

Behind the Scenes in Organized Baseball

A Glimpse at the Complicated Machinery of the National Game as it Works Silently but Unerringly in the Central Office

By F. C. LANE

The following article is the result of a sincere effort on the part of The Baseball Magazine to acquaint the general public with the work of a major league office. This information, much of which has never before appeared in print, has been the result of a large number of interviews. Neither Mr. Lynch nor Mr. Heydler court publicity, and it has been at all times a difficult task to overcome their natural reticence. But little by little, in one way and another, by persistent effort we have finally gathered light on a large part at least of the official duties of the President and Secretary of the National League, and are pleased to present the accumulation of our labors to our readers. Personally we were much surprised to learn of the great mass of detail which devolves upon these busy men, and are sure our readers will be equally surprised. For we believe that neither the importance nor the volume of the work actually transacted in this office has ever been realized or appreciated.

THE busiest place in the baseball world is not on the diamond. Here indeed a group of men struggle and perspire for an hour or two daily in the summer season while the grounds are deserted the rest of the time. Neither is it in the magnates' offices, although these are often veritable bee-hives of activity. The busiest spot in the baseball world is in the offices where the chief executives of the national game supervise its diverse interests.

Hardly a person among the millions of fans who have made baseball the greatest of games realize the vast amount of work that devolves upon its chief executives. It is not given to them to peer behind the scenes into the offices of the Metropolitan Tower, where the National League makes its headquarters, or of the Fisher Building at Chicago, the White House of the American League. Even if they had looked in for a moment upon these well-appointed offices they would probably not have comprehended the full

scope of the business interests which are there in full swing, so noiselessly do the wheels of that complicated machinery do their work. But to one who has been favored with frequent visits at all times during the day and all seasons of the year a full view of the multifarious duties of baseball's officials finally reveals itself little by little not surprising in its details, but truly staggering in the sum total of energy and executive ability it requires.

Inasmuch as The Baseball Magazine has established its quarters in the near vicinity and does much of its work under the shadow of the Metropolitan Tower, it has been singularly fortunate in the privileges it has enjoyed in watching the vast mechanism of baseball in full operation. And, as the experience was a revelation to us with all our preconceived notions of the magnitude of the task, we believe it will be a revelation to our readers as well.

The offices of the National League are pleasantly situated in the northwest

corner of the Metropolitan Tower, thirteen stories above Madison Square. Here President Lynch and Secretary Heydler may be seen on any day when they are not called out of town on official business, hard at work on the many laborious and vexatious problems which continually demand their attention.

No department of the Government census bureau has a more complicated task than falls to the lot of Secretary Heydler in handling the official records. The casual reader who glances hastily at a column of the morning's press to see how many base hits Ty Cobb scored has little conception of the actual work involved in the compilation of the batting and fielding records of two hundred or more big stars. The records have been systematically kept and jealously preserved since 1903. They are complete in every detail to absolute mathematical perfection. Prior to 1903, however, there are many errors and uncertainties, for this was the first year after peace was declared between the two great leagues. With the dawning of this new era President Pulliam began his first term as chief executive of the National League, and with his inauguration a comprehensive system of keeping the records was installed. This system, which has been wonderfully improved with the passage of years, is still in vogue at present. To be sure, playing records exist dating from 1868. These are carefully preserved and furnish an invaluable mass of historical information on the national game. But as stated, they are very incomplete as compared with the elaborate and exhaustive statistics of 1912.

When the busy Secretary enters his office on a summer morning, the first act which confronts him is the pasting in a scrap book the scores of the previous day. Into this invaluable volume go also any remarks and newspaper clippings of any unusual happenings in the previous day's games. The American League daily scores are also carefully preserved. Upon the wall of Secretary Heydler's office is suspended a board much in the nature of a bulletin board, which is the invention of the Secretary himself. This board shows all the scheduled games in box form. Every club appears in its

proper place and day by day victories and defeats are carefully indicated, showing clearly the exact status of every club on the circuits. In addition all postponed or tied games, that continual source of complication, are also noted. Thus a moment's examination of the board reveals to the observer the complete history of the league race up to date.

An entirely separate ledger of postponed and tie games is most carefully kept. The league has the most admirable system designed for this purpose. As soon as notice is received at the central office, a date for playing off the postponed game is wired the same night. Special care is taken to see that such dates are in accord with the rule governing postponed games and also that the date set does not conflict with any American League game. After they have been thus substantiated the dates are bulletined to the presidents of the clubs in question, and such dates thus fixed then become automatically a part of the regular schedule. From this schedule they cannot be changed save by a three-fourths vote of the league. Complications arising from this one detail can be readily imagined when it is said that there were approximately ninety such postponed and tie games during the season just closed.

All records of the individual player are kept by Mr. Heydler personally. These involve probably the most elaborate set of figures ever compiled in organized baseball. The official scorers make a daily report to Mr. Heydler of the games under their charge. As soon as these reports are received they undergo a most careful inspection, the columns are added and checked up and the winning and losing pitchers determined. This detail alone requires a good deal of judgment, and sometimes presents unusual and complicated features. The figures thus inspected are then carefully transferred to a ledger kept for that purpose under the heads of the individual players. Some idea of the infinite detail involved in this task may be gathered when it is stated that there are eighteen separate columns devoted to every player in the national league and for a pitcher seventeen additional columns, thirty-five

in all. These additional columns are added to show a pitcher's actual work against the teams which he has opposed. All these entries are made in red or black ink in the order of dates as the games are played. Entries in black ink show games played on the home grounds; entries in red ink indicate games played on the road. By this method it can be seen at a glance how a player's work fluctuates throughout the season and also how his work on the road compares with his work on the home grounds. In addition the team records for each game are also entered in separate form. These records are carefully checked up by comparing them with the totals of players enrolled with any given team. In this manner errors where they do exist are speedily discovered and remedied. Three proofs of all such figures are taken during the season, and in the course of the busy summer months several million figures have to be recorded and examined before the final averages are ready for the printer or for advance distribution to the press.

In his long and successful work in this department of big league statistics Mr. Heydler has added several important innovations which have proved of marked advantage. In particular he has endeavored to perfect a system of analyzing the work of a pitcher in a much more thorough manner than is usually done. In accordance with this design the official score blanks this year have carried columns for figures showing the number of runs scored on every pitcher counting against him all bases on balls, wild pitches, batsmen hit and safe hits. The value of this exhaustive analysis will unquestionably increase with the progress of the game.

The records which fall to Mr. Heydler's supervision cover over three hundred individual players. Many of these records do not appear in print for the reason that the players in question have not participated in the minimum number of fifteen games. Mr. Heydler has long advocated a rule requiring a participation in at least half the number of scheduled games before a player should be entitled to the batting championship of his league.

It is not commonly known that all or-

ders for baseballs used in big league games are sent through the National headquarters, but such is the case. In the National League these orders are forwarded to the Metropolitan Tower, where they are taken care of through the usual channels and filled by Spalding Brothers. From 10,000 to 12,000 baseballs are shipped in this manner to the different clubs every season. Orders vary anywhere from two to twenty-four dozen. The supervision of this business requires a special ledger, in which all orders are confirmed, duplicate express vouchers of shipment added and absolutely nothing taken for granted. No baseball can be used in a national league championship game that does not bear the stamped signature of T. J. Lynch. This mark is always looked for by the umpires before putting a new ball into play. The prompt supply of baseballs is an important detail, for a visiting club could logically refuse to play in case the home club provided anything but the officially sealed sphere.

Just as the official scorers report daily to Secretary Heydler, so the umpires mail daily a report to President Lynch. This report gives full particulars concerning the game played on the date in question or the reasons in event of a postponement. These reports also contain a review of the action of the players involved and general team behavior. In short, everything is incorporated essential to keeping the President of the league in close touch with affairs on the diamonds under his supervision. A complete card index is kept of all players reported for the infraction of rules by the umpires. Where suspension is meted out by the President, the player, club president, manager and umpire in charge are all notified by wire. Such suspensions are made official by the confirmation of the umpire. Where a fine is imposed such fine must be paid within five days, otherwise suspension follows. Where a serious infraction of rules has occurred a report is immediately wired to President Lynch and this report is followed by a written account signed by both umpires, in which they discuss the affair in detail. A protested game involves a great deal of correspondence. The club president making the protest

sends his view of the affair to the President. A copy of this protest is at once taken and mailed to the President of the other club involved. Both umpires in charge of the game in question also submit in writing their report of the protested decision. All oral evidence or statements of mere spectators are not considered. When the case is fully made up the President in the first instance gives his decision. In case either club appeals from his decision a duplicate of all papers and records involved is forwarded to the members of the Board of Directors, whose ruling is final and can neither be inquired into or reopened by the league.

A tremendous addition to the duties of the league officials has resulted from the enormous growth of business attendant upon the work of the National Commission. More than half the President's time is occupied with the work that falls to his charge as a member of this important court. Much of the Secretary's time is also given to this work. On a liberal estimate more than 10,000 letters, telegrams and findings now issue from the office of August Herrmann, the indefatigable Chairman of the National Commission. Copies of all these communications are forwarded to the headquarters of President Lynch, and it is no unusual morning's mail which brings from one hundred to two hundred typewritten pages of Commission work. To properly arrange, index and file this steady influx of mail is a task in itself. Separate records of all major league agreements covering the service of purchasing optional players are also kept. The closest supervision is required to assure a fair and strict enforcement of the new National agreement.

An insight into the tremendous increase in routine work, owing to the development of the Supreme Court of baseball is well illustrated by the recent statement of its Chairman, August Herrmann. According to Mr. Herrmann, the official business of this commission increased more than three hundred per cent. from 1910 to 1911. A proportionate increase almost if not quite as great has continued through the season of 1912.

In addition to the Commission work

which involves more than half of President Lynch's time, there devolves upon the busy executive of the National League the supervision of all the umpires. The President must be constantly on the alert to see how his umpire teams are conducting themselves, for it is no small task to keep two umpires working together smoothly and harmoniously day by day. A most exacting detail of the President's work is his unremitting effort to strengthen his umpire staff, particularly in those places where experience has shown it to be weak.

The schedules which are drawn up for the instruction of the umpires are almost as elaborate as those devised by the clubs themselves. These schedules are usually made out for two weeks in advance, so as to cover an inter-sectional trip. They are never altered save on account of illness or accident. Every effort is made to give the eight cities in the National League circuit a frequent change of officials. This is often a difficult task, particularly where the eastern and western clubs are playing a long series of games in their respective sections of the country. The umpires for an important series are selected and supervised in much the same manner as star pitchers. A team of umpires that is doing good work and is in good physical condition is frequently picked over a pair of umpires with greater reputation who are hampered by injuries.

Still another important feature of the detail work which devolves upon headquarters is the asking for National and American League waivers on the services of players. This department has grown to such proportions that there is never a day in the active season that does not see several waivers going the rounds of the circuits. Seventy-two hours alone are allowed to claim or waive on an American League request. In the National League this period is extended to five days during the season and ten days in the off season. That this in itself is no small task is shown by the fact that waivers on more than six hundred players are asked every year. The claiming of services, the withdrawal of requests and the adjustment of cases where players are rewarded on such claims demand

an unusual degree of watchfulness and careful attention to detail.

A complete card index is kept of every player who comes into the league and his history until he departs. Frequent bulletins are issued showing changes in the playing list, and these are carefully compared with the bulletins issued by the National Commission and the National Association of Minor Leagues.

A distinctly separate record is required to hold the various clubs strictly to the limited number of players allowed by the National agreement. A wonderfully accurate system has been worked out to meet these requirements, and responsibility for the work is shared by the President, the Secretary and Miss Caylor, who attends competently to much of the clerical work outside of her routine duties as stenographer.

No less than half a dozen forms of letterheads are required to handle the different classes of correspondence. These innovations have been rendered necessary to meet the enormous increase in correspondence which inevitably falls to the National Headquarters.

The extensive and important book-keeping department of the National League falls to the charge of Mr. Heydler. It has been his duty to manage the finances of the organization since he entered the league's services in 1903. It requires more than one hundred separate accounts to cover the business which falls to his share and between four hundred and five hundred vouchers per annum to cover the league's annual disbursements. A telegraph record is also kept by Secretary Heydler. His motto in all the infinite detail for which he is held accountable has been, "Take nothing for granted."

The World's Series has added another heavy burden to the already overtaxed energies of the National League executives. Though the actual grind of these important games is confined to two weeks or less, this year plans for their supervision were started as early as the middle of September, while the last communication and bank account was not closed until a month after the final game of the series had been lost and won. The responsibility devolving upon Mr. Heydler in such a series is well illustrated

when it is recalled that as the representative of the Commission he had in his personal care tickets to a value of over \$400,000, and himself handled without error nearly \$50,000 in actual cash.

The duties of the President of the league, exacting as they are, are by no means confined to his office. He is required to make several trips around the circuit during the playing season, such trips occupying from ten days to three weeks each. The Secretary does little traveling, but manages to find time to inspect the work of the new umpires.

The unavoidable additional work which always marks the close of a season, the vexatious details of the World's Series, the preparation of annual reports to the league and the Board of Directors, the final revision of the playing records, the work on the playing schedule, the meetings of the league, the preparation of the official league guide, the revising and indexing of league proceedings, in addition to much of the regular routine work outlined give a fair idea of the Secretary's duties from the end of one season to the opening of the next. So rapidly have these duties increased with the enormous progress of baseball that a brief period in the month of March has come to be the only available vacation time for a big league executive.

In addition to all the important duties that have been briefly outlined above, the routine work of the season requires the daily answering of a half a dozen queries on the rules as well as information on the official records, a task which sometimes takes hours to supply. A strict rule of the office, however, provides against answering any communication requesting a decision on a matter upon which a bet depends. Frequent telephone calls from baseball writers and the general baseball public repeatedly interrupt a day's work. On days when the weather is threatening and it is doubtful whether a scheduled game in New York or Brooklyn will be played the central office telephone is kept busy. In particular many inquiries come from out-of-town patrons who find the National League the first thought on picking up a telephone book or directory.

When the western clubs are playing in the East, daily interviews are necessary with four umpires. Visitors then

consist of officials traveling with the clubs, representatives of the press, and various interested personages who cannot be denied, so there are days at a time when the daily program is crowded into late hours. The handling of news-matters and directing them in proper channels through the press associations is likewise a labor which devolves upon the Secretary. Social duties require the presence of the President at four or five banquets a season, and many other more or less formal affairs. There are two magnates' meetings during the year, one in December, the other in February. At these meetings the President presides, and the many serious problems which concern him at this season are among the heaviest of his cares.

This brief account will acquaint the general public in a measure with the voluminous business annually transacted at its league headquarters. It will thus share in the knowledge of the elevator

boys at the Metropolitan Tower who invariably glance at the door of the National League Headquarters at closing time and on Sundays. They know the location of the busiest place in the baseball world.

President Lynch gained a sterling reputation as one of the leading umpires of the National Game. Since his election to the high office which he now occupies so acceptably, he has handled the complicated problems which have fallen to his charge justly and well. In all his actions he has earned and gained the approbation of the great baseball public. Secretary Heydler after several years of able service as secretary to the President, was elected Secretary and Treasurer of the National League in 1907, and has filled that position ever since with credit to himself and unusual benefit to the cause he serves. The National League may well feel complimented upon her two leading executives.



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