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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS

REPORT OF A MEETING

OF THE

NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

held on

24th AUGUST, 1998

at

THE BONNINGTON HOTEL, LONDON

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Present: Mr A M Burrows Chairman
Mr J E M Burford
Mr A R Butlin
Mrs J Kendall
Mr J Peberdy

In Attendance: Mr C Baker General Secretary
Mr K Davis Asst General Secretary

The CHAIRMAN welcomed members of the Negotiating Committee to the meeting.

A) REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings held on 26th/27th February, 6th July and 20th July, 1998 were approved and signed as a true record.

DECISION

B) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

1. POST OFFICE BOARD - PO BD

The GENERAL SECRETARY gave a report of his recent meeting with Dr. Neville Bain, Chairman of The Post Office. Five common issues had been discussed:- the Future of the Post Office; the Future of Horizon; Counters Business; Minimum Wage and the Working Time Directive; and the Size and Shape of the Network. In addition the Federation had Mailwork; and what the Corporation were doing for the various businesses, whilst Security; and Signage and Presentation were put forward by Dr. Bain. It was stressed by him that he was purely a non-Executive Chairman, and that he could make no recommendations or promises.

All the above issues were covered during the course of the meeting, although it became evident that Dr. Bain had no knowledge of Mailwork with regard to its particular impact on sub post offices. He expressed deep concern regarding security and undertook to investigate the question of the £40 million, of which he was unaware. With regard to signage and presentation, Dr. Bain indicated his desire to work with the Federation in an attempt to improve the substantial differences which existed between sub offices. As to the size and shape of the Network, it was Dr. Bain's opinion that very shortly, the picture should be much clearer although he considered that the urban

network would be addressed as opposed to the rural one, which was self regulating. A serious look needed to be taken at the subject.

A good working relationship had been established which it was anticipated would be continued.

Irrelevant

- THE POST OFFICE INQUIRY

There was little to report on the subject stated the GENERAL SECRETARY, although the result of the Inquiry might be to hand somewhat earlier than had originally been expected.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

6. HUMAN RESOURCES

6(a) TRAINING FOR SUBPOSTMASTERS

Although not on the Agenda, MR. PEBERDY wished to raise the issue of Transactional Knowledge training and referred to a trial in the Midlands Region. The Royal Mail session was excellent and well received. However, that conducted by POCL regarding Insurance Products did not meet expectations.

It was the GENERAL SECRETARY's view that information be sought from Sub-Postmasters in order that difficulties could be addressed.

The CHAIRMAN highlighted concerns with regard to pre-appointment training, particularly where Regional General Managers were insistent the Sub-Postmasters attend for four weeks without any pay whatsoever. If, at the end of such training, a Sub-Postmaster had not reached the required standard, his Contract was under threat.

MRS. KENDALL concurred pointing out there were occasions in the North East when, following a new appointment, due to a lack of qualified trainers, training could not be carried out in the prescribed time period. The whole situation would be addressed.

ACTION

8. NETWORK**8(b) COUNTER AUTOMATION - BA/POCL - PC NW 06 01**

The GENERAL SECRETARY confirmed he had met with both ICL Pathway and Dave Miller, the Project Director and an announcement was anticipated shortly about some reorganisation which was likely together with the creation of the new role of Communications Manager.

There continued to be concerns regarding Horizon's ability to handle Cash Accounts, although the CHAIRMAN pointed out that whilst the facility existed, a manual cash account would still be required for at least 12 months.

The GENERAL SECRETARY reported that difficulties remained with the working relationship between ICL Pathway and the Post Office who continued to lay the blame at each other's doors for all problems and delays.

Attention was drawn by the CHAIRMAN to a number of instances where ICL Pathway had conducted surveys following Screen 2000 installations, and condemned the electrical work undertaken by ROMEK. Dissatisfaction with ROMEK's installations had also been expressed by a Regional Security Manager. It was unrealistic for anyone to have to pay twice for the electrical installation and the situation would be pursued.

In response to MRS. KENDALL's concerns regarding the letter to be despatched to Sub-Postmasters of Non-Cash Account offices, the GENERAL SECRETARY confirmed it had been revised. In addition, he commented that he was still seeking a reasonable explanation regarding the necessity of Non-Cash Account Offices to complete a Cash Account.

It was confirmed that other than Mailwork, all other functions would have to be undertaken once a Non-Cash Account office became a Cash Account office, but pressure would continue to be exerted to obtain a definitive explanation of all the associated difficulties.

ACTION

A BSC would be circulated to ensure Branch Secretaries were aware the letter was being despatched.

ACTION

With regard to those Sub-Postmasters who were participating in the trial, enquiries would be undertaken to ascertain the official line appertaining to the requirement to record the number of transactions per session.

ACTION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

34. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1998

- 98/RB1(D)** *Extension of 6 months re-appointment*
- 98/RB1(K)** *365 day year*
- 98/RB1(R)** *Mailwork POCL expenditure, Health & Safety at Work*
- 98/RB1(S)** *Mailwork Local Unit Specification*
- 98/2,3,4,5** *Reduction in POCL internal expenditure*
- 98/6** *Federation involvement in POCL client contract negotiations*
- 98/10** *Compensation for loss of pay - cash and stock "outs"*
- 98/14** *Adjust remuneration when adjacent office created*
- 98/18,19,20** *Priority Services and Recorded Delivery*
- 98/22** *Payment to compensate for work removed*
- 98/23** *Certificates of Posting*
- 98/24** *Payment for holding extra cash and stock*
- 98/26** *Interim payment agreed before commencement of new work*

- 98/27 *Interim payment for new work*
- 98/31 to 36 *Conditions of Appointment*
- 98/38 *Liability for losses following robbery*
- 98/39 *Appeals against recovery of losses heard outside Region*
- 98/44 *Transfer of appointment to spouse/partner treated as ongoing appointment*
- 98/50 to 54 *Supply of APTs, Electronic Bill Payment and PayPoint*
- 98/55 to 57 *Horizon*
- 98/RB4(H) *Time away from counter following attack*
- 98/64 *Screen 2000*
- 98/66 *Installation and maintenance for monitored alarm system*
- 98/67 *Publicise grants for anti-intruder alarms in Sub-Postmaster's residence*
- 98/68 *RNMs conducting debriefing and then disciplinary action follows*
- 98/69 *Assistance package to cover attendance at identity parades and court hearings*

The GENERAL SECRETARY confirmed that following discussion, action was in hand regarding the above Resolutions which were either about to be addressed in correspondence with POCL or deal with in the appropriate Forums.

Various comments were made regarding the hardening of POCL's attitude in respect of counter losses (98/38) in response to which, the GENERAL SECRETARY confirmed that proposals for a revision of Sub Rem 5/88 were awaited from POCL which it was hoped would ultimately address the current problems and soften POCL's approach that "you are guilty until proven innocent".

With regard to 98/18,19,20, the CHAIRMAN was of the view that in the case of Resolutions 18 and 19, the recently agreed increased Product Payments for Priority Service items did not satisfy the Federation's long standing claim. Resolution 20 which specifically referred to Recorded Delivery items had not been addressed by the 1998 Pay Settlement. A letter would be written reiterating the Federation's claim for improved payments for these products.

ACTION

It was pointed out that 98/42 had been omitted from the Agenda, which position would be rectified. Appropriate action on the subject had in any event already been taken.

The CHAIRMAN thanked everyone for their assistance in moving some of the subjects forward and wished them a safe journey home.

GRO

N.B. Add 98/42 PQID Activities

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