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**THE PUBLIC
REFUSES TO PAY**

**EDITORIALS
FROM THE BOSTON HERALD
ON THE RAILROAD AND
BUILDING SITUATION**

**BY
F. LAURISTON BULLARD**

PRICE 50 CENTS

**MARSHALL JONES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
212 SUMMER STREET, BOSTON**

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Introductory Statement

THESE editorials represent no "campaign." They are not "inspired" by any individual or organization. They are not propaganda in behalf of any "cause." No one "approached" the Herald and asked that they be "run." Their sole purpose is to tell the public something it ought to know and has a right to know. Quite casually the one series started and equally without premeditation the other series followed, but the response of the public was so prompt and the interest of the public so keen that the Herald soon realized it was getting "near" its readers and that it was rendering a valuable public service.

The circumstances that occasioned the first building editorials were these: The Herald learned that about half a hundred building projects, many of them of the first magnitude, most of them fully planned and some of them actually begun, were to be held up "until conditions improve." This looked like news and the paper undertook to ascertain what these "conditions" were. Inquiry developed these facts— That buildings in Boston are erected upon terms agreed to by the Building Trades Employers' Association, said to control nine-tenths of the building contracts, and the United Building Trades Council, claiming to represent nearly all the workmen having to do with building operations; that the last agreement between these parties carrying a basic wage scale of \$1 an hour had expired on the last day of 1920; that while committees were in conference upon the terms of a new agreement the plasterers went on strike for an advance to \$1.50 an hour; and that before the termination of the

old agreement the employers had offered to sign a new one founded upon the continuance of the old \$1-an-hour basic wage. Obviously if the plasterers got a 50 per cent advance other trades would have to be advanced. And the process of deflation from war levels was well under way. Wages in general were coming down.

At once the Herald investigator found that the Unions had perfected an organization which gave them almost arbitrary power and that as a practical autocracy they were levying unjust charges upon the public. Therefore the editorials. The articles were not intended to deal so much with the question of what the basic wage ought to be, but rather with that great barbed wire entanglement known as the "working rules" of the 27 Unions of the building industry. And these articles have been widely read and commented upon because this seems to be almost the first time a newspaper has cited actual cases that illustrate how those rules operate. While the series was in course of publication the strike came on. Their first offer rejected, the employers proposed a cut to 90 cents an hour as a basic wage, together with the abolition of union foremen, the reduction of overtime from double-time pay to a time-and-a-half rate, and the increase from 40 hours to 44 hours of the week of the five trades that now do no work on Saturdays. At this writing the strike is still unsettled.

As to the railway editorials: The railroads have been "in the news" constantly for many months. The public has known that the managements were seeking concessions from the Labor Board at Chicago. Then the Herald stumbled upon the fact that a New England road is paying today for the guarding of an ordinary country crossing almost three times what it paid before government operation. Through that small portal the Herald investigator began his quest for detailed information upon the conditions under which the railway men work today.

He pored over the pages of the bulky official publications containing rules, supplements, addenda, interpretations, decisions, that govern the way railway labor today must be performed and the rates at which it must be paid. Private ownership had inherited from Federal control a bewildering maze of regulations. The Herald accumulated a mass of illustrative material and spread it before the public in its editorial columns.

These articles are reprinted here precisely as they appeared in the paper except for a small amount of condensation and some omissions to prevent duplication. The cases cited are believed all to be authentic. Only one is left out and that because when it was used in the Herald opinions differed as to its accuracy.

And please notice: In our opinion the great majority of labor union members are as public-spirited and patriotic, as fair-minded and conscientious, as any other class of men. But they themselves are enmeshed in the rules and regulations their leaders have woven together into a fabric that tends to become a straightjacket, limiting their freedom of action, hobbling the ambitious, hampering those who develop unusual skill, leveling all down to the dead level of the least competent. The writer of these articles has nothing but good will for every man who toils. He would like to see labor emancipated from the restrictions that prevent each man from making the most of his natural endowments.

What ought membership in a labor union to guarantee? It ought to be a stamp of quality, a "union label" in another than the usual sense. It ought to be a pledge to the public of ability, efficiency, fidelity. But is it? Does union membership guarantee these things? It does not. The public knows it does not. And for that reason the public no longer tends spontaneously to take the labor side in any time of industrial trouble.

F. LAURISTON BULLARD.

*SOME THINGS YOU PAY FOR WHEN
YOU BUILD*

YOU intend to make an investment in a new building, an apartment house, a residence, a business block. You have your plans and your contractor. Operations are starting. At once your contractor runs into the midst of a most complicated system of barbed wire entanglements. He cannot escape them; they are staked down and held in place by the immutable rules of the trades unions. Unless the contractor keeps within their bounds he will have a strike on hand. They hinder his freedom of action, determine his choice of helpers, greatly increase the cost of his product. Here is the way these results are brought about:

All the foremen on the job must be union men. The plasterers, the carpenters, the plumbers, the brick masons, each trade will have one or more foremen, depending on the size of the building. Each foreman will be assisted probably by several sub-foremen. Your contractor may not choose for a foreman the man he thinks the ablest and fairest for the job, altogether aside from all other considerations. He must choose a man who has a union card. Once on duty, supervising the work of the individual workers in his craft, this foreman is confronted with the necessity of satisfying these union men that he is carefully watchful of their rights and interests under their rules. If they become dissatisfied with him as a foreman they may bring charges against him. He then will be brought before the union for trial, and if the union takes away his union card that action automatically expels him from both the union and the job. Your contractor then must select another union man for foreman.

It follows naturally that these foremen are seldom if ever genuine directors of work, regarding impartially the

just rights of both the workers and their employer, who also is his employer, the men who get the wages and the man who foots the bills. In effect these foremen become go-betweens, mere errand boys, their efficiency enormously decreased by the punitive relation which their own subordinates hold to them by virtue of their membership in the union. Codes of ethics may vary in different trades, but essentially these conditions are the same in all.

Moreover, a close study of the rules the unions impose upon these foremen disclose some very remarkable restrictions. For instance, Article 9 in the Agreement of the Plumbers' Union reads thus:

"It shall be the duty of all foremen to report any man late on the job to his employer at the time it occurs."

The rule reads all right. The man ought to be reported. But—that rule has been interpreted to mean that the foreman cannot report the workman for anything else. The only thing he can report is tardiness.

And one in a position to know declares that in the Painters' and Decorators' Union a foreman on a job is restricted from comment as to whether a man is doing a proper or an improper amount of work.

Again—the contractor, and back of him the owners of the new construction, will be up against an artificial limitation in the supply of skilled labor. It is a serious fact that organized attempts have been made to limit the number of new men coming into several crafts, thus lessening the supply of labor in that field and increasing the price the public must pay for the labor that is available. Here are the facts as to the restrictions imposed in one or two trades:

In the case of the plasterers: No matter how many men may be employed in any one shop no more than three apprentices may learn the trade in that shop. A small shop with three or four men may have one or two or three apprentices; so may a big shop with forty or fifty men,

but it may not have more than three. During 1920 the employers voluntarily increased their wages more than 50 per cent and for the first year more than doubled the apprentice wage, in order to encourage American youths to learn this craft. But the results were very discouraging, for the local union is understood to have diluted the ardor of nearly all applicants.

Here is the rule in Article 14 of the local Plumbers' Union: "It is expressly understood that no employer will be entitled to more than two (2) apprentices." Let us see how that rule works out:

A certain plumber's shop in this city has ordinarily from twenty-eight to thirty men at work. The shop has two apprentices and can have no more. Each of these apprentices may be sent out to assist upon a single job. When a third order is to be filled what shall the employer do? He is not permitted to use helpers. He does the only thing he can do—he sends two plumbers. Often he has men scattered about on eight or ten different jobs. In all but two cases no apprentices will be serving as unskilled assistants on these jobs.

The plumber screws a long pipe into place; a second plumber acting as helper, holds level the far end of the pipe—a task any boy might do. Both plumbers get the regulation \$1 an hour. The plumber runs a long piece of pipe down through the flashing on a roof; a second plumber goes to the floor below and supports the pipe. The plumber wants an extra tool; the second plumber goes to the main floor and gets it. The plumber wants a small fitting carried through the building, and plumber No. 2, serving as general assistant, carries it. And both men receive the full rate per hour. In the plumbing trade the assistance of an ordinary helper is constantly required. But such helpers cannot be obtained, once the two apprentices allowed a shop have been assigned to jobs.

The matter of apprentices in the Brickmasons' Union

has been brought up at the Chamber of Commerce hearings. The bricklayers charged that the contractors will not employ apprentices. The contractors vigorously deny this, and declare that in the Brickmasons' Union no one can be entered as an apprentice unless he be a son of a member of that union. This is said to be true also of some other unions.

Once more: The builder often has to contend with the union rules as to travel and the time for reporting for duty. The plasterers have a provision in their agreement which requires them when traveling to and from work out of town to take the train nearest eight in the morning and nearest five in the evening. In one actual case that rule worked this way: Distance to travel about twenty miles. Morning trains available: an express at 7:10 and a local at 7:35. The local was chosen "under the rules," arriving at about 8:17, and making it possible to start work about nine. Quitting time for return was fixed at 4:30. Evening trains available: a local at 4:40, an express at 3:55. A way was found for the express to be taken "under the rules." It arrived one minute nearer five than the other train. The builder, of course, was paying the traveling expenses of these workers. If it had required more than an hour to reach the job then the worker would have been paid for his travel time at the regular scale rates per hour.

So many are the rules in these trade union agreements, so perplexing is their application, that many a builder has despaired of understanding them. Many public-spirited men declare that, altogether aside from the general principle of collective bargaining and the stabilizing influence that results from definite pledges as to rates of wages and hours of work, such rules as these penalize the public, boost the cost of building, and injure the workers themselves. Anyhow, it is well for the public that has to pay the bills to see where some of its money goes. No one

knows absolutely how much could be saved in the cost of building if contractors were allowed to manage for themselves. But those best qualified to form opinions are in general agreement that without these rules, these wire entanglements—and without any reference to wages and hours—the cost of erecting a building could be decreased one-fourth. That is enough to make all the difference between a decision to build and a decision not to build. One dollar in every four is a considerable saving.

SOME LESSONS IN THE BOOSTING ART

ANYBODY who can crank a Ford car can operate a gasoline diaphragm pump. Any man looking for a snap is recommended to try for a pump job. If he lands one he will have to start the pump in the morning and stop it at night, and occasionally put a little oil on the places where the wear comes. Not many years ago the boy who carried water to the workmen on a building job would run half a dozen such pumps. Nowadays an engineer runs a single pump and gets \$10 a day for starting it, stopping it, and pouring on the oil. Each day he has several hours to read the papers, smoke and chat—and consume his noon-day meal. But the meal time is also pay time.

In one actual case after the operator had drawn his first week's pay the business agent of the Hoisting and Portable Engineers' Union wanted to know about "that \$2 shortage. That man only got \$8. He's \$2 shy on the noon hour." The employer replied: "Why, the man does nothing the noon hour." The agent came back with, "Well, doesn't the pump keep on and isn't he responsible?" "We—ll," said the employer, "that's only an hour, so he's only entitled to \$1." "No, sir," came the reply; "that's overtime and must be paid for as double time."

It's all under the rules and perfectly simple. The man who runs the pump must get the rate if he is classified as

an engineer. The rules so classify him. Rule 36 of this union reads: "We claim hoisting and portable engines and boilers on buildings and construction work where operated by steam, electricity, gasoline or compressed air, including pumps, siphons, pulsometers, concrete mixers, stone crushers, air compressors and elevators, where used for hoisting material, street rollers, steam shovels, cableways, orange-peel, clam-shell buckets, pile drivers, Dinkey Locomotives or any other machine used, irrespective of its motive power." The rule obviously intends to leave nothing out. "Any other machine" is a blanket phrase.

A great new building has been in process of erection in the Back Bay. It became necessary to get rid of the surface water that flowed into the excavation. To do this draining the builders installed an automatic electrically driven pump. A floating control started and stopped the pump as conditions made necessary. The entire apparatus was placed in a wooden shack under lock and key. Aside from occasionally oiling the motor the machine required no attention whatever. The union, nevertheless, under the rules declared that the pump must have the constant attention of an engineer.

For the time thus "worked" the builder of that structure had to pay by that interpretation \$168 a week.

Some time ago a hoisting engine needed repairs. The employer asked the regular engineer to do the work on a Saturday afternoon and the following Sunday. The engineer refused. The employer obtained other men for the job. And the union compelled the employer to pay the engineer double time for the period covered by the outside machinists. For—the rules again—the work "belongs" to the union employee. He may decline to do it, but if any one else does it the employee collects, just the same. By the rules of nearly all the unions, in such cases of absence payment must be made to the regular union man to whom the work "belongs."

On a Saturday lately, some union iron workers placed some reënforcing steel strips in position for some concrete work on a big structure. The concreters did their job next day and found they had to change the position of some of these steel bars—an easy task. Laborers made the shifts. The iron workers, who had not been on the job at all, collected double time for that Sunday.

Brickmasons today are paid about twice what they formerly received. But the owner pays ten times as much for his walls. Thus:

Not many years ago a good brickmason laid 2,000 bricks a day. The union now customarily limits him to 500. The reduced output per man made it necessary to use more men to get the same amount of work done. The artificial limitation in the number of brickmasons, produced by methods recently explained in the Herald, puts a premium on the available supply. The established union wage is \$1 an hour. But last year, when it was almost impossible to get men, employers bid against each other for emergency forces, and the rate per hour went up to \$1.25 even to \$1.35. Therefore the owner who paid \$1.35 an hour to get his walls up would pay each man \$10.80 for an 8-hour day. As the mason laid only 500 bricks it would take two days' time, or \$21.60, to get 1,000 bricks into the wall, to say nothing of the cost of the helpers and the materials. The owner used to pay \$2 a thousand to get his walls and now pays more than \$20. At the Chamber of Commerce hearings, a witness showed that the mason who picks up a brick and places it in a wall is paid as much as the brick manufacturer receives for producing the brick—for excavating the clay, moulding and burning it, handling and storing the brick, and all the risks and charges of doing business.

The union painter these days must use a brush of union dimensions. The narrower a brush the longer it takes to cover a surface, or the more men must be put on a hurry

job. So the union decrees that no brush more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide shall be handled by any member of the union—which is only an indirect way of limiting output. Also the union rules say that no paint-spraying machine shall be used on a union job. Sprayers save time, so the union prefers to have painters do the work with brushes of prescribed dimensions. Not long ago in this city an employer began on a rush order to whiten some big walls with a sprayer. The union's watchman came in a hurry with his ultimatum: "Stop the machine or I order off the men." Today these sprayers—very useful for saving time and money on any surface needing only a plain and protective covering—may not be used on any union job.

The lathers, just when the present strike started, had in view a limitation of the amount of work to be done in a day. Sixteen bundles is not a maximum, but it has been the average under union conditions. When the strike came, the lathers had pending a demand for twelve bundles a day, a reduction of one-fourth in output.

Other suggestive illustrations of union conditions are easy to cite. A deck hand on a lighter or pile driver in use in wharf building may do nothing whatever but watch an anchor rope, but he must be a member of the Wharf Carpenters' Union and be paid, not as a deck hand, but as a wharf carpenter. Concrete, of course, is poured into wooden forms and the forms are later stripped away. Any laborer could take the planking down, but under the rules a union carpenter must do it, and he gets the pay not of a laborer but of a carpenter. Once the materials used in the work of a plumber have reached the first floor of a building only a plumber may handle them. Plain labor may unload them from car or truck and deliver them on the first floor, but then only a highly-paid craftsman may touch them.

Further: On a big Boston job, a man on a concrete mixer and another on a derrick sat idle and a man on a

pump had little to do. The employer needed a man two hours for a second mixer. He tried to switch one of the idle men. He could not do so without fracturing a rule. If a man had shifted he could not have gone back to his first job. Violation of the rule would have cost him \$5. So the employer had to order a fourth man from the union. He came, worked two hours, and got a half-day's pay. If an employer fires an engineer he cannot employ another without an O. K. from the union's business agent, who in turn must have time to see if he shall order the first man back on the job as "wrongfully discharged."

According to the rules, no one may lift a pump out of a hole and drop it into another hole unless he be an iron worker. This is classified as "rigging" work, and with the classification comes the difference in pay. The various rules applying in such matters are so made that when on a Boston job the pumps known as pulsometers were used to remove water from the excavations, and these pumps had often to be relocated, actually every time a pump was moved it required the services of two steamfitters, two plumbers, three iron workers and one engineer, while that engineer and a handy laborer could have done it as well and much faster.

Matters of this kind come under the head of "jurisdictional requirements," and these jurisdictional questions are an expensive feature of the present building system. More than 20 unions have to do with buildings. Disputes often arise between them as to which under the rules has the right to do a certain piece of work. So both the carpenter and the iron worker claim the right to set steel sash and door frames. Both the iron worker and the steamfitter claim the installation of pipe railings. Both the metal lather and the iron worker claim the placing of reinforcing rods. And the employer must mind his step or find himself in trouble.

And, by the way, when trouble does come with any

craft, adjustment tends to be a matter for the decision of one party and not of both parties. For instance, the rule in one craft reads:

“In case of misunderstanding between engineer and employer in regard to wages or conditions, engineer shall refer matter to business agent, whose decision shall be binding till next meeting of union.”

That is, the arbitrator must be a union man, and the only authority over him is the union itself. The employer's only function is to accept decisions. The owner's only obligation is to pay the bills. And, of course, at the last the public pays the bills,—the man who buys the house, the family that rents the apartment, the firm that leases the office, the business that uses the building, the consumer who buys the goods sold in that building. The cases here cited are not isolated, they are representative. Everybody believes real work should have real pay. But rules like these are bound to penalize the public and in the end to damage the whole labor cause.

WHY LABOR “PLAYS” FOR OVERTIME

AS an indoor sport running an electric converter beats watching the stock market to a standstill. Anybody who has a rudimentary knowledge of electrical apparatus can start a converter and once he throws the switch all he has to do is to sit by hour after hour while the machine operates itself. The job requires no exertion, risk, or investment. But it does pay dividends.

The two men on that job on a recent piece of building construction in this city collected between them \$280 a week—\$112 for the day man and \$168 for the night man. Other workers wanted a chance at that machine. They accused their bosses of favoritism when they were not put on. Envious eyes watched the man who “drew down” \$16 a day for the day shift and the other who

“pulled” \$24 for the night shift on that converter. All the two had to do was to switch on the juice, smoke and gossip through their shifts and collect their pay. The machine gave a continuous performance and the electricians occasionally lubricated it with a little oil.

The man who had to pay the bills took the matter up with the Electricians' Union. The officials assured him all was regular and correct “under the rules.” The men merely were getting their dues. It figured out this way:

The rate of pay in the building trades is \$1 an hour and double pay for overtime. A day is eight hours. The Electrician's Union makes overtime of all night work. The man on the 12-hour day shift therefore collected \$8 for eight regular hours and \$8 for four overtime hours, making \$16 a day, or \$112 for the seven-day week. The man on the night turn collected the double rate of \$2 an hour for the entire twelve hours of his shift, making \$24 a day, or \$168 a week. To be sure three men might have been put on the apparatus in shifts of eight hours each, but the owner would have saved no money thereby. So he saved one man for other work and two men very cheerfully gave twelve hours a day to the job.

In nearly all the twenty-seven building trades unions the double time for overtime rule produces results almost as ridiculous. The workers like the overtime income and “play” for it. In the cement craft, for instance:

The employers tried some time ago to use what are called “accelerators” to “hurry the setting” of a mortar surface so that it might not be necessary to go over regular hours to complete the work of the day. The local Cement Finishers' Union decided, however, that they wanted the overtime and refused to use the accelerators, and they are not used today in this city. In placing a cement finish the men spread and level off the mortar surfacing in the early part of the day. They then must wait until the mortar “sets,” gets solid and stiff enough for the final

troweling later in the day. Usually the mortar last spread cannot be troweled until the final hours of the afternoon and often a large amount of overtime is necessary to complete the work that must be done ere the job can be left. Obviously efficiency and economy demanded that a way be found to "hurry the set." But when ingredients were added that did shorten the waiting time and keep the final troweling within the regular hours the unions decided the men must have the overtime and outlawed the use of the accelerator.

The manufacturer of one of these accelerators testified at the Chamber of Commerce hearings that the union's refusal to permit its use had driven him out of business. He had a lot of contractors among his clients. They had to notify him that they could not use his product, and he had to turn his attention to other lines of business.

The unions want the overtime rate because they know how much overtime work there is bound to be in the building business. In many trades overtime cannot be avoided without damaging consequences. A machine breaks while concrete walls are being placed; the delay means overtime unless the contractor struggles along to avoid the penalty charge. Work frequently must be carried on to a certain point before it can be left for the night. Sometimes an amount of preparatory work is necessary after hours in order to get a good start next morning. To prevent interruption of the day's operations machinery often has to be repaired out-of-hours. These and other factors add up into heavy sums for overtime, and the employers would like to reduce the penalty of \$2 for what normally costs \$1 because it increases enormously the total cost of construction, a cost that the owners, of course, pass on to the public.

The workmen are keenly alive to the "advantages" of overtime. In 1918 the wage per hour in the building trades was 75 cents, not, as later, \$1, but the doubling for

overtime existed then as now. And carpenters who were getting \$6 a day told their employers they could not afford to stay on the job, because they could go across town to a government job where overtime was plentiful and work two hours more, making their income \$9 a day. Today such a swap would mean \$12 instead of \$8. A machine runs through meal time, and the workers collect overtime pay for an extra hour. Outsiders do on Saturday what the union men will not do and the unionists claim wages at overtime rates on all the outsiders have done. The overtime charge enters into every phase of the building business.

Today five of the twenty-seven unions are organized on a five-day week basis—the carpenters, plasterers, lathers, painters and tile workers—besides one helpers' union of semi-skilled workers. The tendency is toward the organization of the entire industry on this 40-hour week basis. This means inevitably still more overtime work at punitive rates. As things now are, the fact that twenty-two trades work on Saturday forenoon means that to prevent interruption in necessary building processes some of the five-day tradesmen will have to be used. They work side by side with six-day tradesmen and get twice their pay for that extra half-day.

This overtime labor became general during the war. Efforts to reduce to the eight-hour day caused dissatisfaction to labor in general and frequent strikes on government work. The men protested against "cutting down their pay." They were ready enough to work more than eight hours if the extra time brought them a bonus. Labor leaders always argue that the overtime charge is intended solely to prevent employers from exacting an excessive amount of work per day from their employers, with destructive effects upon their mental and physical welfare.

But it seems undeniable that many times rules are

framed and conditions arranged for the express purpose of getting access to overtime pay. Why else do workmen "scrap for a chance" at the overtime? Why else should the electricians have this rule: "When a contractor finds it necessary to work men overtime, men working on the job must have the preference"? On a big Boston job with work going on day and night two months ago the labor delegates used to complain that the superintendent played favorites and gave certain men an unfair share of the after-hours work.

If the unions' aim is merely discouragement of excessive toil, surely that result could be secured as readily by a smaller penalty. The railways pay time-and-a-half for overtime and they are as keen to keep down the extra charge as are the builders with the double time exaction. The one best way to reduce the amount of overtime is to make its rewards less attractive. Everybody wants the workers to enjoy good wages and fair hours, to receive a full day's pay for a real day's work. But, as some time we shall try to show more at length, the excess charges that we emphasize today and the workings of the rules to which we have referred in earlier articles, have so boosted the cost of building in this city that nobody can afford to build, and the workers instead of having more work as the result of their rules have no work at all.

A MACHINE TAMMANY MIGHT ENVY

SETTING steel sash in iron frames and setting sash in masonry—do these jobs belong to the iron workers or the carpenters?

Fitting steel sash into concrete openings and fitting steel sash into brick openings—are both these jobs properly done by masons or may the cement finishers do one of them?

Placing "concealed" iron door "bucks" in the partitions

in which wooden doors are to be set—does the Carpenters' Union or the Iron Workers' Union control that job?

Knocking the rough nubbins, the "fins," off the ceiling of a new building with a chisel—which trade union is entitled to that job? Must the mason do it or may the plain laborer do it?

Such questions as these are subjects of "jurisdiction" to be determined by the rules of the American Federation of Labor. Over the interpretation of these rules many a lively controversy is waged. Lucky is the owner, the architect, the contractor, who erects a big building these days without at least one strike over precisely such matters.

On one Boston building the carpenters struck and remained off the job for a month because the iron workers were assigned the setting of the door "bucks." The Federation rules give the setting of steel sashes in iron frames to the iron workers and in masonry to the carpenters. But in the putting up of a fine new building in this city both unions claimed both jobs and for some time the owner and the builder stood by and watched the row. In another building lately under construction here the masons and cement finishers had a collision over the setting of steel sash in concrete openings. The Federation rules so assign it. But the masons refused to accept the rule, claiming all the steel sash whatever the openings. Again there ensued strife, delay, lessening of efficiency, increase of costs, waste of time. When, in the case of another large construction, the laborers and the cement finishers collided over the clearing of the ceilings the laborers finally won out but much damage had been done before a settlement was at last patched up between the rival unions.

These are typical examples of the jurisdictional complications that the rules of the unions invariably produce when a building enterprise is going forward. In the case of one big Boston job no fewer than seven strikes ensued

upon just such differences as these, and twice seven prolonged arguments that threatened to produce serious trouble but did not actually reach the point of a stoppage of work.

One more illustration: When the war came the government undertook in a hurry to provide a village of homes for the employes of the Navy Department's Proving Ground and Smokeless Powder Works 25 miles from Washington. The population at Indian Head boomed almost over night from 500 to 5,000. Employees lived in wobbling shacks or drove 20 miles twice a day. After much searching the Housing Corporation got 100 carpenters and 20 plasterers to produce the needed houses, dormitories, schoolhouse and postoffice. The testing of the big naval guns jarred the ground so that the usual plastering methods could not be used. Plaster on lath would shake off. A plaster board composition had to be substituted. It went up in sheets with a slight joint between to be covered with narrow strips of wood producing a neat panelling effect.

But—was that a plastering job or a carpentering job? Every carpenter stopped work, in spite of the dire need for those buildings, the minute the plasterers began to line the rooms. The corporation merely said: "That work must be done. Hurry and settle who shall do it." After a fortnight the unions decided that if wooden strips covered the cracks carpenters must do the work, but if plaster filled the cracks plasterers must do it. Meanwhile the carpenters had scattered far and wide, a new force had to be gathered, and that village of homes and dormitories for war workers came into actual use a month behind time.

Another matter to which the Herald as yet has not given much attention has to do with the rather extensive double organization that exists upon every big building construction in Boston and the other cities of the country.

Thus:

Every trade union has its business agent who serves as a general overseer of the work done by the men of his craft. He is paid by the union. Then to watch the union men at work upon each job the agent selects a steward. These stewards use tools, work with the rest of the men of the craft, and in addition enforce the union rules, report violations, and see to it that the fast workers do not outstrip the slow ones. They draw their wages like the other workmen. The business agent circulates over the city from job to job. The job stewards keep the agent informed as to conditions on the separate jobs. This is the organization of practically all the 27 unions that have to do with Boston building operations.

Surely then the owners, the people who are investing money in a building, will have their interests protected under the organization that the contractor makes. But are the builders thus protected?

The contractor's superintendent has general supervision of the job. Every union whose men work on that job must have its foreman. The superintendent names these foremen. But every foreman must be a member of the union.

That is to say, every job steward, chosen outright as a union representative, and every foreman, chosen nominally to represent the interests of the employer and owner, must be a union man. The owner's cause both ways is in the hands of men whose freedom is limited by union rules.

These foremen handle no tools, they merely give orders. They are paid a higher rate than the men who handle the tools. And when the job is a big one sub-foremen are appointed, sometimes to the number of three or four. For instance, when concreting is to be done the carpenters may divide into three forces, one to make the forms, one to erect them, one to strip them away after the concrete

has been poured and the walls are solid. Each force has its under-foreman, using no tools, and getting the larger wage because he gives orders. All these, of course, are union men.

This is one of the fundamental differences between the master builders and the unions today in Boston. The builders object to the foremen on the job being union men. As things are, however fair a foreman may strive to be, his primary obligation is bound to be to the union with which he is affiliated. Many things he might like to do he does not do because the union is his master.

Seemingly then the owner's only function is to accept the decisions of the functionaries of the unions and send the weekly pay roll over to the building at the right time on pay day.

This kind of organization in a city devoid of competition gives the unions every opportunity to slow down their workmen. Every one who has any knowledge of building knows that a job steward's prime duty is to see to it that his men do not "do too much" work. "Cut it out," "Slow up," "Go easy," such directions are on his lips every hour. He is there for keeps. If the owner enters objection he usually finds that every thing is right and regular under the rules.

Competition in the building industry does not exist in Boston today. A few years ago both open and closed shops bid for the business. But the leaders of the labor unions—some of them men whose shrewdness and organizing ability no one who knows conditions will deny—so manipulated the situation that open shop contractors gradually were eliminated. Public sentiment, backing the union cause, helped the process.

So now organized labor, through the closed shop, holds a practical monopoly over the building industry in this city. A contractor who maintains an open shop may erect a building outside of Boston, but he cannot operate

in the city because the labor supply has been absorbed by the unions. If he undertakes a job in the city he must import his labor. Nor can a non-union laborer find employment in Boston save to a very limited extent.

With monopoly and the possession of arbitrary power have come a multitude of abuses, all intended to increase the number of men that are employed on any given job, to reduce their output, to make it easier to run overtime and draw double pay, to lessen the supply of labor, to prevent the use of devices that would save labor and speed up work.

With autocracy have come scraps within the unions over the interpretation of their own rules, the employment of excessive numbers of non-tool-using watchmen, one at least of whose duties is to prevent the men doing too much work, and such a general decrease of efficiency as to penalize all who build and imperil the welfare of the entire community. The public pays the bills ultimately, and when "trouble" comes merely stands on the sidelines and waits for labor to solve the mazes its own rules create.

"NOTORIOUSLY INEFFICIENT"

TO untie a rope is a very simple thing, but union labor finds a way to make it a complicated operation. The unions decree how and by whom it shall be done. Untying a rope becomes a subject for "jurisdictional adjustment" under the union rules, a time-losing and cost-consuming job, not a plain chore for ordinary labor, but a thing to be done only by skilled labor. It's this way:

You are hurrying along with a big building job. The lumber forms are up ready for the pouring of your concrete. The elevator carries the material to the hopper at the top of the tower and from the hopper it is poured down a chute and spilled into place. The chute is held in position by a hemp rope. From time to time the position of the chute must be changed a bit; it must be swung

along to give the concrete ready access to the empty spaces it is to fill. Now plain labor easily could shift that chute, and plenty of plain labor is right on the spot. But plain labor has no right, "under the rules," to touch that rope. No, that is a technical job requiring the attention of a skilled workman whose wages are much higher than those of a mere laborer. You have to send for "Bill" or yell for "Sam," and the structural steel worker who rigged the chute must untie the rope that moors it; plain labor then swings the chute to its new position; skilled labor once more ties the rope—and the making of the concrete walls may proceed, now that all the requirements of the rules have been complied with.

Such regulations abound in the organization of the building trades unions. Any body of men whose dominating aim is to promote efficiency, to render the utmost of service in the minimum of time, would not tolerate such rules. But the rule that decrees who shall rig that rope is a symbol of a thousand others, all having to do with the minute classification of all the multitude of processes that enter into the construction of all modern buildings. Every craft jealously watches every other craft and instantly resents any invasion of its "rights" by its fellow-workmen of a different union. Woe be to the builder who permits a pipe to be fitted or a load to be carried or a wire to be run or a brick to be handled by a member of the wrong union. For instance:

Four unions squabble over the building of some scaffolds. Does that job belong to the International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union, or to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, or to the Operative Plasterers and Cement Finishers International Association, or to the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers International Union?

Whose job is it to paint a radiator? Does it belong to the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paper

Hangers or to the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters? The building trades department of the American Federation of Labor debated that issue at its Rochester convention a few years ago and awarded the right to paint a radiator to the painter.

Five unions claimed their "rights" in doing acetylene and electric welding. May it be done by the Electrical Workers, the Sheet Metal Workers, the Iron Workers, the Plumbers and Steam Fitters, or the Machinists? The Philadelphia convention of the building trades department of the A. F. of L. had to settle the quarrel.

Three unions lately had a difference over the right to set metal forms for concrete columns. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers International Alliance and the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers got the formal and official decision on the question on December 4, last.

It's a long list. The sheet metal workers—which is short for the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers International Alliance—and the lathers want to know about metal floor domes. The painters and asbestos workers want to know about tacking muslin and canvas used for decorative purposes. The waterproofer, the painters and the roofers must have a decision about applying damp-resisting preparations. The operative plasterers, the cement finishers and the common laborers have a difference over the repairing of defects in concrete work caused by leakage or the sagging of forms.

These are suggestive illustrations of the way rigid unionization works. The men are classified under twenty-seven different titles. The labor of erecting a big building falls under a score or more of classifications. Each classification is an air-tight compartment. Only members of one union have any right therein. One man may use the tools, another must carry them about the building; one

man may dump the rods in a pile, another must sort and lay them beside the places they are to go; one man may swing the chute, another must unhitch the rope that holds the chute. Absolute and exclusive authority in Greater Boston for this system has been the aim of the labor unions. The labor leaders have gone to great lengths, even at times when the peril of the nation demanded the unselfish service of every citizen, to secure for the unions that position of impregnable autocracy. Evidence of the fact is plentiful. Here is one token:

Somewhere in Greater Boston a big war plant is in process of construction. It is an open shop job. Anybody who has either skill or labor to market may work here, whether he has a union card or not. The one aim is to do the job well and quickly. The country is at war. The output of the plant is a vital necessity. Everybody at it and at it to the limit is the motto. And union labor leaders undertake to compel the unionization of that job, not in the interest of speed or efficiency or economy, but for the sole purpose of furthering the union cause as they conceive that cause.

In all such construction certain workers occupy pivotal or key positions. If they quit, other workers, often more numerous, must also quit. A job that has been galloping along slows down to a walk; perhaps stops altogether. That method of attack the leaders chose. On that job the steam shovel operators and cranemen were getting the union wage and the union overtime. At the lowest they made \$48 a week. At the time the thrust came some were getting about \$100 a week. Without warning these men were called off the plant. The union executive in New York promised to supply other men and then withdrew the promise. Another union executive pledged a supply and then rescinded his pledge. The builders had to go to the Lehigh Valley for men who had been digging there for a cement company; the builders also secured

some superannuated members of the Steam Shovelers' Union and set them to work once more. These men were cared for and fed on the plant.

Now these steam shovel men at the time of the strike were in a key position. Fifty trucks were serving those shovels, also three trains of cars and six locomotives. When it seemed likely that the company might defeat the labor leaders, the union firemen quit and the steam road-roller men. Towards the end of the crisis many union carpenters were warned off the plant. Some stayed for a time and were fined \$100 each. Others stuck to the end—rating the nation above the union—and found themselves assessed \$250 each and the fulfilment of the penalty a preliminary to employment on other jobs. Some of those men left that plant with tears in their eyes.

No question of wages, or time, or conditions was involved. Only one aim inspired those strikes. The labor leaders either intended to compel the unionization of the job or they intended so to hamper and retard the work that always thereafter they might cite it as an illustration of the botch that an open shop policy causes when it undertakes a big contract—and these two things tend towards the same aim, the complete unionization of Greater Boston.

Well, as a matter of fact, is the closed shop more efficient than the open shop? Comparisons that mean anything are hard to get. But here is one real calculation of costs, accurately made by an expert. He had at his command the facts as to building costs from two big concerns, Company A, a unionized concern, and Company B, an open-shop concern. He plotted a curve, chart fashion, to show how the two compared, starting with the year 1914 as his base at 100. Thus:

Year	Co. A	Co. B	Year	Co. A	Co. B
1914.....	100	100	1917.....	196	138
1915.....	110	102	1918.....	216	158
1916.....	144	118	1919.....	254	188

The comparison is all in favor of the open shop. In the five years union costs went up 154 per cent; labor cost two and one-half times what it cost in 1914. By comparison the open-shop increase was large but relatively small. Be it understood that these two concerns do precisely the same kind of work and their materials cost the same. Both pay the union scale.

The other day the director of research of the National Association of Credit Men published the results of an extensive study of the building situation. Said he in the report: "Building trades labor in 1920 was notoriously inefficient."

"Notoriously inefficient"—that is one of the foundation reasons why the general public—for years enthusiastic in its support of labor—today is severely critical of labor. The people today are ready to applaud every unselfish thing that labor does, to pay well for every genuine day's work that labor performs. Occasionally, even in the midst of such conditions as exist in Boston today, the rank and file of a labor union's membership defy their leaders in the interest of the public. Here is such a case:

On a big government emergency job in war time near Boston the electric linemen were ordered away. Three days after a big snow storm came. The lines all fell, the plant was without light and power. And those linemen came back, keeping out of sight of the union process servers; wet to the skin they fought that storm; they put the lines back in shape—and then formally quit.

Deeds of that sort will help labor to regain lost ground. The trouble, as a rule, is not with the mass of the men; it is with their leaders, their business agents. The leaders have put labor "in bad" with the public; labor has a reputation for "notorious inefficiency" to live down; only by living it down will labor regain public approval.

BUT—IT'S ALL "UNDER THE RULES"

ALWAYS have a Ford car chauffeur at hand when you undertake the erection of any sizeable building. As a handy man who can keep a "tin Lizzie" running he will probably save you a lot of time and money by tinkering your building machinery after hours so that when "skilled" union men come on the job in the morning they will not be embarrassed by their inability to keep their tools in order. For instance:

In this city on a large construction job nine engineers and one master mechanic were employed. They had to operate nine engines, some electric, some gasoline and others steam. The gas engines got out of order pretty often. Some times one would stop at mid-forenoon, and another at mid-afternoon, but when one once quit it seldom resumed the same day. This because under the rules a union man only could fix the engine and very seldom did any union man have the knowledge or skill to do the fixing. Classed as "skilled" men, paid as skilled men, and called engineers, the men on that job—and in other cases, too, for this is not an isolated instance—once an engine struck on their hands could do nothing but dissemble or bluff the balance of the day. They might declare the machine worn out and say it must go to the shop, but the obvious fact was that they were ignorant of the principles on which their engines operated and did not know how to remedy simple troubles. But by the rules the union man must stay with his engine. Importing help would do no good.

Well, on any job of magnitude the builder will have a small car, often a Ford, in service day after day as the "job car," for running errands and saving time. The chauffeur will receive about \$25 a week. In this case the chauffeur liked to tinker. He knew when it was

necessary to take a machine apart and when a rap with a wrench would solve all problems. So he would stroll over any evening a gas engine was "off," look it over, and in 15 minutes have it running again. He did it partly because of his liking for machinery and partly in the interest of the job. Next day the union engineers would find all in order, and, rather than raise any objections that might tend to the exposure of their own incompetency, would go to work without remark.

Further to illustrate the union tendency to claim all the work in sight, whether competent for it or not—

A Boston hospital must transfer its X-ray outfit from one building to another. A specialist for twenty years devoted to such work had originally installed the apparatus and was engaged to dismantle it and set it up in the new plant. He started to work on a Saturday noon and planned to have the job finished the following Monday morning. But he counted without the union. It happened that a lot of union electricians were wiring the new building. At once they demanded that the non-union expert stop work; they refused to go on until he had left the building. The understanding was they would be all done by Tuesday noon when the specialist might come back. But their work strung out. They did not finish for ten days. Then the specialist could not be had for the X-ray installation and the union men took on the task.

Not one of them knew anything about that kind of work. Every little while they had to seek help from the operator, a woman nurse. She had to explain the assembling of the machine. Repeatedly work done wrong had to be undone and then done right. At last, they sought the aid of the X-ray expert himself. They had refused to work in the same building with this non-union man and now they asked him to save the job the union had botched. He refused. Whereupon they quit and he finished the installation. Nearly three weeks of extra time had

been lost, much useless labor had been paid for, and patients needing X-ray attention had been sent to other institutions.

Also in that hospital many buzzers are needed in the various rooms. Union men seemed slow in installing them. The concern employed a non-union man to place them. He reported "all done" in a few hours. Next morning the union men found the buzzers ready, and—call it childish or call it criminal—they cut some wires, they stuck chewing gum around the hammer of one buzzer, they declared the material poor and the work bad, and demanded that the buzzers be taken out and the whole thing done over again—at union speed. Yet for several hours every buzzer had been working entirely to the satisfaction of the persons for whose use they were placed in the building.

That rule about one man to one machine produces some interesting situations. Here are some things that happened not far from Boston.

For operating a steam derrick engine the job properly required a hoisting engineer. For operating an electrically driven concrete mixer no skilled engineer really was required, but under the rules one had nevertheless to be employed. Two other machines had to be installed on the job—an electrically operated cable drum to haul "charging cars," and a small, electrically driven air compressor to furnish air for the rivetting hammers. Now it happened that at the time the union could not supply two engineers for the drum and the compressor. So the union arranged to have the two men already on the job do the "additional work." The compressor ran almost continuously and the union decreed that the wages a man in charge of it would have received should be divided between those two engineers. The cable drum ran occasionally, and the union arranged that any day it was operated one of the two engineers should be credited with two hours additional pay.

It is a fact that neither of the two engineers rendered any service in connection with either the compressor or the drum yet that each man received an extra half-day's pay on account of one machine and that one man received an additional quarter-day's pay every day the other machine worked. That is, both men always got twelve hours' pay for eight hours' work and one man often got fourteen hours' pay for eight hours' work.

And here is another chapter in that story. One evening the job required the running of the concrete mixer. Its engineer wanted the night off to attend a meeting of his union. He arranged with the foreman of the concrete gang to look after the machine in his absence. The mixer ran until 9 o'clock. Next day the engineer demanded—and ultimately received—pay at the over-hours' rate for the time the machine ran in his own voluntary absence.

It's all under the rules. The rules are intended to make such charges possible. Machinery may need no attention, machines may run themselves, but by the rules owners must pay just the same.

A hoisting engineer gets a full day's pay for operating his engine. If a steam pump or pulsometer or concrete mixer is attached to that engine he must have an additional \$2, or the amount of two hours' pay under the scale. Actually he may do nothing but turn a valve or throw a switch twice or four times a day. Moreover the machine may not even run. Just so long as the connection continues between the engine and the attached apparatus the \$2 extra per day must be paid.

If the engineer spends a half-hour in the morning firing his engine he gets an extra hour's pay. Sometimes the night watchman does the firing. But to do it he must be a "licensed" man. The rule reads: "On jobs where there is no licensed watchman, engineer shall get up steam and shall receive one hour's pay for the same."

By the rules you may shift a derrick crew from one crane to another. But an engineer sticks by the engine with which he starts. On a big job you have a motor and derrick at each end of your building. The trucks will deliver materials to the derrick nearest where they will be required. On any day when only one motor is running if a truck arrives with a load that goes to the opposite end of the structure you cannot shift your engineer. He may have nothing whatever to do, but you must send for another union man to operate the idle engine or you must have your goods hoisted to a place distant from their point of application and later handle them all over again.

These rules are supposed to operate to the advantage of the men who work under them. They do not. Not only do they penalize owners and the entire public unjustly but they damage the whole labor cause by demanding more and more pay not for more and better work, but for less and poorer work. The only way labor can permanently help itself is by doing, each and every man, the best work and the most work of which he is capable, expecting to receive, as he would abundantly deserve, handsome pay therefor.

WHAT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUND

THE report just rendered by "the special committee of the Chamber of Commerce on the building situation in Boston" confirms in practically every respect the statements that have appeared in the Herald's double-column editorials on the same subject.

"It is generally admitted and recognized that the efficiency of labor decreased very generally during the war and showed very few signs of increasing up to the beginning of 1921."

"The frank and fair labor leaders agree with the builders that inefficiency in labor existed during the war and for some time thereafter."

“Decreased labor productivity necessitated the use of a larger number of men for a given amount of work, intensified the labor shortage, and thereby increased building costs materially.”

“The production of labor at the end of 1920 was about three-fourths of what it was in pre-war times.”

“The laborers and mechanics in the building industry owe it as much to themselves as to the public to produce efficiently and to the best of their ability.”

“The cost of building can be very radically reduced by increased efficiency and productivity of the laborer and mechanic.”

Precisely—the Herald has been saying just these things.

These editorials have emphasized the artificial limitation of the labor supply by the union rules that restrict the number of apprentices. The report quotes from these restrictive rules: “The cement finishers provide that ‘not more than one apprentice shall be allowed on a job to every five finishers or fraction thereof employed, except by special permission of the union.’” “The Carpenters’ Union provides that ‘No person over the age of 22 years shall be admitted to membership as an apprentice. No person shall be admitted as an apprentice until he has followed the carpenter’s trade for at least six months. The regular term of apprenticeship shall be four years. The number of apprentices shall not exceed one to each six journey-men employed in each job or shop.’” “The plasterers provide that to ‘constitute a journeyman a boy shall be required to serve a regular apprenticeship of at least four years.’” And, says the report: “Mr. James P. Dobbs, business agent of the Plasterers’ Union, Local No. 19, testified that in 1914 there were 660 journey-men on the membership roll of the union and at the present time there are about 350.” And: “Mr. John Carroll, business agent of the Cement Finishers’ Union,

said there were approximately 300 journeymen in his organization and only twelve apprentices."

Our editorials have dealt with the union restrictions on the size of a paint brush. The report says: "On December 18, 1918, the Painters' District Council of Boston notified all the employers that 'the brush to be used in oil shall not exceed 4½ inches and under no circumstances are our members allowed to use brushes any wider.'" We have referred to the unions' ruling out labor-saving devices, as the paint sprayer. The committee reports: "On December 2, 1918, the Painters' District Council notified employers on and after December 15 the members of the Brotherhood will not be allowed to work with or operate any machine used to apply paint or any other substance used by painters to any surface where paint is applied." We also have noted the unions' refusal to work with any of the accelerators or "quick-sets" that cause cement to harden quickly, thus saving overtime. The report verifies the fact thus: "In the constitution and by-laws of the Boston Cement, Asphalt and Terrazzo Finishers' Union, Local No. 534, article 15, section 6, it is provided that 'no member of this union may work on any material which contains quick-sets or any matter to unduly hasten the hardening and setting of cement.'"

As to the limitation of output, the committee states that "the wood, wire and metal lathers have gone so far as to specify what the day's work shall be. Heretofore sixteen bundles of wood lath have been prescribed as the size of a day's work, and now it is proposed that twelve bundles shall constitute a day." The report quotes several of the rules of the Hoisting and Portable Engineers by which they claim the right to run all engines and boilers on buildings "whether operated by steam, electricity, gasoline or compressed air, including pumps, etc. * * * or any other machine irrespective of its motive power." Also that this rule applies to the gasoline diaphragm pump

that ran through the noon hour and entitled the "engineer" to double time while he ate his meal—a story the Herald told. The report says that "a hoisting engineer can operate only one machine or engine and is not permitted to shift from one engine to another." We have illustrated these facts in terms of time and dollars, as our readers will recall.

Moreover, the Chamber's committee mentions "four classes of mechanics in the building industry that have been working under a five-day week, the carpenters, plasterers, lathers and painters." There is also a fifth class, perhaps added since the hearings, the tile workers. The Herald has referred to the general tendency of this time limitation to add to the amount of double-pay overtime on any sizable job. The report says that "the labor witnesses testified . . . that it was necessary to rest up the overworked mechanic." That would seem to mean that the carpenters, lathers, painters, tile workers and plasterers need two days in seven to "rest up" from their "over work" on five days in seven.

The entire report makes a valuable document, filling twenty-six single-spaced typewritten pages. With it went verbatim reports of testimony, "exhibits," and a quantity of charts. Here appears the story of the jurisdictional disputes, with the consequent slowing up on the job and assignment of skilled men to unskilled work. Evidence is cited that mechanics desired and sought overtime work and that applicants wanted to be satisfied that double pay time would be available before going on a job. The committee quotes the electrical workers' requirement that "when a contractor finds it necessary to work men overtime, men working on the job must have the preference."

There is a probable error in one point of the report. The Herald heretofore has discussed the fact that on a building job both the unions and the owner are repre-

sented by men who must be members of the unions, that is, that the owner and his contractors are without disinterested supervisors of the work the building crafts do. Both the job stewards and the foremen must be union men, as we have explained. The report cites a few of the rules that thus shut the owner away from any protective supervision. For the carpenters, "It shall be the duty of all members in this jurisdiction to see that a steward is elected on every job," and "All foremen and sub-foremen shall be members of the United Brotherhood. Members on the job shall take orders from none other." Now, labor's answer to this charge as contained in the report is that "the requirement is not universal" and that, "for instance, in the case of the plumbers, a shop foreman or superintendent need not be a union man."

We think these statements convey a wrong impression. We understand that foremen on building jobs in all the twenty-seven crafts of the Boston Building Council must be union men. If any exceptions exist to the rule, the unions did not cite them in their own defence at the hearings before this committee. For this plumbers' "exception" does not apply. In support of it the labor witnesses quoted section 11 of the plumbers' agreement, thus: "Shop foreman or superintendent need not be a member of the United Association or any labor union, provided he does not use tools in performing his duties." But the other half of the rule does not appear in the report. It reads thus: "But no journeyman shall become a superintendent or foreman of a shop while under discipline or in bad standing by local No. 12 of the United Association." As a matter of fact, it makes no difference whether a non-union man may be a plumbing shop superintendent or not. It's the limitation as to job foremen to which the builders object, the men on the job at the site where the building is going up. The objection to job foremen seems to have been answered before the committee

in terms of a rule that has to do with shop superintendents in one craft. And, by the way, section 9 of this plumbers' agreement has to do with job foremen and reads thus: "It shall be the duty of all foremen to report any man late on the job to his employers at the time it occurs." The Herald has before stated that this rule is interpreted to mean that the foreman shall report men for tardiness—and for nothing else.

The report contains points of another nature to which mere reference is made here at this time. The committee surmises that "building interests" and "material men" have fixed prices artificially, combined illegally and exacted excessive profits. But, "handicapped by a lack of authority," the committee is "unable to make findings" on these matters "substantiated by evidence." We do not know whether these conditions exist in Boston or not. If they do, we hope to see them exposed and ended. We now deal here only with the things of which the Herald has been treating and the truth of which this illuminating report abundantly indorses. We say once more that we want to see real work get real pay and that we also want real pay to produce real work. In the process of deflation now going on all parties must share. This report shows a decrease in the cost of living in the twelve months of 1920 of more than 8 per cent, and a lessening of the food cost of an average family in February, 1921, of 9 per cent. We have figures to show that the cost of materials is coming down. The chamber's Committee reports that the wage rates of building labor between 1911 and 1921 went up from 66 2-3 per cent to 237 per cent. Yet the strike now on in Boston was precipitated by a demand for a large wage increase. And in labor on the building and in labor in production of building materials you pay out, this report intimates, more than four-fifths of the total cost of your building.

One thing more: It has been said at times that union

building jobs in Boston are not closed to non-union men, that non-union men may be employed on them provided union conditions are kept. Yet, according to this report, that is a mistake. Says the document: "The United Building Trades Council of Boston and Vicinity, according to its constitution and by-laws, has as its objects 'to build up all building trades organizations * * * and to see that each man employed in the construction of a building is a member of his respective organization and carries a card of, or button of, the United Building Trades Council.' "

*NOTHING IS DONE "RIGHT" UNTIL A
UNION MAN DOES IT*

JOHAN SMITH lives in the suburbs. He is proud of his home and takes pains to keep it trim. He is handy with tools and likes to tinker. When a small one-story addition required new roof and clapboards he engaged two carpenters to do the job. But he could not stand idly by, so he put on his overalls and began to pry off some of the old boards and hammer out the nails. Presently both the carpenters began to call down from the roof, and in the conversation that followed Mr. Smith learned these things:

That these union carpenters could not allow him to work or in any way to help them with their work on his house. That, however good his intentions and however agreeable their personal relations he could not get round the fact that he had no union card. That if the walking delegate saw him hammering on "their" job they would be liable to fines of \$50 each. That they might themselves cheerfully go ahead and let him potter away, but they dared not risk the heavy hand of the union's business agent. And Mr. Smith had to lay aside his tools.

Thus the owner learned that he was a scab, a fact that

hundreds of other Mr. Smiths have learned in recent years to their astonishment. Owners who employ union men must submit to union rules.

On a ten-story apartment house in this city the elevator men under a separate contract were putting in the steel framework within which the car was to run. To construct the "well" steel beams had to be placed about the opening on each floor and their ends sunk into the brick work. Each beam was about a foot in height. The elevator workmen cut into the brick and cemented in the beams from the first floor to the eighth. Then the bricklayers protested. The elevator men were doing brick-mason's work. The union could not tolerate that infraction of their rules. The work might be almost complete and it might be all O K, but it ought to have been done by bricklayers and would have to be done by bricklayers. And faced with the alternative of an entire cessation of work of every kind on that apartment the man who paid the bills had to stand on the side lines while the brick men cut out all those steel beams and cemented them in all over again.

Here is a large building in process of construction in Boston. Ordinary masons for some time have been placing and cementing some plain stone inside the walls. Then the marble setters demand their "rights." "Under the rules" everything in the way of stone that goes inside the shell of the building becomes "marble." It may look like plain cobbles or rough granite or ordinary limestone; but under the rules it's "marble." And the members of the Marble Setters' Union have to handle it. What happened in this case has happened many times in this city and all over the country. The work already done was officially condemned, done all over again and officially accepted.

More than that: It happens not infrequently that after a quantity of marble—real marble, that is—has been

placed in a building and actually "set," if the marble setters discover that the marble was not cut under conditions satisfactory to the marble cutters and according to their rules, then this marble must be condemned, cut out and thrown out, and other marble substituted.

The expense does not matter. The rules at all odds must be saved.

Article 12 of the rules of Local Union 12 of the United Association of Plumbers reads thus: "All piping appertaining to plumbing shall be done and cut by members of the United Association by hand power on the job." Now there are two ways to cut and thread ordinary pipe for a building in course of construction. The first is fast, efficient, economical. The second is slow, deficient, expensive. The quicker and cheaper way would be to send a young engineer or master plumber from shop or office to make a rough outline sketch of the job to be done. From his sketch with the simple directions alone necessary all the pipe could be cut and threaded by power machinery and taken to the job ready for placing. But under the union rule this work must be done "by hand" power and "on the job." The union men must measure and cut by hand; by hand they must twist the long-handled die stock for threading the pipe. What could be done in the shop in twenty seconds takes five minutes on the job. That will make a large amount of difference of time for the entire contract. Only one excuse can be offered for this rule. "It makes work and means more pay." That is the union idea. It is a mistake. In the end it means less work and less pay.

Why should the Plasterers' Union require that ornamental cornices be "run on the job" instead of being cast in the shop at half the price? The restriction means that all ornamental work over two feet square must be done by hand. In former times apprentice boys at the shops would easily run these ornamental pieces in the sheet iron

moulds made for the purpose from the designs supplied by the architect. Some shops still do the work that way, and all shops are prepared to do it if permitted. But the union plasterers refuse to put up the shopmade pieces. Builders could save a lot of money by using stock designs, but the plasterers object to these also. The rules say "by hand" and "on the job," and the architect, the contractor and the owner must govern themselves by these rules, and in time they will pass along the added cost to the public that in the end foots all the bills.

A reading of the constitution of the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers' International Union, as revised at the Toledo convention last September and in effect December 1, 1920, yields some interesting disclosures. The lathers seem to be no more anxious than the other unions to multiply the number of their apprentices. The rule in section 136 reads: "Apprentices shall in no case be admitted into any local union of the L. I. U. in excess of one apprentice to each local and one additional one to each ten members, said apprentice not to be under the age of 16 or over the age of 21 years, and in no case shall the secretary of any local union send in the name of an apprentice for a member until such a time as said apprentice shall have served his term of apprenticeship at the trade." The idea seems to be to limit the supply of efficient mechanics.

The lathers moreover have a curious provision which makes it easy for the union to charge a contractor \$100 for the right to carry on his business. In section 139 of their constitution they define a contractor as "a man or firm engaged at the lathing business who does not use the tools of the trade himself or themselves." That section declares that "all locals shall have power to regulate the granting of permits to contracting lathers, provided: That the fee charged contractors or solicitors shall be left to the discretion of each local, but not to exceed \$100, and

the resident limit cannot exceed one year." And the section then assured "such contractor" that he shall not be charged "any higher wage scale than that in force with local contractors or solicitors."

That section seems to mean one thing and only one thing—that a man or a firm wanting to get a contract for lathing a building must pay the union for an annual permit before he does any lathing and that the permit may cost him \$100. This, by the way, is the union that, as the Chamber of Commerce Committee said in its recent report, proposed lately to lessen by one-fourth the amount of work that shall be done in a day.

There are no bounds seemingly to the arbitrary authority conferred by the union rules upon the business agents of the unions. Sometimes the agents apply the rules in ways that have no apparent purpose except to emphasize their authority. For example: At a well known school some distance out of Boston a gang of men were at work on a new building. They came from their homes in the morning on a main line car and transferred to a branch line. But the schedule was bad for the return trip in the evening. Therefore, merely for their comfort, the contractor arranged with them to cut the noon hour in half and cut off a half-hour at the close of the day. Thus they would catch a branch line car, making direct connection at the junction with a car on the main line that would deliver them at their homes an hour earlier than otherwise would be possible. And the walking delegate "wouldn't stand for it." He declared the noon hour cut against the rules, and the men, with nothing to do, had to wait an hour after quitting time.

Is there any possible way for organized labor to justify such rules as these? The public will support them without question or murmur if they can be shown to be necessary or beneficial. If these rules are wrong then their abrogation will benefit no one more than the workingman

himself. He is the largest consumer of housing today, say some authorities, and it is for his own advantage that his labor should be emancipated from all unjust restrictions by whomever imposed, owners, employers or unions. It is the blind adherence to just such rules that has cost labor the public support and sympathy which once it enjoyed.

Thomas A. Edison, never to be suspected of lack of sympathy with labor, the other day stated the case in terms which every unprejudiced person will indorse: "I am not against the eight-hour day, or any other thing that protects labor from exploitation at the hands of ruthless employers, but it makes me sad to see young Americans shackle their abilities by conforming with rules which force them to keep step with the shirker. I have always felt that one of the principal reasons for American progress in the past has been that every man had a chance to be whatever he wanted to be. . . . This country would not amount to as much as it does if the young men of fifty years ago had been afraid they might earn more than they were paid. There ought to be some labor leader strong enough and wise enough to make trade unions a means of fitting their members for better jobs and greater responsibilities."

How the Railway Labor Unions Work Against the Public Welfare

SOME THINGS THE RAILROADS ARE UP AGAINST

NEARLY all the railroads of the United States have some crossings of the 24-hours-a-day and 7-days-a-week kind, that is, crossings that have to be guarded constantly.

The men on guard at these crossings are often well on in years; many of them are minus a limb; few of them would be able to market their labor in the open competition of the world at large; they are kept on these jobs partly because younger and more active men would be hard to find for the service they render, partly because their employers rate them as pensioners, long-time employees who have given years of toil to the railways and have therefore a fair claim upon the roads for consideration.

But the duties of these men are of the simplest, requiring no special exertion, either mental or physical. They lower the gates that bar their crossing when a train comes along; they swing a lantern or wave a flag. Often their crossings are little used. They are comfortably housed in their "shanties", and with plenty of time to read and smoke and gossip, they never found occasion for complaint under the old wages and working conditions. But what a "streak of luck" has "come their way" in the last few years, and what a difference in the railway payrolls that "streak" has made. Thus:

In 1915 two men kept watch on a New England road at one of these crossings in twelve-hour shifts and received each \$2.15 a day, or \$15.05 a week. The railroad paid them together \$30.10 every seven days. Then came the eight-hour day and the big boost in wages. These two men now get \$4.16 for every eight hours of labor. That crossing now has three tenders every twenty-four hours. The road now pays \$87.36 every seven days, instead of \$30.10. Had the road kept the two-shift system the cost of caring for that crossing, on account of the punitive charges for overtime, would be \$101.92. The three-shift system is cheaper, yet it costs almost three times as much now to watch that crossing as six years ago.

That is by no means an isolated example of the problem the railroads of the United States are up against today. Further, to illustrate the situation:

The women who clean the coaches at railway terminals were paid in 1915 about sixteen cents an hour; the standardized rate now prescribed for the entire country is fifty cents an hour, more than three times the earlier amount. Track laborers in 1915 received eighteen cents an hour; today their wage is slightly less than fifty cents an hour. The work of car inspector and repairman is not highly skilled, but whereas in 1915 these men got from twenty-three cents to twenty-five and a half cents an hour for their services they now receive three times as much, the hourly wage ranging from eighty cents to nearly eighty-two cents.

Also: In many cases the wage of the mechanic's helper has more than tripled. Six years ago he received from nineteen to twenty-five cents an hour; he now gets sixty-four cents an hour. The signal helper who then got \$1.85 a day now is well over the \$5 rate. The signal mechanic has advanced from a little more than \$2.50 a day to more than \$7 a day. Federal crafts workmen, as they are called now, have practically a standardized

wage the country over of eighty-five cents an hour, and in New England some roads have to pay a little more under certain conditions. But the machinists thus classified received only thirty and a half cents to thirty-four cents an hour in 1915, and blacksmiths from twenty-nine to twenty-nine and six-tenths cents.

Further: The freight house clerks used to work sixty hours a week for a minimum wage of \$13.80; they now work forty-eight hours a week for a minimum of \$26.36. Girl clerks of all sorts in railroad offices must have a minimum of over \$100 a month, even if without a year's experience. All railway lines have their small stations where one man easily serves as station agent and telegraph operator. Such men received in 1915 an average of about thirty-one cents an hour in various eastern states. Today they are paid about seventy-five cents an hour.

These examples might be multiplied indefinitely. Those cited are sufficient to indicate the nature of the wage problem which confronts the railways of this country. In good faith the railroads have undertaken to live up to the terms imposed upon them by the United States labor board as to wages, hours and conditions. They are not attempting to evade these requirements. But even cursory reference to the language of various official documents having to do with this big industrial problem shows some of the additional troubles with which the roads have to contend. For instance:

The Federal Transportation Act which went into effect on March 1, 1920, provides that the Labor Board, dealing with wages, and the Adjustment Board, dealing with conditions, shall be "just and reasonable," and shall consider the wages paid in other industries for similar work, the cost of living, hazards, skill, responsibilities, inequalities caused by previous wage orders, and so on. And yet this United States Railroad Labor Board at Chicago on July 20, 1920, when it made its wage award

retroactive to May 1, practically admitted that it had to do a hurry-up job and had lacked the time necessary for the careful consideration of the provisions imposed by the transportation act. Said the Board in the report: "As to 'inequalities of increases in wages or of treatment the result of previous wage orders and adjustments', the urgency of prompt action has made elaborate investigation into these facts impracticable."

Moreover, two weeks ago Edgar E. Clark, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, at a hearing on the Clayton act, in reply to the questions of a United States senator, declared that, in his opinion, it was not wise for the Labor Board to standardize the wages of all employees without discrimination. The chairman could not see why women cleaning coaches in the South should get as much of an increase as women doing the same work in Chicago, because of the wide differences in living conditions. Changes in the cost of living did not warrant the same additions everywhere. Chairman Clark cited the case of colored women in the South whose boosts had approximated 200 per cent.

Such facts surely show that a condition, not a theory, confronts our railroads. The war caused all manner of maladjustments and serious disruptions of organization. The places of service men had somehow to be filled. Now the time for reorganization is at hand. But as the result of a long series of official awards, rulings, interpretations, often without reference to each other, the railways, once more under private ownership, are handicapped heavily in any honest effort to create efficient organizations on the basis of fair wages and reasonable treatment for all employees. In thousands of cases unskilled laborers are getting more money than trained workers. Standardization means that a worker in one part of the country is in comparative affluence, while in another section the same job yields returns that are less than ordinary. What the

railways want is genuine examination of the whole problem and careful readjustment, that what was done in a rush under emergency conditions shall be revised in the interest of fair play for the employes, the railways themselves, and—the public.

SIX MEN FOR A TWO-MAN JOB

A NEW ENGLAND railroad recently had occasion to send a machinist from the shop in which ordinarily he worked to a round house some distance down the line, there to do a certain job. He was away from home in all ten minutes less than 28 hours. Six hours, or more than a fifth of that time, was spent in travel in a passenger coach. Seven hours and twenty minutes, or more than a fourth of the time, was spent off duty at the round house. The actual working time was $14\frac{1}{2}$ hours, which is a half-hour more than half the total time of absence from home. The railroad paid the machinist \$28.88, \$1 an hour for the whole time, or about \$2 an hour for the actual time spent in labor.

Cases of this kind are not rare these days. For instance: A certain New England railway a short time ago sent a man by passenger train three hours away from the railway shop in his home town to do some repair work. He left on a Saturday morning and returned on the following Monday afternoon, having been absent a few minutes less than 52 hours. He spent six hours on the trains, and 12 hours besides off duty. The actual working time counted up to 34 hours, or slightly less than two-thirds of the entire time. His pay envelope brought him for that trip \$67.68, which figures out again at about \$2 an hour averaged for the working time, and about \$1.30 an hour for the whole absence.

These are typical illustrations of the way the standardization of working conditions operates every day on all the railway lines of the country. For example:

An Ohio Valley road not long ago had to send five machinists 101 miles from A to B. Each man worked eight hours a day for three days; each man was paid not for 24 hours' work but for 72 hours of time, most of it at the time-and-a-half rate. Each man received \$30 for his 24 hours of labor, and \$52 in addition, and for the latter sum he had rendered no service whatever.

An engine some days ago was about to start a run on the El Paso & Southwestern line when it was noticed that a window pane in the cab was broken. The sky looked threatening and the engineer insisted on repairs. No engine carpenter being then on duty, a foreman, who himself could have done the work in a few minutes, had to send for the "right man." The train was held up an hour and a half; the "right man" did the work in a half-hour and pulled down pay for five hours.

Or consider this case on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe last August. The line investigated a difference between a car foreman and a car repairer. The inquiry was asked for by a workman and consumed 82 minutes more than his regular working time. He entered a claim for time-and-a-half pay for 60 minutes of that overtime, and for five hours' pay for the other 22 minutes, and he was paid for six hours and 30 minutes instead of 82 minutes.

Further to illustrate: The rules under which the railroads now operate are so framed as to multiply the number of men who must be used to do the work a clever tinker of the kind that abounds in New England could do alone.

A headlight generator is to be removed and replaced—an electrician disconnects the wires, a sheet metal worker disconnects the pipes, a machinist unbolts and removes the generator and applies a new one, the sheet metal man then reconnects the pipes and the electrician reconnects the wires; each man usually has a helper, making six men in all for what one machinist and one helper could easily do.

A leak in a boiler is to be looked after—a sheet metal worker loosens the jacket, a locomotive carpenter loosens the “lagging,” a boiler maker caulks the leak, and then the others return to replace the parts that fall within the carefully limited areas of their jobs; six men again on a trivial task.

A boiler check is to be changed—one man could do it apparently, but at least two men do do it; a sheet metal worker does the disconnecting, a machinist removes the old and applies a new check, and the sheet metal man does the reconnecting.

A Baltimore & Ohio engine lately went to the shops for certain repairs; members of five crafts had to do parts of the work, formerly members of two crafts did it equally well. And so through the whole gamut of railway division of labor.

If the men dismantling an old car use an acetylene torch they must be paid at mechanics' rates; in one case that cost a railroad \$6421 more than such jobs usually cost. If a car cleaner makes trifling repairs on a coach he must be paid the mechanics' scale as the rules now are.

In general—the operation of one rule compelled the railroads to pay in the first six months of 1920 almost \$6,500,000 for work that was not done. This punitive payment was on account of a clause providing that when employes are required to check in and out on their own time they are to be paid each week one hour extra. For the later months of the year recent additions will make such payments larger still. Other rules punish the railways as badly. For instance, if a discharged employe is held to have been unjustly treated he must not only be reinstated but given full pay for the entire time of his separation from the road, no matter if in the interval his earnings have equalled his ordinary wage, thus making it possible for him to double his income.

Now all these examples are cited, not so much to show what wage rates the railroads have to pay today, but more to show how the rates are applied and what are the conditions of employment. A simple statement makes this situation clear: The Adamson law established the eight-hour day as the basis for fixing wages without limiting the hours of labor to eight. The Hours of Service Act limited continuous labor to sixteen hours. As everybody knows, in the nature of the industry it often is necessary for railway men to work more than eight hours a day. The railroad brotherhoods demanded time and a half for overtime, that is for all work beyond eight hours a day. The railways under private operation refused the demand; under federal control it was granted, and that provision is now in effect. The result is a standardization of working conditions throughout the United States, the application of punitive charges for unavoidable overtime, the imposition of the same wage for the same work whether done in New England or Arizona, in densely populated Connecticut or in sparsely settled Montana, in Chicago, where living costs are high, or in Maine, where they are comparatively low.

As things are today, railroad workers tend to become a privileged class immune from the conditions that affect other classes of labor. How could it be otherwise, for instance, when a green stenographer right out of school has to be paid under the rules almost twice what her sister receives in commercial offices everywhere? The Labor Board awarded the present rates on July 20, 1920, and based the scale upon statistics of the preceding March, when the cost of living and the wages in other industries were at the highest war levels. Since then the cost of living has been coming down and the whole tendency in the industrial world is toward a lowering of wages. If railway wages stay up and other things come down the railway worker will have an unfair and unjust advantage

over all his fellow-workers, and the public, as always, will pay the bill. In the general process of deflation now going on every industry and all classes ought to help.

Under federal control the railway men secured standard agreements for every phase of every conceivable situation, as the above illustrations indicate. The Labor Board has said that these agreements shall continue until the Board has an opportunity to consider them. The railroad executives now in Chicago are asking the Board to reconsider and rescind these agreements by which millions are exacted from the roads, and ultimately from the public, for which no service whatever is performed, or a service whose value is enormously inflated.

“RIDICULOUS”—WILLIAM H. TAFT

IS a young woman who cleans and polishes the brass work of passenger coaches, while the cars are going through the railway paint shops, to be classified as a mechanic or not? If not, she receives $52\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour for her labor. If she is so rated, she must be paid 85 cents an hour, which makes a difference of 62 per cent, or \$2.60 a day.

This is not merely a hypothetical case. Such a young woman in a New England railroad shop in 1917 was cleaning brass at 22 cents an hour. Presently the railway wage award lifted her compensation to $52\frac{1}{2}$ cents. She was entirely satisfied. Then the shop committee, without her authorization, declared hers to be a mechanic's job and obtained her reclassification and a wage of 68 cents an hour. At the same time she was awarded \$227.75 as back pay at the new rate. Later still another Labor Board increase put her wage up to 85 cents an hour—about four times what she received in 1917.

If a man turns a valve and “starts the juice,” and shuts off the current by turning the valve again, is he to be

classified as an electrician? Even though he is entirely ignorant of electrical machinery? New England railways have found that the answer to this question also involves a big difference in wages. So have the roads all over the United States.

In certain railway shops here in New England three stationary engineers—not locomotive engineers—are employed in the power house. Two men could do the work, but it is cheaper to use three and avoid the time-and-a-half charge for overtime. Usually the shop runs but eight hours a day, but the pumps have to be cared for and a small dynamo for lighting purposes. Forthwith the shop committee demanded that these men be classified as electricians and paid as such. In back pay at the new rate they received respectively \$1825, \$1861 and \$993. It costs the company to operate that power house nearly three times as much a month as in 1917. In the same manner the Pere Marquette railroad lately had to pay three employes \$9333—they had been “pumpers,” they became “electricians.” Their services now cost the line more than the value of all water pumped and all current generated at the station.

These cases illustrate why it is that the railways of the country have been asking the United States Railroad Labor Board to abrogate the agreements that make such conditions possible. These agreements have nothing whatever to do with the amount per hour that is paid any employe according to his classification, once that classification is established. The railroads have not asked for any changes in basic wages. They have asked for changes in the working conditions which are covered by these national agreements.

How did these agreements come into existence?

When the government took over the railways for war purposes the federal administration, as is well known, raised wages greatly. But the labor leaders, having

obtained these huge lifts in wages and the standardization of all wages for the whole United States, undertook also to obtain a standardization of working conditions. They achieved this end through what was called the national agreements. One was signed as late as October 19, 1919. Another received the necessary signatures barely six days before the roads came back under private control last April. The Esch-Cummins act requires these agreements to remain in effect until they are set aside by the United States Railway Labor Board, the board which a few days ago in Chicago refused to set them aside "immediately."

However, there was not time before the lines were turned back for all working conditions to be standardized. These national agreements do not now cover all classes of railroad labor. But so heavy is the charge which the agreements now in effect do impose upon the roads, and so enormous is the number of employes whom it does involve and so many are their classifications, that the roads have been asking the board to rescind the agreements and permit each road to deal directly with its own employes, as was done before the war. Labor, on the other hand, is insisting not only that the present agreements be continued but that they be extended to cover all the remaining classes of railroad labor.

These agreements dealing with working conditions are concerned with all manner of local arrangements, besides the classification problem, the time-and-a-half charge for all hours of overtime work, "waiting time" at points away from home, and the like. Under standardization local conditions are ignored. Minnesota and Louisiana, Maine and Oregon, the Arizona desert and densely populated New Jersey, all fare alike. Further to illustrate the situation:

Few of the millions who use the railroads every day understand how "enginemen"—locomotive engineers and

firemen—are paid. The rule is that 100 miles or less or eight hours or less shall constitute a day's work in freight service, 100 miles or less or five hours or less in passenger service. The base is computed in miles. But if the hours work out better for the enginemen their pay is computed accordingly. Both overtime and over-mileage count for the men. The "day" begins when the fireman or engineer reports at the engine house for duty. If at the end of the regular hours he is still at work he receives time-and-a-half for the extra hours until his job is done, no matter how many miles he may have traveled during the regular hours.

A certain New England line has one run of precisely 200 miles. The engineer's time from reporting for duty until arrival at the end of the run is 8 hours and 10 minutes. But he has run 200 miles. Therefore, he must get and does get two days' pay. The exact amount depends upon the weight of the engine he drives. The minimum is \$5.60. He receives double that for this run, or \$11.20. He goes "up" one day and comes back the next and so shuttles over his 200-mile line through a six-day week, and his pay envelope contains \$67.20. So it is one thing to hear that an engineer's pay is \$5.60 a "day" and quite another to know what he receives a week.

Another New England railroad has a run of 165 miles. The fireman does the run in four hours. The engine is heavy enough to make the day's pay \$6.50. Under the rule he gets \$6.50 for 100 miles and \$10.90 for the run. He lays over awhile and then fires another engine back, making another 165 miles and another \$10.90. Three trips a week net him \$65.40.

Or, here are the freight enginemen on another New England road. Over a certain 85-mile run the through freights, which are supposed to make no stops for set-offs or pick-ups, score varying times depending on the number of trains ahead, the weather and other conditions. If the

run takes five hours they collect their eight hours' pay; if the run requires ten hours they get the day and time-and-a-half for two hours more. And, by the way, there are three kinds of freight trains, through, local and way freights. If a dispatcher requires a through freight to make more than six stops in a run it becomes a local and on the locals the wage is somewhat higher than on the through freights. A way freight is never expected to make 100 miles; sometimes it covers only 25 or even 12. But the men are paid under the same rule and the rate per hour is the highest of all.

This method obtains also in the case of train crews—conductors and trainmen. In the freight service the crews are paid on the 100 miles or eight hours basis. But in the passenger service the basis is 150 miles or eight hours to a “day.”

One more phase of this important matter: Here is a certain small station in a thinly settled region of New England. It has a train at 5:30 in the morning and another at 7:30 in the evening and between the two a freight train. The station agent thus has but intermittent duties. Continuous service is not necessary. He goes and comes and looks after all sorts of personal affairs. In 1917 he earned \$3.04 a day. To save money the railroad uses two men at that station now, paying each of them \$4.64, or \$9.28 for the two, which is more than three times what the chores at that place cost the road four years ago. In all New England there are hundreds of stations that tell that same tale.

No wonder that William H. Taft said a few days ago that this standardization of working conditions produces ridiculous results. Is it strange that a former member of the Interstate Commerce Commission calls this system “unsound and utterly unjust”? And he added: “The present system is unjust both to the railroad-using public, and, because of the gross discrimination, to the wage-

earners themselves. The artificial standardization of wages on a mere money basis—regardless of money-purchasing power in various sections and of the quantity and quality of service required of such employes as station agents and freight handlers in large over-worked sections as compared with small stations in which the business is limited to two or three hours a day—cannot be justified.”

TWO YEARS TO FIGURE OUT THE BACK PAY

AT 7 o'clock tomorrow morning a short passenger train will start from a certain small town in New England to make a leisurely run of sixty miles over a branch line to the point where it joins the main stem of the system. The train will reach the junction at 10 o'clock. At that point the cars and the crew will wait with nothing to do until 3 or 4 in the afternoon, when the return trip will start. At 7 tomorrow evening the train will pull into the same terminal it left twelve hours before. This train crew—conductor, baggage master and brakeman—will actually have worked six hours. The “spread of their day” will have been twelve hours. But for making that 120-mile “turnaround” run every day but Sunday, or twenty-six times a month—in February only twenty-four times—they will receive respectively \$255.50, \$188.08 and \$182.50.

It works out this way for the conductor: “Under the rules” there exists in the railway passenger service a monthly guarantee that gives him a thirty-day month no matter how many days they may actually be on duty. Specifically the rule is based upon some clauses in an article in “Supplement 25” to “General Order 27.” Conductors are entitled to a wage of \$7 a day. The guarantee of a thirty-day month brings him a minimum of \$210. But the twelve-hour “spread” adds in over-time enough to make the wage for each working day

\$8.75. For the twenty-six working days therefore he must have \$227.50. But—there is a difference of four days between the actual working time and the thirty-day month of the guarantee. Add in then four times \$7 for those days and you reach the grand total of \$255.50.

This is not an isolated, and it is an actual case. All the New England roads have such branch lines, some of them longer than sixty miles, others shorter, upon which the rules operate precisely in the manner described.

Some weeks ago a railway repair man made a trip over his line at the road's expense on an assignment to repair a motor car. He spent several hours on the train, fixed the car, and took another train back home. In all he was away from his home station twenty-seven hours, of which three hours, or one-ninth of the time, were spent in actual labor. His pay envelope contained \$32.73 as his due "under the rules" for that job. Another case of exactly the same nature kept the employe away from home thirty-two hours; one-sixteenth of the time, or two hours, sufficed to fix the car; the workman "under the rules" got his expenses and \$38.25 for that task.

On New England roads also occurred these cases: A few months ago a repairman spent twenty-one hours away from his home station. He did his work in four hours. He drew for the trip \$23.76. Another man consumed six hours in repairing a pump and twenty hours in all away from his base. The rules allowed him \$25.56. Yet another workman received \$28.08 for repairing a stand-pipe, having been absent from the home station twenty-seven hours, and worked one day even, or eight hours. Things like this abound not only in New England, but all over the land. Before the United States Labor Board in Chicago some days ago a western line presented this case: A man traveled to an outside terminal, slept there, did some labor, and traveled back. He claimed, "under the rules," time-and-a-half and double time for overtime

for the period of his absence from his home station. He actually worked one hour; the company paid him \$34.84.

These sums are collected under the "agreement between the United States railroad administration and the railway employes' department of the American Federation of Labor." Rule 6 of this agreement reads thus: "All overtime . . . outside of bulletin hours, up to and including the sixteenth hour of service in any one twenty-four hour period, computed from the starting time of the employe's regular shift, shall be paid for at the rate of time-and-a-half and thereafter at the rate for double time, up to the starting time for the employe's regular shift."

The computation of overtime and of back pay has come to be a colossal job in every railroad office of the United States. The forces of the timekeepers have been devoted for almost two years here in New England and in all other sections of the country to figuring out how much back pay the men are entitled to under the terms imposed by the railroad administration. On May 25, 1918, the director-general issued General Order 27. One section provides that the wage increases granted therein are effective as of January 1 preceding. Thus at the end of May two years ago the clerks who keep the time of the thousands of railway workers started on the back pay task.

They are still figuring with all their might. Of course, the back dues include the difference between the old wages and the new and the additional amounts assessed for overtime, and the timekeepers are enmeshed in a great web of rules and interpretations trying to figure out how the overtime is to be reckoned. The whole problem is about as complicated as the Versailles treaty.

There are fifty-seven kinds of engine service wages, fourteen kinds of train service rates, and five kinds of passenger train service rates—and it is said to be possible for one man to get all five "under the rules." The old boards of adjustment went out of existence when the roads

came back to private ownership, but their decisions remain in effect. Board No. 3 made 1051 decisions, Board No. 2 made 2039 decisions, Board No. 1 made 2276—in all 5366 decisions. Are these decisions harmonious, all fitting together? They are not. Later decisions conflict with earlier ones, some decisions conflict with orders of the director-general, some with the wage awards, and in some instances decisions on the same question do not jibe. No wonder the timekeepers thus far have figured for two years. They are required “as promptly as possible to ascertain the amount due in back pay,” and they “must compute the payment due employes separately from the regular monthly payments” in order that the employes “may know the exact amount of those back payments.”

Some curious things follow the application of these back payment requirements. For instance: John Jones used to be employed on a New England road. He left the service of his own free will and went into another business. He gets no back pay. John Smith and John Robinson also worked for the same road. Smith was fired and Robinson was arrested and sent to jail for crime. Both Smith and Robinson get the back pay. Their separation was “involuntary,” and the requirement is that those “who have been for any reason dismissed from the service since January 1, 1918,” shall get the back pay. The only way to avoid getting it is to quit. Few quit.

One more illustration of the conditions that afflict the roads today. This happened on a western road. It might have happened in New England, for the same rule binds all the roads. The list of roads runs right through the alphabet from the Alabama & Vicksburg to the Zanesville & Western. It often happens that when a New England line wants to know how the rules interpret the case of a Maine machinist, or a New Hampshire blacksmith, or a Massachusetts sheet metal worker, they find

the rule in some decision in an Oregon, or an Arizona or a Minnesota case. Local conditions, "like the flowers that bloom in the spring," "have nothing to do with the case."

Now this western road had to pay six men each five hours' wages for thirty minutes' work. The men repaired an engine in the shops of the line. They finished their regular day, and then had to work a half-hour longer to complete the testing of the engine. But the rule says: "Employees called or required to return to work will be allowed five hours for three hours and twenty minutes service, OR LESS." Thirty minutes is a good deal less than three hours and twenty minutes, but there's the rule, and—pay for five hours was demanded and collected. There had been no interruption in work, but the extra half-hour was claimed and allowed as an additional shift.

The railroads today are not seeking to escape all payment for overtime work. But they are trying to get rid of the rules which extort from the public such unwarranted over-payments as those indicated above. They do seek to prevent the payment of sums that add up far into the millions for services that are not performed at all. They wish to escape the paying of wrecking crews for doing no wrecking, the paying of inexperienced substitutes more money than regular foremen get for the same work, the paying of thousands in back pay to men who know no electricity but who are classed as electricians merely because they turn the valve that allows the "juice" to flow—and so through a list of many thousands of similar iniquities. The agreements that make such things possible the roads want to have rescinded. If they are not abrogated the public must keep right on paying these unjustifiable bills, said to amount in the aggregate to \$600,000,000 a year.

*WHY THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION SAID "YES" TO THE
B. & M.*

THE New Hampshire Public Service Commission lately decided to find out why the New England railroads "are rapidly approaching bankruptcy" and in particular why the Boston & Maine is so poor that it wants to discontinue its agencies at twenty-four small rural stations. The commission did find out. It allowed the discontinuances. The document containing its report is very illuminating reading just now. From it some of the illustrations below are cited.

Rule 60 of the national agreements, issued when the roads were under federal control, requires the roads to pay their employes an hour a week extra for punching the time clock "regardless of the number of hours worked during the week." That rule cost the B. & M. some \$150,000 last year.

Rule 10 of the agreements requires men sent away from home to "receive continuous time from the time called until their return," with overtime and other provisions, and the rate is to be paid whether the men are "working, waiting or traveling." "Time called" means an hour before train time. "Return" includes the time necessary for depositing tools in the regular places. Here is a sample of the way the rule works: A boilermaker is called at 4:20, takes a 5:20 train at a certain New Hampshire station, rides an hour or so, works from 7 to 2, waits nearly four hours for a train back, arrives at 6:50, spends 10 minutes putting his tools away, and collects for eight hours at 85 cents an hour and for six hours and 40 minutes at \$1.27 an hour, making \$15.30 for the "day."

Rule 7 requires that an employe "called or required to return to work" shall be "allowed five hours for three

hours and 20 minutes' service or less. Also that he "shall be required to do only such work as held or called for." Under that rule cases of this kind are occurring frequently on all the railways: A machinist is called after his day is over to do a bit of tinkering on a locomotive. He does the job in 30 minutes or less. Another locomotive is at hand also needing some small attention. The man on the spot is assigned to that job also. It takes another half-hour. In all he has worked one hour. Under the rules he gets pay for ten hours.

Rule 13 says that "employes changed from one shift to another will be paid overtime for the first shift of each change." The "interpretation" is that it makes no difference if the workman asks for the change. If a man on a night shift "bids off" a day shift he must have 1½ days' pay for the first day on the new shift, twelve hours for eight. Such items run fast into money on a railway system.

Among the Machinists' Special Rules is No. 64 which lists a lot of employes, including "grease cup fillers," in such a way that the filling of the cups may be done only by men whose rate of pay is 63 or 64 cents an hour. Before these rules came a foreman could designate anyone he considered competent to do this simple job, and the degree of skill and experience required for it surely was much below the \$5 a day level. Rule 79 assigns highly paid boilermakers to do "all drilling," although low-paid helpers are quite able to do much of the drilling, and as well. Rules 4 and 5, about shifts and hours, prevent the railroads from having more men on the job through the rush hours than through the slack hours of the day, with obvious results upon the pay rolls. In the Clerks' National Agreement, Rule 26 makes the minimum salary of a clerk of one year's experience \$4.39 a day, or \$114.14 a month of twenty-six days. The same service used to command \$14 a week.

Notice also how the eight-hour day and time-and-a-half for overtime affect the New England lines. In 1915 two baggage masters served a certain station at \$2.10 a day each, or \$29.40 a week for both. Today three men are doing the same work, one working six hours and getting a full day's pay. Each receives \$5.18 a day; the three are paid \$108.78 a week. Handling baggage at that station has gone up in cost 270 per cent.

In 1915, also, an agent and an assistant did all the work of a certain station at a charge of \$3.20 a day, or \$22.40 a week. Working the same hours today they would have to be paid, by the rules, \$100.10 a week. By a rearrangement of hours that amount could be reduced to \$71.12 a week, which still is more than three times the cost of six years ago.

Also in 1915 in a certain switching yard two switch tenders covered the 24 hours at a weekly cost of \$37.80. Today three men are on this job, each receives \$5.04 a day, and the three \$105.84 a week, or nearly thrice the amount paid before government control.

The New Hampshire commission refers to the abolition of piece work in car shops as "having slowed up production and increased costs," and adds that "under private control 20 per cent of the men in passenger car repair shops and 58 per cent of the men in freight car shops were on a piece work basis." The change went into effect in July, 1918. Several roads have computed what the shift from pay-by-the-piece to pay-by-the-hour has meant in decrease of efficiency and increase of cost. In efficiency, piece work car repairers went down 41 per cent, air brake repairers 33 per cent, passenger car painters 25 per cent, brass foundry workers 11 per cent. By the hour system it takes the painter almost two hours longer to paint a locomotive and almost twenty-eight hours longer to paint a freight car. On the hour basis men bore two wheels in the time they used to take for three. In

one boiler shop the time for doing work has gone up 32 per cent and the output has gone down 24 per cent, in a blacksmith shop the time is up 35 per cent and the output is down 26 per cent. In a paintshop time increased 42 per cent and output diminished 30 per cent; in a passenger repair shop the time mounted by 32 per cent and the work done slumped by 25 per cent, and in a freight repair shop the amount done lessened 21 per cent and the time necessary to do a given bit of work advanced 26 per cent.

And the New England roads, of course, are up against the same back pay requirements that embarrass all the nation's lines. Rule 27 of the agreements has this section: "In the restoration of forces, senior laid-off men will be given preference of re-employment, if available, within a reasonable time, and shall be returned to their former positions." Now a certain road had a car repair man whose defective eyesight exposed him and his fellow-workers to serious risk. The company offered him employment if any competent oculist "passed" his vision. Otherwise the foreman would not reinstate him. Under the rules he was ordered back and awarded \$1000 in back wages and, in addition, 172½ hours overtime at \$1.02 an hour, for extra compensation earned by his gang during the time he was out of service.

These examples illustrate some of the conditions the railroads are up against. What shall they do? What can the New England lines do? The answers that naturally come to mind are these: Decrease expenses. Increase rates. Or quit business.

But the roads can't stop business. A private industry can quit when it wants to, or close down awhile when it begins to lose money. But a railway sells transportation of goods and people. It receives from the state certain valuable franchise rights and the law requires it to render its service until proper authority relieves it of the duty.

Can the roads increase rates? The New Hampshire commission has some strong things to say on that point. Since 1915 freight rates on the B. & M. have gone up 101 per cent and passenger charges 44 per cent. And in that same period, while operating revenues have more than doubled, the annual deficit has increased from \$250,000 to \$4,500,000. The commission, therefore, asks: "Can the industries and business interests of New England stand another rate increase?"

The other alternative is the lessening of expenses. Wages make 65 per cent, practically two-thirds, of the costs of running the roads. Materials, fuel, taxes, car rentals are higher. But the big item is labor. Increased wages and overtime and back pay have boosted the pay roll of this line from \$21,000,000 in 1915 to \$60,000,000 in 1920. Of the \$39,000,000 increase nine-tenths is due to higher rates and one-tenth to a gain in the number of men. The amount the line shall pay per hour to a woman for scrubbing a coach, or a man for waving a crossing flag, or an engineer for driving a locomotive, or a shopman for fixing a boiler does not in the least depend on the prices for such labor in any town hereabouts. All these things have been standardized for the whole United States. Local conditions have nothing to do with the contents of the pay envelope. The same sum must be paid whether the work is done in North Dakota or Texas, down in Maine, or out West in Oregon.

Bear in mind that the railways on the one hand must keep right on doing business, and on the other hand, cannot themselves settle their freight rates, passenger rates, or wage rates. The prices a road may charge for transportation are settled by a group of men in Washington—the Interstate Commerce Commission. The amounts a road shall pay in wages are settled by a group of men in Chicago—the Railroad Labor Board. And

when a road states its case at Chicago the Labor Board may say: "You don't need lower wages. You need higher rates. Go to Washington and get them." And when a road goes to the I. C. C. it may say: "The country can't stand higher rates. You ought to reduce wages. Go to Chicago and get them reduced." So they "pass the buck." And the railroads keep on accumulating deficits and closing small rural stations.

Of course the New Hampshire Commission says that under the present plan "the New England roads are rapidly approaching bankruptcy."

NO WONDER RAILROADS DO NOT PAY EXPENSES

A CERTAIN railroad in thirty-four weeks called upon a car repairer fifteen times to operate a small torch in emergency wrecking work. He rendered a temporary service and the total time it required was well within fifteen hours. But under the national agreements as to working conditions, established while the federal government operated the lines, this workman made two special pleas.

He claimed that he ought to be paid for continuous service for the entire thirty-four weeks, although he had rendered intermittent service that amounted to less than two days of working time. The board granted the claim. He also asked an increase of pay from 58 cents to 68 cents per hour. Because he used an oxy-acetylene torch on the average of one hour every two weeks he insisted that he ought to have the same pay that is awarded employes who operate welding and cutting torches all the time. He got that, too. Look up Docket 1194 and you will find the record of the decision of this case by the Railway Board of Adjustment No. 2.

A certain other railroad some time since had to pay a furnace man in a blacksmith shop 1140 hours back pay for 228 hours of actual work. It was all under the rules, of course, and entirely regular. This worker came in at 6 in the morning and spent an hour getting his fire going. From the time the furnace was built in 1915 he had been getting overtime rates for that extra hour. But by the national agreements he entered a claim for five hours overtime for that one hour. The Wage Board granted it to him. That decision compelled the road to pay him five hours extra a day for the one hour of service, thirty hours extra a week for six hours at the furnace, and—being retroactive in its effect—1140 hours of back pay for 228 hours of actual service.

Is it any wonder that 36 railroads do not earn their operating expenses? Among them are the Maine Central and the New York, New Haven & Hartford, together with such lines as the Erie, the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, the Philadelphia & Reading and the Hocking Valley. Or that 28 other roads earn expenses but not their taxes and fixed charges? In this list the Boston & Maine figures, and besides the Baltimore & Ohio, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, the Rock Island & Pacific, the Missouri Pacific, the Lehigh Valley, the Pennsylvania and the Pere Marquette. These lines have 100,000 miles of steel rails in operation, which is two-fifths of the entire railway mileage of the United States.

What are the roads to do? Labor must have and will surely have good pay for every real service rendered. But the entire public as well as the men who manage the lines are becoming impatient of rules and interpretations that make large payments for small service or no service a thing of ordinary occurrence on all the roads in the country. Notice a few foundation statistics:

In 1917 it took 303,000 skilled workers to run the railroads of the United States. In 1920 it took 440,000 skilled workers, and the number of cars and locomotives had increased but little.

In 1917 the people who travel and ship goods by rail paid these skilled workmen \$318,000,000. In 1920 the people were paying them at the rate of \$890,000,000 a year.

For every two skilled workmen employed on the roads in 1917 three are now in the service. For every dollar the public paid these men in 1917 the public now pays more than three dollars.

In 1917 only 350,000 section men and unskilled laborers cared for the nation's railway lines. In 1920 their number had gone up to 376,000. But while the pay rolls for these men in 1917 added up to \$220,000,000 their pay rolls today amount per year to \$476,000,000.

The lines today employ 38 such men for every 35 of three years ago, but the roads pay them today \$24 for every \$11 paid them in 1917.

In 1917 the railroad offices used 184,000 clerks; at the end of 1920 with business about normal the roads were using something under 239,000 clerks. The pay envelopes of these clerks contained in 1917 more than \$189,000,000 a year; they are paid now at a rate per year of \$399,000,000. The roads now need 17 men to do about the same amount of work as 13 men did three years ago, but the public pays for practically the same service \$19 now for every \$9 then.

In 1917 before government control the entire pay roll of all the railroads in the country footed up to \$1,739,482,142. That wage bill in 1920 had more than doubled, reaching a grand total of about \$3,610,000,000. The 1921 pay roll is likely to go well over the two billions mark.

One more of these statistical facts—In 1917 the rail-

roads figured their total operating expenses at \$2,860,000,000. Thus, it costs far more for wages alone today than the total expenses of operation three years ago.

WAGES ARE ONE THING; EARNINGS ANOTHER

IN 1917 a Boston business man paid 37 cents to ship 100 pounds of shoes by freight from this city to Philadelphia. Today the labor cost alone is 37 cents. That is, the railway freight charge is made up of several items, of which the largest, the labor cost, is precisely what the whole cost of the shipment was four years ago.

In 1917 a Lowell business man paid \$1 to ship 100 pounds of dry goods from his city by freight to Seattle on the Pacific Coast. Today that business man must pay labor alone \$1.04 for that shipment, to say nothing of the other costs of the service.

In 1917 a Hartford business man paid 55.9 cents to ship 100 pounds of typewriters by freight from the Connecticut city to Cleveland, O. Today the labor cost of that shipment is 60 cents flat, and the Hartford shipper finds his freight rate proportionally higher.

In 1917 the whole charge for the shipment of a bushel of wheat from Kansas to New York City was 27 cents. Today 27 cents pays the labor costs alone of that shipment.

In 1917 copper came from Anaconda, Mont., to New York City, at the rate of $50\frac{3}{4}$ cents for each 100 pounds. Today to ship 100 pounds of copper over that same route costs for labor alone $4\frac{1}{4}$ cents more than the entire charge of four years ago, that is 55 cents.

The increased wages of railway labor thus are added into the costs of travel and traffic upon all the railways of the United States. All these charges ultimately are paid by the public, the people who use the roads, who buy the transportation which the railways have to sell.

Just what these increased labor costs are in the case of one of the vital circulatory systems of New England is shown by the report rendered March 21, by the New York, New Haven & Hartford to the Interstate Commerce Commission. It is true, of course, that the I. C. C. has nothing to do with the establishment of the rates of pay of railway employes; that function belongs to the railway Labor Board at Chicago. But for its own information and use in the study of all problems having to do with freight and passenger rates the I. C. C. requires the roads to supply the facts as to their labor costs. Also the commission in order to have a basis for the comparison of these costs on roads scattered all over the continent has minutely classified all railway employes and numbered the classes. When the I. C. C. talks about class 19 of the New Haven road, or of the Denver & Rio Grande, it refers to men whose jobs are the same—the painters and upholsterers. By this standardized classification class 62 always includes crossings flagmen and gatemen, whether these employes work in California, Texas, Minnesota or Maine. In all, the I. C. C. considers 68 classes of employes, beginning with the general officers as classes 1 and 2 and ending with class 68, which includes all not rated under the other 67.

Now these figures submitted today by the New Haven to the commission show that two classes of employes are paid today more than three times the wages they received in 1916. That employes in sixteen other classes are paid today more than double, and in some cases almost treble, what they received in 1916. That the earnings of the employes in thirty other classes have more than doubled in the same interval. That the employes of ten other classes receive today from a half more to double what they were paid four years ago. And that in six classes only have the increases been

less than half the earnings of 1917. These six include the general officers and the division officers. The former have advanced 7.5 per cent, the latter 44.5 per cent. The traveling agents and solicitors have advanced one-third. The long array of figures shows that the New Haven's general officers in all departments were paid a little less than a fiftieth of the entire pay roll in 1916, and that today they are paid less than a hundredth of the whole wage outgo.

Here are the outstanding facts of these increases:

In 1916 a car inspector on the New Haven road earned 27 cents an hour, today 86 cents an hour, which is more than three times what he was paid five years ago.

The engine house men appear in the list as class 51. In 1916 their rate of earnings was $18\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour; today they average a little over threefold that amount, or a decimal over 56 cents an hour.

In 1916 a car repairer, listed under class 23, found in his pay envelope $28\frac{1}{2}$ cents for each hour he worked. His envelope today averages 84 cents for every hour of work. The increase is slightly under 200 per cent.

What a hostler does for a horse an I. C. C. class 50 "hostler" does for an engine. He takes the machine when it enters the "stable," cleans and furbishes it for the next run. His rate of earnings in 1916 was a little over 25 cents an hour, today it is a little under 75 cents an hour.

Station service employes in 1916 were earning a little more than 20 cents an hour; today their rate is a little less than 60 cents an hour.

"Road freight firemen and helpers" received 34 cents an hour in 1916; they receive 98 cents an hour today.

Unskilled laborers in the employ of the New Haven drew 31 4-5 cents an hour in 1916; they draw 83 3-5 cents today.

The day's earnings for a yardmaster in 1916 were \$4.42;

they are \$9.27 today. Policemen and watchmen received \$2.28 a day in 1916; their rate today is \$4.91 a day. Electricians, class 20, earned \$2.99 a day five years ago. They earn \$7.28 today. Section foremen in the interval have gone up from \$3.15 a day to \$6.23.

Other increases that appear in the list may thus be tabulated:

Class	Earnings by the hour			Per cent Increase
	Last Qr.		Increase	
	1916	1920		
Station Agents, Telegraphers	24½c	72c	47½c	194%
Yard Firemen and Helpers . .	26c	71c	45c	175%
Road Freight Brakemen and Flagmen	32½c	89½c	57c	176%
Road Passenger Firemen and Helpers	47c	92½c	45½c	95%
Road Passenger Baggage-men	43c	90c	47c	109%
Road Passenger Brakemen .	43c	93c	50c	116%

These facts explain the present situation of the New Haven system. Boiled down to the shortest possible statement of its present emergency that situation is this: In the year 1916 it showed a balance on the right side of the ledger of \$26,000,000; in the year 1920, with a business a half larger, it showed a balance on the wrong side of the ledger, a deficit, of \$3,000,000.

Here let it be noticed that these ratios are not computed in terms of wages but of earnings. The scales of pay will show figures somewhat lower than those above cited from the New Haven's official return. For there is a difference between the amount a man must be paid under the union scale and the amount he actually receives. A man may work for \$1 an hour and yet his earnings, averaged over a period of several weeks may reach a much larger sum per hour. A few examples not only will make this clear, but they will also serve to illustrate still further the conditions under which the railroads must operate nowadays.

You employ 100 men. You pay them \$1 an hour for an eight-hour day. For overtime you pay them

time-and-a-half, or \$1.50 an hour. At the end of three months you decide to ascertain what the earnings of these men have averaged per hour for the entire quarter. Some of them have had no excess hours, some a little and others a good deal of overtime. Your accountants figure up the entire amount you have paid these men for the thirteen weeks and divide the total by the whole number of working hours. The result will be their average earnings per hour. Their rate or scale is \$1 an hour, but the average earnings of the hundred men will have been considerably more than \$1 an hour. The Interstate Commerce Commission asks for average earnings and the New Haven presented them. On straight time a man gets \$8 for eight hours. For four hours' overtime he gets \$6. The entire twelve hours yield him \$14. His basic wage rate is \$1; his earnings are \$1.16 2-3 an hour. That explanation covers most of the supposed discrepancies.

But in certain classifications, especially in the passenger service, overtime work is not paid for at the time-and-a-half rate, but "pro rata." What then?

A conductor brings a train from New York to Boston, 232 miles. Including the half-hour between reporting time and starting time, he is on duty seven hours. But his "day" is computed not only in terms of hours but of miles, as the Herald has heretofore explained, and 150 miles is a day's work. He has completed a day therefore when he is two-thirds of the way to Boston. For the eighty-two remaining miles he is paid at the rate of 3 1-3 cents a mile, which adds \$2.73 to his regular day's pay. His scale rate per hour or day will be one thing; to get his earnings per hour you must divide by seven the total amount he receives for that run.

Once more—here are some passenger trainmen who have a "turnaround". They start this morning with a train four hours out; they wait four hours at the city

terminal; they make a return run of four hours. The spread of their day is twelve hours; they work eight hours. Suppose the company uses some of the mid-day waiting time and employs the men to shift some cars a short distance, to take a pay car over to South Boston, or what not. For that added service the men must be allowed five extra hours. They work twelve hours; they are paid for seventeen hours. Their earnings by the hour will average much more than the scale rate per hour. If their scale were \$1 they would receive \$17, which would be an average of \$1.41 2-3 for every hour of actual service.

And in case the men spend the four hours in the middle of the day merely in waiting? Here emerges the fact that the Interstate Commerce Commission requires its information in terms of hours worked, not of hours paid for. These men actually work eight hours. If the scale rate then is \$1 they get \$12 for the twelve hours credited to them, but their earnings average \$1.50 for every hour of working time.

Obviously the thing of greatest importance is not what the scale awards a man by the hour as a basic wage, but what under the rules and working agreements the railroads actually pay the men for each hour or day they actually work. The I. C. C. divides the numerous crafts and railway workers of every sort into sixty-eight classes. The New Haven takes the employes class by class as thus divided and ascertains their average earnings for the last quarter as compared with their average earnings in 1916. One class may contain seventeen or 170 or 1170 men. In each class earnings per man will vary. One man one month may be paid \$5 or \$50 more than his next neighbor. By the scale all the men in any one class are paid, however, on the common level. But under the rules they vary in the amounts their respective pay envelopes contain. The company com-

putes the total amount paid to the men in each classification and strikes an average for the hours worked. These earnings per hour almost invariably amount to more than the scale.

“*McADOO MECHANICS*”

A CERTAIN New England railroad has in its employ an Italian who handles stone at a point a few miles out of Boston. A few years ago he was known as a chain stoner; he chained and loaded stone. The job required no skill; this employer was simply a laborer. Then the road changed the manner of handling the stone and installed a 40-ton crane at the quarry, operated by a common electric lever. The laborer had had no experience with a crane and in no sense could he be considered a skilled man. But, because he now loaded stone with a crane, under the rules he acquired the rating of a skilled mechanic and he had to be paid accordingly.

He had worked a long time at 48 cents an hour, a short time at 50 cents. By the new rating his pay went up to 85 cents an hour. Moreover, under the retroactive operation of the wage award the railway had to “adjust” his back pay to September 18, 1918. That is, this laborer, knowing nothing whatever of electrical machinery and doing nothing that any plain workman might not do as well, is costing the road \$6.80 a day instead of \$4, and has received \$900 in a lump sum as back pay.

The arbitrary definitions and classifications imposed upon the roads during federal control have produced curious conditions which would be amusing were they not so expensive. Director-General McAdoo by his now famous supplement No. 4, to General Order No. 27, dated July 25, 1918, and the numerous supplements and interpretations which followed, created by signing his name a great number of “skilled mechanics.” These

men are commonly called today "McAdoo mechanics." They did not become mechanics by acquiring skill and experience. They simply were reclassified.

For instance: The man who prepares a car for the repair men, that is who takes the screws out from the seats and racks and removes the racks and seats, thus became a skilled mechanic. He strips a car for repairs and is called a stripper. The rules now make any man who works "above the trucks" of a car a skilled mechanic, and he must be paid accordingly. By that supplement as interpreted officially many thousands of "handy" men paid before federal control a little more than the pay of common laborers are now receiving 85 cents an hour and time and a half for overtime.

That supplement No. 4 to General Order No. 27 is a most complicated document. It classifies employes in the mechanical departments of the roads as machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, sheetmetal workers, electrical workers (first and second classes), carmen and molders. With each classification there are apprentices and helpers. On September 1 appeared Addendum No. 1 to this Supplement No. 4, and that was followed by Interpretation No. 1 to Addendum No. 1 to Supplement 4. Then in order came Addendum 2, with several interpretations, and Amendment 1 to Supplement 4, and so through page after page of the official 212-paged book. So that in figuring on the wages of these classes of employes the railway accountants are dealing for example with such directions as appear in "Interpretation No. 8 to Supplement No. 4, Interpretations and Addenda thereof to General Order No. 27."

The classifications thus made have multiplied by two, by three, by four, sometimes even by six the number of men required to do simple jobs that could be done today by one man, or two men, as they were done a few years ago. Thus:

To produce the necessary draft in the short smoke stack of an ordinary locomotive steam is discharged through a nozzle at the end of a pipe from the boiler. The tips on these nozzles have to be changed at times. Once a single handy man could do that job. A single handy man could do it today. But under the rules which now the railroads must obey it takes six men to do that job. The door at the front of the locomotive must be opened by a boilermaker, because this is the work the rules assign to a boilermaker, and he must have his helper at hand to hand him his tools. The blower pipe must be removed by a pipeman, because the rules assign him that kind of work, and his helper must hand him his tools. Then the machinist and his helper may remove the old tip and substitute a new one. The pipeman and his helper having replaced the pipe and the boilermaker and his helper having closed the door again, the job is officially completed.

Coupling and uncoupling the hose between two railway cars is not so hard nor so dangerous as hitching and unhitching a span of mules, but the couplers are now classed as carmen, they are paid 80 cents an hour, and with the overtime for Sundays and holidays they average about \$215 a month, and they actually work 7 hours and 40 minutes a day. Before federal control they received from 28 to 34 cents an hour, and straight time for overtime, and their average was about \$96 a month for a 10-hour day.

This section foreman and his men are on their way to work. They will look after a bit of track a couple of miles out. Their motor car takes them over the rails morning and evening. The car is simpler than a farm tractor. But if it breaks down they are permitted, under the rules, to make only such temporary repairs as will enable them to get to the terminal. They could put the car into perfect shape again, but that is ma-

chinists' work, and either a machinist must come out to make repairs or the car must go to the shop.

A New England lumberman and a New England railroad man the other day talked over their respective labor situations. Said the lumberman: "We pay our millwrights from \$4.50 to \$5 for a 10-hour day. These men do many sorts of work. They repair a steam engine or any part of the mill machinery, and do the tasks of the carpenter, pipefitter, machinist or blacksmith, as occasion requires." Said the railroad man: "We have no millwrights, so called, but we have men who do precisely the same kind of work. We pay them 85 cents an hour, and occasionally 90 cents. But if we worked 10 hours a day they would get \$6.80 for eight hours, then time and a half for the ninth hour, or \$1.27½, and for the tenth hour, under the rules, they would have to be paid for five hours, at the regular rate of \$4.25. That makes in all \$12.32½. And these men are limited to one minutely described kind of work. They cannot serve as general utility men. The kinds of work you mention would have to be divided among five or six crafts." "Well," mused the lumberman, "I don't wonder that it costs money to keep the railroads going."

One more illustration to show how the overtime charges as now assessed penalize the railroad treasuries and the public who, of course, put into the treasuries the money they contain:

A wrecking crew at 8 in the morning starts to clear up a wreck some 50 miles distant from the home terminal. The crew complete the clearing of the main track at 6 in the evening. The outfit has sleeping facilities and the men tie up for the night. At 7 next morning they begin picking up scrap and refuse and at 2 in the afternoon report back at their home base.

They have been away from their home shop 30 hours.

They have actually worked nine hours. They are paid for 42 hours. Under the rules it figures out thus:

For the first eight hours, reckoning from their start from the shop, straight time. For the next eight hours, ending at midnight, time and a half, or 12 hours for 8. From midnight to 8 in the morning, double time, or 16 hours for 8. From that time to quitting time at the home base, six hours straight.

Included in that computation is the item of 16 hours' pay for their eight hours of sleeping time.

Wage wastes of this kind cannot be justified from any point of view. No one possibly can defend the payment of high prices for work that is not done at all. Or a rule that makes necessary the payment of 85 cents an hour for what a helper could do as well for 64 cents or an unskilled laborer for 48½ cents. There can be no valid reason why six men should be used to do what one man, or two men, can do as well, and sometimes quicker.

In an address the other day before the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, Elisha Lee, vice-president of the Pennsylvania railroad, in charge of the Eastern region, said: "Railroad work ought to be well paid. It is impossible to overstate its responsibility or the fundamental necessity of its character. Many important classes of railroad men are entitled to be designated as the very highest types of American skilled labor. They are among the best of our citizens." The public will agree with him.

And the public also will agree with Mr. Lee in this statement: "When machinery began on a large scale to supersede hand labor in manufacturing plants, workmen bitterly fought the change, in the belief that if a machine could do the work of several men there would be fewer jobs. We all know that was a mistaken view, and that mechanical production has not only greatly increased the number of jobs open, but has paved the

way for the astonishing advance in standards of living on the part of all classes of population, which has been perhaps the most striking economic feature of our time.

“Many railroad men today are being just as badly deceived by those leaders who tell them that by making their work slow, difficult, complicated and expensive, and insisting upon an unnecessary number of different kinds of mechanics working on a given job, the earnings and prosperity of railroad employes will be increased. That will not happen at all, for various reasons, one of which is that the public, upon realizing the facts, will step in and stop it.”

HOW THE GLUE BOY BECAME AN UPHOLSTERER

“**BILLY**” is a 17-year-old boy employed in the upholstery department of the shops of a New England railroad. His duties had consisted almost entirely of stripping the plush from the seats of passenger coaches, beating it, and turning it over for replacement in the cars. He did no constructive work; he did not put the plush back upon the seats. The compressed air system of cleaning was not in use in these shops.

And then, like the boys in the novels, a fortune dropped out of the clouds and crammed his pockets with cash. For he became a “McAdoo mechanic.” It happened this way:

The skilled upholsterers in that shop often were bothered about their glue being “wrong.” The glue pots were placed in the openings in a heater much as kettles are set into the openings in an ordinary kitchen stove. Pieces of chip glue were dropped into the pots on the range for melting, and the upholsterers hated to be hindered by glue of the wrong consistency. So they turned to “Billy” for help. He had time on his hands and liked to be busy.

Why shouldn't he add this glue pot to his ordinary duties and keep the glue "right"? They wished the task on him and for many months he spent some time every day at the glue range.

And then "Billy's" case became a subject for official adjustment. Something in the rules made the mixing and heating of glue a part of the regular job of an upholsterer. "Billy" had no other connection with the upholsterer's craft. He merely kept the glue hot. But because of that fact the Wage Board ruled that he must be rated as a first-class upholsterer and paid accordingly.

Of course, the back pay rules also applied to him. In his case the back pay went back to January 1, 1918, so that at one time "Billy" was handed more than \$1200 in cash, a gift from the railroads by direction of the government.

He is classed as an upholsterer and paid as an upholsterer, yet he has none of the skill or experience of an upholsterer. Mr. McAdoo was director-general of the railways when the order was issued making such things possible, and "Billy" is a skilled man by executive fiat—a "McAdoo mechanic."

For several years "James Brown" has worked as a clerk in a New England railway freight office. At the time the government took over the control of the nation's transportation system he worked nine hours a day and was paid at the rate of \$2.25 a day, or \$15.75 for a seven-day week. Under Supplement 7 to General Order 27, dated September 1, 1918, and having to do with "rates of pay and rules for overtime and working conditions for all clerical forces in all departments," he received an increase making his rate \$3.07 a day. Under the Endicott award of 1919 he had an additional increase of 40 cents, making his wages \$3.47 a day. The Labor Board award of 1920 added \$1.04 more to his pay envelope, so that his daily wage became \$4.51, or \$31.57 a week.

However, "James Brown" was now working on a basis of an eight-hour day, but spending nine hours every day at his desk. For that additional hour he was drawing pay at the overtime, or time-and-a-half, rate, which put 85 cents more every day to his credit on the books of the office, or \$5.95 every week. Therefore, the total amount paid him every seven days now is \$37.52 and for precisely the same kind and amount of service that he was rendering five years ago at \$15.75 a week.

But the accounting job in his case is by no means yet completed. The back pay has to be calculated under the retroactive feature of the board's award. The figures already cited are on the basis of a 365-day year. The accountant therefore multiplies the basic eight-hour-a-day wage of \$4.51 by 365 and gets \$1646.15. He now takes out the 52 Sundays and the seven holidays, leaving 306, and divides that \$1646.15 by that total number of "regular days" and gets \$5.379 a day as a basis for the back pay calculation. The difference between \$4.51 and \$5.379 is 86 9-10 cents, and the road must pay "James Brown" that amount for every day covered by the retroactive requirement of the award.

But—one item more, please: There's that ninth hour, the overtime hour, to consider. If the road must pay this clerk 86 9-10 cents back pay for every eight-hour day, then it is paying at the rate of about 11 cents an hour, and the overtime or time-and-a-half hour must go in at about 16 cents. So the accountants will figure back on this basis to January 1, 1920, and pay "James Brown" a good-sized lump sum.

As a matter of fact the operation of the rulings illustrated in this authentic case is going to cost one division of a certain New England road within a few dollars of \$30,000 and on all ten of its divisions, varying in size as they do, it will take \$250,000 to satisfy these back pay charges. That's the kind of work that keeps pencils and

adding machines busy these days in every office of every railroad in New England and of the entire United States. This case of "James Brown" helps to show how it is that the railways talk about hundreds of millions of back pay money that the wage awards exact from them.

And employes are making sure that not a penny of any sum due under all the rulings and interpretations and supplements to "G. O. 27" shall go uncollected. For instance, consider this case of "James Brown" again. He represents a class of men paid by the week. We have noticed how the government established a basis for calculation by multiplying the week's wage by 52 and dividing by 306. Recently the clerks came forward with a demand for one more day's pay a year. They pointed out that you must add one to the product of 52 and seven in order to get the 365 of a full year. Which is quite correct, and indicates how watchful the employes are that no application of the complicated accounting system of the roads under the transportation act shall elude their attention. That demand for the extra day was made not long ago by the Clerks' Union of a New England line.

Further to illustrate how the rules and the overtime inflict punitive charges upon the railroads, and through them the public, owing to circumstances quite beyond their control: Here is the case of a mechanic working at his regular occupation in the shops on a passenger car. He has continued one hour over the regular day, so that at 5 in the afternoon he has one hour at the time-and-a-half rate to his credit. He has just stepped from the car when another employe pulls the handle off the water valve. The foreman is on the spot and calls the mechanic back to fix this valve. In four minutes he has performed the task. In two minutes more, at precisely 5.06 P.M., he has checked out at the time clock a hundred yards away. All he had done in these four minutes was to

loosen two screws, put back the handle, and tighten the two screws. Any tyro could have done it, only the rules wouldn't let him.

And for those six minutes the road had to pay him full five hours. The reason is perfectly plain "under the rules." He has completed a day. He has worked one hour overtime at the half-pay premium for the first hour over. Now he works six more minutes and not a minute beyond that extra hour may an employe work without being allowed pay for five hours.

Anyone who may refer to the shop crafts agreement so-called, dated September 20, 1919, will notice numbers of rules that show how the railways are penalized for sums that in the aggregate mount to huge totals. Thus Rule 161 provides that "men shall not be required to work on cars taken from trains to repair tracks," which means, without going into the technical details, that instead of being used to the best advantage in repair work they must be paid for lying idle. And a study of Rules 2 and 12 will show how second shifts have to be employed which after working a half-day or less have nothing to do for the balance of their day. And in Rules 40 and 41 one may discern how the labor supply is restricted by the limitation of apprentices. Other rules, six in all, restrict the labor supply of the roads by requiring four years' experience of an employe, although he would be entirely competent to do many things requiring little skill. And Rules 62, 79, 111, 226, 140, 141, 142, 143, and 154, the "classification rules," work out in such a way that small skill is paid as high a rate as high skill, thereby discouraging the ambitious and encouraging inefficiency to be content with what it does and what it leaves undone.

The operation of these rules—that is one way the railway treasuries are depleted and the roads forced into receiverships. The other has to do, of course, with the flat increases in wages. For instance: In any railway

yard the men will work in three tricks, from 7 A. M. to 3 P. M., from 3 to 11 P. M., and from 11 P. M. to 7 A. M. For the first trick a brakeman used to get \$2.80 a day, for the second \$2.88, and for the third \$2.96. The same men for the same work now get \$6.48 each. The flat increases have come in three increments, under "G. O. 27," and Supplements 16 and 24 respectively. The same ratios hold true all along the line.

However, something happened the other day in a New England office that never had happened before. The management wonder if it ever will happen again. A man 30 years in the service of the line, an agent in charge of a small station, checking baggage, delivering freight, selling tickets, but doing no telegraphing, came into the accountant's room with a bad case of conscience. He told his hours and his pay. They were pronounced O. K. And he said: "I thought I was getting too much money. If I am entitled to it, I don't earn it. It's highway robbery. You say I must take it. Well, say, could I report a smaller number of hours, and reduce my own pay? Would that be all right by the rules?"

Labor's First Duty

ORGANIZED labor today more than all else needs to emphasize less its rights and more its duties.

The leaders of more than 100 trades unions the other day in Washington drew up a "bill of rights." That bill claimed certain "rights" which no one disputes. Labor had no need to demand the right to organize; labor now possesses it. Labor had no reason to demand the "right to and practice of collective bargaining"; labor now has that right.

There are many fair and reasonable claims that the public readily and unanimously grants to labor. First and most fundamental of these is the right to receive a

good day's pay for a good day's work. In the determination of what constitutes a good day's wage many factors must be considered—the cost of living, the rates paid in various lines of labor, the degree of experience and skill involved in any work done, the general conditions under which the service is performed. Few employers, and certainly not the public as a whole, have any desire to stint labor. The public is quite willing to see labor receive liberal and generous treatment. The American people believe in a fair deal and always have tended to sympathize with the "under dog" in times of industrial clashing.

What the public objects to is something altogether different. The county grand jury at Cleveland on June 9, 1920, after having devoted a fourth of a year to a careful examination of the housing situation in that city, declared the principal reason for the big boost in the cost of building was "the refusal of labor to do a real day's work in return for a real day's pay." There is the sore spot in the present situation. Union labor beyond all other things needs to consider what duty it owes to the community. The good will of the community is the greatest asset of labor.

The public today reluctantly is compelled to believe that unionism stands not only for the "rights" lately emphasized in Washington, but for a great mass of rules that decrease enormously the service labor renders for the wage it receives. The Herald lately has cited many illustrations of the way these rules work in the railway service the country over as well as in New England and in the building trades in Boston. Numerous letters commenting on these editorials are daily received at this office, indicating how intense is public interest in all the questions at issue. Of the hundreds of actual cases cited possible error is pointed out in but two or three. Every day brings its tale of personal experience from some one

who has suffered "under the union rules." But one distinction always should be borne in mind—no one objects to real pay for real service; everybody does object to paying exorbitant sums where no service or only slacker service is rendered.

Many union rules lessen production and impair efficiency. The unions strive to restrict output, to level all workers down and up to one dead level, to limit the labor supply by strict apprenticeship rules and high admission fees, to slow up the speed of production in order to reap the larger returns of overtime. The United States commissioner of labor in his eleventh special report said: "It has been found that there is in the building trades a very general feeling that by working slower the work will be made to last longer." The report quotes a rule to prevent a foreman "rushing his men." A carpenter's union fines "any member who does an unreasonable amount of work." The unions prohibit the use of labor-saving implements, prescribe the size of paint brushes, require "under the rules" that men shall receive a dollar an hour day and night for doing what does not need to be done at all, compel the employment of skilled men for duties that ordinary unskilled men could do as well, and here in Boston double time for overtime which directly invites the worker to shirk through the regular hours. One of the most excessive demands we have noticed was that of the building trades in Cleveland, where they are said to have announced in the newspapers their intention to erect no buildings to be occupied by individuals or firms not approved by union labor.

Undoubtedly large numbers of workers themselves see the iniquity of these rules, realize the damage they are doing the whole union cause, and understand the injury they work upon the community as a whole. Such rules tend to the deterioration of the character of the individual workman. Not all American workmen like to

take "big money" for work not done; they like to feel that they have earned what they receive. Once in the union they are helpless; they must abide by the rules and obey the leaders. The best thing these leaders can do is to talk less about "rights" that no one denies and look about for ways of increasing production and stimulating efficiency. If labor dislikes the public's opinion of its present practices it has only itself to blame. Once owners and employers and the people in general see the rank and file of the union workers really getting on the job there will be no trouble in agreeing on a wage scale.

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