

**LABOR TURNOVER, LOYALTY AND
OUTPUT: A CONSIDERATION OF THE
TREND OF THE TIMES AS SHOWN BY
THE RESULTS OF WAR ACTIVITIES IN
THE MACHINE SHOPS AND ELSEWHERE**

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IN THE MACHINE SHOPS AND ELSEWHERE

BY

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FOREWORD

The stress of war gave us little time to note the many changes which have taken place in the industries of the country. Now that it is over we are face to face with new problems and those who have not kept pace with the trend toward greater democracy in industry, are startled to find the changing conditions. But while this is perhaps the greatest problem, there are many others all of which bear on production and on future prosperity.

The demands of war work emphasized the need for a greater supply of trained mechanics of various kinds and showed very clearly the shortsightedness which had overlooked the fact that we were not training nearly enough men for the needs of industry. This shortage of trained men has had much to do with the great advance in wages, and with them, the cost of everyday commodities.

Spasmodic efforts have been made to create a supply of mechanics almost over-night, and splendid results have been accomplished by intensive training under qualified instructors in some places. In others the thin veneer of instruction

has been of little consequence. It has shown very clearly however that intensive training can lay a foundation from which we can secure mechanics of various kinds in a very short time, and that such schools are of great value to the industry and to the community.

This training, however, especially that which only taught one operation, has not had the desired effect on reducing labor turnover. Nor is the cause of changing from one factory to another always the result of higher wages. Sheer monotony and the desire to do something different has much to do with it, and for the most part nothing has been done to meet this phase of the problem, if indeed it is generally recognized.

This little book endeavors to point out some of the methods by which men and women may be induced to take an interest in their work, these being based to a considerable extent upon the successful experience of Robert B. Wolf in his handling of paper and pulp mills under various conditions. This for the most part, has a direct bearing in making them better workers by adding to their fund of knowledge about their work and the industry in general. It can also be made to add to their value as citizens, which is going to be an even more important item in the future than in the past.

The book also takes up some of the broader problems which are being presented and which are bound to confront us in increasing numbers, the problems of shop government and the relations between the employer and his employees. For, just as many small autocratic governments are crumbling in Europe, so many of our most foresighted men, both manufacturers and economists, believe that similar changes are bound to occur in industry. The manufacturers who attended the Babson Conference on Co-operation were unanimous in the belief that arbitrary methods of shop management were not only unjust but unwise, and that the workers should have a voice in all matters that affected their welfare in the shop as well as out.

The changes wrought by the war have not been lost on the workers in this country and the desire for a voice in shop government is more deeply rooted than many realize. Those who have studied the question most carefully believe that safety lies in meeting the desire half way, or more. They believe that it is necessary for progressive manufacturers to co-operate with the sane element of the labor movement in order to prevent a clash between the radical element of labor and the reactionary employer, who is the autocrat of his shop just as the Czar was the auto-

crat of all the Russians. Such clashes are to be deplored from every point of view.

I am indebted to James Hartness, a highly successful manufacturer, for the inspiration received from his book, "The Human Element in Works Management." He deserves especial credit for being one of the pioneers in the movement for a better understanding of the human side of the problems of the machine shop.

In the belief that the good of the country, as well as of the industries demand a careful consideration of these problems and that many changes are before us, I have endeavored to present some of the problems and to suggest possible solutions, for some of them. No one today is wise enough to outline the precise way in which these problems will be solved. But no citizen who loves his country and his fellow man can shut his eyes to the impending changes or strive to prevent what the great majority deem progress.