

INLAND STEEL COMPANY

- and -

UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA)  
Local Union No. 1010

)  
) Grievance No. 15-F-9  
) Docket No. IH-93-93-12/27/56  
) Arbitration No. 204  
) Opinion and Award

Appearances:

For the Company:

William Dillon, Assistant Superintendent,  
Labor Relations  
Tom Tikalski, Divisional Supervisor,  
Labor Relations

For the Union:

Cecil Clifton, International Staff Representative  
Joseph Wolanin, Acting Chairman, Grievance Committee  
Sylvester Logan, Vice Chairman, Grievance Committee

The question presented in this case is whether the Company may reprimand an employee for poor workmanship resulting in a substantial production delay and loss of steel during his temporary relief of an employee in a higher rated job in his sequence.

On October 16, 1956 the grievant, J. Roque, was a Coil Strapper in the Mill Sequence of the Promotional Sequence of the 44" Hot Strip Department. Due to extended operations he had been scheduled and reported for work as a Roll Hand in that sequence. On the day mentioned he was asked by the Crop Shearman to relieve him at his equipment while he absented himself for personal needs. During this short relief period he permitted a crop end to go through the #2 Scale Breaker and into the #5 Mill. This resulted in a cobble in the #5 Mill, a loss of 8500 pounds of steel and a fifty minute production delay. The Company placed a written reprimand in the grievant's personnel file stating that any further repetition of the fault may be cause for discipline. The grievance notice claims that the reprimand was "unjust and unwarranted in light of all the circumstances" and requests that the reprimand be withdrawn.

There is no conflict in the testimony as to the fact of negligence and poor workmanship. The issue between the parties is whether, in view of the extent of training and experience of the grievant and the fact that the description of the job of Roll Hand does not refer to the relief of Crop Shearman, fault is properly attributable to the grievant.

The Company claims, and the Union does not dispute, that there has been a practice of Roll Hands affording temporary personal relief to Crop Shearmen since the 44" Mill was established in 1938. When a Crop Shearman desires relief for personal reasons he asks a Roll Hand to operate the equipment for him. According to the Company, the average relief period is 12 minutes and usually occurs twice a day. Manifestly, this system of relief is advantageous both to the Company and to the Roll Hands who are afforded an opportunity to acquire experience on a higher rated job. A Roll Hand who is inexperienced is not required to perform as reliefman, according to the Company. The Company claims, however, that the operation of the controls to prevent the occurrence involved in this grievance can be learned in about two days and that care is exercised not to permit Roll Hands to relieve Crop Shearers until they are acquainted with the requirements of the job and know how to operate the controls.

The Assistant Superintendent of the Mill testified, without contradiction, that every employee, including Roll Hands, permitted to work in the Crop Shearman's occupation is carefully impressed with the importance of being certain that the crop end of the strip is discarded by dropping it down a chute and into a receptacle; and that if this is not done a cobble will result with consequential loss of steel and production time. In the instant case the grievant stated that he was under the impression that the crop end had been discarded. This was not the case, however, and he might have ascertained this either visually or by listening for the fall of the crop end into the receptacle. He candidly and frankly conceded that he knew of the importance of discarding the crop ends and the consequences of not doing so.

The Union contended that grievant had not been adequately trained in the performance of the requirements of the Crop Shearman's job and, accordingly, should not be held accountable for his fault. The facts in the record, however, do not support this contention. The Company reports that from May 3, 1955 to October 16, 1956 grievant served 80 turns as Roll Hand. It seems reasonable to assume, in the light of the well established relief practice testified to, that on a large number of these turns he furnished temporary relief to Crop Shearmen. The actual number is not known. Furthermore, on 13 turns between October 2, 1955 and August 11, 1956 he was actually scheduled as a Crop Shearman and received the rate of that occupation. On 15 turns, some of which are identical with those for which he had been scheduled as Crop Shearman, he was scheduled for training and breaking-in as Crop Shearman. On these turns he sat alongside a Crop Shearman to observe working procedures and, occasionally, operated the controls. The grievant testified that he operated the controls more frequently in the later stages of his training.

In view of the extent of the grievant's experience and training in the Crop Shearman's occupation, it cannot be found that it was unreasonable or unjust for the Company to reprimand him and hold him accountable for his failure to dispose of the crop end. Grievant was aware of his responsibilities and must be considered to have acquired sufficient mastery of the equipment to have known how to avoid the damage that was caused.

The fact that the job duties for Roll Hand, the occupation for which the grievant was scheduled on the day in question, do not include Crop Shearman's relief, is not an argument against this conclusion. The record contains no evidence contradicting the assertion that the relief practice described has been regularly and consistently followed since the mill was placed into operation. The enumeration and listing of job duties in a job description are illustrative and not exclusive, especially in a situation where a practice is so long and well established, as that of Roll Hands relieving Crop Shearmen. Having accepted the benefits of this practice, and being entirely familiar with it, the grievant may not refuse the responsibility for proper performance of the duties which are an established part of the work of the Roll Hand.

AWARD

The grievance is denied.

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Peter Seitz,  
Assistant Permanent Arbitrator

Approved:

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David L. Cole,  
Permanent Arbitrator

Dated: October 2, 1957