

**Southern Union Gas Company and International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, Local Union No. 492 (Ind.), Petitioner. Case 28-RC-1877**

May 6, 1969

DECISION AND DIRECTION OF  
ELECTION

BY CHAIRMAN McCULLOCH AND MEMBERS  
BROWN AND JENKINS

Upon a petition duly filed under Section 9(c) of the National Labor Relations Act, as amended, a hearing was held before Hearing Officer Gordon J. Jorgensen. Following the hearing, pursuant to Section 102.67 of the National Labor Relations Board Rules and Regulations and Statements of Procedure, Series 8, as amended, this case was transferred to the National Labor Relations Board for decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 3(b) of the National Labor Relations Act, as amended, the National Labor Relations Board has delegated its powers in connection with this case to a three-member panel.

The Board has reviewed the Hearing Officer's rulings made at the hearing and finds no prejudicial error. The rulings are hereby affirmed.

Upon the entire record in this case, the Board finds:

1. The Employer is engaged in commerce within the meaning of the Act, and it will effectuate the purposes of the Act to assert jurisdiction herein.

2. The Petitioner is a labor organization claiming to represent certain employees of the Employer.

3. A question affecting commerce exists concerning the representation of employees of the Employer within the meaning of Section 9(c)(1) and Section 2(6) and (7) of the Act.

4. The evidence indicates that the Employer operates and maintains natural gas systems in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Its Albuquerque, New Mexico, district, which is involved in the instant proceeding, distributes and sells natural gas to the consuming public. The Employer's Albuquerque district is headed by a district manager under whose supervision falls the district's commercial and service divisions. The employees comprising the service division are represented by a union. None of the employees comprising the commercial division, which is divided into the meter department, billing department, etc., is currently represented by any labor organization, and there is no collective-bargaining history for any of these employees.

The Petitioner requests an election in a unit composed of some four meter readers comprising the Employer's meter department. The Employer, while not suggesting an appropriate unit, urges that the petition be dismissed on the ground that the meter readers are part of the Employer's overall operation and should not be segregated from the remaining employees.

The meter readers perform the normal functions of the job. Thus, they go to the customers' homes, take readings, record, and submit them to their department supervisor. The meter department supervisor in turn submits the readings to the billing department of the commercial division which is also under separate supervision. Unlike the other employees in the various departments of the commercial division, the meter readers wear uniforms in the performance of their work. There is no standard line of progression to or from the meter department. With the exception of emergency situations, there is no interchange of employees between meter reading and any other department of the Employer. Transfers in or out of the Meter Department are only on a permanent basis and at the option of the affected employee.

On the basis of the foregoing, and particularly in view of the lack of functional integration, the absence of interchange between meter readers and the Employer's other employees, and the separate immediate supervision of the meter readers by the meter reading superintendent, we find that the following employees constitute an appropriate unit for the purposes of collective bargaining within the meaning of Section 9(b) of the Act:

All gas meter readers employed by Employer in its meter reading department at Albuquerque, New Mexico, but excluding all other employees, office clerical employees, guards and supervisors as defined in the Act.<sup>1</sup>

[Direction of Election<sup>2</sup> omitted from publication.]

<sup>1</sup>Cf *El Paso Electric Company*, 168 NLRB No 136, wherein a unit limited solely to the Employer's meter readers was deemed inappropriate. In that case, contrary to the facts herein, the meter readers were shown to be an integral part of the accounting department, enjoying common supervision and frequent temporary job interchange, as well as job progression, with the other clerical employees comprising the accounting department.

<sup>2</sup>In order to assure that all eligible voters may have the opportunity to be informed of the issues in the exercise of their statutory right to vote, all parties to the election should have access to a list of voters and their addresses which may be used to communicate with them *Excelsior Underwear Inc.*, 156 NLRB 1236; *N L R B. v. Wyman-Gordon Company*, 394 U S. 759. Accordingly, it is hereby directed that an election eligibility list, containing the names and addresses of all the eligible voters, must be filed with the Regional Director for Region 28 within 7 days of the date of this Decision and Direction of Election. The Regional Director shall make the list available to all parties to the election. No extension of time to file this list shall be granted by the Regional Director except in extraordinary circumstances. Failure to comply with this requirement shall be grounds for setting aside the election whenever proper objections are filed.