A Comparative Study of Grievances in the Meatpacking Industry

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GRIEVANCES IN THE MEATPACKING INDUSTRY

by

Thomas Bernard Ewers

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social and Industrial Relations

February 1957
LIFE

Thomas Bernard Ewers was born in Jamaica, Long Island, New York on June 23, 1931.

He was graduated from Saint Ignatius High School, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1949, and from Loyola University of Chicago in February, 1955 with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.

From July, 1952 through October, 1952 the author was employed by Swift & Company in their wholesale market, Union Stockyards. From November, 1952 to November, 1954 he was on a military leave of absence and returned to Swift & Company in November, 1954. At this time he was placed in the Standards Department of the company. He undertook his graduate studies at Loyola University in February, 1955.

Permission was granted to the author to do the necessary research for this thesis in October, 1955 by the Industrial Relations Department of Swift & Company. On March 30, 1956 the author resigned from Swift & Company.
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CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

Anyone who works for a living can always find something wrong with his job, his pay or the people with whom he works. In some instances there is not a thing a person can do about it. In other cases a person, who feels that he has a legitimate complaint, can bring his grievance to a grievance procedure mechanism, set up under the union-management contract, for solution or remedy. This study will attempt to discuss such grievance procedures at three plants of the same organization in the meatpacking industry.

Purpose

The author chose for his research the three Swift & Company plants at Chicago, Kansas City, Kansas and East Saint Louis. Such a choice was made to supplement research, already accomplished at these three plants by the Loyola Human Relations Research Group. The three plants were suitable to the author's study in that he wanted to make a comparative study of grievance procedures at plants within the same industry. With the exception of size the plants were similar in most respects. They differed in the racial composition of the work forces and the kind of union in each plant. Using these differences as a starting point in each plant
chapter and then bringing them together in the final chapter, the writer demonstrates possible explanations for the differences in numbers and kinds of grievances at the three plants.

A case study, such as this, on grievances at three separate plants within the same company should yield information about grievance procedures not previously known in the field of industrial relations. This study will discuss actual grievants, racial composition of the work force and the union in each of the three plants. This may have been done in other studies on an individual plant. However, this thesis will compare three plants of one company in an attempt to offer some explanations for the variance in numbers and kind of grievances. The reader should be advised that the study itself has somewhat limited transfer value to other industries because the type of work done in the meatpacking industry, the working conditions and the working people are, to a certain extent, unique to the industry. There are several factors influencing the number and kind of grievances which any one plant may have, such factors being of paramount importance in contrast to the many minor factors which may be involved.

It is the intention of the author in writing this thesis to discuss these factors of a grievance in each of the three plants separately and then compare them with reference to the three plants together. From such a comparison we learn that there are differences in the numbers and kinds of grievances among plants of the same company. Further we see possible reasons for these differences. And perhaps, we may learn how to deal better with
grievances in this and other industries.

The grievance program is an integral part of American industrial life. Grievances reveal much about the workers and the plant in which they work as well as the union to which they belong. It can be said that there are two main functions of the grievance procedure system: communication and ventilation. The grievance mechanism as outlined in every collectively bargained contract is the best means of communication upwards by which higher management comes to know what is going on every day in the plant among the workers, the union and the supervisors. Without such communication upwards as well as downwards, which can also come through the grievance procedure, employer-employee relations would still be the same as at the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Ventilation as the second function of the grievance procedure is equally important as the function of communication. Harold W. Davey in his Contemporary Collective Bargaining states that, "A genuine grievance requires an airing, even if it is not strictly in order under the existing contract."¹ A worker who must harbor his complaints and not be entitled to an airing can be a dangerous worker as well as a poor producer.

Many such workers can combine to cause major work stoppages and hinder the nation's economy. The grievance mechanism allows every worker who so wishes to speak his complaint and have a hearing, if needs be, by the top middle management of the organization. The grievance system has become an integral part of collective bargaining, which in turn has become the most important facet of our entire industrial relations field. Without the handling of grievances the collectively bargained contract is unworkable.

Definition

A clear, concise definition of a grievance can be stated thusly: "A grievance is anything connected with his job which an employee thinks or feels is wrong." This is a general definition of a grievance which can be applied to this study. The word "feels" should be noted as quite often the feelings of a worker enter into the grievance picture rather than his rational faculties.

The three union-management contracts in force at the time of the author's research give a more inclusive, particularized definition of what is to be considered as a grievance. The agreements in substance define a grievance as any difference between the company and the union, between any employees and the company or between employees, or any local trouble of any kind arising in the plant, pertaining to matters involved in the

\[2\text{William Spriegel and Edward Schulz, Elements of Supervision, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1942, p 58.}\]
agreement or incident to employment relations. 3

Methods of Research

1954 was the year in which all the grievances mentioned in this study took place. This year was selected by the author because all of the grievances of 1954 had been settled by the time he began his research in October, 1955. The research work was completed in late January, 1956 after a week long trip to Kansas City, Kansas and East Saint Louis in December, 1955. From time to time after the actual writing of the first draft was begun the author found it necessary to consult further with the company for the purpose of clarifying certain points. This he was able to do until the time of his resignation on March 30, 1956.

In 1954, as at the present time, three different local unions represented the workers at the three plants under discussion. Local 28 of the United Packinghouse Workers of America, (CIO) was the recognized bargaining agent for the workers in the Chicago Plant. In Kansas City, Kansas the union was Local 12 of the National Brotherhood of Packinghouse Workers, (Independent). The employees at the National Stockyards Plant of Swift & Company in East Saint Louis had as their union Local 78 of the Amalgama-

ted Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, (AFL).

In order to obtain the necessary material for his thesis, the writer had to go directly to the company files on grievances, filed in 1954. Permission to view the union files on the same grievances was requested but refused in the Chicago Plant. There was insufficient time to request permission to view the union files in Kansas City and East Saint Louis.

It was necessary to obtain permission to use the company files from the head of the Industrial Relations Department at Swift & Company's General Office in Chicago. The author has agreed to honor the confidential nature of the material to which he had access and handle it accordingly in the writing of his thesis by using no names of participants in any of the grievance cases.

Any one grievance can go through five steps, the fifth step being arbitration by an outside party. This study relates only to third step grievances which will be explained in the following discussion. All three union-management contracts call for the same five step process of handling grievances. By looking at the process as set forth in the United Packinghouse Workers, (CIO) agreement the reader will have a workable knowledge of the five step process. The first step calls for an attempt at settling the grievance between the employee or employees

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4 Swift & Company Master Agreement with the United Packinghouse Workers of America (CIO), 1954-1956, pp 61-63.
along with a shop steward and the foreman of the department. The next step carries the grievance to a union representative, not the immediate shop steward, or a group of union representatives, not to exceed the number of three, and the designated representatives of the company, including either the general foreman or division superintendent or both. At the conclusion of this step if no agreement has been reached, the grievance must be put into written form. One member or several members of the union grievance committee meet with either the plant superintendent or his designated representative in the third step of the grievance process. The aggrieved employee may or may not be present at this and the last two steps of the process. Again, if no solution is found in this step, the case is brought to the fourth step in which the grievance committee along with an international representative of the union meet with the General Superintendent or his designated representatives in the General Office in Chicago. The fifth and final step of any grievance involves the use of outside arbitration which shall be final and binding upon both parties. The percentage of grievances to reach the fifth step is less than one per cent.

The author chose the third step grievances for his research since this is the last step of the process which remains on the local plant level, making possible the means of comparison at the three plants. Also this is the first step of the procedure in which both sides are required to reduce the grievance to writing. Up to this step only fragmentary notes are kept of the
grievance by both sides. The fourth and fifth step grievances have left behind the local representatives of union and management as well as the conditions and circumstances under which the grievance was raised. Here in the last two steps the process becomes similar to an appellate or review court which renders a decision only on the record of the trial in lower court.

In the Chicago Plant the author worked with the labor relations man in the plant superintendent's office who handled most of the third step grievances personally. All third step grievances for the year 1951 in the Chicago Plant were read by the author to determine what type of grievance each one was. The types of grievances will be discussed briefly in another paragraph of this chapter and more fully in the second chapter. Such factors as people involved, time elapsed in the prosecution of a grievance to a conclusion and outcome were noted for incorporation into this thesis. Only strict facts in each case will be used in this presentation.

To obtain similar data from the East Saint Louis and Kansas City Plants on their grievances the author went to both of these cities to investigate the company files there. Here too the author conducted interviews with the labor relations man at each plant. The plant in general was discussed as well as the supervisors and the union stewards involved in the grievances. The man with whom the writer dealt in Kansas City was quite impartial in his discussion. However, the interviewed party in East Saint Louis was very opinionated, particularly with respect to the
union. He was under the impression that as soon as a union steward became responsible and aware of the provisions of the contract, he would be removed in favor of a less experienced union representative who would give the company trouble because of lack of contract knowledge and a general striving to get ahead in the union.

The grievances, discussed in the following three chapters were classified according to the eight categories set forth by John T. Dunlop and James J. Healy in their book, Collective Bargaining. The eight types of grievances are as follows:

1. Discharge and discipline,
2. Status of union and management representatives,
3. Union security,
4. Employment rights in jobs,
5. Work schedules and premium pay,
6. Vacation provisions,
7. Wage structure, and
8. General wage changes.

These classifications will be discussed in greater detail in the second chapter.

There are various factors influencing grievances and bearing a relationship to the number and kind of grievances had in any given plant. The author has chosen four of these factors

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as the most important in any discussion on grievances. These four factors are: the general work force, the grievance participants, the clarity of the union-management agreement and the time of year in which most grievances take place. These factors are to be considered the most important in a discussion of grievances and possible answers to the why and wherefore of grievances. Without discussing each of these factors we would not be aware of the full story behind any one grievance. They tell us what we must know to give them adequate consideration.

Included in the first factor, the work force in general, is the minimum and maximum number of workers in one year, the racial composition and sex distribution of the workers, along with the working conditions in the plant. Herein was the first difference, or what may be termed a variable factor, between the three plants. For this part of the discussion, the author made use of all general information gathered on the topic by the Loyola Human Relations in Industry Research Group.

Grievance participants was the second factor considered by the researcher. Here the difference between the plants was only noticeable in the race and sex of the actual grievants. However, just the geographical location of the people created a difference both in this factor as well as the first one. The author noted the age, race, sex and length of company service of the individuals, taking part as the aggrieved parties. Much of the same information was secured, regarding the supervisors and union stewards involved in the grievances, in the aforementioned
interviews with the plant labor relations man at each of the three plants. In studying this factor no assumptions could be drawn with respect to a typical grievant. In the aggregate of all the grievance participants only, was there a noticeable variance among the three plants. The reader along with the author will have to conclude individually as to whether or not certain people cause grievances. The author is of this opinion, particularly regarding the Chicago Plant, where he was able to observe personally the people who raised grievances.

The third factor to be considered in a comparative study of grievances is the clarity of the union contract at each of the three plants. After a careful review of each contract, the author found that all three were virtually the same. The United Packinghouse Workers (CIO) contract with Swift & Company was somewhat more lengthy and detailed than the other two. The comparative value was found in the way the contract was interpreted, especially by the union involved. This will be discussed briefly in the chapter on each individual plant.

The final factor for comparison revolved around the time or times of the year at which most grievances occur at each plant. To a certain extent a pattern was evolved from this consideration. The study will bring out the fact that there are more grievances at union election time and contract negotiation periods than at any other times of the year. This should be an important factor to be considered by management in order to make preparations for the increased number of grievances at these times and perhaps,
take steps to limit the number of grievances if possible.

As the author was employed by Swift & Company on the management side at the time of this research, an objection may be raised as to the objectivity of this study. It is true that most of the writer's material was obtained from company files or from representatives of management. However, a part of every grievance case to reach the third step in each of the three plants is submitted by the union to state its case. This part is a typed or handwritten statement turned over to management by a representative of the union. Such documents are always signed by the president or secretary of the local union or a member of the union grievance committee. Also the author looked at employees' service records which are a part of management records but the information therein, is freely given to management by the employee upon his or her being hired.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF GRIEVANCES AT THE CHICAGO PLANT

Introduction

Of the three plants at which the author did research, the Chicago Plant was the largest in geographical size and worker population. In this chapter the fifty-one third step grievances in the Chicago Plant for 1954 will be analyzed according to the type of grievance and the people involved in the grievances, including the aggrieved party, the foreman and the steward in each case. Secondly, the writer will briefly review the union-management contract, in force in the Chicago Plant, to determine its role with respect to third step grievances. And lastly a few paragraphs will be given to a discussion on the monthly apportionment of third step grievances in the Chicago Plant for 1954.

In the two following sections on the work force and the union in the Chicago Plant there is a definite relation to the subsequent analysis of grievances. Both factors are to be considered in an analysis of grievances, especially in the Chicago Plant. The very size of the work force has an effect on the number of advanced step grievances as does the Negro-white composition of the plant employees. The union has an effect on the number and types of grievances through its officers and some of its more militant members. The union is important in a discussion on the
analysis of grievances because all grievances which reach the third step are processed by the union, regardless of the aggrieved employee's union membership or lack of it. A discussion of the analysis of grievances would be incomplete without the prior discussion of the plant work force and the union.

The Work Force

Since the Chicago Plant of Swift & Company is the largest of the three plants under discussion, it is appropriate to begin here. In 1953 the maximum number of plant employees was 3887, and the minimum number was 3782. It is interesting to note that there is slightly over one hundred difference between the two figures which indicates the company's awareness of its labor needs along with the ability to stabilize production in an industry with a highly seasonal supply of raw materials.

There is no accurate count of the number of Negroes and whites in the Chicago Plant, but the Negro population represented fifty-five per cent of the work force in 1953 and substantially more in 1954. Fifteen per cent of the Chicago work force are women. There is practically a fifty per cent split between the number of white women workers and the number of Negro women workers.

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1 Based on a Conversation with the Labor Relations Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, March 13, 1954.

The Union

Local 28 (CIO) claims it represents a substantial majority of the workers in the Chicago Plant. It is true that this local is the bargaining agent for the plant employees in Chicago. However, as recently as the last wage negotiations in September of 1955 close to five hundred members took advantage of the annual escape clause in the contract to withdraw from the union by notifying the company to cease withdrawing union dues from their pay. There is a definite split in the union between the right wing members and those of the left wing, who at present are in the majority. Most of those who withdrew in September were of the right wing group.

All officers of Local 28 are now Negro. The majority of stewards are also Negroes. Only one of the top officers of the local is intelligent and diplomatic. He is the Chairman of the Grievance Committee. The company would prefer to handle all of its grievances beyond the first step with this man. The other officers do a lot of talking without saying anything. The officers in 1956 were officers of the local in the same capacities in 1954.

4 Local 28, "Flash", March 6, 1956.
5 Personal Conversation with a Labor Relations Representative, Chicago Plant Superintendent's Office, March 1, 1956.
As the union is in a period of upheaval at the present time, it is impossible to determine the number of dues paying members. The company was unwilling to tell the author the number of employees who authorized the withholding of union dues from their pay, that is, the authorization known as the check-off. This unrest and disturbance in Local 23 has been in progress since the 1946 strike and reached its zenith in 1949 when Communists assumed control.  

**Grievances**

In the Chicago Plant the author studied fifty-one third step grievances. The following table represents the classification of grievances according to Dunlop and Healy with the number of each at the Chicago Plant.

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<td>Union and Management Status</td>
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<td>Union Security</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Rights</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Schedules and Premium Pay.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Structure</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
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For the purpose of this chapter as well as the two following it is necessary to describe the above six of Dunlop and Healy's eight classifications. A grievance on discipline is one filed when an employee or group of employees feel that unjust disciplinary action has been taken against them. In the case of a discharge the union at the request of the person discharged will file a protest in his behalf and apply for reinstatement.

Grievances on union and management status are those filed when a union member feels that he is being discriminated against because of his union membership or when a supervisor is not acting as a supervisor by working in the gang or by using bad language. Those grievances on union security concern all protests on seniority, union shop clauses in the contract and any management encroachments on union rules and regulations.

The classification of employment rights involves grievances on job rights, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off, recall and work load. The one on work schedules and premium pay covers all grievances on payment for lost time, sickness and accident pay, vacation and holiday pay and bonus pay which comes under the Standards Department in Swift & Company. The last of the six on wage structure is composed of all grievances on job classifications or job rates.

In the following sections all grievances which fall into the six categories, as outlined above, will be analyzed for the purpose of showing to the reader exactly what each grievance involved and who the people were, taking part in the grievance.
The writer believes this to be necessary for a complete picture of the processing of third step grievances at each of the three plants.

In order that the reader may understand a comparison of third step grievances between the three plants, it is necessary that he be informed as to the content and outcome of each grievance. In keeping with the purpose of this thesis the author has covered all the third step grievances in the three plants rather elaborately in order to bring out all facets of a comparison between the three. Some of the findings derived from the analysis of each third step grievance will be brought together in tables at the conclusion of the chapter. These tables will serve quite well to illustrate the differences as well as the similarities which exist between the three plants.

Grievances over discharge and discipline were more than twice the number of any other kind of grievance. Of these twenty-two grievances, thirteen actually involved the meting out of disciplinary action short of discharge and the remaining nine were outright discharge. What were the causes of discharge and disciplinary action? The causes for discharge were theft, refusal to perform a job, excessive absenteeism, fraudulent collection of unemployment compensation, leaving the job without permission for a longer period than it takes to go to the wash room, loafing on a job and long unexplained absences. Such things as fighting,
insubordination, an unauthorized walkout, using profanity, unauthorized union representation in the plant, not performing a job up to standard, refusing to do work of a suspended gang, refusing to work overtime, taking time off for an off-the-plant accident, loafing and leaving the job without telling the foreman were the causes of grievances over disciplinary action.

Seven of the cases on discharge were withdrawn by the union. It is very difficult for the union to talk the company into reinstating an employee after discharging him. The company is quite willing to take a discharge case to arbitration.7 In the other two discharge cases the employees were reinstated with no back pay but with full seniority rights. The lost time was to be considered as time off disciplinary action. In other words these two cases were not complete victories for the union.

Of the thirteen cases on disciplinary action without discharge eleven were withdrawn by the union. Here too the company showed its unwillingness to acknowledge error in disciplining an employee. The remaining two cases were split between the company and the union. In one, the company paid the employee for time lost due to a disciplinary lay-off. In the other the company called the man back to work, but considered his lost time to be disciplinary action and did not pay the man for his time off.

It is interesting to note that no one having been disciplined

for drunkenness on the job, carried the grievance to the third step. In many other industries intoxication is a cause for immediate, no appeal discharge where there are witnesses to the employee's condition. It has been the author's experience to see intoxicated people sent home for a day or two and sometimes a week, and yet the union will not intervene when it is obvious that the employee is drunk and incapable of performing his job.

Involved in the twenty-two cases on discipline and discharge were twenty-six employees, including one gang of women and a male gang, together with seventeen stewards and twenty-two foremen. Four of the aggrieved parties were also the stewards for their departments. In addition to these men at the first step there was one more representative of management and one or several more union people at the second step and even more representatives from both sides at the third step. The writer has decided to discuss only the people concerned at the first step since in the later steps the higher representatives are usually the same in most cases.

Of the twenty-six employees four were women; one white, three Negro; of the men one was white and the remaining twenty-one were Negro. All of the foremen involved were white. At the present time there is only one Negro foreman in the Chicago Plant. There was one other, but he requested to be relieved as foreman and be returned to the gang. All of the male stewards were Negro including the four men who represented themselves as the aggrieved parties. Only one white woman served as a stewardess in the
Sliced Bacon Department. No Negro females were stewardesses in any of the grievances on discipline and discharge. The men ranged in age from twenty-one to sixty-two; the women from thirty-two to forty-five.

The age range of the foremen involved in grievances on discipline went from thirty to sixty-four. All of the foremen had worked their ways up through the gangs. One of the thirty year old foremen had one year of college; the other had two years of college and was a former member of the Standards Department. Except for the very old foremen most had some high school education, and several were high school graduates. This would indicate that the foremen in general had a little more education than the employees involved in the grievances.

As was mentioned above all of the stewards in the cases on discipline and discharge were Negro. With respect to age these men ranged from twenty-eight to about sixty. One of the stewards is regarded by management people as being the most intelligent Negro in the Chicago Plant. Presently he is Chairman of the Grievance Committee. The youngest steward in this group has since been discharged for insubordination and general holding up of production. He was also discharged in the case under discussion but was reinstated by the company. None of the stewards had any college, but a few were high school graduates, born and raised in the North. According to a company spokesman several of the stewards were above average intelligence and knew the
contract quite well. However, this same man who deals with the union in most third step grievances also stated that some of the stewards knew very little about the contract, and it was these men who looked for grievances and pushed them into the advanced steps.

Service wise, the involved parties ranged from short service to very long service with a heavy concentration of participants in the middle service bracket of from five to fifteen years. In all three groups of employees, foremen's and steward's service was quite evenly distributed over short, middle and long service. The presentation of grievances seems to taper off with long service employees. Many older employees, from the author's observation, have accepted their job and are willing to do the best they can on it, provided they are not hampered by union or management.

Grievances on Union and Management Status and the Participants Therein

In the second classification there were just two grievances with respect to the status of union and management representatives. Actually one grievance involved the status of a union man the other the status of representatives of management. In the first case a union employee was not capable of performing her assigned task. When warned of her low production and the consequences of continued low production, the employee claimed she

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8Personal Conversation with a Labor Relations Representative Chicago Plant Superintendent's Office, March 1, 1954.
was not given sufficient time to learn the job and was being discriminated against for union membership.

The second grievance of the two concerned the status of two representatives of management. The union claimed a supervisor and a shipping checker were working in the gang, a direct violation of an unwritten agreement between the company and union. Management retaliated that the union was putting pressure on a new supervisor. The union further charged that the supervisor and checker both used profanity to union members. Management produced a witness who testified that neither representative of the company used profanity. The union withdrew both of these grievances in the third step.

In these two cases on union and management status, one gang of five women were involved in the first one, and two Negro men were involved in the other. The names of the five females were not available to the writer, and so no information was available on them.

Of the two men, only one record was located by the author. This man was thirty-two and had short service. The foreman for the five women was also one of the foremen involved in grievances on discipline and discharge. He was the thirty year old one with one year of college, quite intelligent, but at times a little over zealous. The steward was Negro, married with one child and three years of high school. This man could be classified as having middle service. It was this man who was later discharged by the company for insubordination. The male grievant previously
mentioned in this category was also later discharged for repeated
intoxication on the job. The steward in the second case was
Negro, forty-five years old, married, a high school graduate and
quite active in the union. The foreman was about fifty-five,
mARRied with some high school and very rough and ready in manner.
The entire gang plus the supervisors are quite rough and indepen-
dent.

Grievances on Union Security and the Participants Therein

Union security, the third factor in our classification also
had only two third step grievance cases. Both cases were on the
seniority of union members. In the first of the two cases a fe-
male employee sought her former job after being off on a preg-
nancy leave of absence. It was found that she was unable to per-
form her old job. The woman claimed discrimination on the part
of the company since she was a Displaced Person. The outcome of
the grievance was that the employee was to be returned to her
former job and given sufficient time to adjust to it.

An employee who had less seniority than the aggrieved em-
ployee in the second grievance case was recalled to work before
the aggrieved. Through an error made when both employees were
transferred from one department to another, the company made a
mistake in recalling the laid-off workers. The aggrieved em-
ployee was paid for the time he had lost between the other man's
recall and his own recall.

Both men and women were involved in the grievances on union
security. In the first case a white woman was the aggrieved
party, twenty-two years of age, unmarried with five years of grade school. This was the girl, mentioned above as a Displaced Person, who had short service. The stewardess was Negro, thirty years old, married with a little education. She was given to making a lot of noise, but was not very active in the union. The forelady was white, divorced, had middle service with a grammar school education. She had one child.

In the second case three men were involved whose names were not disclosed in the case. The case involved recall after lay-off so that the foreman of the department had nothing to do with it. The steward in the case was Negro, about fifty, married with very little education. A company spokesman judged the man to be weak with respect to knowledge of the contract but quiet and very intent.

Grievances on Employment Rights and the Participants Therein

The next largest group in our classification is concerned with employment rights. Nine of the grievances involved job rights of individual employees and the tenth was on the work load of a gang. The first nine grievances all evolved from workers' not being placed on jobs to which they felt entitled. In all cases the job sought was either higher in responsibility or paid a higher rate of pay than their other job.

In the single case on work load a gang felt it could use two more men to do the assigned work. The company told the union that there were sufficient men in the gang to do the work and
would not hire any more workers for the gang. The union withdrew this case, and management stated that it was going to investigate the entire plant for excess workers who could be weeded out.

Six of the grievances on job rights were withdrawn by the union, and the other three cases were settled by the company's either paying the employee for time lost by not being on the higher rated job or by placing the worker on the job desired. In this group the union's prestige was affected, in a negative manner. Six of the aggrieved employees certainly were unhappy at the union's failure to do something for them.

After discipline and discharge, the classification on employment rights involved the most people in the Chicago Plant. In the ten cases there were eight Negro male employees concerned, one Negro woman and one gang. All of the foremen were white; nine of the stewards were Negro, and the one stewardess was Negro. The one female employee's service record was not available. The female stewardess was thirty-three with some high school, married and very active in the union. She was known to be sharp tongued and a fighter for Negro rights.

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9Swift & Company Master Agreement with the United Packinghouse Workers of America, 1954-1956, Par. 10, p 6. "The management of the plants and direction of the working forces, including the right to hire,... to assign to jobs, to transfer employees within the plant... are vested in the Company...."

The eight male employee participants in grievances on employment rights ranged in age from twenty-three to fifty-two. Only one man, the oldest in the group, had long service with the company dating back to 1920. The other men had middle service with the exception of one who had short service.

On the whole, the stewards involved in these cases were more educated than the aggrieved parties. At least five of them were high school graduates. One was and still is the president of Local 28. All of these stewards were in the age group from thirty to forty. One steward was noted by the company representative to be a bad actor, as he termed it, and one who raised many grievances. This man thought that stewards were to be accorded special privileges as they are in other industries. In the meatpacking industry there is no super seniority by which stewards are the last to be laid-off and the first to be recalled.

The foremen as already mentioned were all white. They ranged in age from forty to fifty, the next decade above the stewards. All had some high school; none had been to college. All of the foremen were married and had at least middle service with the company. It was the foremen in this group whom the writer found to be the most colorful in a discussion with a representative from

the General Superintendent's Office. 12

One foreman was described as a lady's man without much brain power; another as not being too sharp but a hard worker who had risen to become a foreman during the war. Still a third one was pictured as being moody and trying to give the impression of being a big shot to compensate for his feelings of inadequacy. Another foreman was described as being very active in his community and a good member of the Holy Name Society. The man from the superintendent's office termed this foreman as one of the better supervisors in the Chicago Plant.

Grievances on Work Schedules and Premium Pay and the Participants Therein

Our fifth classification embraces the eight grievances on work scheduling and premium pay. Only one of the eight cases involved payment for a last time accident which took place while the worker was performing his job. The union brought this case to the third step, and the company agreed to make payment to the injured employee for all time lost due to his accident.

Three more of the eight grievances concerned the equalization of time for departments in which there were more than one gang or where there was a first and second shift. The first involved a department in which there were two gangs who quite often did not work the same number of hours in any one week. The union

12Personal Conversation with the Supervisory Training Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, February 26, 1956 at his home.
requested to see the time records of the two gangs for the past month, and the company refused access to such records. The company called on its management right's clause\(^1\) and told the union it had no right to see department time records. As a result the union withdrew the grievance at the third step.

In the second of these three cases the union asked that all workers be allowed to work on Saturday in a certain gang to take inventory. The company contended that only a few men were able to take an inventory since a thorough knowledge of many grades and cuts of meat was necessary in completing the inventory. The weekly inventory was a special situation brought about by an unusually high shrinkage of product. It was not to be a permanent arrangement. The union also withdrew this case.

The last of the three cases concerned the equalization of hours between the day and the night shift. In this particular case the day shift worked on Saturday to use up supplies which were on hand. The union wanted the night shift to work the same number of hours. Only one Saturday was involved, and there was not sufficient work to call out the night shift. The union withdrew this case with very little argument. Since this case was settled, the day shift in many departments will come out without the night shift doing the same on Saturdays.

Two more of the eight cases on work scheduling and premium

payments were concerned with work load. In the first case some work was being taken out of a department, and the gang wanted to keep the same number of workers. The company refused, in the interests of economy and efficiency. The union took the part of the workers in the gang, but withdrew the case after some discussion with management. In the other case a worker was advised of his low production and the penalty for continued low production. This case was different from the case already mentioned with respect to the status of a union member in that this employee was working as a member of a gang, and in the other instance the employee was working individually. This case also was withdrawn by the union.

The remaining two cases in the classification involved overtime pay and vacation time. The case on vacation time was referred back to the first step for settlement and will not concern us further in this discussion. The second of these cases was brought up by a gang, the working hours of which were being changed to include more night work. The union asked for overtime pay for a certain amount of the increased night work. The company refused on the basis that the gang was off on two other nights during the week. The union also withdrew from this case without any settlement.

Five gangs of men were involved in the grievances on work schedules and premium pay along with three individual men. No records could be found by the writer on two of the three individual
men. The third was Negro, thirty-two years old and was an employee with middle service.

In the cases where the entire gang was involved the union steward, as the representative of the men, would be the most important man among the participants from the employee's standpoint. One of the stewards, not previously mentioned in this group, was Negro, thirty-five years of age with a little high school. He was active in the union welfare committee, an official of the union and a member of the Union Grievance Committee. However, even though he was closely connected with the union, he initiated very few grievances and did not encourage his men to look for grievances.

Only one foreman stood out in this group. He was close to forty, married with two children and approaching long service with the company. This man had been a union steward and was considered by the company to be very intelligent. He was a high school graduate and had some college work in night school.

Grievances on Wage Structure and the Participants Therein

Our last classification in the Chicago Plant covers grievances on the general wage structure. In this group there were seven grievances.

The first of these seven cases was on job evaluation. The members of a gang wanted all their work time studied and put on a bonus basis instead of the straight pay daywork they were doing at

14 Personal Conversation with the Supervisory Training Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, February 26, 1956 at his home.
the present time. The company contended that many new operations were being introduced into the department, and all of the operations could not be time studied until all new operations were in use. The company cited Paragraph sixty-eight of the Master Agreement as the basis for its argument.15 Clearly this was a matter to be determined by management, and the union withdrew at the third step.

The other six cases in this classification involved job rates in one form or another. One case was concerned with Sunday work. The gang felt that it was entitled to double pay since three weeks had elapsed since a Sunday was called a regular working day. The case was actually a union protest against the unwritten company rule of needing four Sundays to make or break Sunday as a regular working day or as a day for which double time was to be paid. This case was also withdrawn by the union.

The five remaining cases were concerned with higher rates of pay for work done by an individual employee. One was in the mechanical gang where two men wanted the welder's rate for the job they did, but the company refused the higher rate on the grounds that the work performed was not inspected, as regular welding work was. In another case an employee felt he was the gang leader and re-

15Swift & Company Master Agreement with the United Packinghouse Workers of America (CIO), 1954-1956, Par. 68, p 73. "When a production standard is set and approved for use by the company, there shall be no change in the standard unless...(2) The operation is changed, in which case time studies shall be made and a proper standard set covering the new method."
quired a gang leader's rate. The company declared that the man worked in the gang and was not entitled to a gang leader's rate. All seven cases in this category were withdrawn by the union.

Participants in the cases on wage structure numbered seven men and two gangs along with the seven foremen and an equal number of union stewards. Four of the employees were white; the other three were Negro. One of the white employees had been killed in an auto accident early in 1955 before the writer began his research. The youngest man had middle service and the two in their fifties began with the company in 1929. The youngest man was also the union steward, and judged by management to be one of the less intelligent white stewards. The Negro employees were ages thirty-four, thirty-six and forty-two. All three men had middle service with the company.

Other than one man already mentioned as a steward above, the stewards were Negro. Only two of the stewards have not already been described in other cases. One of the others was the man previously described as thinking that the stewards should have special privileges. Of the other two one was fifty-five, the other was forty-three. Both had only a few years of grammar school education. One was deemed to have a fair knowledge of the contract by the company and the other was considered to be very weak with

16 Personal Conversation with a Labor Relations Representative, Chicago Plant Superintendent's Office, March 1.
respect to knowledge of the contract. The older of these two men brought up many grievances but did not try to push them through to the third and fourth steps.

The foremen involved in the cases on wage structure tended to be older than the average foreman in the plant. One was in his early fifties, and the rest were sixty or above. At least one has retired since the writer began his research. The retired man was married, had two years of college and judged by management to be top-notch and very level-headed. Another had only a grammar school education, was married, quick tempered, and rather a hot and cold individual according to the company spokesman. A third foreman in this group, the youngest one, was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and helped many people toward rehabilitating themselves. He was noted to have a good deal of ability in handling people. A final foreman not already described was married with a great knowledge of the jobs his men had to perform. He was known as a steady individual and willing to give any man every possible break in learning a job or getting another chance after making a mistake.


18 Personal Conversation with the Supervisory Training Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, February 26, 1956, in his home.

19 Ibid.
The Union-Management Contract as a Factor in Chicago Plant Third Step Grievances

The Swift & Company-UPWA Agreement, in force in the Chicago Plant as mentioned in the first chapter was somewhat more lengthy and detailed than either of the other two contracts in use at the Kansas City or East Saint Louis Plants. From personal observation of first step grievances and from the reading of the fifty-one third step grievances for 1954 the author was able to conclude that the union representatives in the Chicago Plant quite often made use of the contract to confuse the issue of the grievance at hand.

In the Chicago Plant both the union stewards and the supervisors give wide interpretation to the various clauses of the union management agreement. Strictly from a first step grievance point of view, the author is of the opinion that more often than not both sides misinterpret the clause or clauses of the contract which apply to the instant grievance case. Having read all three contracts several times, the writer thinks that each clause was composed with only one meaning in the minds of the bargainers, but with some latitude of interpretation. Misinterpretation of the contract is a factor in the number and kinds of grievances at the Chicago Plant, but it is not as important as the other three factors set forth in chapter one, two of which have already been discussed in this chapter.

The use of the contract as an element in third step grievances
in the Chicago Plant differs from the use made of the contract in the other two plants. In the following two chapters the reader will observe the apparently more intelligent use of the agreement by the union representatives.

Chronological Breakdown of Grievances in the Chicago Plant

The last variable which the author wanted to study with respect to grievances in all three plants was the time of year in which most of the grievances took place, if any such time predominated. The following is a breakdown of grievances according to the months in which they were initiated in the Chicago Plant.

TABLE II

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE CHICAGO PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Third Step Grievances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table, the most grievances in the third step took place in the month of October. This is the month immediately following the negotiation of a new two year contract. In the month of September there was also a higher than usual number of third step grievances, the very time during which the negotiations were taking place. Would this seem to indicate that more
grievances tend to crop up during and subsequent to periods of collective bargaining when the union is testing the new agreement? What then explains the corresponding number of grievances in the month of June as compared to the month of September? In June there is usually a sharp cutback in the production of fresh meat, especially pork. Perhaps there is a tendency on the part of union people to protect the security of the union by showing the company that it meant to protect the workers who had been laid off as well as those who still remained on the job.

But then in the month of February when the union holds its annual election of officers, there was only one grievance brought to the third step in 1954 in the Chicago Plant. The month preceding the elections and the month following them held to the mode of the distribution. Does the lack of grievances in the month of February indicate that the officers and other representatives of the union may be doing a little electioneering instead of prosecuting grievances as they are wont to do? This may be the case; however, the writer knows that production is high in the winter months of November, December, January and February. Undoubtedly this has some influence on the number of grievances brought up during this period when workers' bonuses are high.

From a study of the chronological breakdown of third step grievances for 1954 in the Chicago Plant, it will be observed that there definitely were three months of the year in which grievances were more numerous than in any of the other months. However, when
the other plant breakdowns are studied, the same pattern does not arise. Some reasons have already been given for the Chicago pattern. The author wishes to emphasize the theory that the reason for the most number of grievances in the month of October is directly traceable to the union's testing of the new agreement which had just been negotiated in the month of September. For the two years previous the union has been using the old union-management agreement. Then it is faced with a new, perhaps quite changed contract, which must be followed for the coming two years. It seems quite likely to experiment with something new, and it is just this which the union is doing when they initiate the most number of grievances for the year in the month of October.

The only explanation the writer can offer for the large number of grievances in the month of September is one which sees the union in a role of harasssing management during negotiations of the new contract or wage agreement depending on the even or odd numbered year.

**Summary and Conclusion**

By way of summary to the discussion of the grievances and the grievants, the author has composed the following tables to show the distribution of third step grievance participants according to sex, race, age, service with the company and the departments in which they worked at the time of initiating the grievance which later
advanced to the third step. 20

TABLE III

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE IV

RACE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE V

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO COMPANY SERVICE IN THE CHICAGO PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Service</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Service</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Service</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 The first four tables include only those people who were mentioned by name in the grievances read, and whose records the writer reviewed. The figures do not include any gang grievance participants, since their names were not in the records or reviewed.
TABLE VII

THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE CHICAGO PLANT ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENTS
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table Ready Meats Kitchen</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Oils</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliced Bacon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke House</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 House Shipping Platform</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Shop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg Yolk</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Oil House</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Dressing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cutting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freezer Storage</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pard</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primal Beef</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Loading</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork Trimming</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Plant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We see from Table III that the percentage of male and female grievants correspond exactly to the percentage of men and women in the Chicago Plant. During the course of research it appeared to the writer that close to twenty-five per cent of the grievants would be women. This number is probably close to the actual percentage of female grievants since many of the gang grievances had a majority of women in them.

Table IV indicates that a greater percentage of grievants are Negroes than the sixty per cent of the whole work force which is Negro. This can be expected to some extent since the union has all Negro officers, and the Negroes appear to be more active union
members than the white workers.

Tables V and VI seem to corroborate one another since there is a concentration of grievants in the thirty to thirty-nine and the forty to forty-nine age brackets and in the middle service group. Employees with middle service will be in the two dominant age brackets although employees in their later forty's begin long service. We shall see a different pattern arising when comparing the tables of all three plants.

The department breakdown as found in Table VII shows that the departments with the greater number of employees have the greater number of grievances. The Table Ready Meats Kitchen is the largest department in the Chicago Plant with the Soap Department second in size. Both departments have a slight majority of women employees.

The Chicago Plant has the greatest number of workers, close to one thousand more at its peak than either of the other two plants at their peak. For every one hundred workers, the Chicago Plant had 1.35 third step grievances in 1954, taking the average number of workers during the year. The comparison to the other two plants will be brought out in the concluding chapter. It is sufficient to note here that over one third step grievance for every one hundred workers would indicate a large number of such grievances in any plant.

The union and union leaders were shown to be a factor in Chicago Plant grievances. The unsettled position of Local 23
along with its small majority contributed to the greater number of third step grievances. A shaky union leadership coupled with an unstable union must do something to retain its members. The writer believes that when the union brings up grievances and sees them through the third step and further, it focuses the attention of members more on their individual lot than on the instability of their local union.

With respect to grievances themselves and grievance participants as factors in third step grievances at the Chicago Plant, it can be said that both are important in a consideration of such grievances. The larger number of disciplinary and discharge grievances in the Chicago Plant indicate the part of company supervisors who may be on the lookout to discipline workers for small infractions of the rules. It may also point to a hostile attitude of some workers toward lower level management.

The heavy influx of young Negro workers into the Chicago Plant after World War II could be traced as a factor in practically all of the grievances on job levels, pay rates and bonus rates. The older white workers do not appreciate being challenged by the younger Negroes. Such grievances, usually brought up by an entire gang, are an outgrowth of this situation.

Some conclusions have already been drawn, concerning the factors of the contract and the chronological monthly breakdown of third step grievances in the Chicago Plant. Further conclusions on these two points must be deferred until they can be discussed comparatively with the other plants in the final chapter.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF GRIEVANCES AT THE KANSAS CITY PLANT

Introduction

This chapter will cover an analysis of the third step grievances at the Kansas City Plant, the next largest plant of this study. In it the author will again discuss briefly the role of the work force and the union as elements in the analysis of grievances. The same reasons hold true in this chapter as given in the preceding one as to why the work force and the union are discussed prior to the analysis of the grievances.

The third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant amounted to twenty-one, according to the company count. However, for the purposes of this study we must number the grievances as sixteen since six of the grievances in the category of Wage Structure involved the same incident which began off the plant and later became a third step grievance. For some reason, known only to the local management, each of the six men involved as grievants were allowed to process their grievance as individuals which accounts for the total number of twenty-one.

After an analysis of the grievances there will again be a very brief discussion on the use of the union-management contract in third step grievances and a few paragraphs on the monthly breakdown of third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant.
summary and conclusion will close the chapter.

The Work Force

In the Kansas City Plant the variance between the maximum and minimum number of workers is decidedly more pronounced than in the Chicago Plant. Here the maximum number of plant hourly paid employees in 1954 was 2343, and the minimum number for the same year was 1836.1 The difference at this plant is over five hundred; in Chicago the difference was slightly over one hundred. These figures are in no way an indicator of the abilities of the individual plant superintendents at the two plants. In Chicago there is a wider diversity of products handled, transportation facilities are more numerous, and it is easier to watch the various market fluctuations from Chicago. It is much simpler to tell what supply and demand will be for the coming month in Chicago than in Kansas City or East Saint Louis.

The Negro population in the Kansas City Plant is not close in numbers to the white population as is the case in the Chicago Plant. Men make up eighty-six per cent of the work force and women comprise the remaining fourteen per cent. Of the percentage of male employees thirty-seven per cent are Negro, and the remaining forty-nine per cent are white. Among the women only one per cent are Negro and the balance of thirteen per cent are white. Included

1Based on a Conversation with the Labor Relations Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, March 15, 1956.
in the number of white people is a substantial majority of Mexican workers.  

Since the Kansas City Plant is situated right on the Missouri River, the dividing line between the states of Kansas and Missouri, the workers live in both states. Approximately sixty per cent live in Kansas, mostly in and around Kansas City, and the remaining forty per cent reside in Kansas City, Missouri or its suburbs. The Negro population in the general work force live in both states, with no clear majority residing in either state. Although Kansas was never a slave state, Missouri was, a factor which seems to hang over the Negroes as a group and sometimes causes them undue hardship. In comparison to the Chicago Negroes, who enjoy a good deal of independence, the Negroes of the Kansas City area are more depressed and conservative.

The Union

The representation enjoyed by the union, Local 12 of the National Brotherhood of Packinghouse Workers (Independent) approaches ninety-five per cent. Such a percentage of participation outstrips that of the Chicago Plant by at least twenty-five per cent if not more. The Negroes are in the minority in this union.

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3 Ibid. p 38.


5 Ibid. p 18.
For the most part the union officers are level headed men who carry on quite amiable relations with the company. The union-management relations have been termed "cordial and cooperative".6

The union newspaper of Local 12 is known as "The Truth teller" which is published irregularly.7 It is nowhere near as rabid and radical as "The Flash", the organ of Local 28 in the Chicago Plant. Local 12 is not plagued by Communists and fellow travelers. Its only opposition is an insurgent group of UPWA-CIO people who maintain a headquarters in downtown Kansas City, Kansas, and another the Swift plant.8

Grievances

The Kansas City Plant had twenty-one third step grievances in 1954 and are classified, according to the categories set forth by Dunlop and Healy, in the following table.

**TABLE VIII**

CLASSIFICATION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and Discharge</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rights</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Structure</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 Ibid. p 71.
8 Ibid. p 13.
In contrast to the Chicago Plant where grievances concerning discipline and discharge were more than twice the number of any other single kind of grievances, the Kansas City Plant had five, less than one quarter of the total. What were the reasons for disciplinary action to be meted out by the company? Theft, falsification of employment records, harassing another employee, refusal to perform a higher rated job, coupled with leaving the job without permission or excuse and excessive absenteeism along with an extensive police record, were the five reasons for disciplinary action to be handed down by the company. Three of the cases involved discharge.

In two of the discharge cases the dismissal remained in effect in the third one the employee was reinstated with one year probation and his lost time was to be considered disciplinary time off without pay. The two cases of permanent discharge were the one for falsification of employment records and the other for extensive absenteeism along with a long police record. The man with the police record was termed as undesirable on his employment record with a "Do Not Rehire" stamp on the card. The other man, who falsified his records, had been working for the Santa Fe Railroad. He had claimed to the company he was taking care of his sick sister, during this time. This was the same excuse he used when he previously left the employment of Swift. Company representatives checked on the man and found he had a record of suing his
employers for alleged injuries on the job. From the Santa Fe Company this man had collected $6,825 in the short time he worked for the railroad. This money had been collected on two separate suits. The third man who was later reinstated, had been dis­charged for failing to accept a higher rated job after absenting himself from his regular job several times during the work day. This man was put back to work on the proviso that he do the work assigned to him and was to be on probation for a period of one year.

In the two disciplinary cases without discharge, action was taken against one man for theft and against the other for fighting and bothering another employee. In the Chicago Plant an employee is discharged for theft of any kind, usually without recourse if caught in the act. This man had been observed stealing six ounce packages of ham by a company watchman. For his action the man was given one week off without pay. In the other case the man was known to be a constant tormentor of the Dressing Room janitor. On the day for which he was given time off the man was seen starting a fight with the janitor and cursing him. The outcome of the case in which the man was given two days off instead of the one, originally intended by the general foreman, saw the company pay­ing the man for twelve of the sixteen hours time lost. In the final analysis the union was certainly the victor in this case as the man was deserving of more than four hours time off without pay for his actions. The three cases involving theft, falsification of records and the extensive police record were withdrawn
by the union in the third step.

In the above five cases three of the aggrieved were Negro, and two were Mexican. A Mexican man was involved in the theft case and in the fighting case. It was a Negro man in each of the other three cases. Both of the Mexicans were middle service employees; one had two prior disciplinary warnings, and the other had three, both were thirty-three years old. No Mexican was involved in any of the discharge cases.

The three Negroes involved as grievers ranged in age from twenty-six to forty-seven with the third man aged thirty-two. The oldest man had fourteen years experience as a butcher. This was the man discharged for falsification of records. The middle aged man had been given four prior disciplinary warnings before being discharged for refusing to perform a higher rated job. The youngest man in the entire group of all five grievers was Negro. This was the man discharged as being wholly undesirable.

Only four foremen were directly involved in the five cases as well as four stewards since the man discharged in the records case was dismissed by the employment department, the department in which the man worked having had nothing to do with it. The foremen were all white; three were in their fifties and the fourth was thirty-five years old. He was the youngest man, who ran the department with the most grievances in the Kansas City Plant, the Beef Kill where cattle are slaughtered, gutted and skinned. This man was fortunate in having the advice of several older foremen.
His high grievance record was traceable to inexperienced stewards, trying to make names for themselves in the union.\(^9\) The other three foremen commanded the respect of their gangs, had few grievances, and all knew how to handle men. One was to be promoted to a division superintendent’s job in January, 1956.\(^10\)

Of the four cases in which stewards took a part, there was a total number of six involved. In the discharge case of the man deemed undesirable three Negro stewards were concerned who were mentioned previously as being the inexperienced ones, trying to make names for themselves in the union. In the three remaining cases one steward was Mexican, and the other two were Negro. It was the Mexican steward who was involved in the theft case. This man was in his early thirties, above average in intelligence, has a very good knowledge of the contract and gets along very well with a mixed gang of mostly Negroes and Mexicans. Of the two Negro stewards one was forty-five, of average intelligence, had a fair knowledge of the contract, handles grievances promptly but does not look for them. The other Negro steward was under thirty-five, of average intelligence, had a fair knowledge of the contract but looked for grievances. In spite of his aggressiveness this man found few grievances, because of the excellent leadership

\(^9\)Personal Interview with the Plant Superintendent, Kansas City Plant, December 18, 1955.

\(^10\)Ibid.
of the gang foreman, the one who was to be promoted to a division superintendent at the first of the year.

Grievances on Employment Rights and the Participants Therein

There was only one employment rights grievance in the Kansas City Plant. In this case the aggrieved had been sent home forty-five minutes before the rest of the gang for refusal to perform a certain job. The union contended that the man earlier had asked the foreman if he might go home early, but the foreman had not heeded his request. In the third step the company agreed to allow the man to work for thirty minutes at time and one-half to compensate for the time the gang had worked and the individual had not.

The aggrieved employee was male, and a Negro. The man had five wage assignments against him and a short police record. He had middle service. The foreman in the case was white and in his late thirties. This man was very well experienced in his work as head of the hide cellar in which all hides of the plant are handled. Several outside firms had tried to hire him away from Swift because of his ability. The steward in this case was Negro, about thirty-five years old, had average intelligence and a fair knowledge of the contract.

Grievances on Wage Structure and the Participants Therein

In the general classification of wage structure the author

11 Personal Interview with the Plant Superintendant, Kansas City Plant, December 18, 1955.
found fifteen cases to be in this group. Six of these cases were exactly the same and counted as one for the purposes of this study. They involved five men from the Pork Cutting Department and one from the Pork Trimming Department. In this group the six aggrieved employees had been granted permission to be absent from work on the day after Thanksgiving. In order to qualify for holiday pay an employee must work the day before and the day after the holiday at the prescribed times. These men contended, since they had permission to be absent, they had worked the prescribed times.

The men had requested time off to appear in police court for arraignment on gambling charges after being caught in a dice game by the police the previous Saturday. The union won these cases in the third step, and the men were paid for the holiday. The only reason payment had not been made at the proper time was due to an oversight by some employee in the payroll division.

One other case concerned pay for a holiday, this time Labor Day. The circumstances were very similar, in that the aggrieved had requested permission to be off on the day after Labor Day to appear in court, but was told to report to work after his court appearance. This the employee did not do stating that the court session lasted for the full working day. The union withdrew the case after the company agreed to pay the employee for Labor Day.

Of the eight remaining cases two involved payment for glasses broken on the job; three were concerned with job rates, two with sick pay and one with premium pay. In the first broken glasses
case the employee broke his glasses while pulling some beef loins from overhead racks. In the process a meat hook fell, breaking the worker's glasses. The union withdrew this case in the face of the company charge that all employees knew that a meat hook would fall on them if they did not pull the meat from the rack properly. The employee was not reimbursed for the loss of his glasses.

In the other glasses case a janitor broke his glasses when a piece of something he was sweeping shot up from the floor, striking his glasses and breaking them. The company claimed this would not have happened if the employee had used care in the performance of his job. The union withdrew this case, and the man was not paid for the breakage of his glasses.

In the three job rate cases one involved an entire gang and the other two individual employees. In the gang case the aggrieved workers felt they should receive the higher pelters' rate for heading calves, that is, removing the heads of the calves after slaughter. Since these men were in the Sheep Kill gang and authorized to head calves, it was their assigned task to do so. Pelters were not allowed to head calves, and it was rather absurd for the union to even press the case to the third step where it was withdrawn. The union admits that the majority of plant radicals are located in the Sheep Kill gang.12

The first of the two individual cases on job rates involved

12Case #9-21-1, Sheep Kill Department, Kansas City Plant, October 13, 1954.
a man who returned from sick leave to a lower rated job than the job he had prior to going on sick leave. He contended that he should receive his former higher rate for doing the lower rated job. The man had some basis to his argument since he was off sick with a nervous disorder, completely beyond his control and contracted without any knowledge on the part of the individual. His condition upon return prevented the man from performing his old job, but it would seem logical that the company could find similar work for the man at the same rate of pay. However, the union withdrew the case in the third step, and the man was assigned to the job of his choice at the lower rate.

The second case was concerned with freezer work performed by the men who operated the elevators in the freezer storage building. Actually this case also involved a gang although it was initiated by only two of the operators assigned to freezer storage. These men felt they were entitled to the higher rate of freezer work whenever they had to leave their elevators and enter the freezer proper, pulling a load of product. Also it was asked by the union in this case that the elevator operators be placed on the bonus system. The company answered the contentions by stating that the operators never entered temperatures below zero, in which the men who drew freezer pay were required to work a good part of the time. The company further stated that it was not practical to put the elevator men on the bonus system until the freezer storage building was in full operation. At that time
only a part of the building was in use while the remainder was undergoing repairs and alterations. The union withdrew in the third step.

In two of the three remaining cases the aggrieved employees were claiming sick pay for time lost while in the hospital. In the first instance the worker had been deliberately shot, off the plant, and his assailant was never found. His wound required several weeks of hospitalization and a period of home convalescence before the man could return to work. For some strange reason the police made no strenuous to locate the gunman after the wounded man would not press charges. The company held that it was in no way responsible for such an occurrence and would not pay any sick pay for time lost. The union conceded in the third step.

In the other case the aggrieved claimed he was in the hospital for a period of time under treatment for bronchitis. The company’s doctor stated that ordinarily a person was not hospitalized for bronchitis. The hospital record of the man indicated that he was in perfect health during his stay in the hospital. The man had a previous record of staying off sick and collecting sick pay whenever he fell behind in alimony payments to a former wife. The union withdrew this case also in the third step.

The one case on premium pay and two of the three on job rates involved the entire gang; consequently, no single employee was selected from these gangs to be discussed in this paper. Such gang grievances are usually put forth by the union and might
indicate the relative strength or weakness of the union's present position. Fifteen percent of the grievances in Kansas City involved gangs which would seem to indicate that the union was comparatively sure of its position if such can be deemed an accurate measuring stick.

In order for an entire gang to bring a grievance, it is necessary for a majority of the workers in the gang to feel the same way with respect to the complaint. The author thinks that the union through its representative for the gang must see to it that enough of the workers in the group will stick by their complaint and see it through to a settlement. If the union has a stable position and the support of the plant workers, it is not necessary for it to encourage gangs to put forth a grievance since such grievances are used to stimulate and reanimate the workers of a certain group who may have become lax and somewhat disinterested in the union and its objectives.

In the gambling case, five of the six grievants were Negro and the sixth was Mexican. The Mexican man was the youngest of the group, being twenty-four; the Negroes were forty-one, fifty-five, thirty-six, fifty-one and forty-one, all considerably older than the Mexican man. One of the Negroes was a long service employee; all the remaining men were employees with middle service.

In the two cases where the grievants sought accident pay for broken glasses one man was Mexican and the other one was white, the only white man who was a grievant to reach the third step in the
Kansas City Plant. The Mexican worker was twenty-nine years old and had very short company service. This man had only been with the company six months when he filed his grievance. The white employee was twenty-four years of age. He had begun work with Swift a little less than a year before presenting his grievance. In the one other case which involved holiday pay the employee was a Negro, twenty-eight years old with only short service, having been hired in May, 1953.

The single case on job rates concerning an individual worker revolved around a Negro man, fifty-six years old with close to fifteen years service which would have classified him as a long service employee. There was a special entry on this man's record to the effect that he had three wage assignments against him.

The two cases on sick benefits concerned two Negro men. One was forty years old with middle service. The other man was forty-five also with middle service. This man had a particularly long disciplinary record and since the grievance had been terminated for failure to report to work.

It is well to observe here that no women were involved as participants in any of the third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant. In a personal interview with the plant superintendent, the author was told that women for the most part were only involved in seniority cases which never reached the third step. 13 This is in

13 Personal Interview with the Plant Superintendent, Kansas City Plant, December 18, 1955.
direct contrast to the Chicago Plant where women were participants in at least fifteen per cent of the third step grievances.

Three foremen were involved in the seven cases on holiday pay. The two in the pork block were in their fifties, both very capable and warranting the respect of their entire gangs. One man had women workers under him. The third foreman was the one previously mentioned as the head of the Beef Kill, the department with the largest number of grievances in the Kansas City Plant. The stewards also were the same in this case as in the prior one in which the man was discharged for being undesirable.

The other two stewards involved were one white and the other Negro. The Negro man was fifty, of average intelligence with a fair knowledge of the contract. This man was in good standing with his gang and was not given to looking for grievances. The younger white steward was thirty-three, a little above average in intelligence and had a good knowledge of the contract. This man commanded the respect of his co-workers, the majority of whom were white with a large minority of women.

In the job rates cases all three foremen were white; two of the stewards were Negro and the other Mexican. One foreman and the Mexican steward were previously discussed in the discipline for theft case. Of the other two foremen one was in his early sixties, a definite old timer around the plant. He was quite capable of handling men with a minimum amount of grievances. His steward was Negro, also an old timer with a good deal of radicals to represent. The man himself was below average in intelligence and did not
attempt to familiarize himself with the contract. The remaining foreman and steward were discussed in the undesirable discharge case in the first group of grievances.

In the compensation for accident cases the same department was involved in both instances. Here both the foreman and steward were white; the foreman in his mid-forties and the steward in his middle thirties. Both men were deemed to be capable and able to get along with their gang. The gang was usually cooperative and was not accustomed to raising many grievances.

In the premium payment case both the steward and foreman were in their early thirties. The foreman had only been a foreman for two or three years and may have been considered a pusher by the older members of the gang. The steward was not overly given to a comprehensive knowledge of the contract and was not too intelligent.

Both of the cases on sick benefits were in the Pork Block, one in Pork Dressing and the other in the Smoke House. Very little was uncovered by the writer on the steward and foreman in Pork Dressing except that the foreman was white and the steward Negro.

In the Smoke House case the foreman was white, in his early forties with a rather small gang of twenty men. This man was actually an assistant to the foreman of the entire Smoke House. He is capable, able to handle his gang and commands the respect of the men who work for him. The steward was quite intelligent, not too old and had a good knowledge of the contract. He was known not to look for grievances but would push through to an adequate settlement when confronted with one.
The Union-Management Contract as a Factor in Kansas City Plant

Third Step Grievances

The contract is very similar to the UPWA (CIO) Master Agreement, used in the Chicago Plant. Most sections are a little briefer, but do not have an increase in clarity due to such brevity. As in the UPWA (CIO) agreement several sections are open to more than one interpretation, which the author finds in most any contract of a large industry. It is largely because of such misinterpretation that grievances occur, although this is not the only cause of grievances.

At times the contract is given to a lot of verbiage. In such instances as the seniority provisions, the vacation clauses and promotion and transfer section the writer found that the provisions as stated could have been said more simply and with more likelihood of being understood by the individual union member.

However, as the contract has remained practically unchanged from the time bargaining began between the company and the union in 1940, it would seem that the contract is adequate for the purposes of day-to-day plant affairs. It is not the writer's intention to propose any changes or revisions in the present contract.

Both parties to the agreement are satisfied with it. In the Kansas City Plant, contract interpretation was definitely not one of the leading causes of grievances, at least not the grievances which reached the third step. Both sides freely cited sections of the contract to support their respective arguments and usually arrived at a similar interpretation of the same clauses.
Chronological Breakdown of Grievances in the Kansas City Plant

And now for the fourth factor which was chosen for this discussion of third step grievances we turn to another table.

TABLE IX
MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>September Grievances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total...16

From the table we learn that the largest number of third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant were initiated in the month of November, 1954. Nothing in particular happens at this time of year since all negotiations are completed in September. However, this larger number can be attributed to the very likely possibility that the union, and perhaps even local management, might be trying out the new contract.

In the early part of the year there were no third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant. Production is always high at this time of year, and in February the union holds its annual election of officers. Both factors point toward few or no grievances.

In Kansas City no one month was especially heavy with third step grievances. Chicago had several heavy months, but the Chicago
Plant also had thirty-five more grievances than the Kansas City Plant. The more stable position of Local 12 in the Kansas City Plant cuts down on the total number of all grievances. A union in its situation does not have to look for grievances or push them to enhance its own prestige.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Once more in order to summarize our findings, concerning the sex, race, age, company service and departments of the grievance participants in third step grievances at the Kansas City Plant, the reader is referred to the following tables. The same must be understood here as in the Chicago Plant that with the exception of the departmental distribution, only the participants named in the individual grievances, whose records the writer was able to review, will be tabulated.

**TABLE X**

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE XI**

RACE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XII

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>20 to 29</th>
<th>30 to 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE XIII

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO COMPANY SERVICE IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Duration</th>
<th>Short Service (Under 5 Years)</th>
<th>Middle Service (5 to 15 Years)</th>
<th>Long Service (Over 15 Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE XIV

THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE KANSAS CITY PLANT ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENTS 1954

- Beef Dressing ........................................ 3
- Pork Cutting ......................................... 1
- Freezer Storage ...................................... 2
- Pork Variety ......................................... 1
- Beef Cutting ......................................... 2
- Pork Dressing ........................................ 1
- Smoke House .......................................... 2
- Pork Trimming ........................................ 1
- Sheep Dressing ........................................ 2
- Loading Dock ......................................... 1

Total ................................................... 16

In Kansas City, as was already observed, there were no women employees involved in third step grievances. This is noteworthy since fourteen per cent of the plant personnel is composed of women. The majority of white women in the Kansas City Plant probably
effects the lack of advanced step grievances on the part of women. Negro women are much more prone to fight for their rights as is indicated by the large number of Negro women involved in third step grievances in the Chicago Plant. The Negro women in Kansas City, being in such a minority, are of necessity less outspoken and very much more conservative than their sisters in Chicago.

Only one white man and several Mexicans, carried on the employment records as white, were involved in the third step grievances. The Negro men, also in the minority, although a much larger one than the Negro women, voiced their complaints and with the help of the union pushed them to the advanced steps. In the plant community the Negro man can have his say; in the living community in Kansas and Missouri he is much more limited in his expression.

Tables XII and XIII can be reconciled if we consider that the work force here, on the average, is older than in the Chicago Plant. Eighty-four per cent of the grievants are found in the age groups of from twenty to forty-nine. Eighty-nine per cent of the grievants have short or middle company service. Workers in the age thirty to thirty-nine group can be found in the Kansas City Plant with only short service more so than in the Chicago Plant. This can be explained by virtue of the fact that some employees, particularly men work at other jobs before coming to the stockyards.

Of the five departments shown in Table XIV with more than one grievance only one, the Smoke House has women workers. As was previously mentioned, in the Beef Dressing and Sheep Dressing Departments of the Kansas City Plant are found the majority of plant
radicals. The greater number of third step grievances in these departments can be traced directly to these workers.

Per one hundred workers in the Kansas City Plant there was only .77 third step grievances as compared to 1.35 third step grievances per one hundred workers in the Chicago Plant. There were seventeen less grievances on discipline and discharge in this plant than in Chicago. Such grievances represented less than one-third of the total in Kansas City and close to one-half in the Chicago Plant.

The high number of third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant in the general category of Wage Structure are not indicative of poor union-management relations. In an industry where there is a variety of rates as well as bonus rates for high production, such types of grievances are to be expected. No worker appreciates a reduction in his pay rate nor a cut in bonus pay because of some change, thought necessary by management.

For the sake of comparison, a discussion on contract usage and monthly breakdown of third step grievances in the Kansas City Plant will be deferred until the final chapter. It can be said here that the union representatives in the Kansas City Plant used the contract, not so much as to bring up grievances as to prove a point when once a grievance arose and was brought to the third step. Local 12 representatives used the contract more intelligently in the processing of third step grievances than did the leaders and representatives of Local 28 in Chicago.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF GRIEVANCES AT THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT

Introduction

The East Saint Louis Plant, also known as the National Stockyards Plant, the third plant to be studied in this paper, is very similar in size to the Kansas City Plant. In this chapter we will discuss, as in the two previous chapters, the work force and the union as elements in a study of third step grievances. Following this will be an analysis of the third step grievances along with a discussion on the grievance participants. The use of the contract by the union as an element in the East Saint Louis Plant third step grievances will be discussed briefly. Just prior to the conclusion a few paragraphs will be given over to telling about the monthly breakdown of third step grievances in the East Saint Louis Plant for 1954.

It will be interesting to observe in this chapter if there are any factors, present in this plant, not present in the other two which would cause it to have the least number of third step grievances. The writer believes that this plant is very similar to the other two in most factors which would have a bearing on the number and kinds of third step grievances. We shall let the facts, as presented, speak for themselves.
The Work Force

Of the three plants in our discussion the Swift plant in the National Stockyards near East Saint Louis, Illinois is the smallest. However, it is not much smaller than the Kansas City Plant, which in turn has approximately one thousand fewer employees than the Chicago Plant. During a maximum period of production the East Saint Louis Plant has 2193 workers, and at the minimum period the plant employs 1939 people. The variation here is less than the Kansas City Plant but more than the Chicago Plant which has the least variation.

The population of the plant consists in eighty-four per cent men and sixteen per cent women. There are no Negro women in the East Saint Louis Plant. Among the men forty-four per cent are Negro and the remaining fifty-six per cent are white.

The National Stock Yards is owned tripartitely by Armour, Swift and the National Stock Yards Company. As such it is a community in itself with few permanent residents. All three companies are responsible for sanitation, police protection and safety precautions throughout the yards.

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1 Based on a Conversation with the Labor Relations Director, General Superintendent's Office, Chicago, March 15, 1956.


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid. p 30.
A good majority of the workers live in East Saint Louis; the balance live in the surrounding small towns in Illinois. The Negro population of the plant live in an area known as South End in East Saint Louis. The Negro-white relations are less aggressive in East Saint Louis since here too as in Kansas City the Negroes are far less independent than those living in Chicago and working in the stockyards.

The Union

Local 78 of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen Union (AFL) is the bargaining agent for the workers in the East Saint Louis Swift Plant. This particular local had its beginning in 1938. The national organization had been given a terrible setback in the 1921 strike in which the company was victorious and the union greatly weakened almost to complete extinction. Since this strike the AFL has had very little representation in any of the stockyards.

The percentage of representation in East Saint Louis is always similar to the percentage in Kansas City, never going below ninety per cent for several years now. At the present time Local 78 has had close to ninety-five per cent of all eligible workers of the East Saint Louis Plant in its ranks. The union has no local newspaper and only takes to the printed word at election time and bar-

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7Ibid. p 26.
gaining time. In doing so these publications never became as rabid as "The Flash" in the Chicago Plant.

Among the officers of Local 78 there is one Negro vice-president as well as some lesser Negro officers. All the officers have come up through the ranks of the union. Some few have been officers from the beginning of the organization. Stewards of the local are paid a small amount for their services. For the most part the executive body of Local 78 is on good terms with the local management; although, a company spokesman was prone to believe that as soon as a man became a good union steward, he was removed shortly thereafter for fear he would become partial to the company.

Grievances

The author investigated fourteen third step grievances on his trip to the East Saint Louis Plant in the National Stockyards.

TABLE XV

CLASSIFICATION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and Discharge</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Security</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rights</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Schedules and Premium Pay</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Structure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department
East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955
In this plant there are seven fewer grievances than in the Kansas City Plant and thirty-seven less than in the Chicago Plant. Here there are five grievance classifications as compared to three in Kansas City and seven in Chicago. The author believes that the small number of advanced step grievances in this plant is directly traceable to the traditional conservatism of the AFL as well as to the fact that Local 78 has never been challenged by any CIO group.

In looking through the files of grievances in the East Saint Louis Plant, the writer found them to be completely without organization. Such a situation was in direct contrast to the Kansas City Plant, visited previously, where excellent files were available on all of the third step grievances. The East Saint Louis cases were not numbered, and the author was pressed to number them for the purpose of his investigation. None of the grievances are reduced to writing in this plant until the third step and here only very sketchily. Perhaps the AFL along with management here follow this procedure because of the small number of advanced step grievances that are processed through the grievance machinery.

Grievances on Discipline and Discharge and the Participants

Therein

The two grievances on discipline and discharge were in the same department, the Loading Dock. Both involved disciplinary action short of discharge. In the first instance an employee was heard to use obscene language to a company watchman when the
guard accused him of something he was supposedly not doing. The company demanded that the employee apologize to the watchman as his disciplinary action. In the end everyone concerned exchanged apologies, and it was agreed by both parties that the case should never have reached the third step.

The employee in this case was white and thirty-six years old. The man had been with the company five years. The foreman was white, around fifty years of age with quite a background of experience. His gang numbers one hundred men at most times with the greatest number of casual workers in the plant. This factor should point to a greater number of grievances, but the loading dock had no more grievances than the average department in the plant. On several occasions in the past this foreman had been accused of violating the contract in the placement of workers and in handing out overtime in different shifts. The white steward was around fifty-two years old, having started with the company in 1924. The man was described by a management representative as being very ignorant of the contract and never bothering to consult the contract before filing a grievance.9

In the second case the employee refused to do the work assigned him without going through the grievance procedure. He sought payment of four hours pay to fill out the thirty-six hour guarantee for the week. For refusing to perform the work the worker was

9 Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
given the balance of the day off, and no back pay was granted by the company in the settlement of this grievance.

The foreman and the steward were the same in this case as in the previous one. The employee was white and twenty-one years old. Sometime after this grievance in which he took part, the man was discharged for insubordination.

Grievances on Union Security and the Participants Therein

Both of the grievances classified as union security, were concerned with seniority. In the first one a woman was laid off to be replaced by a man. In the case the woman was never mentioned, but the union acted as the aggrieved party. Now in all Swift plants where both men and women are employed, separate seniority lists are maintained as well as job classifications for both sexes. The company was in the wrong in this case, acknowledged its error and agreed to adhere more strictly to the separate seniority provisions for men and women. No mention was made as to whether or not the woman was compensated for her lost time.

The foreman in the case was forty-nine, with over thirty years of service and handling on the average three to four hundred people in his entire gang at the Smoke House. The steward was white, around forty-seven with at least twenty years of service. He had a rough knowledge of the contract and enjoyed "average intelligence" in the words of a company spokesman.10

10Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
In the second case an employee felt he was suffering a loss in seniority when plant moves became necessary because of the entrance into military service of some of the younger workers. The company won the case by stating that the Master Agreement allows a man to carry his plant seniority with him whenever a move was made from one job to another within the plant.11

The employee was white, around forty-one years old, having middle service in the company. Two foremen were involved, both in their fifties and quite able to handle their gang. Each man had at least twenty-five years service and got along very well with the gang. Both had a better than average knowledge of the contract with very few grievances. The steward was white, twenty-seven with slightly more than seven years company service. He was not one to raise many grievances, probably because his knowledge of the contract was limited.

Grievances on Employment Rights and the Participants Therein

In the third category of grievances on employment rights the author found three in the East Saint Louis Plant. In the first case an employee felt the need of a reclassification of his job with a corresponding increase in the pay rate because of the increased number of tasks assigned to him. The company contended that no reclassification was necessary and agreed only to talk the matter over at the next bargaining period.

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11 Article 2, Section 2a and b, Swift & Company Master Agreement with the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, September, 1954 to September, 1956, pp 7-8.
The worker involved was white, forty years old, and had twelve years of service with the company. The foreman was comparatively young at age forty-two with fifteen years of service. He got along very well with the gang and had extremely few grievances. The steward in the case was thirty-two and termed "confused" by management. He could not read very well in spite of his two years high school, and as a consequence was restricted in his knowledge of the contract.

In the second case an employee had been accustomed to an early start on his certain job. Management changed his job and also his starting time. The union contended that the company was wrong in arbitrarily changing the starting time of a man who had begun early for several years. The company admitted that it was in error in changing the man's starting time, but would not allow him to start early on his new job.

The participating employee was white, forty-four years old and had fourteen years of service with the company. The foreman was only thirty-three with eleven years service. He had worked his way up through the gang in that comparatively short time. He had a fair knowledge of the contract. The steward was white, about the same age as the foreman with a minimum of formal education. His knowledge of the contract was a little less than that of his foreman.

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12Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
In the last case in this category the employee had been injured on the job, and claimed he was unable to do his old job. He sought reassignment to an easier job. The company doctor stated that the man was perfectly capable of performing his regular work. As a consequence the man was told to do his assigned job, and his time off for refusing to do the job several times prior to the filing of the grievance was to be considered as a disciplinary lay-off.

The employee in this case was Negro, the first we have encountered as a participant in the East Saint Louis grievances. He was only twenty-one with over three years service. The foreman was thirty-eight with fifteen years service, having worked his way up through the gang. Formerly he had been a union representative, a type of super-steward. The man had from sixty to seventy-five workers in his gang, got along with them quite well and had few grievances. The steward in the case was also the first Negro steward in a case of the East Saint Louis Plant. The man was thirty-three years of age with very little education. His knowledge of the contract was quite poor, but the man brought up few grievances.13

Grievances on Premium Pay and Work Schedules and the Participants Therein

In the East Saint Louis Plant the largest number of grievances

13Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
was found in the category of Premium Pay and Work Schedules. This group represents over one-third of the grievances in the National Stockyards Swift Plant. Among the five grievances are two involving entire gangs and three concerned with individual employees.

In the first case an employee of the Beef Dressing Department complained that insufficient rest time was given to employees in both the Beef and Sheep Dressing Departments. Further, the employee felt that sufficient credit was not allowed in the bonus system standard for keeping tools in shape, changing jobs and waste motions involved in every job in the two departments. The company did not even argue the case, but told the union that sufficient rest period was given and allowances were made in the standards for any non-work movements. The union was satisfied with the company’s explanation and withdrew the grievance in the third step.

The foreman and steward in this case were already discussed in the Employment Rights group of grievances in the section immediately preceding this one. The employee involved would hardly be the one most expected to be found in a grievance of this nature. Usually a young male or female worker would be the one to register a complaint of this nature. The grievant was male, Negro, fifty-three years old and had thirty-six years of service.

In the second case the three gangs of Beef Casings, Beef Rough Tallow and Beef Dressing were involved. On the day following a holiday all three gangs worked for 8.6 hours. For some
unknown reason the company did not pay overtime for that particular day. It was rather strange that the company would allow the case to advance to the third step before admitting its error and stating that all workers would be paid overtime for the day in question.

In this case, no particular foremen or stewards were involved. It was a matter in which the union officers brought their complaint directly to the plant management. Perhaps this very action caused the grievance to be classified as one in the third step.

The third case in this group also concerned an entire gang, the Brown and Serve Department, in which both men and women work. In this department the newer type of smoked sausage is manufactured, which requires only a few minutes of heating prior to serving. It seems that a standard had been established for a certain number of women on one line. Several men were added to the line without adjusting the standard, or so the union steward thought. Actually the company time study men had included the extra men in the standard, but the foreman had neglected to tell the steward of the change. The foreman was instructed to tell the union of any changes made in the standards in the future, and no back bonus pay was granted to the people involved.

The foreman in this case was the youngest in the East Saint Louis Plant. The man was twenty-seven years old with nine years of service to the company. He had worked his way up through the gang in that relatively short span of time. As was mentioned previously he had to handle both men and women which he did very well.
The department had very few grievances.

The steward was white, about forty-nine years old with twenty-five years of company service. The man was not bothered by an extremely abundant knowledge of the contract, but was well liked by all members of his gang. He was capable of doing several jobs in the Smoke House and would be transferred for a short period of time if the foreman felt he was being given too much trouble.14

An employee was accidentally shot in the foot and sought sick pay. When the company refused to grant such pay, the fourth grievance in this group was filed. The man felt that he should be compensated for all time lost. The foreman contended that the steward had no argument in this particular case, and the company doctor declared the man fit and able to return to work. Management failed to back up the foreman in this case and paid the employee for all time lost. Actually there was no reason for the man not to be paid since it was clearly established that it was an accident which caused the man to be off from work.

The foreman and steward in this case were previously discussed in the case involving the application of separate male and female seniority. The employee was male. Negro, thirty-four years old and had five years of service with the company.

Two male employees were involved in the fifth and last griev-

14 Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
ance in this group. Both men had worked over eight hours and were instructed to work through their supper time. Article 5, Section 1b of the Master Agreement states that "When employees are required to work more than five (5) consecutive hours after the first meal period, the company shall furnish a meal; and employees so furnished a meal shall be allowed twenty (20) minutes' time off, with pay to eat such meal...". The company admitted a misunderstanding had arisen as to the exact number of hours worked. It was agreed that both men would be paid double time for the twenty minute meal period and time and one-half for all hours worked after eight P.M. The union advised management to admonish the foreman in this case for abusive language in the second step, bringing out the fact that union representatives had on several past occasions been disciplined for using such language.

The older of the two workers involved was Negro, twenty-five years of age with two years of service. The other man was white, twenty years old also with two years company service. The foreman in the case was white, about fifty with thirty years of service. The man was reasonably intelligent and understood the contract fairly well. In his gang were both men and women. The steward was white, aged thirty-three with a grammar school education. The man did not seem too intelligent and lacked a complete grasp of the contract.15

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15 Personal Interview with the Head of the Standards Department, East Saint Louis Plant, December 22, 1955.
The remaining two cases in the East Saint Louis Plant were classified under the heading of Wage Structure. In the first one, a woman, the only one mentioned by name in all fourteen third step grievances in this plant, sought a reclassification of jobs as to whom should be placed on the various jobs in the Pork Trimming Department. In other words the woman felt she was being discriminated against in the matter of job seniority.

The company reviewed the records of all women in the department and found the aggrieved to be in the proper job at the correct rate of pay. No adjustment was necessary in the way of retroactive pay on the part of the company.

The foreman and steward in this case were discussed in the case just prior to this one. The employee was female, white, forty-one years of age with eight years of service to the company.

In the concluding case the four members of the Boiler and Engine Room Department who sought the higher rate of engineers' pay were not named. These men, although they were classified as oilers, performed the duties of the engineer, usually one or two hours every shift. The company argued that these men performed such work only with the permission of the foreman or the chief engineer and were not entitled to the higher rate of pay. In settlement the company agreed to pay the oilers the learning rate of the engineer at such times as they were doing the functions of the engineer. The foreman and steward in this case were the same two involved in the military service seniority case of the second group.
The Union-Management Contract as a Factor in East Saint Louis
Plant Third Step Grievances

In comparison to the two contracts previously discussed the contract between Swift & Company and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America seems a trifle shorter in length and is arranged a little differently. For example in the other two contracts, the section on seniority comes before the section on grievance procedure. In this contract the reverse is true, and yet the Amalgamated has fewer grievances at the East Saint Louis Plant which reach the third step than the number at both of the other plants.

In this contract, as well as in the other two, many sections seem to bear the imprint of management such as the sections on shop conditions, wages and vacations. It is very possible that such parts are a carry over from the rules of the old Swift Employees' Representation Plan which was nothing more than a company union in the days prior to worker organized unions.

To a man with only a grammar school education the East Saint Louis agreement might seem difficult of interpretation. However, in comparison to contracts in steel, the electronics industry and the building trades this one is quite lucid and easy of comprehension. From the reading of the fourteen third step grievances the writer concludes that the union is just as quick to quote the contract as the company, but not too many grievances arise because of contract misinterpretation.
### Chronological Breakdown of Grievances in the East Saint Louis Plant

By months the third step grievances can be listed in the following table for the East Saint Louis plant according to the months in which they were initiated.

**TABLE XVI**

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Grievances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**...14

A preliminary glance at the table seems to indicate that the union takes a vacation from filing grievances during the late spring and early summer. They pick up a little just prior to bargaining time and then remain steady at one a month for the remainder of the year.

The most number of grievances occurred in this plant just prior to union elections and shortly after them. In view of the stable position of the union and its officers, it would seem incongruous that the union would have to bring up more grievances than usual to stimulate the vote from the rank and file at election time. However, maybe it is a union tactic that is used regardless
of the union's prestige and position in the work community.

Summary and Conclusion

Once more we turn to tabular representation for a summary on the participants in third step grievances, this time for the East Saint Louis Plant. The following are tables on the sex, race, age, company service and departments of the workers involved in the East Saint Louis third step grievances. Participants in gang grievances are omitted from the first four tables since the writer was unable to review the records of those taking part in such grievances.

**TABLE XVII**

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE XVIII**

RACE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XIX

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN
THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20 to 29</th>
<th>30 to 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>40 to 49</th>
<th>50 to 59</th>
<th>Over 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE XX

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING
TO COMPANY SERVICE IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Group</th>
<th>Short Service (Under 5 Years)</th>
<th>Middle Service (5 to 15 Years)</th>
<th>Long Service (Over 15 Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE XXI

THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANT
ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENTS
1954

Table Ready Meats Kitchen . . . 4  Loading Dock . . . . . . . . . . 2
Beef Dressing . . . . . . . . . . 3  Pork Trimming . . . . . . . . . . 2
Boiler and Engine Room . . . 2  Mechanical Department . . . . . . 1

Total . . . 14

We find in Table XVII that ninety-one per cent of the grievants are male in a plant with eighty-six per cent male workers. Women make up the remaining nine per cent of the grievants in the East Saint Louis Plant where women workers comprise fourteen per cent of the work force. These figures seem to be in proportion when we consider that women, for the most part, usually bring up
grievances on seniority which can be settled in the first or second step of the grievance machinery.

Because of the small total number of individual grievants in the East Saint Louis Plant, only eleven, the percentages found in Table XVIII seem to be striking. However, in view of the white majority of plant workers the proportion is related. The white majority of grievants is somewhat higher than the majority of white workers in the plant. But this again can be attributed to the less independent status of the Negro workers in this plant as compared to the Chicago Plant.

The more than fifty per cent majority of short service grievants found in Table XX can be related to the percentages of grievants found in the twenty-to twenty-nine and thirty to thirty-nine age groups. The forty-six per cent of the grievants found in the forty to forty-nine and fifty to fifty-nine age brackets can be related to the percentage of long service employees. East Saint Louis follows the three plant pattern, as we shall see in the final chapter, in that the majority of grievants are found in the short service group as opposed to the middle and long service groups.

Table XXI again demonstrates the presence of women grievants when we find the largest number of grievances in the Table Ready Meats Kitchen. The Beef Dressing Department in the East Saint Louis Plant is quite independent and outspoken as a group which shows up in their higher number of grievances in comparison to the other departments. On the whole grievances in this plant were confined to a fewer number of departments than in either of the other
two plants.

Based on the average number of workers for 1954 in the East Saint Louis Plant there were only .67 grievances per every one hundred workers as compared to 1.35 in Chicago and .77 in Kansas City. The most number of grievances were found in the general category of Work Schedules and Premium Pay. Such grievances do not indicate poor union-management relations since this type of grievance is common to most industries.

The proportion of women taking part in grievances in East Saint Louis is low in comparison to Chicago. However, it cannot be compared with the Kansas City Plant where there were no women in any of the third step grievances. The proportion of women workers to the total number of plant employees in the National Stockyards is comparable to that in Chicago and Kansas City. Currently there are no women Negroes employed in the East Saint Louis Plant nor were there any in 1954.

As was mentioned previously, Local 73 is more conservative than its counterpart locals in Chicago and Kansas City. The stewards in Local 78 are paid a small compensation for their services to the union. Perhaps, this would indicate, although it actually does not, a tendency towards more grievances if stewards felt they had to have many grievances to prove their worth to the union.

In the East Saint Louis Plant there is not a steward for every department. This would tend towards fewer grievances since many workers are not inclined to going to another department to get a steward to represent them in a complaint. In Chicago a
steward can be found, more often than not, only a few feet from any individual worker. The writer had the opportunity to observe that such a situation in the Chicago Plant may have helped more grievances to arise and certainly did not suppress any.

With reference to grievances, the East Saint Louis Plant had fewer grievances in comparison to its size than either of the other two plants. Does this indicate that the workers are suppressing their grievances and perhaps building up to a break someday? On the contrary, from the standpoint of a very brief period of observation, it is the author's opinion that this plant enjoyed excellent union-management relations. Many grievances were settled prior to the third step by a friendly discussion between a union officer or officers and a representative of the local management. On the whole, in view of the grievances studied, it would seem that this plant had the best union-management situation of the three.
CHAPTER V

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this, the concluding chapter, an attempt will be made to bring together the findings on the third step grievances as discussed in the previous three chapters. The same outline will be followed as in these three chapters. First a comparison will be drawn between the three work forces at the plants. Then the local unions at the three plants will be covered in as comparative a manner as facts allow. In this section also the use of the contract by the union leaders will be compared. As pointed out in the introductory chapter an evaluation of the three union agreements by the author demonstrated the similarity of the documents. And so in this chapter the only findings, drawn from the various contracts as elements in third step grievances, will be included with the discussion of the union leaders who make use of these agreements in the processing of grievances.

In the comparative discussion on the findings from the analysis of grievances and grievants at the three plants the first four tables, used in the conclusion of the three preceding chapters will be brought together in four comparative tables. We will see if any definite conclusions can be drawn as to the fact or fiction
that certain people have grievances consistently and consistently try to advance them to the third, fourth and fifth steps. Some other tables will also be used in this section to clarify some of the findings with respect to the types and numbers of grievances at the three plants.

Before the comparative discussion on the monthly breakdown of third step grievances at the three plants another table will be set forth which will show the monthly breakdown at all three plants together in the same table. It will be found that this monthly distribution of third step grievances is not as important an element as an analysis of the grievances or a discussion of the work force or union in reference to a study of the elements involved in third step grievances. From this discussion the paper will then go into a brief survey as to the conclusions to be drawn from this research.

The Work Forces

The number of the labor force in the Chicago Plant at any given time stands eighteen hundred to two thousand more than both the Kansas City and East Saint Louis Plants. The Negro population in the Chicago Plant represents well over fifty per cent of the total working population. In both of the other plants the Negroes are not as well represented with thirty-eight per cent of the total work population in Kansas City and forty-four per cent of the total in the East Saint Louis Plant.

Can it be said that there is a direct relationship between the number of plant employees and the total number of third step
grievances in each of the three plants? There is definitely a relationship between the factors, but it is not in proportion to the worker population of each of the three plants. The following table demonstrates the comparative number of third step grievances per one hundred workers at each of the three plants.

**TABLE XXII**

**THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES PER ONE HUNDRED WORKERS IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Kansas City</th>
<th>East Saint Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can the size of the work force be put down as a cause for grievances? This point the writer was not trying to determine at the outset of his research. However, in the course of research, it was found that size alone of the work force was not a cause of grievances. If one were to look only at the Kansas City and East Saint Louis Plants, knowing that the average size of the Kansas City work force is just one hundred more than that in East Saint Louis, it would seem that size is a determining factor in the number of grievances which a plant may have. But in looking at the number of grievances per one hundred workers in the Chicago Plant, it becomes obvious that there are other things than size alone which cause grievances.

The writer's research did reveal the fact that racial composition of the work population was a primary factor in third step grievances. The following table illustrates the number of third step grievances in each of the three plants along with the number
of white employees and Negro employees as the aggrieved parties.\(^1\)

**TABLE XXIII**

THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES AND THE RACE OF GRIEVANTS IN THE CHICAGO,
KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Kansas City</th>
<th>East Saint Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grievances</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another table will follow which will point out the percentage of Negroes in the three work forces and the percentage of Negro grievants, taking part in third step grievances for each plant.

**TABLE XXIV**

NEGRO PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL WORK FORCES AND NEGRO PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL NUMBER OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANTS IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY
AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Kansas City</th>
<th>East Saint Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Force</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievants</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Negro population is in the majority in the Chicago Plant. Also in Chicago Negroes are accorded a greater amount of independence in comparison to Kansas City and East Saint Louis. These two factors combined are, in the opinion of this writer, one of the pri-

\(^1\)Figures on the number of grievants represent only those employees whose records the writer was able to review. Participants in gang grievances are not listed as the author was unable to determine the number of people involved or review their records.
mary causes of third step grievances in the Chicago Plant.

On all sides in housing, social life, education, community existence and even church attendance the Negroes are on the defensive. The majority group of Negroes in the Chicago Plant finds some outlet for their rebuffs in other life aspects by raising grievances and processing them to the upper level third and fourth steps. Of the fifty-one third step grievances at the Chicago Plant in 1954 more than three quarters had a Negro man or woman as the aggrieved party. In the cases where whole gangs were concerned, Negroes were in the majority in all but the mechanical gangs.

Grievances filed by Negroes in Kansas City and East Saint Louis seem to be a form of protest to their situation in the social community. In Kansas City, Missouri and in East Saint Louis, and to some extent in Kansas City, Kansas, the Negro populations are restricted to a rather small area and have less prestige and power than the Negro population in Chicago. In both of the areas, surrounding the Kansas City and East Saint Louis Plants, the Negro population is repressed. It is difficult to explain why there are not more grievances at the third step in these two plants since the Negroes of the work force are limited in their expression in the social community. It would seem that more grievances would be filed and processed to the third step and beyond to compensate for the lack of expression outside the work community.

The Unions

The unions in the three plants under study are the most variant factor of any in this discussion. All three branches of
unionism, as it stood in 1954, are represented by Local 28, UPWA, CIO, in Chicago, by Local 12, Independent, in Kansas City and by Local 78, AMG&EWNA (AFL) in East Saint Louis. Representation of the working population by each union is about the same in Kansas City and East Saint Louis at close to ninety-five per cent in both plants. In Chicago Local 28 maintains a small majority representation of the workers which is far below the percentage of representation, enjoyed by the unions in the other two plants.

Leadership in all three unions is retained by members of the majority group in each plant. As was previously noted, all officers of Local 28 in Chicago were Negro in 1954, as is the case at the present time. In Kansas City in 1954 there were no major union offices held by Negroes. Now there are one or two Negroes in high union offices in Local 12 of the Kansas City Plant. In East Saint Louis in 1954 there was one Negro vice-president in Local 78 which is the same today. It can easily be assumed that the Negro leadership of Local 28 would certainly prompt more Negroes than white people in the Chicago Plant to bring up grievances which advance to the third, fourth and fifth steps.

The membership of Local 28 is not in the majority pro-communist, but a tight minority of Communists and fellow travelers within the local is enough to lend a Communist tinge to the entire local. Both Locals 12 and 78 do not have such trouble with Communist groups. Local 12 carries on a constant fight with a CIO group in Kansas City which tries to raid its membership. Local 78 remains a traditional AFL group with a rather conservative membe-
ship and no outside opposition.

The author is of the opinion that neither the union as such
nor its leaders are a dominant factor in the number and kinds of
grievances in the Kansas City and East Saint Louis Plants. Neither
group is fighting to maintain its membership. Both have reason-
ably cordial relations with management. A great number of griev-
ances would not add to the standing of the union as a whole nor
its leaders since both have achieved a great margin of success
without them.

However, in Local 28 of the Chicago Plant the union and its
leaders are a primary factor in the number and kind of grievances
which are processed. The Negroes have been a majority group in
the Union Stockyards only since the Second World War and after it.
In this time more and more have entered the city of Chicago and
met with discrimination and racial hatred on every side. And yet
in this respect Chicago is reputed to be one of the more liberal
cities in the treatment of the Negro Race. It is to be expected
that the Negroes will express themselves where they must be heard.
The grievance system offers them this expression.

Before leaving this discussion on the unions and their lead-
ers we must investigate briefly the role of the union leaders in
the use of the contract with respect to grievances. Local 28
representatives in the Chicago Plant make the contract serve as
an argument starter and grievance breeding ground. In doing so the
union-management agreement is given wide and oftentimes mistaken
interpretation by the union people involved.

In the Kansas City Plant and to a somewhat lesser extent in the East Saint Louis Plant the union leaders use the contract as a means of supporting its position in any third step grievance. In reviewing the third step cases in both plants the author encountered frequent references to the contract in supporting a point. In Kansas City the management followed the same procedure. These two unions and their leaders made use of the contract to further good union-management relations not as the means to bring up more grievances.

Grievances and Grievants.

In discussing the types of third step grievances at the three plants it is well to use another comparative table to illustrate the kinds and number of each kind of grievance.

**TABLE XXV**

**TYPES OF GRIEVANCES AND THEIR NUMBER AT THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline and Discharge</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Kansas City</th>
<th>East Saint Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and Discharge</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union-Management Status</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rights</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Schedules and Premium Pay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage Structure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The high number of grievances on discipline and discharge in the Chicago Plant are indicative of the union-management relations there. There seem to be foremen in the Chicago Plant who are on the offensive in looking for people to discipline. Also there are employees in the Chicago Plant who do things, which they are well aware will bring disciplinary measures. It has been the author's observation that there are people in the Chicago Plant, both union and non-union, who are troublemakers, either from choice or appointment in the case of union people.

The known union troublemakers will cause a grievance due to disciplinary action or discharge, and then, with the help of the union, push their cases to the advanced steps. This type of action follows the union attitude toward management in general in the Chicago Plant, one of distrust and wariness. About the only thing in which Local 28 cooperates with the management of the Chicago Plant is in the joint administration of the Safety Committee.

In the Kansas City Plant the largest number of grievances was to be found in the category of Wage Structure. Here were sixty-three per cent of the total third step grievances in Kansas City. This kind of a grievance is the continuation of collective bargaining on a day-to-day basis. These grievances do not leave as much bad feeling on both sides as do discipline and discharge grievances.

Third step grievances in the classification of Work Schedules and Premium Pay were in the majority with a thirty-six per cent of the total in the East Saint Louis Plant. Here again this type of
grievance is common in industry and is a continuation of collective bargaining from day-to-day.

Four comparative tables must be used to summarize the findings on the third step grievants in the three plants.

**TABLE XXVI**

**SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THE THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>29(85%)</td>
<td>5(15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>18(100%)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Saint Louis</td>
<td>10(91%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE XXVII**

**RACE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Negro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>6(18%)</td>
<td>28(82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>5(33%)</td>
<td>11(67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Saint Louis</td>
<td>7(64%)</td>
<td>4(36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE XXVIII**

**AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20 to 29</th>
<th>30 to 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>7(20%)</td>
<td>10(30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>5(28%)</td>
<td>5(28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Saint Louis</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>4(36%)</td>
<td>2(18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>50 to 59</td>
<td>Over 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>10(30%)</td>
<td>6(17%)</td>
<td>1(3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>5(28%)</td>
<td>3(16%)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Saint Louis</td>
<td>4(36%)</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XXIX

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO COMPANY SERVICE IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS 1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short Service</th>
<th>Middle Service</th>
<th>Long Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>8 (24%)</td>
<td>15 (44%)</td>
<td>11 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>11 (61%)</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Saint Louis</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a brief resume it will be noticed that more men have grievances than women. More Negroes than whites had third step grievances. The age group with the greatest number of grievances was in the bracket from age forty to forty-nine. And lastly the short service workers had more grievances than the middle service and long service employees. The last two findings do not corroborate each other since most people from the ages of forty to forty-nine have more than just five years of service with a company. This last finding can only be reconciled by reviewing the tables and noting that grievants with middle service run a very close second to those with short service. Grievants in the forty to forty-nine age bracket most likely have middle service but seem to overlap into the short service category when just the two figures are considered alone without relationship to all of the figures.

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE THREE PLANTS FOR 1954

In comparing the monthly distribution of third step grievances at the three plants for 1954 we must turn once more to a
TABLE XXX

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THIRD STEP GRIEVANCES IN THE CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY AND EAST SAINT LOUIS PLANTS
1954

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Kansas City</th>
<th>East Saint Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Little can be said concerning the comparison of the monthly distribution of third step grievances in the three plants. Both Chicago and Kansas City have the greatest number of grievances in October, the month in which the new contract would be tested. East Saint Louis does not follow this pattern. Only the contract testing theory can be advanced as the logical reason for more grievances in one month than in any other month of the year. For the other months the grievances seem to fall among them in a random pattern.
Summary Conclusion

In writing this thesis it was the author's intention to investigate and attempt to demonstrate that certain factors brought about third step grievances in the meatpacking industry. We have found that the racial composition of the work force is an important factor as well as the union and union leaders. The size of the work force was discounted as a cause of third step grievances. Contract interpretation was found to be important only in the way in which the union leaders used it with reference to third step grievances. We also found that there is not a definite pattern of any particular month or months in a year when more grievances are put forth. Although the facts pointed to the month of October as a predominantly heavy grievance month in two of the three plants surveyed.

In the first chapter we mentioned ventilation as a function of the grievance procedure. From the discussion of the three plants, it would seem that more grievances do not indicate more ventilation. More ventilation would point to better union-management relations which definitely not the case in the Chicago Plant where the most third step grievances took place. On the contrary, fewer grievances took place in the two plants with good union-management relations and yet there were no indications that the workers were not allowed to vent their feelings.

What are some of the things this thesis has shown? In it we have found a better understanding of the factors involved in advanced step grievances, specifically third step grievances. We have
seen that some factors are more important than others. The reader has become acquainted with the relationship of the various factors involved in grievances. We have observed the primary ones in their relationship to the secondary factors.

Has this study indicated anything which management could do to lessen the number of advanced step grievances? Perhaps, it would help to improve working conditions in the stockyards. Modernization in the way of new buildings, better machines and lights and more safety devices would help toward improving working conditions. Both union and management could train their men to handle situations from which grievances could arise. Grievances are necessary to a functioning, collectively-bargained agreement, but the more would-be grievances that are settled before reaching the grievance procedure, the better will be the union-management relations in that situation.

In some small way it is hoped that this study has advanced the field of knowledge with respect to grievances. Taken in its entirety it has added to what is already known about the Swift & Company workers and their attitudes toward the company and the union. The author hopes that it will prove to be a stimulus to further study in a field he found interesting and engaging.
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