

REVIEW COMMITTEE DECISION

Review Committee Files Nos. 1128 and 1129
De Sabla Division Grievance No. D.Gr/C 10-71-10
Colgate Division Grievance No. D.Gr/C 12-71-5

Subject of the Grievances

The cases, although brought in separate Divisions, concern the propriety of Meter Readers testing the potential coils of polyphase meters with a magnet.

Discussion

Neither of the grievances is very explicit with regard to details, but this Committee understands that the test requires very little skill or technical knowledge to administer, takes but a second to perform, and, finally, involves no repair on the part of the Meter Reader if he finds a malfunctioning coil.

The Committee is of the further opinion that the tests performed in the course of the day represent a very small part of the Meter Reader's routine. This does not infer, however, that the Committee does not recognize its underlying importance to the parties. For the Union, it represents a possible addition of a new duty for Meter Readers that is not at this time reflected in their compensation; or, perhaps the removal of that duty from some other classification. As to the Company's interest, although the impact may be slight on an individual-daily basis, it certainly is a more efficient method than having another classification follow behind the Meter Reader to perform the test.

These considerations lie more in the field of bargaining than subjects for resolution in the grievance procedure. However, if the tests do not fall within the usual scope of the Meter Reader function, they are subject to grievance.

The question here then is whether Meter Readers customarily look for mechanical or physical defects that might affect the proper billing of a customer's account. The answer to this question is: yes. It is part of their routine to note in the field book any fact that might denote an infraction of a service rule, a hazard such as a gas leak, or any reason that they might note by visually examining the meter that would indicate a malfunction. The difference between most of this and the grievance here is that in testing the coil he performs a physical act as opposed to mere observation. In short, he passes a magnet over the coil rather than just eye-balling the meter for defects.

Decision

Notwithstanding the use of a magnet, the basic purpose of this simple test is to note a malfunction and in this respect is no different than other visual observations required of Meter Readers.

FOR UNION:

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By s/L. N. Foss

Date November 1, 1972

FOR COMPANY:

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Date November 1, 1972