



Jimmy was always finding things that the company was doing wrong, and pointing out how the guys had a right to challenge these things. So they came to him with grievances pretty often. And even though he was in the all-white repair gang, he had helped fight quite a few grievances for the Black furnace men, too.

Here's how he was able to do it:

The superintendent of the whole department, John Hill, was a kind of egomaniac, as superintendents often are in relation to those they think are below them. Hill used to hold "mass" stewards' meetings in the safety meeting hall, where anywhere from five to fifteen stewards used to gather maybe once or twice a month to take up three or four "big" grievances with him.

That didn't prevent them from taking up grievances on the spot, too, when they occurred. They often barged into Hill's office after a foreman wouldn't give in on something that required immediate attention.

But this big meeting was Hill's way of getting "good labor relations" with his department, and he thought he was pretty smart doing it that way. He and his department clerk, Robert Hay, would sit up there on a sort of stage and dispense justice like feudal lords. (Robert Hay made up the schedule every week and was directly responsible for the job assignments, so where there was too obvious an injustice, Hill could always blame it on Hay.)

It looked pretty terrible, I guess. But somehow, none of the