

January 6, 1937

Mr. Robert Wohlfergh, Secretary

Maurice W. Howard, 19th Region

BURNS AGENCY - PORTLAND, OREGON

On January 6th I contacted Mr. Fleming, manager of the Portland Burns Agency, in his office. Mr. Fleming turned over the complete file of the American Can Company, giving me the carbon copies from his journal, together with a copy of the authorization for this service.

In the course of the conversation with Mr. Fleming he said he had a new industrial case, and in response to an inquiry as to what firm, he replied that it was Montgomery Ward and Company.

He showed me the authorization for this service, which authorized the employment of operatives at \$8.00 per day. Mr. Fleming stated they had at least two operatives working there, in addition to various employees who were phoning in reports. He mentioned one girl who had telephoned in about a girl who was very active in the union, and had reported that this union girl was dancing in some night club and was altogether unfit to associate with the other girls at Montgomery Ward's. Mr. Fleming stated that, much as he regretted having to do it, he had suggested to the management that this girl be discharged because of her bad moral influence on the other employees. Her discharge, he said, had nothing to do with her union activity.

Mr. Fleming stated he received the reports from his operatives orally and passed them on in the same way. He mentioned that one of his operatives had called in and told him that two boys prominent in the newly formed union had been discharged, and later this same operative called to say that these men were merely on leave of absence or vacation following the Christmas holidays.

Mr. Fleming stated that the instructions given to his operatives prior to going out on this case were that they were to join the union if they were requested to do so, and attend the meetings; but if they were suggested or recommended for offices, they were to decline on the ground that they had not been employed long enough to be familiar with the business.

I asked him if his operatives were instructed to advise the union in methods of procedure, etc., and he said no, they were not.

This visit to Mr. Fleming's office was made about 9:30 on Wednesday morning, January 6th. Mr. Fleming was already well informed about a meeting that had been held the previous night by the practically defunct union of the Montgomery Ward employees. About 20 of a potential membership of several hundred showed up. He surmised that this small attendance was indicative of the fact that the union had been successfully broken up (jurisdiction dispute has something to do with this) and he was of the opinion that the services of the Agency would be discontinued probably that day or in the very near future.

He stated that the agency's reports were being made to a man who was planning to leave town. Because of our connection with this case in our capacity as Regional Labor Board, I am quite sure the man he had reference to was Mr. Bullock, Assistant Mail Order Operating Manager, who had flown out from Chicago soon after the union had been organized.

From our contact with the union, we believe we have a very reliable lead as to the identity of one of the operatives from the Burns Agency at Montgomery Ward's.

The union had spotted a chap by the name of James E. Meyers, who attended all union meetings and whenever small groups of the executives of the union would get together in a corner of the room, Mr. Meyers would always start edging over toward the group, where he could listen in.

Checking his record of employment with the company, in my capacity as Examiner for the Labor Relations Board, relative to the charge before us, I found that this James E. Meyers began work on November 5, 1936, and at the date of my examination, January 6th or 7th, he was still working on the freight elevators at Montgomery Ward's. This date was just about the date that the union started organizing at this plant. Meyers also admitted to one of the union men that he had at one time been a Burns operative, but stated that he no longer was.

Enclosed herewith are: authorization signed by J.R. Spence of the American Can Company and expense accounts and special reports dated: August 17-21; inclusive; August 24-29 inclusive; August 31st (2 reports for August 31st); September 1-4 inclusive, and September 30; October 15th.

Very truly yours,

MWH/H  
Enclosures.

Maurice W. Howard