

II. BACKGROUND OF THE DISPUTE

The carriers before the Board comprise almost the entire Class I railroad industry and account for well over 95 percent of the total railroad mileage in the United States.²

The six organizations represent approximately 137,000 shopworkers employed by the Class I railroads. These employees consist of journeymen mechanics, their helpers and apprentices, powerhouse employees and railway shop laborers. It is the primary responsibility of these employees to inspect, maintain, and repair all types of locomotives, freight and passenger cars, all work equipment such as cranes, hoists, work cars, wreck equipment, and the shop machinery and equipment. They also operate and maintain the stationary power plants and power stations where electricity is generated to furnish power and heat to the shops and buildings.

On May 17, 1966, the organizations served notices under Section 6 of the Railway Labor Act, as amended, requesting a general increase of 20 percent in all wage rates and differentials, the establishment of procedures for periodic cost of living adjustments, shift differentials, additional overtime pay, vacation and paid holiday improvements, jury duty pay and the establishment of a 30-minute paid lunch period on each shift.³

The request was that all changes be made effective January 1, 1967. On the first day of the hearings, the organizations officially withdrew their paid lunch period proposal.

Subsequently, in June 1966, various proposals were served by the individual carriers on the organizations. Among the changes requested were a revision of the vacation agreement, elimination of certain craft jurisdictional barriers, a revision of the rules governing the work of car inspectors, greater freedom to institute technological, operational and organizational changes, establishment of entrance rates, compulsory retirement age limits, revision of the 40-hour work-week rules, establishment of a rule to prohibit duplicate punitive holiday payments, elimination of the advance notice requirement for emergency force reductions and the establishment of a rule that would require adherence to the common law rule of damages for breach of collective bargaining contracts.⁴ The carriers subsequently withdrew their car inspector proposal.

² The carriers who are parties to this dispute consist of 138 line-haul railroads and terminal and switching companies. They function for national collective bargaining purposes through the National Railway Labor Conference and the three regional Carriers' Conference Committees.

³ The organizations' proposals are contained in Appendix B.

⁴ The carriers' proposals are contained in Appendix C.