

REVIEW COMMITTEE DECISION

Review Committee File Number 329
General Office Grievance Number 16

Subject of the Grievance

The grievant, a Key Punch Machine Operator B in the Central Customer Accounts Department, was employed on June 27, 1960. During the period of her employment she was absent a total of thirty seven days due to various illnesses. The records also show that she was absent on other occasions, and tardy a number of times.

About a month prior to completing her probationary period the employee's Supervisor discussed with her the matter of excessive absenteeism. A review of her sick leave record at that time reveals that she had been absent seven and one half (7½) days. She became a regular employee on December 27, 1960. The grievant's Supervisor states that on April 18 it was necessary to inform the grievant that her absenteeism record was again excessive and that if she did not improve it would be necessary to let her go; the grievant, however, states she has no recollection of being told she would be laid off. On June 21, 1961 she was again counseled about her absenteeism. On October 16 she was told that her absenteeism record had not improved following the previous discussion. During this discussion she also said that she had consulted a physician concerning the nature of her illnesses, and, as he recommended two operations which he believed would improve her general health, she had made plans to enter the hospital on November 28. During a second discussion on the same day the employee, believing that she was to be discharged, requested that she be allowed to resign. At the conclusion of the interview the employee's resignation was accepted. Shortly thereafter she rescinded her resignation, and was told that she would be discharged effective November 7, 1961.

Discussion

If it were necessary to look only to the cold statistics developed in the course of the grievant's employment there might be little reason to propose an alternative to the Department's course of action. In the short course of her employment, only sixteen months, her attendance record was far from satisfactory. Her numerous and irregular absences, if continued, could adversely affect the production of the Department. Further, the employee was counseled on at least three occasions regarding her attendance record.

But, aside from the statistics, other matters have been considered before arriving at a decision in this case. It is noted that at the conclusion of each interview, except the last one, her Supervisors believed that she could overcome her health problems and thus improve her attendance record. In view of this it appears that the desired effect of the discussions was to prod the employee into seeking correction of an underlying health problem. To the Department's knowledge no corrective action was taken, and their final action was predicated on the facts as known to them. However, unknown to her Supervisor, the employee arranged to have two operations performed which it was believed would improve her health. This was not brought to the attention of her Supervisors until the last interview which led to the termination of her employment.

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It is difficult to understand why she delayed apprising her Supervisor of the fact that she had arranged for the corrective surgery until the October 16 discussion. However, the Review Committee has learned that the grievant did not abandon her plans to undergo corrective surgery and is at present hospitalized. Although admittedly the employee's action is belated, still she has endeavored to remove the cause of her frequent illnesses and there is now reason to expect that she will be capable of maintaining a satisfactory attendance record in the future.

A final factor is given consideration in this grievance, i.e., the corrective surgery was not performed until after she had been discharged. As a result her employee hospitalization insurance had thereby terminated, even though the employee had paid the November premium. The effect, here, is that if the discharge is upheld the grievant will be required to stand the hospitalization cost, which she thought would be covered by the insurance when she made arrangements to have the corrective surgery performed.

Decision

Considering all of the points brought out in the above discussion, it is the decision of the Review Committee that the grievant shall be reinstated as a regular employee and given a leave of absence without pay from November 7, 1961. The conditions of such leave shall be that it is granted for the purpose of having both operations performed and that she will be re-instated in her former classification when she is capable of returning to work, all in accordance with the provisions of Title 6 of the Clerical Agreement between Company and Union. Further, she will be returned to work with the strict understanding that she will be required to maintain a satisfactory attendance record, and if she fails to do so it will be cause for termination of her employment.

FOR UNION:

Kenneth Stevenson
W. M. Fleming
L. L. Mitchell

By L. L. Mitchell

Date Dec 12, 1961

FOR COMPANY:

E. F. Sibley
C. L. Yager
V. J. Thompson

By [Signature]

Date December 12, 1961