




9-27-1948

Something About the Industry of Boonton and the Labor Relations That Prevail Within Some of its Plants

James J. Kromka
Ursinus College

Adviser: James Boswell

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/bus_econ_hon

 Part of the [Benefits and Compensation Commons](#), [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#), [Economics Commons](#), and the [Unions Commons](#)

Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Kromka, James J., "Something About the Industry of Boonton and the Labor Relations That Prevail Within Some of its Plants" (1948). *Business and Economics Honors Papers*. 34.
https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/bus_econ_hon/34

This Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Business and Economics Honors Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. For more information, please contact aprock@ursinus.edu.

----- Something about the industry of Boonton, and the labor relations that prevail within some of its plants.

Ursinus College Library,
URSINUSIANA COLLECTION
Class 0 Box Econ.-1

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the Requirements for Department Honors

By

James J. Kromka
Ursinus College
Collegeville, Pa.

Approved by J. L. Boswell
Department of Economics

Sept. 27, 1948

URSINUS COLLEGE LIBRARY

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction - - - - -	1.
I. Boonton Molding Company - - - - -	9.
II. Measurements Incorporated - - - - -	-16.
III. Aircraft Radio Corporation - - - - -	21.
IV. E.F.Drew and Company - - - - -	27.
V. Van Raalte Hosiery - - - - -	32.
VI. The X. Chemical Company - - - - -	36.

NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM LIBRARY

----- Something about the industry of Boonton, and the labor relations that prevail within some of its plants.

On occasions we become bored with the rigors, and aggravated by the tensions of everyday living and seek an escape - even for a brief interlude - from everything that concerns man and reminds us of the jumbled up world in which he lives - a world in which he loses his perspective. So it is with me. But how far we go, and how often we run is proportionately dependent upon the conditions under which we live, and upon how willing we are to accept these conditions that are only a natural result of the pursuits that we ourselves have chosen.

Life does not maintain an even keel for us. Situations change without warning. They do not adjust themselves to our desires, whims, or fancies, but cause us to alter our pattern so that it more or less corresponds with the general trend of activity prevailing in our immediate social grouping. Then laws are set up - causing this affect to become permanent. It is then the rules of society which dictate how we should apply ourselves in our environment.

Those who are successful in fitting themselves into the scheme of things are useful people; those who refuse or cannot are outsiders, possibly even animals,* depending upon the nature of their incompatibility; and those who would like to adjust themselves to their environment, and to offer improvements, but who lack the essential qualities and backbone to innovate them, are the social leeches who are dragged along like barnacles on a ship's side. This last group offers its society nothing except the loudness of its voice as it protests what is in vogue. All these three exist in society; and that

* criminals

society must contend with them, arranging its laws so that the greater portion is appeased. In its essence this is what we call civil rights. The social leeches are recognized as being part of the group until they prove themselves to be outsiders.

Not only in society, but in industry too the social leeches are receiving rights of being recognized, for they realize that the industry of their employ is just as much a society as the one in which they live. People constitute a society; people constitute an industry. If recognition prevails in one category, it should prevail in the other, for people are just as vital in ascertaining the smooth running of industry's wheels as they are of society's. This thought alone has become the most important technicality with which industry has to contend: Just how much recognition should it give to the social leeches? Peoples' rights must be recognized, for it is they upon whom industry is built. And as it is in the case of their environmental society, the voices of protest are also being raised in their industrial society.

It is this phase in which I am interested. Industry is giving serious thought to the matter. It is valiantly trying to pacify its members, who realizing this are pressing their demands to every advantage. There is apprehension on both sides, for industry's little fellows feel as though they are still being fleeced by methods which on the surface appear as if nothing but benefit is in store for them. Their suspicions cause more demands, especially when industry succumbs so readily at times. On the other hand, industry feels that the little fellows are over-demanding and non-appreciative considering the contributions that they render,

From an early date Boonton has been an industrial community. In the valley where the Jersey City Reservoir now stands was the site of one of America's first iron works. And along the shores of the Rockaway River one may see old ruinous foundations of the foundaries where the crude iron ore was processed. The river supplied the water power needed to operate the machinery involved. A good many feet above the river level, was the Morris Canal which ran parallel to it and carried many a mule-drawn barge from Newark on through Phillipsburg. Because of Boonton's location, because of its natural resources, it had an early start in the industrial movement of this country. As a natural consequence, an abundant supply of immigrant labor soon flocked here and caused Boonton no other alternative but than to continue on its merry industrial way.

Ever since I was a boy old enough to enjoy the sport of hiking into the surrounding woodland area, I took advantage of every opportunity to venture to my favorite look-out point on top of Sheep Hill. From there I used to look due East to New York City's skyline - twenty-eight miles away, and as far in the other directions, pretending that all the land was mine. On the peak of that mountain with all the land before me, I began to formulate my day dreams into a coherent game of make-believe. I would compare the possibilities of a green patch with a brown one, and a woodland with a lake area. Here I would build an air field; there I would have a hunting estate; and beyond the river a private golf course could sleep in the sun-light.

Only one perplexity caused a disruption in my furthering the development of my empire. Almost daily (so it seemed) I

became aware of rising smoke stacks, noticed more and more railroad sidings being constructed, observed how factories were moving into the "flats" and "hollow" of Boonton. The old Morris Canal was abandoned to be choked and dried out of existence by weeds and sun. I could have used that old canal. So I found myself viewing all this with sad eye, feeling for the old-timers who automatically became useless as old industry took its last sleep, and new industry was born.

And, this new industry caused smoke to permeate the air and to block my vision at times. I began to object to the odor of manufactured perfumes, or to the stench of hot rubber, or to the chemical plant odors, and to the dust of the molding company. I cursed them all that they dare spoil my peaceful lair with their humming machinery, and their tooting whistles. But they and the railroads went about their business paying no attention to me. I was ignored on top of Sheep Hill from where I watched the buildings spread up and out, the smoke stacks grow taller, and the railroad trains become longer. Louder hummed the machinery; defiantly tooted the whistles; more varied became the colored smoke; more I choked on offending odors. It was no wonder that I blinked my wonderful eyes, and fed myself on thoughts of what they had beheld as I slowly journeyed homeward. Here were many changes occurring. How were they being caused? Who caused them? Did not someone else object to their being changed?

As is always the case, in all matters, when we have sufficient facts we can answer any puzzling question. And so it was with the enigma of why Boonton was throwing off the old and was putting on the new. A greater portion of the town's (and the surrounding areas) populace was comprised of the immigrant races. They still had the hay seeds of Europe

in their hair, but also the smell of freedom and opportunity of America in their nostrils. The former would disappear; but the latter penetrated too deeply into their systems. It surged through their veins, and invigorated them. By simply pressing buttons, turning handles, and watching gears, they saw clothes being loomed, medicines being made, household appliances being fashioned. They were required to do this for only so long each week, and could realize a return in actual cash - something which all had heard of but not many had had. Now it was at their disposal. And so were goods then. The things that they had dreamed of were commonplace; there was enough for everybody, and plenty was left over. America had been initiated to a mass-production trend. Machines did the work, and people were paid to operate them. The new vogue swamped over the whole country, and infiltrated itself into Boonton. Whether I liked it or not, the innovation was here to stay. The people wanted it so. I would have to contend myself with the situation or move away, for it would not change itself to conform with my wishes. I succumbed and dedicated this portion of my twenty-eight mile radius estate to the onward roll of the wheels of progress, and then joined the movement, least I be lost and left alone.

Now, no longer did I watch from Sheep Hill but became like the farmer who had heard of the giraffe at the local circus. I too wanted a close-up view in order to see if such a thing was really possible. So, among the towns folks I circulated, drinking beer with them, patronizing the stores, attending all the social affairs. I conversed with them all - with the lawyers, the town officials, the real estate dealers,

the shop keepers, the factory workers, the ditch diggers, the housewives; the rich, the poor, the visualizers - even the social leeches. In this manner, over a long period of time, I gathered a relatively authentic cross-section of the average Boontonians and the way that they thought.

They realized as did I that industrialization was here to stay. For most, it was not so much a matter of adjustment to it, as it was one of approval. As previously stated, the people as a whole wanted the town to become a manufacturing center. The few who wanted the peace and tranquility that they only imagined Boonton could offer, soon joined the band-wagon. And when they beheld the many advantages to be derived by it, they wanted no other alternative. The town itself benefited by way of taxation; small businesses arose; luxuries became necessities, and the little fellow began to be recognized, for his spending capacity was as potential as the next man's. A dollar is green in any man's pocket. The safety of industry leaned heavily upon his wise spending and investing. How much he could spend and invest depended chiefly upon how much he could earn. Initiative and resourcefulness greatly enhanced his progress. And very few were not eager to prove themselves. If there was a dollar to be earned, they would earn it - the beginning of Boonton's intra-competitive spirit.

But, wherever advantages are to be derived, disadvantages also prevail. With the recognition of human element, and the dependency of industry upon the coöperative competitive spirit of the individual, people soon began to accustom themselves to the new mode of earn - spend, and began to strive for greater demands. They overdid their inward drives and pressed forward their desires of wanting more ---- but for doing less.

They were becoming spoiled. Industrialization was killing them with kindness - causing them to become lazy. Not only was more money wanted, and more goods too; but less hours of work were also advocated. Another group interpreted the essence of industrialization in a different light. It emphasized that more money and more goods could be had only by more work. Naturally, there was friction; and there still is.

Both sides give in a bit now and then. And both have stopped swinging long enough to admit the value of a compromise between demands and grants. The next problem was to prepare a compromise agreeable to both factions - Labor and Management - and to have someone to officiate.

In recent years the government has had to assume the responsibility of being the mediator in affecting the compromise. And with the new rules that it has laid down, coupled with the demands of the others involved it is no wonder that government, labor, and industry have deviated at times from the ideal course, or that irritation and confusion have occasionally been the order of the day. One consolation to be reckoned with is that as a democratic nation we are glad to pay this meager price of minor disorderliness in order to have the right to continue experimenting. As a nation we will march forward, for such aberrations are the exception rather than the rule. Striking the happy medium is still in the infancy stage. And the only way that one can understand how this is being accomplished is to take another step closer to this circus giraffe which had come to my town.

And closer did I step. The only way that it was possible to gather first hand information about the ordeals that arise as a consequence of industrialization, was to personally inquire of Labor and Management the problems before each and what

efforts were made to eradicate them. I began by telephoning various industrial officials and laid bare my objective before them. They were much in accord with my intention and most eager to have me hear them out. Appointments were made; pen, paper, and clip board were gathered up. Off I went to make the rounds in six of Boonton's major industries. Not only did I question all whom I desired, but I was also conducted on inspection tours within each plant. Some questions were deliberately ignored; others were tactfully evaded; many necessitated being revised; a few brought glaring disapproval. All this I expected. But eyes and ears were also on the alert; thus many of the gaps were filled in through personal observation and the process of deduction. Not everything that was presented to me as supposed fact did I accept at face value.

THE BOONTON MOLDING COMPANY

My first visit was at the Boonton Molding Company. Permission for my investigating this plant was personally extended by Mr. K. Scribner, president. Mr. Frederick Bednar, personell manager, was my guide. It was through Fred's efforts that I learned what I am now relating:

George K. Scribner makes the work at the Molding Company as pleasant as possible, for contentment among human forces is an intangible asset.. He is in accord with them, and has no selfish motives. This is what causes good human relations. Unless the top man is understanding, no industry can proceed far. The atmosphere is informal to a large degree; and there is no union or organization. George Scribner deems them "unnecessary" since he does not lose sight of those certain personal responsibilities to his employees, and thereby cause a weakness which will allow outside influences to instigate unions. (Please reflect). Negotiations are on an individual and daily basis. Gripes, tastes, wants, suggestions, and such are all heeded, for he wishes his people to want to come to work, not to feel compelled to. If they have a complaint to air, "George" is ready to heed them without the usual chain of command procedure.

Extremely important is the worker's mental attitude; and the personell department is constantly circulating to clear any potential situation that may be injurious in this respect. If a complainee cannot gain access to "George", he may iron out his grievances with "Fred". The complainee does not come out with any more material value necessarily, but at least with an understanding, for not only are his woes heard, but he also hears management's. The two then become reasonable with each other.

In many cases, the top man never hears of some of the problems, for "Fred" is sufficiently capable to handle just about every ordeal that confronts him. He is a very modest fellow who oozes with personality, and who has a method in his soft spoken voice and broad smile. He knows everybody; and everybody knows him. Spare moments are spent in reading Lincoln and in living his philosophy when handling people. No rash moves are made unless "Fred" knows that more benefits are to be gained by the group as a whole. Idleness is not a part of his make-up either, for he is constantly circulating in anticipation of nipping any dissatisfactions in the bud where they require a minimum of attention.

Assisting "Fred", who is the "in-personell" man, is Reverend ^{Mr.} Burgraff, the "out-personell" man. While it is "Fred's" job to iron out any difficulties that occur within the company proper, it is similarly ^{Mr. Burgraff's} the Reverend's task to circulate on the outside, visiting employees who are ill, or are in jail; representing the company at local affairs, checking personal affairs for the workers, running necessary errands for them. The two thereby gain a slightly different perspective of the same person and the situation which involves him. When their notes are compared, smoother relations with the eight hundred and fifty employees are bound to be the out-come.

Every three months, the Boonton Molding Co. surveys its whole plant. Efficiency experts go about timing, and evaluating each operation. It is this group that presents an interesting observation: A man with twenty five years' experience may not be any more skilled than one with two years' experience. The former just has that degree of skill twelve and one half times longer! He will be paid according to output,

and not according to length of service. The company's eyes are on the one who can produce. The purpose of the surveying is to screen-out the better qualified and to advance them. If a worker does not advance, it signifies that somewhere along the line he has proved that he can handle only so much responsibility. He has reached his peak of dependability. In this way a worker is encouraged not to loaf. Seniority entitles him to nothing more than his pay.

There is a vacation policy based on the length of time that one is employed. The company assumes the usual one per cent of Federal Old Age withholdings. It has its own hospitalization-plan, besides a medical-surgical plan which the company underwrites. Twenty-six days a year sick-leave are allowed with pay; but this is the average. If circumstances are such that company assistance is the only means of support, an incapacitated worker will receive aid for as long as eighteen full months - as was so done in a case example cited for me.

In order to exemplify to a greater extent the responsibility which the company assumes for the worker, let us take a forty hour week at a dollar per hour rate and see just what happens during the course of one month's time: There is 90 ¢ in group insurance which the company pays. It also assumes the obligation of \$2.60 for the Blue Cross, and pays the medical-surgical plan \$2.00. To the Old Age Pension it contributes \$1.60, and to the State Unemployment Compensation another \$1.60 is paid. In other words, instead of the worker being responsible for \$8.70 which constitutes the usual protective policy while he is employed, he no longer concerns himself, for the B.M.Co. meets all these obligations for him. In addition, every worker has the privilege of seeking free legal service from the com-

pany's attorney, and also may go to any optometrist, purchase glasses, and then bill it to the company's expense. The plant also has two booklets which it publishes and circulates within the premises - "The Boonton Molding Company" which describes the numerous plastic products produced, and the "News", a monthly news periodical that relates interesting personal tid-bits of the workers themselves. A registered nurse is on call at the company first-aid room at all hours of the day.

As for hiring, not all the personell are Boonton people, for if a general lay-off becomes prevalent, Boonton alone will not feel the effect. The surrounding areas then equally share when depression time occurs.

But, until that darkened moment appears, everything possible is done to make working at the plant pleasant. The main stem of the plant is a mass of pipes and stemming compression molding machinery. The heat is often unbearable; yet hands must fly, and minds must be alert. Recorded music produces the necessary stimulation. It is played every hour on the hour for ten minutes. Free coffee is at everyone's disposal during lunch time. A company picnic is held once a year during the summer months. It is more preferable than a Christmas bonus. There are baseball games-intra-plant-and bowling matches in which the company is entered in the town industrial league.

According to the workers, B.M.Co. is a slave shop. Employment there is not in itself enticing unless you are a part of the office force. Working there is of necessity's sake. Comprising the major portion of the tried group are those who cannot find satisfactory work in other fields. And those who so desire cannot afford the loss of time involved in seeking it. A surprisingly large number constitutes the labor-turn-over. B.M.Co. appears to be a lay-over until better work is

found. But, usually better work is not found; it is merely different work which also demands no special aptitudes or keen intelligence. Those who complain of being in a B.M.Co. rut will be in a rut regardless of where they go to work. If and when they go, the same calibre of prospective worker fills their shoes and continues to gripe too.

But, one gripe that is soundly grounded is the one of pay distribution. Every worker wants all that he can get. And he surmises his worthiness of greater rewards by the simple process of comparing his ability and performance with that of another employee. Two types of processes are prevalent - compression (operating the molds by hand), where skill and alertness are requisites, and injection, where the machine does all the work automatically. All that the injection molder does is to stand by watching and following a few simple movements. The injection molder of one year's employment (average) is earning as much salary as a compression molder of twenty years experience. The company in this regard (as previously stated) says that the compression molder has reached his production plateau. He receives pay that is directly proportional to his output. If he is not receiving enough salary, he is not producing enough. B.M.Co. says nothing about the injection processee's salary though. His starting pay is very good. The only advantage that the compression molder has is that he can operate three or four molds and work through lunch time as is often the case. But, here again is another problem: If two compression molders, doing the same job on similar machines, and are producing the same quantity of output their pay will be identical (providing that the base pay is similar) even though

one might be a twenty-year man, and the other a two-year man. To this the company staunchly repeats: If a worker wants more pay, let him produce more goods. In either case of compression vs. injection, or compression vs. compression, besides the salary received, a bonus is also granted for every output beyond a stipulated amount that the company's efficiency expert has timed as being the standard for each particular operation. Naturally, the compression molder strives to work faster and longer in order to increase the output and therefore the bonus received. But, the bonus is plant-wide, for all "over-production" is divided proportionately according to base salary among all workers. So, if all the compression molders surpass production standards, and the injection molders do not, both share the rewards. Naturally enough the former group resents the unfairness. Why should the latter share a bonus that is earned through others efforts? He does nothing to earn it, for his machines are geared and can only operate so fast. The expenditure of human energy should warrant reward.

The management explains this policy so: Pay is begun at a 75¢ base rate. A bonus of 25¢ is added. If a man wants the extra 25¢ he will work for it; otherwise 75¢ will continue to come his way. Some workers want the bonus, and attain a peak of 200% production beyond the normal 80% which the company sets up as standard. 100% is the peak of production that a combination of man and machine can safely stand. 85% **OUT** of this 200% goes to the company; the remaining 115% is divided among all the workers. This is the way that the workers want it, states the management. But I am inclined to think that the employees do not stop long enough to properly analyze the facts and figures. The evasiveness on the part

of management concerning this matter causes a potential source of discontent.

MEASUREMENTS INCORPORATED

Through my acquaintance with Gerald Minter, Vice-President of Measurements Inc., M.I.T. graduate, and President of the Radio Club of America, I gained admittance into his plant which occupies the third and fourth floors of Boonton's first silk mill. At this site is now manufactured radio test equipment. It was here that "Jerry" introduced me to Mr. E.M. Weed, the personell director, who in my estimation is far from being qualified to fill his present official capacity. Lacking in personality, and impressing few favourably with his domineering attitude, I soon surmized that he would show me little cordiality upon learning that I was just a mere college student, and not someone of importance. But, desiring information, I forced myself into feigning naiveness, and humbly implored him to relate just how Measurements Inc. is holding its own in the world of industry - through his efforts, of course:

There is an art to firing as well as to hiring. Mr. Weed considers himself (but modestly) an expert in both, since he majored in Psychology at Columbia University and has worked with people for forty years. All this seems to have developed a "sixth sense". If an employee has a gripe Mr. Weed's recommended procedure is that he should first confer with his immediate foreman who then refers the matter to the supervisor. The latter may then refer it to Mr. Weed or to Mr. H.W. Houck, the general manager (or general supervisor). The difference between these two is that Mr. Houck is worker-conscious, while Mr. Weed is impartial - 50% for the worker, and so for the management. There is no looking out to help an employee with a personal problem; this is the employee's concern. It is up to the worker to come to the personell department. If a dis-

missal is warranted, the general supervisor, or personell director alone has not sufficient authority. But the two in conference can.

While sitting for two hours awaiting my interview, it was the telephone operator (quite an attractive lass. But that is neither here nor there) who informed me that there are two rest periods: 10:00-10:10 A.M. and 3:00-3:10 P.M. during which time, recorded music is played via the loud-speaker system. A pint of milk is provided daily for each worker at the company's expense. And he also has a "liberal" vacation policy presented to him. If employed for less than one year, but more than two months, he receives one day for each month of employment. One year of employment or more warrants two weeks' vacation with pay. A schedule is arrange^d "liberally" for the employees' benefit. It is an ^{not} inflexible arrangement, for in the case of a medical operation a longer time is granted. Mr. Weed verified all this later, and wondered how I knew.

In the case of sick pay, a simple policy was outlined: After two months' of work, one day of sick leave is granted per each month of employment. After a full month of employment, the company pays the full insurance premium.

There is an annual company birthday party, and all the expenses are naturally enough assumed by the company. The best locale is chosen, and prizes are given. During the summer, a company picnic is also held. A Pre-Christmas party is also on the list of social affairs. As is the case with the B.M.Co., bowling teams entered in the local industrial league compete with teams of other industries. For those not sufficiently proficient to obtain a berth on them, the company hires

bowling alleys each Friday night, and allows any employee to bowl.

Because of the nature of the company's business a high quality worker is needed since the equipment is standard. Wage rates consequently are given in accordance with what value the company places upon an individual's worth. A survey made of the radio industry shows that Measurements wage rates are comparable to it. To atone for any discrepancies or deficiencies, a bonus is given whenever the company considers it necessary. This plan instills incentive in an individual; for if he is worth more salary, he will work to prove it. No quota or peak determines this; rather his personal performance. Recently though a 10¢ per hour was given to all employees.

If a prospective employee gains admittance into Mr. Weed's office, he is bluntly asked if permanent work is being sought. The majority say yes; the others did not use their heads. This is important because it takes time and money to properly train a worker to the system used. As a consequence, there is no large labor-turnover in this plant of 250 people - except in the production department where girls are employed. The hiring then consists of engaging people from all the outlying districts in order that Boonton alone will not feel the full impact during the depression phase of the business cycle. Besides (reasons Mr. Weed), all the workers cannot be had locally. Workers who own their homes are sought, for they must rely upon a steady income, and are therefore more dependable. When a person cannot fulfill the requirements and thereby be hired, he is not given the "systematic-brush-off," but is given leads as to where he can secure a job. As

a rule the young age group applies at Measurements; and that is the age group which is sought.

A six months' employee may be more skilled than a twenty year man. There is therefore a gradual disappearance of seniority rule as in the B.M.Co. Seniority-rule applies only during depression times when the working force must be cut. As yet, there has been no general lay-off. If and when the situation occurs, there will be a cut-back in pay instead, and the maintenance of the full working force.

There is no union; the workers are satisfied with their wages and so do not want one, though it is not discouraged. The employees realize that more is to be lost than is to be gained by the presence of a union.

The importance of ple^{*}asantness of surroundings cannot be over-stressed; this too the management realizes, for it has already broken ground on which it will build a modern one floor plant with twice the floor space that it now has. In addition there will be air-conditioning and more safety devices. The present location is in a seventy-five year old building that has seen its day. Constant danger lurks even though the building has been reinforced and passes the rigid inspection laws. Those who maintain the shipping department (located in a cellar of a Boonton business district building) inform me that according to government specification, the moisture-content of the air is well above the safety factor prescribed. For the assurance of well working delicate radio testing equipment, this is bad insurance. It also constitutes a health hazard, as does the mustiness and the draft.

Other than this minor discontent, the plant's labor re-

lations maintains an even keel. Little thought is given to the petty gripes and jealousies, to the agreements and blossoming love affairs that bloom and surely disrupt production, even for but a brief moment. Such is human nature; and Boonton Measurements Inc. must bear its share of the burden.

AIRCRAFT RADIO CORPORATION

Boonton is situated upon a hill, one of the many which comprise the Appalachian mountain range that cuts across northern New Jersey. Just off the northwestern corner of Boonton lies a township called Rockaway Valley, the farm section. The most outstanding part of this ideal location is the eighty-two acres of former corn field which are now utilized as a non-commercial airfield. Bordering the fringe of it, are the camouflaged buildings ^{OF} Aircraft Radio Corporation. Having spent three and one half years of employment here I consider myself qualified with some authority to speak of what is herein mentioned; but I substantiate my information with facts from two other sources:

The purpose of A.R.C. is to invent airborne electronic communicating and testing equipment for military and civilian use. Actual quantity-manufacturing is done by different leased subsidiaries, so that no one location can have access to all the pertinent data, and thereby infringe upon the patent. Much secrecy surrounds the engineering. And there are a large number of different items in the experimental stage, no one of which represents a continuous production method. There are frequent production changes, and no piece-part manufacturing. All parts of a whole unit or phase are manufactured and assembled at one location (the subsidiary). These different phases are then gathered together and enjoined at A.R.C., thus comprising the whole outfit which is given final testing and actual trial in the company's airplane.

In this field a problem looms up. If piece-production was used, speed would become a necessity. Since engineers, supervisors, and inspectors are constantly experimenting for

improvement - even as the assembly is occurring - the speed of the worker is out of necessity greatly slowed down since new adaptations often check progress for days' time.

One of my interviews was held with Mr. Alan W. Parks, contact man for A.R.C., radio engineer, general sales supervisor, retired Lehigh and Harvard University mathematics professor, and former naval Lt. Commander. He is a handsome and exceptionally intelligent man possessing twinkling eyes and a catching smile, that is very compatible with his liking for good fun. Being physically vigorous, Mr. Parks prefers the outdoors, and dislikes being alone or inactive for any great length of time; consequently he is constantly circulating among the "gang" who mostly call him "Al". My second interview was with Mr. John E. Jernberg, electrical engineer, and personell manager, who is the complete reversal of "Al". He is quiet and avoids relationship with other people. In his present capacity he is definitely misplaced.

The older members of A.R.C. are a closely knitted crew, professionally and personally, who have been associated together for as long as seventeen years. Practically all of the engineers have their P.H.D. degree and were taught mathematics by "Al". At this point it should be mentioned that "Al", though he has nothing to do with the actual experimentation, checks the accuracy of the mathematical calculations, and has such a profound knowledge of the intricacies of the set produced that to him is left the task of compiling the explanatory handbook that accompanies each individual set. No one else has the ability nor the energy.

Across from the lab stand the four sections of the main building wherein are located the actual production and assem-

blyng lines, the tool crib, machine shop, engraving room, acid solder room and shipping department. Here, modern facilities make employment a joy instead of a bore. Orderliness prevails; and one senses an atmosphere devoid of tension and industrial strife. A nurse is on constant call in the company's first aid room; candy machines are strategically located; clean-up men are constantly busy dusting and sweeping and polishing the inlaid linoleum floors; there are four exceptionally clean and modern rest rooms; foremen are soft-spoken and very pleasant.

Work consists of a boring routine requiring but a few hours' practise before a new-comer is fully adapted and becomes part of the production line. As a precautionary measure, the line on each specific unit so operates that all of it moves ahead as one feeds his completed part to the following worker. All workers feed together as a fire-fighting bucket brigade does. If worker number two is slow, number one slows down to feed him at a proper speed. The rest automatically slow down since number two hands only the completed operation to the next worker, and so on. The management wants no unit to be ahead on one step in its operation, and behind on another. By simply checking the completed operation of the last person on the line, it can readily be ascertained just how many units are to be transferred to another production line. In the event that parts are not available, or a new technique is being experimented with, the whole line is stopped and is introduced temporarily to work of a different production phase, where they continue to work as a unit. Monotony is evident. As a precautionary measure to insure against boredom interfering

with smooth operation, workers are gradually introduced to all the production steps of their respective lines. Occasionally, someone becomes ill - say number four. Number three handles both his job and number four's, for they are simple enough; and speed is not nerve-racking except on occasions. To compensate against any possible tension that might occur, the workers are permitted reign of freedom with their conversation, provided that it doesn't become hilarious and disrupt output.

Highly qualified personell are desired, especially those with finger dexterity. During the war when a scarcity of males was prevalent women proved their efficiency on many operations where thread-like wire had to be twisted within narrow spaces; consequently, they are in demand. In order to secure the best type of worker, A.R.C. is willing to pay for it. The management will assure cleanliness and attractiveness in addition to good wage whether it is in the plating-room or down in the cellar machine-shop, or in the acid-solder room; but the worker must also assure these two requisites. Personal appearance is symbolic of pride in one's self. An individual with personal regard will transfer this pride to his work.

Here is where the gratuity ends. There are no company papers being printed (except the booklet which is handed to every worker who is introduced to his responsibility to the company and vice-versa; to the regulations and penalties of the Espionage Act to which every worker is subject; to his working hours which are subject to change under national emergency; to his holidays which are the ten government recognized holidays; to his annual two week's vacation with

pay - providing three month's of employment have been completed; otherwise one week of vacation with pay is received; to his sick leave with pay which allows absence not exceeding forty hours in any one week, or eighty hours in any one year of employment - the insurance policy of the company which insures each person at the cost of 30¢ per month, per thousand dollars of insurance with A.R.C. paying the balance necessary to cover the full premium. Both death and permanent disability are covered. And the safety rules that are in effect are also presented to the worker.) There are no picnics, parties or dances at the company's expense. But, if a department wishes to have a spaghetti dinner during its 10 A.M. or 3 P.M. rest period, it can casually clear the tables, sit down and enjoy one. I know, for it was done. There is then a neglected company social life. The management reasons that money is the important thing. Give a worker this, and he can care for himself. In most plants, paternalism is misplaced - is too Y.M.C.A.ish. If a person is old enough to work, give him credit for being old enough to know how to handle the responsibilities that go along with the job. Human relations and the individual's initiative should be put on a highest possible plane. A human machine is a company's most valuable asset. When a mechanical one breaks down, effort is expended to quickly eliminate the trouble. With a human machine more precaution than ever should be shown.

With all these thoughts in mind, a hiring manager interviews an applicant and sizes him from head to toe in order to determine whether or not he or she will fit into the general over-all pattern. After fingers are examined, character is

ascertained, and physical appearance is decided upon, certain qualifications are sought: Has the applicant skill for the type of work that A.R.C. offers? Has he need of the work? Will he fit into the surroundings? Has he money motives? Is his interest in radio work strong? If the report is favorable, the applicant is then sent to the company doctor for a medical examination.

Those who have been and still are employed at A.R.C. speak well of it. Work is easy, and the pay is good, increasing with time and the responsibility assumed. During the last war many sought employment here, for the base rate plus the overtime created an average weekly earning of more than \$60. The post-war situation is slightly different; many have returned to their former more stable jobs, or have left because of the ^{gave}click of Swedes that is in control of policy and the better jobs. One works up to their jobs, hardly ever takes these over, and never goes beyond them. The Swedes control A.R.C. and there's nothing that a worker can do other than to accept his lot and brood in quiet discontent.

E.F.DREW AND COMPANY

On August 3, 1948 James DePhillipes, Personell director of E.F.Drew and Company, signalled to me as he drove by to go to the plant. This was my cue that his afternoon was available for a few hours of conference together during which time we could discuss the labor relations at his plant.

E.F.Drew and Co. is a tough plant in which to keep employees, for the work is arduous and very dangerous. There are no soft jobs; therefore it is of extreme importance that harmony be maintained among the six hundred and some odd employees. A good feature arising out of the set-up is that it is the highest paying industry in the county; here is the compensatory measure. Any unskilled person can be taken in and quickly trained. If an employee has a good head, and determination, he will do well - make himself a success. These factors are excellent precautions against labor turnover; but there is still a large percent of it because of the danger involved, the three shift program in operation, and the ill health that is often the result of some of the jobs. According to "Jimmy", 98% of the supervisors are high school grads or less, earning from \$150 to \$180 a week which bears out the foregoing statement of success being within easy reach. Hiring is local, for the management considers it a social obligation to assist the community of which it is a part as much as possible.

The high cost of living can be met only with money. The unskilled starting weekly wage is \$50 - \$75 (depending upon overtime); after 1 1/2 yrs. of employment it runs beyond \$80. On a seven day basis, it would be \$117. The "take home interest" is the deciding factor. Fill the pay envelope;

and exclude giving a man a title with five assistants but only \$45. in salary. Within the last two years there have been general wage increases of 20%, 15%, and 10% of the base rate. The workers are therefore satisfied. In addition, soda, cake, and candy machines have been provided. An ice cream man appears twice daily. While the Boonton Molding Company pays for all the worker's obligations, "jimmy"^{*} states that a true man - a true worker with pride - should pay for his own way in society. Let him pay for his own obligations and care for his own responsibilities. Management has no right to assume them.

One obligation that it will conscientiously assume is its duty to establish good relations with the community. At first the citizens' bickering about its presence nearly caused the plant to move inspite of a \$5,000,000 building program which meant nothing to a plant that during the previous eleven years had earned \$150,000,000. Through conferences with town officials, the realization that Boonton was basically industrial was soon reached. The people had to be made aware of this or suffer the consequences. Industry was here first in the form of natural resources; the people followed it. Why eliminate the important factor which caused their being incorporated? This sort of appealing soon won the people over to the industry's side; and they have had no reason to regret it, for enough taxation is collected per year from E.F.Drew and Co. to operate the town for the same length of time (not to be accepted as official - a request). The people seem satisfied with combining the residential and industrial aspects because of this and because many local industries are benefiting by the additional boon that E.F.Drew - affords them - contractors, trucking concerns, carpenters, and so forth. A community

which keeps them alive is industrial; and industrial it shall remain.

This man James DePhillipes was a former professional welterweight boxer who had a chance for the world's crown in that division; but he quit fighting in the ring when he was asked to throw a major bout, and began fighting in industry for the average man. He likes people tremendously, and will go to bat for anyone with a just cause. Never did he study Psychology as did Mr. Weed of Measurements, but only human relations by personal observation which he couples with common sense. His degree is from the college of hard knocks where the colors are black and blue. Why study rules of behavior, and then violate them by treating humans as mechanical gadgets? Sincerity is sought in a worker; give it to him in return. To substantiate this statement, an example was cited to me of a worker who after being jailed twice was earnest about beginning anew. He was promoted to a supervisor before me as Jimmy and I were engaged in conversation. Petty gripes, arguments, and personal problems are quickly settled by this fast-thinking and twice-as-fast-moving man who was raised in business and with its people. A big weakness with many company officials is that they do not "feel" towards humans. "Jimmy" attends Eastern meetings of supervisors, directors, and managers in order to clarify one thought in mind: What percentage of time should be devoted to the workers - and how? Jimmy believes that as much time as possible should be given to them; he is for the worker, and admits it. His main objective is to try and instill the element of personal contact in men. Any interviewee who lacks it fails to

receive a job regardless of any other potentiab^{*}ilities or college degrees that he might have. An egotistical man is not wanted; but a human who appreciates working beside a fellow man is wanted because he is the one who realizes that industry will progress as far as the workers allow it.

Within the plant is a safety engineer who makes all the suggestions as to how the worker may be safeguarded against the highly combustible raw materials. There is a plant engineer too. Accidents are cut to a minimum because the company doesn't care how much money it spends as long as the worker is safe. Thousands of dollars were spent installing an odor neutralizer so as to eliminate the various emitted fumes. From Sheep Hill they can no longer be smelled; nor can they be smelled even while one stands directly beside the plant.

"A thousand and one" items are manufactured at the plant. Edible oils (soybean, peanut, salad oil), plasticizer for the rubber and shatter proof glass industry, vitamins, shortenings, soaps, catalysts for the dairy industry, and fluids for the motor car industry (brake fluid, auto wash and crankcase fluid) present a convincing array of this industry's importance. The company has a fifteen year contract with Ford, and a twenty-year contract with General Motors for the manufacture of these products. More than \$1,000,000 per year is spent on pure research and development. There is an experimental kitchen where is determined what are the best standards possible for the products produced. Every precaution is taken to insure human health protection. And, adds "Jimmy", consider the last world war's effect. The food business stood out. People live on food; they must eat! This type of indus-

try then has possibilities since it is still in the infant stage, and growing all the time. To substantiate this statement, I was shown a tract of cleared woodland comprising many acres on which a ten year, \$7,000,000 building program has been begun.

E.F.Drew is a bachelor whom all have nicknamed "Uncle Ernie". What has been related is the creed that he believes in. When a worker's home caught fire, it was completely re-furnished at the company's expense; a worker died; his widow couldn't afford the burial expense; "Uncle Ernie" took care of it. He has no one to claim as kin, and loves everybody. When he dies, charity or the people who helped to build his company will receive the transfer of all his fortune.

It will be interesting to learn which does.

VAN RAALTE HOISERY

Visit number five was to the Van Raalte Hoisery, the larger of two similar industries located within the town, where is manufactured nylon, full-fashion ladies hosiery that is used in both domestic and foreign consumption.

The establishment is operated under a C.I.O. charter. Mr. Peter Russin, shop foreman, escorted me through the plant, and explained various operations as well as the union organization to me. Three to four years' apprenticeship is required before an employee is allowed to operate any knitting machines. The shop itself is neither closed nor opened as far as the beginner is concerned. The company will hire an inexperienced applicant who must later become a union worker. This step necessitates the paying though of a \$2.00 initiating fee and the attending of all meetings, or paying 25¢ for each one not attended. Ultimately then all employees except the office staff and floor ladies (i.e., personell) become union members. The union agreement sets up a minimum wage rate. This is accomplished by a compromise between the union and the manufacturing association for a three year contract period, during which neither side will strike, walk-out, or lock-out. It is at the termination of the three year contract period that either side can open the agreement and subject it to an increase or a decrease, depending upon whose presentation is most substantiated. When either side does request this, it notifies the other; and a meeting is then held, during which time they usually reach a satisfactory settlement. However, should they fail to reach an understanding, the problem is presented to the Tribunal for final

decision. If voices of protest are raised within the three-year period of contract instead of at its end, the company itself then takes the case and settles it as it sees fit. So much for the matter of wages.

Let us say for an example that there is a grievance between the union and the manufacturing association about a matter other than pay. What actually happens is that both parties do not have their respective representatives huddling together about it. Before hand an impartial chairman is determined. Not only must he be acceptable to both parties, but his pay and all expenses, including his staff, are borne equally by both. If the grievance cannot be settled by the shop foreman (Mr. Russin), it is then presented to the plant manager or general foreman. If neither of these can settle it, the matter then becomes filed with the impartial chairman, who hears both sides in order to determine the validity of the complaint, and then renders a decision in writing. This type of decision is binding to both parties - is absolutely final. No mention is made of the parties involved. And a copy of the decision is sent to all the members of the manufacturing association that have a contract with the union. These two outlined procedures cover all complaints that arise during the contract period (general complaints), and those which are presented at the termination of it (wage complaints).

Mr. Karman is the plant manager in charge of labor relations. It was to him that I directed my request to examine the union contract. A staunch refusal was my immediate reward, for no foreign eyes - other than company and union officials - behold it. Besides it is so filled with

technicalities that I would never be able to unravel its mysteries, relates Mr. Karman. Very few have the mental capacity to weather it; besides (says Mr. Karman) he does not have the time to explain it to me. (To him I turn the other cheek.)

A union employee is covered by a group insurance blanket-policy which gives him 60% of his average earnings after the first week of declared absence from work, and continues for as long as the worker is incapacitated. If a medical operation is necessary, the insurance becomes effective the first day. In case of accidental death \$500 is given, provided that it was necessitated by an accident. For a non-union employee (office staff and floor ladies), the salary is covered 100% in case of sickness. 60% is absorbed by the insurance company, and 40% by the hosiery. Group insurance is covered by the company. In either case, the insurance policy is the most liberal one in the town's industries. There is one outstanding clause: Osteopathics are not recognized.

Once a year there is a company party during which time everyone in the plant attends (union and non-union). Service pins are presented in recognition of faithful service. A neighbor of mine will receive a diamond studded pin as a reward for twenty-five years of employment there. And she is very proud of the fact. The union also gives its members a Christmas party and a summer picnic; non-union members are not allowed to attend. A certain ^{*}% of the manufactured articles are allotted to each worker at cost price. The only other benefit remaining is outstanding: The company has a retirement fund set up to care for its aged non-union em-

ployees. This is the only plant in Boonton which pursues this policy; and it is commendable, for it certainly eases one's mind to know that he will be secure in later life when working days are over. In all probability this apprehension of insecurity prevails in the minds of workers in the other Boonton plants and has a profound influence upon their daily actions which greatly affects production.

THE X. CHEMICAL COMPANY

Mr. N. H----- is a graduate chemist, and a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. At his plant (the name is omitted upon request) of which he is the personell supervisor, I learned about the policy which he initiated, and of some other interesting views that he has. The fact that he showed some respect for my humble opinion, and frequently sought my viewpoint, favorably impressed and convinced me that here was a man of leniency and vision who was still plially receptive to sound suggestion no matter what the source.

This sixteen year plant is under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Labor which has rigid rules governing safety regulations. To comply with them the plant has a safety committee (meeting once each month) which is operated by the plant men themselves. It is comprised of a chairman who is a chemist supervisor, a department supervisor, and three foremen. There is also a fire brigade which is well organized, having gas masks and a plant sprinkler systems to aid it.

No union is prevalent; one was outvoted seven to one. Any man who has a personal grievance can come to Mr. H----- and receive immediate attention. The small number of employees (one hundred and thirteen), and first-name-calling causes a personal relationship, that no union could duplicate. Labor turnover seems to be fairly stable, due to the adjustment to the post-war conditions. At the present time, there is 90-95% labor stability.

What is manufactured here is aromatic and food Food flavor

chemical concentrates. Some are used in pharmaceutical products; but none are used directly in consumer consumption.

Because of the nature of the manufactured products, the management tries to obtain skilled workers; but they are generally unskilled, though with a high mental capacity for adaptability. The higher caliber of intelligence is sought, for records must be kept, dials must be read, and engineers are in need of capable assistants. There is no mass production; the plant consists of diversified manufacturing; consequently, the personell is continually switched, and must be able to adjust quickly to each job which has constant non-uniformity. The starting pay is high then to insure this.

95¢ per hour is the starting wage. Within one and one-half years it reaches \$1.25 per hour and remains there until the opportunity to become a foreman presents itself. After that the management evaluates the latter's worth which is not fixed. Three shifts are in operation; for working the "grave yard" shift, 5¢ per hour extra is received.

Benefits include a bowling team and a baseball team which are entered in the local industrial league, and are completely equipped at the company's expense. While engaged in these extra-curricula activities a worker is covered by the plant insurance policy the same as if he was working. Once a year the company holds a picnic for the workers, their families and friends. Hospitalization is optional, though practically all sign. There is no set length of time for which a person will receive compensation while he is unable to work. One man was paid a full forty hours' weekly salary for a full year; another was aided financially for six weeks during a medical operation

period. For general illnesses, there are no deductions. The company is thus trying to create a feeling of security - of permanency. Work clothing is furnished for the workers. And in the case of the needy, non-interest loans are extended.

It is difficult to determine just what the worker would like. The conditions of the present time cause a worker to be frightened and abnormally demanding. All labor problems today stem from the bad management of forty - fifty years ago. It set labor on its strike-way. The war's interception caused labor's demands to be met then, and it (labor) has been on the alert for greater gains ever since. Management now sees the good in pro-labor emphasis, and is striving to meet its demands.

One concern that it has in this regard though is the gradual insepction of communistic influence which is careful to emphasize the "worker". And since the "worker" doesn't realize that communism will eliminate all of his privileges, the management is constantly on the alert to prevent this curse from creeping in. Mr. H----- advocates that the election of officers, and the determining of strikes should be done under secret ballot with N.L.R.B. supervision. This would instill the fast fading confidence in democratic principles, and would enable each person to cast an honest vote without fear of the consequences.

Carrying the word "supervision" a bit further, it was pointed out that in Japan the word means "guidance", not "domination". If this implication was carried out to an Nth degree here, the worker would not feel as if he is being exploited. This town has no large degree of intellect-

tual populace as a college community might have. People of a weak sort of thinking capacity must be led; and what is more, they want to be led, regardless of how much they appear to be protesting aloud their disapproval. On their own they are helpless, for they lack organization and initiative. Point the way; they will follow. Only when they are of the opinion that they are being used to another's advantage will they actually revolt and demand drastic changes. They shout and run in every direction, using little reason, and certainly listening to none. It takes a wise neutral party to bring the two together and have them shake hands.

Management seems to be coming the worker's way; but the worker is not showing reciprocity. He is taking without giving. Too much mob psychology is causing this. Many follow a course that a few set, it hurts to constructively decide upon another alternative by themselves. When people become more educated, they will not think that doing their present jobs will be a task that is below their dignity. They will think as individuals and realize that there is pride to be derived from pitching-in whole heartedly; they will combine forces and work as a group should. Upon such a foundation was American industry built; upon such a foundation only will it continue. Machines will someday be built that will lift skyscrapers; and it will be a human mind that will conceive them. But a human hand is needed to push their starting buttons. Woe unto industry if that hand is not carefully guided; and woe unto the worker as well if he is not willing to allow industry to guide his hand.