we choose. Power is required if you want your choice to be effective. One of our major problems is that we have loaned our power out. We now have to reclaim it. Without a firm hold on our power, we can accomplish nothing. With it we can create and firmly establish the kind of world most of us want, *here and now*.⁶

The source of these ideas stems from his experiences in Vancouver during the Dirty Thirties, on the picket line, as a social activist, as a member of CCF and from his work in and study of the running trades.

Activism

DURING THE 1930s, Lefty repeatedly found himself in confrontations with the state. Like many single unemployed men, he spent time in the relief camps. Conditions there initially were better than starving on the streets, but as administration of the

Martin Meissner of the University of British Columbia read the manuscript and commented on it 23 August 1966. Lefty Morgan Papers, Letter from Martin Meissner to Mr. Richard Morgan, 23 August 1966.

⁴His home was decorated with many artifacts from these days, including a cowboy hat, protective gear, and paintings of the BC interior.

⁵See the bibliography appended to his paper.

⁶Richard E. Morgan, *Enough*, unpublished (original emphasis).

camps was taken over by the military, they became more like holding areas for containing protest, and food and wages were inadequate. There were dozens of protests in BC relief camps, and activists were expelled and blacklisted. Like many others, Lefty protested and was expelled from camps probably more than once, obtaining re-entry by changing his name.⁷ By late December 1934, many of these men wound up on the streets of Vancouver, precipitating demands to abolish the blacklist.⁸ Shortly after one such expulsion and "Early in April, the single unemployed from the interior relief camps went on 'strike' and converged on Vancouver to demand work and wages, the right to vote, the abolition of military control of the camps and other improvements."⁹ Under the guidance of the Worker's Unity League, the unemployed men organized and staged many strikes, hunger marches, and sit-ins. When the demands of the unemployed were not met in Vancouver or Victoria, they began their famous On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935.¹⁰ Lefty patronized many of Vancouver's cheap rooms and lunch counters where political debate was the order of the day, and almost certainly was involved in these protests.

Lefty did not join the Trek, but did participate in workplace-centred struggles. In one acrimonious dispute involving longshoremen, a company union (the Vancouver District Waterfront Workers Association) had signed an unacceptable agreement. The members elected a "communist and left-leaning executive" which

⁷It was a practice to adopt an assumed name, as the army kept blacklists of those whom it considered troublemakers. Morgan was not the only name he assumed, but was the one he kept and legalized. See C.B. Russell, Lieutenant Colonel to the Commissioner of British Columbia Police, 17 December 1934. Public Archives of British Columbia, GR 429, Attorney General. Correspondence Inward 1933-37. Box 21, File 4, No. 101. According to a list of "Riots, Disturbances, Strikes, Demonstrations, Etc. in Unemployment Relief Camps" assembled by the Department of National Defence between June 1933 and March 1934, the men often refused to work, complained about the food, held sympathy strikes over the discharge of men who refused to work, and even demanded an 8 1/2 hour day. On 15 February 1934 there was a "large disturbance" at all camps due to agitation by the BC Single Unemployed Relief Workers Association. National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG 30 E133 (Series II) Vol. 57, File 359, (Vol. 1).

⁸During 31 March 1934-15 April 1935, the work camps' population dropped from 6,060 to 3,859. NAC, "Memorandum, Situation in Vancouver, B.C. 19th April, 1935" from Major-General C.G.S. [Chief General Staff]. McNaughton Papers, MG 30 E133 (Series II) Vol. 57, File 359, (Vol. 2).

⁹R.C. McCandless, "Vancouver's 'Red Menace' of 1935: The Waterfront Situation," *BC Studies*, 22 (Summer 1974), 59. See Lorne Brown, *When Freedom was Lost* (Montreal 1987), 57ff.

¹⁰See Derek Reimer, ed., "Fighting for Labour: Four Decades of Work in British Columbia, 1910-1950", *Sound Heritage*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (1978), 41-60; Ben Swankey and Jean Evans Sheils, eds., *Work and Wages! A Semi-Documetary Account of the Life and Times of Arthur H. (Slim) Evans 1890-1944. Carpenter, Miner, Labour Leader* (Vancouver 1987).

led the strike against "unfair" cargoes.¹¹ The company fired all the militants and hired scabs, creating new company unions to replace the now worker-controlled ones.¹² The longshoremen went on strike, but the company was ready with police support. During the ensuing Battle of Ballantyne Pier, 60 were known to be injured when a crowd of 5,000, "two-thirds of whom" were "not longshoremen" according to the Chief of Police, were ordered to disperse.¹³ Lefty's participation was not unusual. According to John Stanton, the police attacked on horseback and on foot:

"The former swung four-foot, leather-covered clubs weighted with lead, while the police on foot used wooden 'billies.' Grey tentacles of tear gas spread out in some places. This onslaught quickly broke up the marching column, and individuals or small groups were hunted down and beaten mercilessly. No guns were used. The marchers offered minimal resistance, and in only a few minutes the strike had been seriously weakened. The scabs carried on, and the new company unions were preserved, at least for the time."¹⁴

During the Battle of Ballantyne Pier, police dealt Lefty a head wound, which required stitches and hospitalization: he also was jailed briefly.¹⁵ An item in a short-lived socialist publication *Amoeba* gives insight into Lefty's character in the face of this onslaught:

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

¹¹John Stanton, *Never Say Die!: The Life and Times of John Stanton, A Pioneer Labour Lawyer* (Ottawa 1987), 3.

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

¹³"Sixty Injured in Tuesday's Rioting", *Vancouver Sun*, 19 June 1935.

¹⁴John Stanton, *Never Say Die!*, 5-6. For other descriptions of the strike, see Ben Swankey, *"Man Along the Shore" / The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront As told by Longshoremen themselves* (Vancouver 1975 [?]), 86-8.

¹⁵*The Vancouver Sun*, 19 June 1935 lists the injured men. This source cites Lefty's original name, and indicates he was in fair condition after receiving contusions to the head. A news release he wrote in 1961 recalls his very short jail term. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" to the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961.

Of all the young workers none was more devoted to the cause than he. The camp boys will long remember his "Home on the Range" and "Git along little Doggie" at the Royal Theatre when the youth movement set out to entertain them during their stay in Vancouver. Amongst the first of our members to volunteer for picket duty, he has maintained energetically and faithfully his duties on the midnight or "graveyard shift" of the flying squad picket until the fateful Tuesday 17th.¹⁶ In company with other members, Lefty drove down in Roy's car to the Ballantyne. Leaving the car to get a fuller report of the situation he stood for a moment on the sidewalk, an isolated figure. A squad car took the corner on two wheels drawing up alongside.

"Search him!" came the order.

But Lefty was unarmed.

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

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

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

Lefty, Comrade and Fellow-worker, member of the I.W.W. [Industrial Workers of the World] delegate to the Provincial Council Y.S.L. [Young Socialist League] and Provincial Secretary to the C.C.Y. In theory and action second to none. May your recovery be swift. We salute you!¹⁷

The style of this "appreciation" reflects the time as well as the high regard the writer had for Lefty. Lefty's initiation into strikes is suggestive of how the issue of communist control of the union embittered and perhaps divided workers.¹⁸ Later in life, he expressed concern for the welfare of all workers and frequently spoke out against the authoritarian aspect of the Communist Party.

One place Lefty frequented was the White Lunch restaurant at Pender and Granville, where he frequently joined the lively debates about the future of capitalism. Using government vouchers, unemployed workers could obtain meals

¹⁶Tuesday was 18 June.

¹⁷"'LEFTY' (An Appreciation)," *Amoeba*, Vol. 1., No. 8 (1935), 4. The YSL and the CCY were very active in British Columbia at this time. Ivan Avakumovic suggests that the youth movement was disdainful of the older members of the party who were participating in elections, and "explains why some CCYMers preferred to devote their talents to building up trade unions or a broader-based youth organization". See his *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics* (Toronto 1978), 87.

¹⁸See *Labour Statesman*, (July 1935) for a description of the Trades Council meeting, where the issue of communist-controlled unions was debated. As Jack O'Brien, a life-long associate of Lefty's, put it, "The main fight in the 1930s was against the communists." (Interview, 29 July 1989.) John Stanton responded to the issue of communist control, suggesting that it was not a factor in the defeat of the strike, *Never Say Die!*, 9-10. John Smith referred to a split between the unionized workers and the unemployed, "John Smith Interview," 10. UBC Library, Special Collections, Rolf Knight Papers Box 8, File 3.

at the White Lunch which might be their only source of nourishment.¹⁹ People also spent long hours there in political discussion, and it was here, as well as on the picket line, that Lefty often was the centre of attention. As Myron Kuzych, one of Lefty's long-time friends, recalled, the White Lunch was open 24 hours a day, was brightly lit, clean, and warm.

It was more than a mere restaurant, it was an institution... One could buy a 5¢ coffee and baby it for as long as one wished, reading or writing. No one bothered you.... ..I first saw [Lefty], as he stood engaged in an animated discussion with an assorted group of various ages, seated around a big, white-marbled table. The discussion swirled around the I.W.W., its history and its goals, strategy and tactics.²⁰

Perhaps it was at the White Lunch that Lefty first met Doc Roberts,²¹ a dynamic speaker who crossed the province addressing "the bewildered victims of capitalism." In Tappen, a small interior town, more than 300 people attended one of Roberts' speeches and he became the talk of the town the following day. A study group even presented him with a gold watch for "teaching socialism."²² Before

¹⁹Vouchers were \$2.00 for food and \$1.05 for rent. The White Lunch offered toast and coffee for 10 cents, and for lunch, costing 15 cents, a choice between ham and chips with soup and coffee, or fish and chips with soup and coffee. Thus one could have 13 meals each week. The Wonder Lunch offered a poached egg for 10 cents but was not popular among those interested in politics. Jack O'Brien recalled that this diet was so poor that he was rejected for military service due to his physical condition. Interview, 29 July 1989.

²⁰Myron Kuzych, having come recently from the Ukraine was quite interested in North American trade unions and in socialism/communism, having "witnessed the Bolshevik Insurrection from its very inception." Some time later Lefty arrived at Kuzych's door, and for a long time they kept meeting on a one-to-one basis. Quoted passages appear in the typescript of a speech by Myron Kuzych when an engine named in Lefty Morgan's memory was installed in a boat donated to Nicaragua by the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, the Trade Union Group, and Tools for Peace, 15 April 1989.

²¹Frank Roberts' speeches were published in *Amoeba*, and there are several typescripts of a series of lectures on dialectics which bear his name. "Dialectical Materialism," *Amoeba*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (December 1935), 9. One typescript is labelled "'Uniform Study Course': First Series 'Dialectics'". The first page identifies an executive committee representing various organizations: Mrs. R.P. Steeves (CCF Club), Mrs. A.L. Corker (SP of C), R. Young (Young Economic Students), W. Scott (WEL) W. Offer (WEL) Norman Cooper (YSL) W. Hanna (YSL); chair: A.M. Stephens. The Socialist Party of Canada (Sp of C) was a major contributor, as the meetings were organized in February 1934 through the party's headquarters on 60 Cordova Street, and some copies bear its stamp. See UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 3. Many of the committee members later joined the CCF as did branches of the SP of C. *B.C. Workers' News* Vol. 1, No. 20 (31 May 1935).

²²Interview with Margaret Morgan, 29 May 1990. The term communist in this case refers to the communist parties of the day, and for many years Lefty did not wish to abandon communism as a form of society if it meant real control by the people or workers' control. If communism stood for authoritarian regimentation, it was anathema to Lefty.

meeting Roberts it had been Lefty's wont to tear down bills posted by communists. Once, while doing so, a friend said, "Lefty, you've got to hear this man!"²³ Doc Roberts frequently contributed to discussions at the White Lunch, and Lefty, impressed by Roberts' convincing arguments against capitalism, became an ardent supporter of the CCF.

Many jobless people believed capitalism had to be replaced since it had failed society. Lefty began to study socialism, labour history, and economics, which was the beginning of a lifetime of thinking, writing, and arguing about political and social issues. Indeed, his published work appeared when he was only 20 years old and a CCY member.²⁴ A second article in *Amoeba* shows Roberts' influence on Lefty:

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

Fellow-workers, let us adopt our first sentence as a slogan. Let us apply the flaming match of understanding to the dynamite of growing discontent.²⁵

Lefty's call to workers was more than rhetorical. By the end of the 1930s he had become a member of the Stanley Park Club,²⁶ which had attracted much if not most of the Vancouver CCF's most radical element.²⁷

²³D[orothy] S[teeves], "An Appreciation of Frank Roberts," *CCF News*, 16 March 1949. See also UBC Library, Special Collections, Eve Smith Collection Box 10, File 1, letter from Jack Wilson to Eve Smith.

²⁴"Lefty," "Boose Blasts Bennett" *Amoeba*, (21 January 1935), 2-3.

²⁵"Lefty," "Logic in Action", *Amoeba*, Vol. 1 (No.7), (1935), 3. These ideas appear to derive from Roberts' lectures. Books recommended by Roberts were Engels' *Anti-Duehring* (Chicago 1907) and *Socialism-Utopian and Scientific* (New York 1935); Joseph Deigutzen's *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy* (Chicago 1906) and *Philosophical Essays* (Chicago 1906); and Fred Casey's *Art of Thinking* (Chicago 1926). All were in Lefty's library, indicating that Roberts' influence was long-lasting.

²⁶There are no membership lists for this period, but in 1961 he wrote a news release indicating he had been a member of the Stanley Park Club for 24 years, (since 1937). Jack O'Brien stated that he, Lefty, and Rod Young had been close, and very active in the Vancouver Centre Club during the 1930s. Interview, 29 July 1989. Records do show Lefty was a member of the Stanley Park Club in the late 1940s. In 1951, he asked to be transferred to the Burrard Club, but he returned a short time later to the Stanley Park Club, where he was an organizer. He chaired the Vancouver Centre Riding Association in 1953. UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, file 4, and Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 7, files 5, 10. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" for the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961.

²⁷See Walter Young, "Ideology, Personality and the Origin of the CCF in British Columbia", *BC Studies*, No. 32 (Winter 1976-77). Lefty was young but knew many of those mentioned in this article.

Lefty never could abide undemocratic behaviour, and was unbending in his convictions about rights of free association. The military was so much at odds with his ideas that when he was conscripted, he refused to work and eat, or anxiously took his food into a corner to eat. If he was play-acting, he put on a good show. Perhaps he realized that he was incapable of submitting to another person's command. In any case his peculiar behaviour resulted in his being discharged within ten days. The army was no place for him.²⁸

Politically, Lefty described himself in 1961 as having been a member of the Stanley Park Club, an associate editor of *Amoeba*, a member and officer of the Labour Party of Canada (1958-60), and associate editor of and contributor to *Press*. He wrote that at no time was he connected with Stalinist or Trotskyist parties. For most of his life, he admired the Wobblies and their organization's principles. He opposed hierarchy and nationalism and he embraced pacifism, but in later years, at least, he refused to be ideologically labelled.

One foundation of his ideas was the *Regina Manifesto*, particularly the clause that "No C.C.F. Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism...."²⁹ In the early 1950s, this socialist clause became an embarrassment to the Party's provincial and federal leadership.³⁰ In BC a socialist caucus had been formed as early as 1950, and a mysterious Committee of Box 16 was organized "by a group of people 'who are concerned about the current problems of the movement.'"³¹ When Lefty's life-long friend, Rod Young, was questioned about remarks he made

²⁸His discharge papers indicate that he had a nervous condition and fibrositis in the right hip. Lefty Morgan Papers, Canada Pension Commission certificate, 12 March 1945.

²⁹Anon., *Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Programme. Adopted at First National Convention Held at Regina, Sask., July, 1933* (Ottawa n.d.), 8. A readily available copy of the *Regina Manifesto* is cited in Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto 1969), 304-13. See also Michael Cross *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea: CCF-NDP Manifestoes 1932-1969* (Toronto 1974).

³⁰As Lipset put it, "The CCF began compromising its radical doctrine the day after the Regina Manifesto was issued in 1933". *Agrarian Socialism*, Revised edn., (Berkeley 1971), 357.

³¹UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 1. Throughout the 1950s, the Stanley Park Club's activities were questioned by the provincial CCF executive, in one instance about a speech by John Stanton to the Open Forum, a monthly meeting dating back to the 1930s and Roberts' classes, and in another instance about an article written by Malcolm Bruce in *Press*. UBC Library, Special Collections, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 10. On 25 August 1950 a conference was held to organize the Left Wing of the CCF. Lefty is not identified among the 70 persons attending. According to the minutes, Jack O'Brien spoke about there being "a 'moral' obligation for Left Wingers to stand together," while Rod Young proposed a resolution to "disaffiliate from the CCF." The resolution was defeated and a Socialist Caucus was formed within the CCF instead. Like O'Brien and Young, the speakers were close associates of Lefty's, some of whom later joined Lefty in forming the Labour Party of Canada. "Minutes of Left Wing Conference", UBC Library, Special Collections, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 7.

about being a communist, the provincial executive took the case to the BC Convention in 1954.³² Lefty, increasingly unhappy with what he judged to be the gradual abandonment of the *Regina Manifesto*, became involved with Jim McKenzie in organizing a labour party.³³ This party was small and its main activity was publishing *Press* (1957-1965).³⁴

Lefty returned to the CCF in 1960 and was secretary of the Deep Cove CCF Club. As such, he attended the founding convention of the NDP, where the *Regina Manifesto* was replaced by a new policy statement emphasizing planning.³⁵ In 1962 he attended the provincial NDP convention, but returned disillusioned. In his report on the convention he found the

...party to be in a very sick condition, if one views this party as a vehicle to achieve certain ends.

If the end to be achieved is the creation of a party that will attract people who are looking for place in a scheme of life that will give meaning and purpose to the life of the individual person then the party is on its death-bed...

On the other hand, if the party is to be one in which the individual member is regarded as the simple provider of willing hands at election times and a constant source of revenue at all times then there is perhaps some future for this machine of political forces.³⁶

³²See "Extract of the Official Record of the B.C. Provincial Convention C.C.F. 1954 Containing the Speech Delivered by Rodney Young and for which he was subsequently Compelled to Resign from the C.C.F.," UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection, Box 3, File 4. The UBC Library, Special Collections contains extensive documentation on attempts to expel Rod Young from the CCF in both the Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 10, and the Rod Young Collection, Box 3. See Walter D. Young, *Anatomy of a Party*, 282-4 for a short description of the Rod Young Affair, and Elaine Bernard, "The Rod Young Affair in the British Columbia Co-operative Commonwealth Federation," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979.

³³For a short biography of Jim McKenzie, see Olenka Melnyk, *No Bankers in Heaven: Remembering the CCF* (Toronto 1989), 154-8.

³⁴The Labour Party of Canada was formed in 1956 and its first annual report contained a list of 21 members including Lefty and the Secretary-Treasurer, Jim McKenzie. The party quickly became absorbed with *Press*, which later was edited and written under various pseudonyms by McKenzie, Lefty and Margaret Morgan, and others. According to Margaret Morgan the editors shifted responsibility for publication. An early report by Lefty on "The Running Trades" appears in Volume 2, No. 2 (March 1958). Among the contributors was Jack Scott who, disillusioned with the Communist Party by that time, had met Lefty and McKenzie. Jack Scott, *A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers' Movement, 1927-1985* (St. John's 1988), 140-1, 157. "Annual Report, Labour Party," UBC Library, Special Collections, Rod Young Collection. A complete collection of *Press* is located in the UBC Library, Special Collections.

³⁵Anon., *The Federal Programme of the New Democratic Party* (Ottawa 1961), 3-4. There is no evidence of Lefty's final withdrawal from the NDP. Even in 1965 he wrote to the provincial executive stating that the Deep Cove NDP Club was defunct. Lefty Morgan Papers, "Press Release" to the *Vancouver Sun*, 8 May 1961; letter from BC-NDP to Richard E. Morgan, 8 June 1965.

³⁶Lefty Morgan Papers, "'62 Convention Report."

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

There is no hope of returning to the degree of fairness of debate and willingness to face up to controversial issues.... So long as these rules of procedure last there is far too great a possibility of death in [committee], convincing for defeat by lobby, and cutting the heart out of contentious resolutions, watering them down to unctuous and pious statements with [which] anyone including the Liberal Party could agree.³⁷

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

A high point in unfair and unjust conduct was reached in the case of considering the application of Rod Young for membership. Mr. Berger, a lawyer by profession[,] ruled in his own favor to insist that the case for Young be presented prior to the case against him by the executive. This procedure is tantamount to forcing a lawyer to defend a client who is not yet charged. This is a flagrant abuse of even the most elementary justice.³⁸

Lefty ended his report with:

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

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

— // —

To us right — to them left.³⁹

Like many on the BC left, Lefty felt the party had forsaken its principles. In a speech on a local radio show in 1967, Lefty blamed “Douglas, Lewis, Coldwell and Knowles, among others...[who believed] that as long as this disturbing call for the eradication of capitalism remained a declared goal for the party, power would never be obtained on a wide scale”. He felt that the original CCF policy had attracted people of two opposing views: those who wished to “dull the barbs of an iniquitous social system” and “those who wish to put an end to that system, barbs and all.”⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Lefty supported other struggles, such as the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, where he came in contact with various people on the left throughout

³⁷Lefty Morgan Papers, “’62 Convention Report.”

³⁸Lefty Morgan Papers, “’62 Convention Report.”

³⁹Lefty Morgan Papers, “’62 Convention Report.”

⁴⁰Lefty Morgan Papers, “Comments prepared for ‘Town Meeting in Canada’, Taped in Vancouver, BC, 13 July 1967. Topic: “What is the Significance of the N.D.P. National Convention and Policy?,” 1.

North America both academic and political. While in Detroit, Lefty sought out Grace Lee and Jimmy Boggs after reading a small book by Lee, Pierre Chaulieu, and C.R. Johnson.⁴¹ Through Lee and Boggs he met the Marxist-Humanist Raya Dunayevskaya.⁴² Lefty's disillusionment with the CCF/NDP dovetailed with a new direction, since it was at this time that he began to write at length about democracy in the workplace and workers' control.

On the Job

LEFTY'S VANCOUVER WORK EXPERIENCE goes back to 1938 when he got a job as a dispatcher at Ryan's Cartage Ltd. According to Stewart Cooper, a co-worker, "His willingness to co-operate and his devotion to duty under severe pressure are a matter of personal knowledge."⁴³ Cooper wrote:

During the entire period[,] I knew that Mr. Morgan and Mr. Ryan spent the greater part of their spare time in promoting ideas that supported the creation of a new society. Also, whenever the opportunity presented itself during working time, they expounded their ideas. They helped to form a local of the Teamsters' Union for the men on the job. It was apparent that Morgan and Ryan were convinced that there could at times be a coincidence of employer and employee interests. They believed men have common interests without regard to their relative economic relationships.⁴⁴

Tony Ryan, after a few months as company owner, couldn't justify having employees. So one afternoon he called in Cooper, Lefty, and two others and announced "Well, boys, you are now co-owners". Some time later, Cooper and the others bought out Lefty's share.

Few people were better at coordinating pick-up and delivery than Lefty. By this time he had developed a technique for dispatching trucks, and it was used by many different firms, including Pacific Great Eastern Railway, until at least the mid-1960s.⁴⁵ The system involved the colour-coding of dispatch zones and statuses.

⁴¹ *Facing Reality* (Detroit, 1958). Johnson was in fact C.L.R. James, the Trinidadian Marxist.

⁴² See Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ 1981). Lefty met her in the early 1960s and they maintained a friendship until he died. Lefty also contributed to *News and Letters*, a Detroit newspaper which focused around the Marxism-Humanism movement whose leading writer was Dunayevskaya. A collection of her writings is available on microfilm from the Wayne State University Labor History Archives in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxism-Humanism, Its Origin and Development in the U.S., 1941 to Today* (Detroit 1981). Lee and Boggs' *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (New York 1974) was in Lefty's library, along with several books by Dunayevskaya.

⁴³ Lefty Morgan Papers, Testimonial of Stewart A. Cooper, 6 April 1964, 1.

⁴⁴ Lefty Morgan Papers, Testimonial of Stewart A. Cooper, 6 April 1964, 1.

⁴⁵ Lefty Morgan Papers, Testimonial of T. J. Lehane, President Amerada Bridge and Steel Erectors, Ltd., 6 April 1964.

After quitting Ryan's in 1942, he worked for several cartage and warehouse firms, where he could use his exceptional skills as a dispatcher.⁴⁶

By 1956, he was working for the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (which later became British Columbia Railway). First working as a brakeman, his love was the head end and he chose engine service. As he rose up the seniority ladder, he worked as a fireman and finally as an engineman — the job he held until he retired in 1978. Over the years he was engaged in numerous personal as well as union struggles. His typewriter was rarely silent.

Many of Lefty's ideas derived directly from his everyday experiences as a worker involved in operating trains. He did not see the labour process as one in which capital unequivocally opposed labour. This might have been expected in view of his commitment to socialism. But, there never was any question in Lefty's mind that workers should use their skills to the best of their abilities. If there was something wrong with work, it was not inherent in the labour process. Rather, he believed the workplace required cooperation to ensure that work was done with maximum efficiency, subject to natural conditions and safety considerations.

Managers could not make people work without their consent. Railway work necessitated the coordination of complex tasks which involved an engine crew, switchmen, conductors, and other crews. Yardmasters assigned tasks to crews, whether in the assembling of trains, or in sending them out of the yard to a distant location within certain time limits. Undoubtedly machine-shop operations demanded a different pattern of labour cooperation. To Lefty, the railway was only an example of how, in almost all situations, labour could be in partial control of the workplace.

Since Lefty wrote his papers, many others have attempted to analyze the workplace, focusing on changes in labour-management relations.⁴⁷ Rather than writing in the traditions of worker resistance or class conflict, Lefty's approach was to discover how work, in reality, was self-realized and oriented toward "getting the job done". This calls to mind Michael Burawoy's more-recent view that "conflict is endemic to the organization of work."⁴⁸ Lefty recognized conflict, but tried to see how workers could meet each other's needs and organize themselves through cooperation, a fundamental social need. Work is thus an expression of what it means to be human. Institutions and organizations could easily subvert the labour process. Lefty often questioned union officials about their ideas. For example, in

⁴⁶Lefty Morgan Papers, Testimonial of Kenneth A. Calder, 6 April 1964, 2; testimonial of T.J. Lehane, Amerada Bridge and Steel Erectors, Ltd., 6 April 1964, 1.

⁴⁷Harry Braverman *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York 1974); Richard Edwards *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York 1979); Andrew L. Friedman *Industry and Labour: Class Struggle at Work and Monopoly Capitalism* (London 1977); Michael Burawoy *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Capitalism* (Chicago 1979).

⁴⁸Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent*, 66.

a letter to G.H. Harris, President of the Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen (ORCB), Lefty cited a passage in the constitution of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (B of LE) which states that "The interests of the employer and employee being co-ordinate, the aim of the Organization will be co-operation and the cultivation of amicable relations with the employer..." Lefty also drew attention to a parallel passage in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (B of LF&E) constitution: "...the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen has been instituted...having as one of its aims the desire to cultivate a spirit of harmony between employer and employee."⁴⁹ Lefty asked Harris whether the ORCB had ever had such a clause in its constitution. Harris replied he was unaware of such a clause, but that the union had always "strived for amicable relations."⁵⁰ For Lefty, these clauses and attitudes indicated that the unions had become agents of the company, and he had nothing but contempt for such alliances.

In keeping with Braverman's perspective, if there were conflicts between employers and employees, it would be due to the fact that the employer had to impose rules on employees because of the market economy, that is, competition was the probable cause of labour-capital conflict.⁵¹ Capitalism itself had subverted the labour process. As Lefty put it: "Being 'human' is a difficult thing to define, but in my opinion, it embraces more than simply what is good for business. It is not a case of being anti-employer, but rather a case of being pro-individual human being."⁵² Just as Lefty had regarded the agitation against Rod Young as evidence of the subversion of socialist democratic principles, he held that certain unions were acting against the interests of their members. The labour process was the one arena where workers' control could reach its fullest expression, especially in the running trades.

In another paper, Lefty asked whether "the work relationships of the running trades in North America qualify as an operating example of industrial democracy, co-determination, workers' control or self-management?" He answered that co-determination is a more accurately chosen category, and listed 23 different criteria for evaluating the degree of democracy in the workplace, ranging from "An almost total absence of work-related alienation" to "a very restrained tendency to withdraw

⁴⁹Lefty Morgan Papers, letter from R.E. Morgan to G.H. Harris, President Order of Railroad Conductors and Brakemen, 7 April 1965.

⁵⁰Reply from G.H. Harris to R.E. Morgan.

⁵¹Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 261ff. Braverman suggests that markets must remain the "prime area of uncertainty" and the organization of the corporation flows directly from this fact. Marketing becomes secondary only to production. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 265. On the railway, marketing is less visible since other corporations use the transportation system as a marketing channel.

⁵²Richard E. (Lefty) Morgan, *A Practical Example "Right Under Your Nose"*, 20. This manuscript is being prepared for publication.

labour en masse."⁵³ Understanding the workplace, in particular its organization, was of utmost importance to social change and improvement.

Lefty's paper perhaps presents a rosy picture of the running trades. If so, this is because he sought every possible avenue which might lead society toward a fully humanized democracy. When others assumed that conflict was pre-eminent in human relations, Lefty immediately questioned them. If anything can characterize his ideas, it was his conviction that society should strive to become "a free association of free people."⁵⁴

This does not mean that he was against organized associations of labour — quite the contrary. Lefty was an active member of the Canadian Union of Transportation Employees (CUTE), the union that replaced the B of LE and the B of LF&E in the early 1970s on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. He drafted the by-laws for CUTE Local No. 1, and part of the CUTE constitution.⁵⁵ Some of these constitutional provisions are a lasting monument to Lefty's concern for workers. CUTE's central purpose encompasses such aims as:

- a) To regulate relations between employees and employers...
- b) To promote the material and intellectual welfare of the member...
- c) To bring about improvement in the working conditions of the member...
- d) To educate and enlighten the member...
- e) To organize workers into the National Union.
- f) To provide a democratic form of organization...encouraging equal and free voice and vote to all members regardless of race, colour, sex, creed or political opinion.
- g) To promote the rights of all workers, freedom to belong to labour organizations which are operated in the sole interest of those who work for wages, those retired from that category, and those who are generally socially disadvantaged and ... are not influenced or dominated by any element not in the best interest of the above-mentioned categories of persons.⁵⁶

All of these provisions were adapted from the constitution of the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW). CAIMAW includes an additional clause "to bring about fair wage standards" and instead of II(g), the CAIMAW constitution mentions only "Canadian workers."⁵⁷ According

⁵³Lefty Morgan Papers, "Peculiarities of the North American Railway Running Trades' Labour Relationships," Paper presented to the Second International Conference on Participation, Workers' Control and Self-management, sponsored by the Centre International de coordination des recherches sur l'autogestion, Paris, 7-10 September 1977.

⁵⁴Myron Kuzych speech, 15 April 1989.

⁵⁵Memo from Lefty Morgan to Canadian Union of Transportation Employees, 6 July 1974. A copy of the by-laws which make up this memo was kindly provided by Kevin Rhodes.

⁵⁶Memo from Lefty Morgan to Canadian Union of Transportation Employees, 6 July 1974. A copy of the by-laws which make up this memo was kindly provided by Kevin Rhodes.

⁵⁷Constitution of the CUTE, (Revision of 1987) Article II, 1.

to Kevin Rhodes, Article II(g) shows Lefty's influence since it includes those who work for wages, are retired, or are disadvantaged in some way.⁵⁸

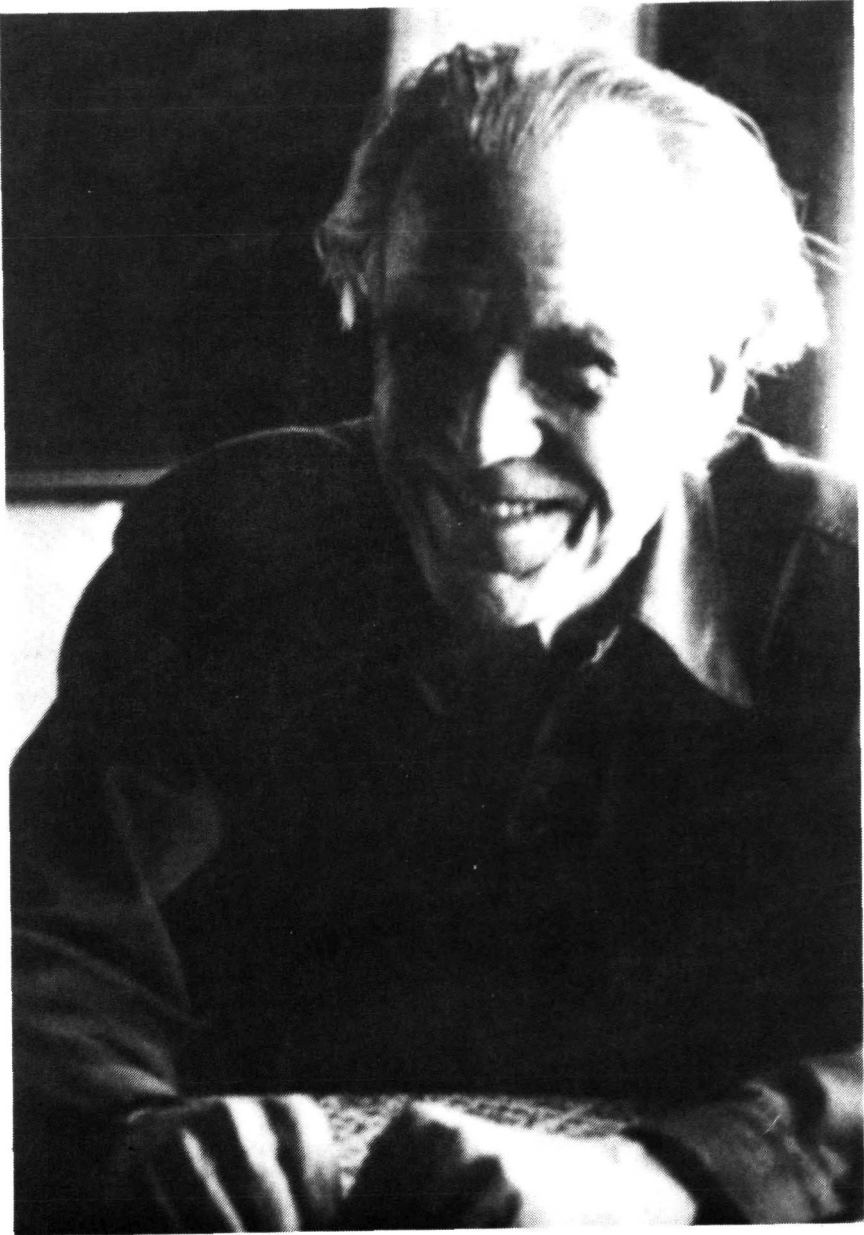
While Lefty strongly supported unions, he felt that they had been subverted by the negotiation process and the requirements of a capitalist economy — in some instances to the extent that the executive had simply become a company tool. He was chairperson of the BC Branch of the Canadian Railways Employees' Pension Association from 1971 until 1987, and he fought many pension cases for workers. His activity over a lengthy period was widely appreciated, as he always took up the cause of employees who had been disciplined and at times challenged the unions themselves to obtain action on behalf of union members..

Lefty read widely, and he was able to grasp complex political and philosophical questions. His quick mind and ready wit were compelling; those who met him admired him deeply. As the late Morris Carrell put it, "You could trust him with your life."⁵⁹

Lefty felt that scrupulous adherence to democratic principles and practice was the only route to social evolution. People may see him as a anarchist or socialist or humanist. Lefty might have agreed to one such label — he was a democrat. He wanted to see a world based on co-operation and free of the need for money. He believed that each person should have a say in the social and economic affairs of the world. For Lefty, the defense of individual freedom and democracy were fundamental. Truly democratic decision-making, whether in the workplace or elsewhere, was essential to social peace and economic well-being. In addition to his work on the railway running trades, Lefty wrote at length on what a democratic society would look like. In a manuscript, entitled *Enough*, he suggested that people should live according to their needs in a society organized without money. Consumer goods would be produced to meet the requirements of the people — nobody would produce or consume more than needed. But the individual would decide his or her needs; the state would not dictate. *Enough* combines Lefty's ideas about the organization of society with his interest in the work people do. This was Lefty's last major written contribution. Unfortunately, Lefty could not bring it or the vision it records to completion.

⁵⁸Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers Union, *Constitution and By-Laws* (Adopted 23-4 October 1965), 3-4. Lefty also worked on the CAIMAW Constitution.

⁵⁹Interview with Morris Carrell, 20 July 1989.



Informal Participation Patterns in the Railroad Running Trades

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THE WORK PATTERNS of "running trades" crews on the railroads in North America can be considered as an example of semi-autonomous self-management in industry.

The above statement requires these qualifications:

- (1) Use of the term "running trades" must be strictly confined to define work done by yard foreman and switchmen (yardmen), conductors and trainmen and as well, in both cases, their accompanying locomotive engineers with their firemen-helpers (where such are in service).
- (2) The statement is true on a rapidly declining scale.
- (3) Modern concepts of self-management imply a work force that has consciously decided to work within that framework. In this case that consciousness is lacking, replaced however by an attachment to a "mystique" simply termed "railroading". The lack of a clear consciousness has a serious adverse impact on the application of the theories of self-management.

Running Trades' work divides into two categories; yard service and road service, one section occasionally overlapping onto the other. Yard service includes all car movements necessary for the assembly or disassembly of trains or other such placements as a customer might order. Only in an emergency situation would yard service men do road service work. Road service includes all car or engine movements of all trains regardless of their purpose. It is not uncommon for a road crew to make minor movements directly related to the composition of their trains while it is still within yard limits even where yard crews are available. As well as taking trains from terminal to terminal, road crews do work between terminals which would be done by yard crews if such crews existed at the points where the work is required. Such work may or may not be done within yard limits which are arbitrarily chosen and clearly defined by appropriate signs and written definitions.

Footnotes are those of the editors. Apart from obvious typographical errors the text is exactly as it was written by Lefty.

R.E. (Lefty) Morgan, "Informal Participation Patterns in the Railroad Running Trades," *Labour/Le Travail*, 27 (Spring 1991), 231-248.

As in all industry, the customers' desires are transmitted through established channels and emerge as instructions to working forces. The North American railway system however, encounters impediments peculiar to the industry which affect its ability to meet customers' requirements. Were it not for these impediments, it is not likely that the phenomenon of self-management would have flourished to the extent it has.

Unlike the average industrial plant, it is not unusual to require the overseeing of activities on many miles of track inside yard limits and as well, supervision must extend great distances beyond any particular yard limit. Despite modern communication systems, direct and immediate supervision of an entire railway from one central point is not yet practical. In recent years however, modern technology has come much closer to making it possible for that segment of the work force clearly defined as "management" to more or less continuously and rigidly direct all movements in both services.

The central feature of this barrier to easy and successful response to a customer's expressed wish is the reaction by the running trades crew members to the existence of the Uniform Code of Operating Rules referred to henceforth as the U.C.O.R. or Rules. It was early discovered that a commonly accepted pattern of behaviour was imperative if movement of such heavy equipment, was to be made within and without yard limits with a reasonable regard for safety.¹ A common code was thus formulated and accepted by all North American railroads. Minor variations in the U.C.O.R. reflecting the individual needs of particular railroads are to be found. At points where crews of different railroads interchange cars, reliance is placed in the main on common aspects of the Rules. Where there are variations, pains are taken to ensure that all crews are aware of them.

Certain basic Rules have not undergone any fundamental change since their introduction in 1887. The U.C.O.R. contains prescriptions and proscriptions for all conceivable conditions pertaining to yard switching and the movement of trains. Where specific Rules are not quite sufficient, omnibus Rules prevail and thus the whole is encompassed. A minimum but workable level of understanding is expected and provision is made to augment that understanding as and when required. The U.C.O.R. is basically little other than the codified demand for rational reactions to various situations. In those instances where the Rules demand other than that and appear to be merely arbitrary, common sense is not offended. The modifications from the original formulation found in recent editions of the Rules are reflections of the impact of technological devices now in service and as well are indicative of revisions sought by management in the authority structure erected by the U.C.O.R.

¹Safety, from the trainman's point of view, was central to survival and many accidents were caused by inadequate attention to safety. Management always harped on this issue in order to protect railway property.

Such a set of Rules has, for obvious reasons, more than one capability. Their rigidity is such that a complete and painstaking observance of them would have an almost disastrous effect on the efficiency of the operation. They therefore can become a tool available to each and every running trades worker who wishes to impede the flow of production.

Obedience to the U.C.O.R., a prerequisite for continued employment, is further buttressed inasmuch as the Rules are a part of codified law in all areas of the Continent. Changes in the Rules require the consent in principle, of legislative bodies of some sort. Powerful regulatory boards then work out the details, oversee and effect desired alterations. The power of those boards is rooted in the authority of the legislators. Rule changes are not readily accomplished and are normally considerably modified from original requests when they are finally adopted.²

The effect of the application of the Rules on the work process is entirely governed by the degree to which conservatism or its opposite is uppermost in the mind of each worker at any moment. The specific tendency of each worker is greatly affected by his knowledge of the general attitude towards Rules observance being displayed by other crew members at any one moment. The mechanics of the process prevent the working to Rule by any man from having the adverse impact on production to be seen if the practice is engaged in by two or more crew member. The efforts of one man at Rules observance are partially undone by short cuts taken by his mates who at that moment do not care to work to rule. Any one man on the crew however, can, by persistently following the Rules, slow the productive process to some extent. Each man on the crew has the means and is required by the Rules to signal for a stop in the movement when, in his view, sufficient judgement is not being used. The locomotive engineer has of course, the most ready and sophisticated means of causing a stoppage.³

There are many variations in the ways in which this lever of power over the industrial process is used. The most obvious way appears at the moment a "switch list" is presented by the yardmaster to a crew when the crew is about to start to

²When employees broke the rules they were assessed demerit points, and were taken off duty when they had reached 60 points. Points remained on the books for one year, and the employee was not allowed to return until the accumulated number of points was reduced to below 60. Workers who were "packing" 50 points were protected by other crew members who took the blame for any Rules violations if they could. Many arbitration cases centred around the question of whether such points should have been assessed. Lefty went to bat for anyone who sought his help in fighting the assessment of points. These are the famous "Brownie" points, named after the man who devised the scheme. There is a common misconception among the public that Brownie points are "good", perhaps due to the mis-association with "Brown-nosing", which is getting in the boss's favour.

³Switchmen who had it out for a train crew could also cause major delays for obscure reasons, thus reducing the pay of the train crew. Arguments might break out in such cases.

work in the yard service or at a later point in the shift when a further list is given to those men.⁴

Commonly the yardmasters assume their positions after considerable experience as switchmen or as trainmen. Unlike their counterparts in most industries, yardmasters emanating from the running trades (far more likely to have been trainmen than enginemen),⁵ retain the unabridged right to revert to those trades without penalty and in so doing will on occasion, obtain higher wages. Moreover, a peripheral attachment is maintained with the bargaining agencies representing the crafts in which they formerly worked. These two associations with the men on the crews they supervise have observable influences on the attitude displayed by the yardmasters, and as well, colour the composition of work load allotments.

This is particularly so when in the yardmaster's mind questions arise as to whether or not he has benefitted himself by accepting promotion. Should he return to the outdoor work force, a reputation as an exacting and hard-driving supervisor can create a barrier to an easy relationship with his work mates. As a former switchman-trainman he has a good concept of a "fair day's work". Any attempt to overload one crew to the benefit of another or to augment the total of work done is readily detected with predictable results. Nevertheless if the yardmaster wishes to retain his post even in the short run his supervisors will naturally expect him to extract the greatest possible amount of labour from the crews under his immediate jurisdiction.

Being unable to provide detailed and constant supervision because of the physical aspects of the work place, employers established at the outset a piecework system of pay which served as an incentive to increased production. In yard service this system embodied the concept that although eight hours constituted a day, if a conceived-as-sufficient amount of work was performed in fewer hours, the crews left the job but received pay for the eight hours. This phenomenon is termed a "quit".

The yardmaster and yard foreman⁶ thus face each other, each out to achieve not necessarily correlative ends. The yardmaster's authority is derived from managerial prerogative. The yard foreman's authority is based on that accorded him by the Rules. The yardmaster and the yard foreman are very aware of the serious impact on production caused by a rigid observance of the Rules. In due course, normally following a debate, a bargain is struck and work commences.

⁴The switch or work list is the assignment to assemble or dis-assemble a train. To move a train outside of the yard limits the crew would have to obtain an order or orders.

⁵The tail-end crew was based in the caboose and consisted of the conductor (called yard foreman in yard work), brakeman and/or switchman. The head-end crew was based in the engine and consisted of the engineer and fireman (presently more likely to be a head-end brakeman).

⁶Similar to the conductor who was part of the crew and had overall responsibility for the operation of the train, the yard foreman was part of the crew and was responsible for ensuring completion of the work list.

As spokesman for the crew in the bargaining-process, the yard foreman presents what he deems to be a consensus opinion. His presentation is more likely to be accurate if his crew consists of men who work with him daily and whose pattern of work performance he knows.

It is not possible for the foreman to become overly dominant despite his designation as foreman. He too is a "brother" to his mates for even in the past, although represented by craft-differentiating bargaining agencies, all were organized into the various labour bodies. Today an amalgamated body speaks for all segments even providing a place for engine service men.⁷ Nonmembership is a rare occurrence. More importantly though, the "individual responsibility" Rule can be used by either or both of his mates to frustrate a foreman anxious to deliver a productivity level beyond a norm considered acceptable to the two mates or the engineman. Each and every man on the crew shares a responsibility for observance of the Rules. In the event of a mishap, although the foreman will be the first questioned, the other men can be sure of an interview and a share of the discipline.

Once the movement of the rolling stock begins, the foreman is charged, again by Rule, with responsibility for the supervision of all of the details of the work process. The size and shape of the physical plant make the application of the Rule somewhat impractical. The extent to which the foreman's intentions bear fruit may hinge decisively on the degree of involvement chosen by his mates.

In the bargaining process which starts the day, comments of a practical and expeditious nature may be offered by one or both of the foreman's mates. The alert and co-operative foreman adopts such suggestions. In turn they may be incorporated into the yardmaster's plans when he is prepared to recognize their value. Even after work has started useful suggestions made by junior men on the crew become embodied into the work plan by foreman who are both quick-minded and desirous for whatever reasons, of encouraging a co-operative attitude.

Involvement of a consequential nature is however a choice freely made by all of the men on the crew. A mixture of both attitudes is also occasionally seen. Two of the three crew members could for instance, simply "switch to signals" i.e., adopt (within clearly recognized limits), the "I just work here" attitude. One of those two might be the foreman who avoids debate with the yardmaster, offers no comment and simply carries out the listed work although aware that it may later have to be undone. An uninterested attitude chosen by either or both of his mates will result in less production because the details cannot be regulated to the ninth degree. Impediments unforeseen at the outset are certain to be encountered. These arise despite marked skill at planning. Initiative from each crew man is nearly an imperative if any reasonable production level is to be obtained. For instance, the junior member of the crew may find himself three quarters of a mile from his foreman, temporarily out of communication with him and discover another crew

⁷The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers negotiate as a unit for contracts.

using the track into which he was to put or take some cars. In such an instance some arrangement is made with the other crew, which might entail an exchange of particular parts of their work lists. If the junior man refrains from making the necessary decisions, production stops on his crew.

As well as Rules observance, attitude can and does play a part in controlling the work process. An overbearing yardmaster will find his role impossible and similarly an unduly authoritarian foreman faces insurmountable difficulties. In each case, attitude has more than immediate consequence. The "moccasin telegraph" puts out the message that a certain yardmaster requires reform and this serves to intensify the debates he faces and guarantees non-co-operation from other crews. The yard foreman with the iron hand soon finds that he must work with very junior and thus very inexperienced men. His only (and limited) protection is that he can not be forced to work with two mates both of whom have less than six months service. Men can be forced onto a crew with a unpopular yard foreman because their seniority number leaves them little choice. The chances of that foreman getting a quit are very minimal indeed. Also of course, the chance of mishaps occurring relates directly to the inexperience of the men.

Fellow workers can either exercise their seniority to move away from an unwanted situation if they have the seniority to take a more desirable job or failing that, work strictly to Rule when they are forced by lack of seniority to work a job they would prefer not to bid.

In the normal circumstance the foreman is the most senior man and is accorded some degree of respect from his mates on that basis. This is offered in all honesty for it is formally established that seniority alone guarantees an opportunity for promotion. (It should be noted that the terms "promotion" and "demotion" when used by the running trades men do not carry either the adulatory or pejorative connotation common to ordinary usage. Preference for certain jobs determines the choice made by the men and no great concern is shown for titles). The reasonable assumption is made that the time spent gaining seniority was also spent in absorbing technique. Both employer and workers have escape hatches when it is established that the time was spent merely growing older but not wiser. Employers retain the right to deprive, for specified or unspecified periods, the right of a foreman to act as such. The bargaining agency involved might or might not entertain a grievance on the issue.

It is so well understood by all that a co-operative attitude and spirit is needed that conflict beyond a limited level is avoided. Forms of conflict (other than working to Rule when that practice is used for that purpose) which have an adverse effect on work performance are not tolerated. Armistices are arranged and continuance of the disagreement is set over to times and places separate from the job site. No holds are barred in verbal onslaughts and seniority counts for nothing there. Physical violence on the job is not tolerated by men or management.⁸

⁸Liquor was grounds for immediate dismissal under Rule G of the U.C.O.R., but physical conflict was subject to informal and contractual regulation.

Avoidance of conflict may require a man to perform a task which his experience tells him is quite preposterous. If the instructions are not in conflict with the U.C.O.R., the wise worker will carry out the assignment. He knows that in revenge for having been required to perform unnecessary or unproductive work, all he has to do is relate his experience to other crew men and ridicule will follow. As a final and very-seldom-taken step in conflict resolution, a written report is made to middle management and corrective measures are taken. This course is avoided if at all possible. Care is taken by the men to avoid unduly penalizing anyone for an honest error. Only when the error pattern is repetitious, grievous and likely to affect safety is written complaint tendered and by then, all other forms of appeal must have failed.

The fact that the habit of gossip is firmly entrenched is of bearing in this regard. Through that means, management becomes aware and often takes steps to intervene before the situation is exacerbated.

Particularly in a situation where a yard is congested sacrifices are required by crews to benefit each other. Curtailments and quick revisions of plans are made to expedite the overall work production. These revisions range from exchanges of parts of the work lists (as often as not without either the knowledge or blessing of the yardmaster) to simply standing by, keeping clear of conflicting movement. Standing by is of course in conflict with the idled crew's concept of how to get a quit. By and large these sacrifices are made with remarkable tolerance and often in very good grace although seldom when work is exchanged is the trade even.

Only a minor mention has so far been made of crews in road service. In rather general terms, most of what has been said about yard crews pertains to road crews.

The road conductor's work is influenced by yard activities and by yard masters' decisions but in the main the conductor must deal with the operator, the train dispatcher or the chief train dispatcher or all three.

The operator prepares the train orders strictly in accordance with the train dispatcher's prescribed wording and as well, prepares the train "message" authorized by the chief train dispatcher which corresponds to the switch list given to the yard foreman.

The message, like the list, is the written expression of hoped-for work from the crew. Again, the fulfilment of the hope is influenced by a great many factors the most important of which is the attitude the road crew will take in reference to the provisions of the U.C.O.R. and other restrictive regulations (some of which are underwritten by codified law), set down by the employer.

The train dispatcher performs his duties within a tightly restricted frame work of ritual which leaves no room for innovation. No situation can arise for which a precise reaction is not prescribed. When problems emerge which raise the question of exactly how the prescribed reactions are to be applied, the train dispatcher avoids protracted discussion with the road conductor and turns to the chief train dispatcher for resolution.

Despite more or less adequate communications systems, chief train dispatchers sometimes put out messages which cannot, for innumerable reasons, be carried out. The message, like the yard switching list, never contains requests or instructions contrary to the U.C.O.R.

An intimate knowledge of terrain, grades and other salient aspects of the physical property often makes it possible for a conductor to know immediately on receipt that the instructions cannot be carried out. Here the conductor's attitude plays an important part. He chooses either to point out the error he observes and thus have the message revised or proceeds to the point(s) named and reports the impossibility from there. Should he choose the latter course he will disrupt plans made by the train dispatcher the success of which are contingent upon the "success" of a plan that cannot be accomplished. The overall plan for the movement of the train may be affected by any number of unforeseen problems and once again, the attitude adopted by the crew can be helpful or hindering.

The crews are free to adopt a "waiting for instruction" stance and to withhold the advantages of "on the spot" observations which combined with their expertise usually provide a logical way out of the dilemma. Certainly cautious in the exercise of such authority as he has at least until he has been made acquainted with the details, the chief train dispatcher usually asks for a statement of some of the options open to him in resolving the problem. The range of options is not necessarily fully delineated, denigration of the best option can occur and promotion of the worst option offered. Close acquaintance with the technical details of the mechanical equipment, seldom understood by those in the train dispatching office, can be used to delay further progress of the train.⁹

As do the yard crews, road crews respond to a piecework incentive. The sooner a train can move from Point A to Point B, the more the pay-by-the-hour rises. The general tenor of the Rules provides a restraining influence and if the train is to move with relative safety at maximum speed, a judicious selection must be made of which Rules are to be bent or broken. This done by consensus, accompanied on occasion by grumbling from a minority of more conservatively oriented crew members.

Once it is established however, that hope of a premium rate by the hour is lost through misadventure, the road conductor takes part in slowing the pace of the train

⁹At the time of Lefty's dismissal in 1964 he wrote a summary of various demerit marks which had been assessed. On steep grades in slippery conditions, for example, the options might be to sand, causing a slowing down to allow sand to be released, or not to sand, in which delay would be caused by poor progress on a slippery track. In being assessed marks for causing a train to be late he argued that sanding, was the *safest* way to proceed in his view. Without sanding the train might have slid backwards down the grade causing even slower and unsafe progress. Therefore demerit marks should not have been assessed since safety was of greatest concern to management. "A Brief Concerning the Case for Re-instatement of R. E. Morgan into Service with the Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company" Lefty Morgan Papers. He was eventually re-instated in a Canadian Board of Arbitration case and was awarded \$12,721.50 for lost wages under Arbitration Case #49 of 1964.

so that a quantitative wage emerges which more equates the premium rate even though the hours spent on duty may be considerably more.

The road service conductor is in no better position than his yard service counterpart to impose his will on the rest of the crew. Should his mates object to his attitude they can commence observing the Rules to the letter and thus frustrate his direction. Other options are also open to the crew members to keep the conductor in line with the general views of the crew as a whole. Other crew members can fail to co-operate when the conductor's wishes are contrary to consensus opinion. For example, the conductor may wish to spend a minimum amount of time in the terminal at the end of the first leg of a round trip. By collective agreement the three man train crew may not be divided and one trainman may decide to spend many more hours in that terminal thus defeating his conductor's hope of a quick turnaround.

Another example:- by collective agreement, no crew can be required to work more than a specific number of hours (usually 12), without rest. The conductor may wish to continue the journey though the hours may be considerably (or even minimally) in excess of the stated maximum. Should one of the trainmen decide that the maximum is sufficient for that day, the train will stop until the rest period has expired. Thus the conductor is reminded that he is not in full command. In such instances however, the employer will when practical, supply a relief crew and the original crew will go on to the destination with pay continuing at the same rate. In cases of that sort, the debate between the trainman and the conductor ends in a sort of "draw" for although work has ceased, the quality of "rest" obtained in the circumstance is questionable.

As a side effect of having taken rest on the road, the crew which "deadheads" stands first out ahead of the crew which completed the working trip once the train arrives at the objective terminal.¹⁰ This feature is the cause of much diplomatic manoeuvring between the two crews for it is considered unethical to "scoop a man in bed", i.e., accept the first outstanding earned by deadheading. The regular practice is for the working crew to book a number of hours rest on arrival and the deadhead crew books that much rest plus five minutes more thus reversing the crew standings relative to further work.

The above serves to demonstrate that within recognized limits the train crews are in command and in many respects regulate the movement of the trains to service particular purposes they have in mind. It will be remembered however, that to the extent that electronic devices make remote regulation possible, the options for direct control by the crews is diminished.

Generalized control over the entire operations department insofar as yard and road service is concerned is greatly affected by the availability of men to do the work. A given number of spare (usually very junior) men is retained to protect

¹⁰Deadheading is when a crew is either sent to or returns from a distant location as non-working passengers.

vacancies caused by short absences. By collective agreement each man is the judge of his own condition, i.e., fitness for duty. If in his view he will not be granted a request to "book off for personal reasons", he simply registers the fact that he is taking rest until the expiration of a stated number of hours which have been known to slightly exceed one hundred. This industry can not simply reach out for casual labour and thus fill out the crews. Experienced men not already employed are few and far between and inasmuch as a very limited guarantee of an income is assured spare men, the number of men off duty can have a marked impact on the overall amount of work done within a given time span.

Another place where a marked degree of control is exercised by the men is demonstrated when discipline is either threatened or has been administered. Very seldom does a managerial decision on this subject go unchallenged. Those discipline cases which proceed without challenge are usually those wherein the crewman himself decides that for whatever reason an objection should not be offered. The philosophical question of whether such a decision is properly the domain of the individual or not, despite its precedent-setting qualities, is not yet and may never be settled. Interference with the assessment of discipline ranges from established recourses to subterfuge. It is sometimes arranged that a blameless man will shoulder the responsibility for a mishap. Thus he receives a disciplinary reprimand earned by a popular fellow worker whose record will not accommodate further assessments. Company officials may be very suspicious but, faced with a solemnly-made statement as to what has occurred, have little choice. In the relatively unsupervised conditions prevailing, a crew need only to arbitrarily decide to say who was where and did what and the stage is set. Solidarity prevails and the possible discharge of a well-liked fellow worker is prevented.

Discharge is in any case, seldom resorted to, preference being given to a demerit system of reprimand. The record indicates that above 90% of those who are discharged return to duty in due course with seniority intact but seldom with compensation for time lost. The records of the officers of the bargaining agencies in this regard is commendable.

The practice of self-management is short of a vital ingredient if control by the workers is not exercised in the matter of hiring. In this industry, running trades men make the final decision as to which of their newly-hired fellow workers will become permanent employees. Even the initial selection of men from the general population is greatly influenced by the men inasmuch as any employer entertains only a given number of applications at any one time. There is a strong tendency for running trades men to refer relatives, friends and relatives of friends to the employment office. Railways normally give preference to those persons thus referred.

On some railroads a minimum time is spent by a student trainman in study class but the balance of the training (and all of it where class study is not used) is done by the crews.

This brief statement of the relationships between the men of the running trades would be even less complete without a short description of the reactions evident when a student trainman is first introduced to the work.

The crew with which the student is to make his first trip will have, in the normal circumstance, been selected by the yardmaster. Whether his first appearance has been preceded by class study or not, the student will have been issued certain critical books etc. and will have been given a cursory review of their intent. The books and other material however are not as yet very meaningful to the student. He is formally introduced to the crew and is then left on his own during the period when the crew is absorbed in making the initial bargain of the day with the yardmaster. Even if the two mates take no active part in that process it would be quite unusual for them to be paying no attention whatever. When the crew leaves the yard office a cautious probing of the student starts with priority given to determining if he has had any experience on other railroads. The replies to questions determine precisely the order of priority for instructions given to him. If the response is negative care will be taken to put him where there is the least danger at least until they can gauge his reactions to the surroundings which are so strange to him. The crews have an ambiguous attitude toward the student, a certain hidden pleasure is taken in having the opportunity to break in the student which is clearly and decidedly overridden by a sense of protective responsibility. Some crew members, not well versed in historically validated procedures in the industry feel somewhat imposed upon when required to take a student out, feeling that they have quite enough burdens already. Intent upon getting a quit, they conveniently and quickly forget that they themselves were put through the same school. The attitude of the men toward the student is coloured by many factors but these two predominate. They are positively confident, for excellent reasons, that the student is unable to dupe them in regard to claims to previous experience. Even if he does claim previous experience, keen eyes are upon him as he preforms the very simple tasks assigned to him at the start. His body movements as he gets on or off an engine or car that is moving, the way he handles fixed objects such as switches, tell his trainers in seconds exactly how true his statements are about being experienced. Crew members are positively confident that no matter how brilliant this new man may be, other things being equal, their own promotion in running trades work will take place ahead of his. The fact that he may be related to some fellow worker does not in general, affect in the slightest the treatment received by the student. The very minor exceptions apply when he is related to some very popular mate or even to a well-liked supervisor. There is a transference of some of that popularity onto the student but there are clearly defined limits of toleration. Sometimes the student's family background or an established relationship with the running trades men on another railroad combines with enjoyable personality traits to produce what is termed a "carried man". The end result is the presence on the permanent staff of a man who, if judged rather more strictly would not be there. Were it not for this admixture of relationships and/or personality, he would be weeded out at the start instead of becoming

somewhat of a permanent burden despite certain pleasure taken from his company. As the nature of the industry changes with the rapid introduction of judgement-removing devices, the "mystique" is slowly losing ground, resulting in a slackening of demands made upon the student and the greater probability of permitting permanence of employment which would not have been countenanced in earlier years. This probability is augmented by the very human feelings extended toward any student. The effect of unemployment on the student may be taken into consideration when making the necessary judgements.

Although various criteria are used by the men in making the decision as to who will become a permanent employee, in the main the degree of continuous interest displayed by the student is *the* determining factor. In such a hazardous occupation it is realized that there is no place for the daydreamer and even those with the most winning personality must measure up to consensus standard. To date no employer has evolved a method of foisting an unwanted man into the ranks of the running trades.

The locomotive engineer and his (*seldom found*) fireman helper are of course integrally bound into the whole process. Their specific segment of control is over the motive power and by Rule, the engineer is in charge of and responsible for the operation of the engine. His command can be disturbed by no one except when he is removed from service for cause by proper authority.

Prior to the advent of the diesel engine, all training of enginemen was done on the job by senior men except for the period spent in the shops where the equipment is stored when not in service. There the student engineman learned the basic rudiments of maintenance and obtained minimal experience in moving the engines. The modern engineer is expected to know a mere minimum of maintenance procedures sufficient only to follow radioed instructions given to him in a breakdown situation. No time in the shops is required. Electronically activated devices simulating experiences he will meet in running an engine are today used in conjunction with fairly protracted classroom instruction as a basis for initial training. No doubt these devices are useful in eliminating those from the program who have no natural bent in the direction required. Experience in this form of training has clearly shown that, although it is beneficial in some respects, it is not a substitute for the traditional on-the-job training. Time periods set down in the original classroom programs as maximum between graduation and qualification have had to be considerably extended.

The crews are necessarily but, as specified earlier, not entirely dependent on the engineer's judgement for ensuring safe movement. He is entirely free to refuse all signals from all persons other than, for obvious reasons, a signal to stop. He must be satisfied that he is being signalled to provide power for a reasonable purpose not in conflict with the U.C.O.R.

His helper is required to police his actions in the same way that all crew members are instructed to police all other members of their own and other crews.

The locomotive engineer and his helper are attached to bargaining agencies, sometimes the same one, at other times a different one, but in any case separate from the one(s) that cover train service crews (as opposed to engine service crews). Craft delineations are very pronounced and show no signs of weakening.

In both yard and road service, engine service men have very similar rights as do the train service men to take rest after the maximum hours of work specified have expired. The engine service men have also however a right to book "unfit", a right jealously guarded from the many attempts to remove it from the collective agreements. When booking unfit for duty, no comment is made and none is expected by those who receive the information. This prerogative had its origin during the days when through the brute labour, vast amounts of coal were fed daily into hungry boilers. It has been retained to provide for times when even a feeling of unease caused by any source whatever, would distract the engine service men from their very exacting duties which call for an unrelenting concentration when the engine is moving.

When engine service men are promoted to positions outside the running trades, precisely the same peripheral attachments are maintained to the bargaining agencies as is the case with train service men. Likewise their seniority status is preserved intact.

Central to the concept and vital to the practice of self-management, is the core notion of task-orientation carried to the point where no interference which would impede the work is permitted. Running trades work provided a very clear example of that principle functioning in a pragmatic manner.

In both train and engine service men bring with them all the aspects of their experience as well as the psychological effects of whatever may be occurring in their personal lives. Disparities of every sort are found from bare literacy to erudition, polarization on religious views, ad infinitum. Whatever their personal inclination however, it is fully and jointly understood that nothing will be permitted to interfere with job performance.

The re-training of an ego-bound conductor or foreman or the deflating of a pompous engineer, although taking place while the work progresses, (through Rules observance or other means), is restrained so that the ego-adjustment has a minimal effect on production. These adjustments are regarded as an integrally necessary part of the whole process rather than the injection of a foreign influence interfering with the task to be done.

Concern is often expressed by some who are interested in developing the theoretical approach to self-management over its effect on production levels. Considerable space has been devoted here to illustrate the ways and means used to restrict production. In order to create a proper and factual perspective it should be noted that studies done by the U.S. Department of Labor indicate that between 1935 and 1951, productivity [on trains] doubled and almost tripled during the years of World War Two. This is to be compared to an 80% increase in productivity by labour in general during the same period. It has been noted that productivity has

gone up tremendously even when there was no new equipment available through heavier loading of cars and the use of large trains.

That productivity levels are not necessarily related directly and exclusively to the piecework system of pay is demonstrable in that it can be shown that on those railways where the normal hourly rated pay system is used, no variation in the productivity output can be found. It is reasonable to suppose that this phenomenon is explained basically because of the strong attachment to the "mystique" mentioned at the outset.

Any form of self-management lacking clear deference to the demands of democracy with its egalitarian and "fairness" aspects is at its best, a mere shadow and likely has fraud as an objective.

Some comparisons between the actualities of the work life of the running trades men and the demands mentioned above should be useful.

So absolutely does seniority reign over the selection of jobs that the success of a bid is decided entirely on the location of the man's name on the list.¹¹ No permission is needed, no questions asked, if the bid is successful the transfer is made or the retention secured even when, as is still possible on some railroads (within limits), the bid results in a demotion for the bidder.

The operation of the rigid seniority system however, creates an ambiguous situation and opposing views as to its fairness are found. One view, usually but not exclusively held by the junior men holds that too many rights are granted to the senior men, that a "winner take all" method is not really all that fair. The other view, normally but again not exclusively held by the senior men holds that it is fair enough in that the senior man of today is the junior man of yesteryear. Each man will have his chance to be in his turn, the top man on the roster. The senior man sums up his defence of the system with the saying: "You didn't leave the farm soon enough".

From the view that all seniority provisions apply equally to each man it can be said that the system is basically democratic. On the other hand, in that the rights accorded each vary with the seniority standing and therefore all are not equal at any one moment, it can be said that a fully equal status normally associated with democracy is absent.

In any case there are a number of other factors which because they foster the feeling of fairness and equality between the men, mitigate to the extent possible such limited hostility as exists toward certain aspects of the working of the seniority system.

¹¹All those eligible could bid on jobs of their choice (e.g., long runs, yard work, short runs) and would be given such work if their seniority was high enough. A very high seniority number meant almost any jobs posted were available to you. A low number meant that you would be able to bid only on the most undesirable jobs. Bids were opened with great anticipation since it could determine how much you were away from home and whether the work would be more or less pleasant.

Even the "imperatives" of competition are trimmed and made to foster the overall aim. In road service on single track railways for instance, the rapid progress of one train is often made at the cost of disadvantaging another. It is well understood by all that the application of advantages or the converse is done even-handedly and entirely without reference to personal likes or dislikes. Advantages offered are accepted without gloating, disadvantages accepted with good grace. Favouritism is unknown. This same attitude was illustrated earlier in remarks about yardmen competing for room to work in a congested yard.

In passenger service a minor distinction in uniform is seen to distinguish a rank. In all other services, dress is entirely optional.

Each man must carry a watch that is required to meet a minimum standard of quality.

Each man carries a key which will open any lock any other man may need to open while working in either service.

Each man carries precisely the same instruction pamphlets, allowing of course for the differing demands made of those in engine service.

Even in that realm of work where appointment alone is the means used, a reasonable element of opportunity for each is present.

Egalitarianism is also seen in the relationships between the men and supervisors in middle management. Very much in the main, these posts are filled by former fellow-workers whose first names are well remembered. "Cap in hand" is not demanded nor would it be well received if offered.

Peripheral attachments to the traditional organizations of labour are usually retained by these promoted men and even their seniority position is preserved to a level which in another industry would seem quite remarkable. The preservation of seniority provides an escape hatch for a supervisor beleaguered by irrational demands from upper levels of management who may not be overly knowledgeable of practical requirements. If the supervisor's sense of fair play toward himself or others is offended he has an option which can be taken without loss of face.

Egalitarianism is expressly seen in the relationships in that regardless of any person's place in the echelon of supervision, this without exception, all are subject to the Uniform Code of Operating Rules.

All factors considered the control of salient portions of the work process and as well, unmistakable influence in functions normally clearly falling within the ambit of managerial prerogative, lies in the hands of the running trades men themselves.

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