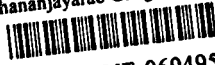


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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
MY FATHER, GEORGE CADBURY
AND TO THE MEMORY OF
MY UNCLE, RICHARD CADBURY,
WHO TOGETHER,
MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS AGO,
CONCEIVED THE IDEALS WHICH HAVE MADE POSSIBLE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXPERIMENTS DESCRIBED.

PREFACE

THE problem of the organization of the labour force within their works and factories is one which business men are only beginning seriously to consider. The pressure of commercial competition forces them to pay close and constant attention to the market; and they are also compelled to give a careful study to their machinery and other plant. But their labour they are usually content to take very much as it comes; they follow the customary practice in the matters of engaging, controlling, and remunerating their workpeople, and give the whole subject not one quarter of the attention they devote to their customers or their technical processes. And then, from time to time, labour gives trouble, and brings production to a stop, and business men naturally feel hurt. Are they not working hard, they are inclined to ask, at what, after all, is their primary business? Unless they can find customers, their workpeople will lose their employment, even such as it is.

With this frame of mind we cannot but feel a certain sympathy. In businesses managed by a single proprietor, it is often true that the worry of getting trade, on top of the other worry of looking after the plant, is so harassing and engrossing, that the employer has simply no energy to spare for anything else. But as the undertaking increases in scale, it ceases to be possible to keep everything under one man's guidance ; and with specialization of responsibility, if not before, comes an opportunity to take stock of the situation. And what the business world is now realizing is that, whether they desire it or no, the labour side of a big industrial concern calls for a large and continuous expenditure of brain power on the part of somebody. It cannot be left to subordinates : it must be made the main concern of one of the heads of the business ; and even then, there will be large questions of policy which will need to be anxiously and laboriously considered by the whole board.

We have already had enough experience in this matter to be able to say that, in the direction and regulation of labour, there are two lines of policy to be avoided. One is that which devises beneficent arrangements with the intention of lessening the workman's.

independence ; with the purpose, for example, so to attach the workman by material ties to the concern that employs him that he will no longer care about a trade union. Such a policy may possibly be sometimes justifiable, and it may possibly sometimes succeed. But, broadly speaking, it is incompatible with the democratic temper of the age, and it is almost certain to break down. The other policy is that which fixes its attention on the efficiency of the workman as a living tool, and disregards every other part of his individuality. Bonus or premium plans which are designed to extract every ounce of effort out of a man ; schemes of scientific division of labour which are intended to reduce work to the repetition of a few simple movements ; these may, indeed, succeed for the time and even bring the workpeople larger earnings ; but they are bound to awaken resentment. For in the long run—awkward as the fact is from a “purely business” point of view—human beings will insist on being treated as human beings, and not as imperfect machines.

It is for business men to say how far the methods set forth in this book are suitable for imitation in other manufacturing establishments. Businesses differ greatly from one another in the type of labour they employ ; and what may be

feasible or desirable with one type may be impracticable or undesirable with another. But it will be apparent that the measures here described proceed from principles the very opposite to those above mentioned. They respect the industrial independence of the workpeople; they treat them, not as mere workpeople, but as citizens, with their own human hopes and aspirations, and their own part to play in the life of a democratic nation.

Every one who is acquainted at all intimately with the Bournville Works and with those who direct them knows full well that the mainspring of their policy has been a sense of social duty. No political partisanship should blind even the severest of critics to this primary fact: and I feel bound to say this the more emphatically because on certain important political issues of the day I find myself in an opposite camp. But though the ultimate motive has not been business expediency, and much of the action here narrated has evidently been the direct outcome of considerations of a quite different nature, it is the belief of the Firm that, taken as a whole, their policy has distinctly "paid." And this is the aspect of the matter which particularly interests me as Dean of a Faculty of Commerce, concerned with the training of

young business men. It has paid in two ways. For first—I see no reason why we should not be quite frank in the matter—it has been a splendid advertisement. Instead of cynically . pooh-poohing it for that reason, I think this is a particularly encouraging fact, and highly creditable to human nature. It shows there is such a thing as a consumers' conscience. The whole essence of the Consumers' League work in America and of the White Lists of the Christian Social Union in this country is to make it "good business" to be known to manufacture under satisfactory working conditions; and with increasing publicity and an increasing fellow-feeling among all classes, I expect that this is going to be the case more and more. And, secondly, it has reduced the expenses of manufacture. An atmosphere of good-will in a shop makes every operation run more smoothly: and the better the work and the mental and physical powers of the operatives are adjusted to one another, the less there is of "lost time," and of a score of those other occasions of expense which do so much to swell "general charges."

One final word. I am myself one of those who think that "individual enterprise" and "capitalism" are too deeply rooted soon to

disappear. But to those who think otherwise the interest of a book like this must still be great. For even if the State (as one school proposes), or the great Union or Syndicate (as another school anticipates) is to take over the conduct of industry, the greater part of the work of manufacture will still be conducted on a large scale, in extensive establishments, with costly machinery, and with considerable bodies of workpeople organized on some plan of division of labour. Most of the internal questions of works management will still remain to be determined somehow; and to that end the experiments described in this book will still be full of valuable suggestion.

W. J. ASHLEY.

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INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages an account is given of the organization of a large factory, which I have ventured to describe as Experiments in Industrial Organization, because certain definite ends which they wished to attain have been in the minds of those responsible for the business, and the varied schemes involved have not come into being in any haphazard or accidental way. The supreme principle has been the belief that business efficiency and the welfare of the employees are but different sides of the same problem. Character is an economic asset; and business efficiency depends not merely on the physical condition of employees, but on their general attitude and feeling towards the employer. The test of any scheme of factory organization is the extent to which it creates and fosters the atmosphere and spirit of co-operation and good-will, without in any sense lessening the loyalty of the worker to his own class and its organizations.

To accomplish this purpose the directors found it necessary to adopt a careful method of selecting their employees, a scheme for educating them, carefully thought-out methods of promotion, just and fair discipline, and opportunities for the development of the organizing ability and initiative of the workers.

The direct value for business efficiency of the various schemes described is indicated by the continuous growth of the business and the number of people employed. Without going further back than 1880, the number of employees was then 303, and at the end of 1911 was 6,182. The efficiency of the employees shows itself in many ways, one of the most striking being the elimination of waste and the reduction of cost in the various departments. Where discipline is good and elicits the good-will and efficiency of the employees, the staff and foremen can give practically all their attention to organizing their departments, instead of their energies being diverted to anticipating and dealing with breaches of discipline. The increased intelligence of employees, obtained by the method of selection and the educational system, facilitates the scientific organization of their work. As pointed out in Chapter III, late time has been successfully dealt with, .

and the employees are very regular in their attendance at work. On the other hand, the value of regularity of employment, both in relation to individual character and efficiency and to the social life of the worker, is fully appreciated by the Firm; they have almost eliminated periods of short time, and also largely obviated excessive overtime. This end has been attained, however, only by the most careful organization and system of stock-keeping, which enables the departments to be regularly employed during the whole year. In the cocoa and chocolate trade there are decided seasonal demands; but by counterbalancing these, and by developing markets whose demands come in at times when trade would otherwise be quiet, the required balance has been obtained.

Another indication of this efficiency which will at once commend itself to the modern business man, accustomed as he is to the stress of foreign competition, is the fact that the Firm is competing with increasing success in foreign and colonial markets although their foreign competitors pay lower wages, the wages of the women-workers being in some cases not more than half those paid at Bournville.

The care for the physical efficiency of the worker brings results in the shape of a decreased

sickness rate, and the corollary of this decreased rate is the higher physical fitness of those at work.

The efficiency of the Firm and the employees does not end in the Firm itself; it has a wider civic value in so far as the Firm is a unit of the national industrial organization and the employee plays his part as an intelligent and capable citizen.

The science of industrial organization is yet almost in its infancy, in respect both to the individual factory and to the industry of the country as a whole. Therefore the account given in the following pages is not considered to cover the whole ground. The subject is not dealt with exhaustively, but the book is offered as a contribution to the material necessary for a wider and more complete study.

It must be clearly understood that the organization described is the outcome of the work and initiative of the whole of the directors of the Firm, over a period of more than fifty years. I have to acknowledge the kind assistance and many valuable suggestions of the present directors as to the form in which the material should be presented to the reader, but I am alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the conclusions drawn from the facts.

INTRODUCTION

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I am also greatly indebted to the various officials of the Firm, who have rendered me great assistance in gathering and co-ordinating information respecting the different departments and schemes, and whose assistance and sympathy have made the various experiments in welfare work possible.

E. C.

September, 1912.

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