

hears an employee's appeal against what the employee claims was unjust discipline by his foreman. What the superintendent is doing is deciding a case of discipline, his method is to hold a hearing at which both sides are represented, but his purpose may be to save the foreman's face, or to appear like a good fellow to the employee, or to find out the truth and make a just decision, or some combination of these.

All of us who have worked in factories know that what a man "is really after" is rarely a simple thing. Work-shops are too complicated for that. In most acts of management there are several purposes—several things the manager "is really after," each in their own right. Furthermore, the relative strength of the elements in this complex of motivating desires is subject to rapid change. Some small untoward incident in a hearing of a grievance may shift the predominant desire of the executive in charge from a desire to find out the truth to a desire to put the Employee Representative in his place. In the same way, a more fundamental purpose, for instance, the desire of employees for food, shelter and clothing, may by a rapid increase in wages, such as occurred in some trades during the war, become almost wholly inactive and the hitherto relatively latent purposes of securing agreeable working conditions and leisure become predominant. A condition may thus arise where the economic incentive fails to operate, and the larger the pay the less the laborers are willing to work.

In order to understand the conduct of a factory executive, therefore, it is not enough merely to know what his methods are and what he is doing, nor even what are the several things he "is after"—it is necessary to know the relative influence of his several purposes, and especially what purpose, or purposes, are predominant at the particular time. Curiously, what an executive's predominant purpose, or purposes, are is something particularly hard for him to know. While it is usually perfectly clear to all concerned just what he is doing, what he "is really after," as Mr. Tead has indicated, is often far from clear, especially to himself. A foreman, who goes over to another department to explain a misunderstanding in regard to an interdepartmental order, may think that explanation is his real purpose when in fact the primary thing he "is after" is to get a chance to tell the foreman in that department (who had recently annoyed him) just what he thinks of him. A manager who institutes some spectacular scheme of welfare work may think that he is doing it out of concern for his em-

ployees' well-being, when in fact his predominant purpose may be to make larger profits, or merely to show off.

But assuming all this, why is it that a manager's purpose is as important as what he does, or how he does it? The answer is, that as one wishes or purposes, so in the long run does he act. While superficially his actions may conform to what he thinks he is doing, it is rare indeed that his true purposes do not control his more subtle conduct and cause him to act so as to get what underneath he really desires. People usually do the things that get them what they want, and if they try to act as if they "were after" something else, they are usually more successful in fooling themselves than anyone else. To this management is no exception. If the primary thing our foreman "was after" was to get a chance to give his colleague "a piece of his mind," it is relatively unimportant that what he was doing was explaining a misunderstanding or that his method was one of deliberate courtesy. Carefully hidden innuendo, and tones of contempt within the form of courtesy, would disclose his real purpose and the affront would, if anything, be the more keenly felt because it was clothed in the velvet of artifice. To act a part is for this reason always dangerous. It is especially so with the manager. He is in daily and intimate contact with the same employees and colleagues for an indefinite period, and the acting of a part under such intimate and sustained observation is far more of an ordeal than any requirement of the stage. Moreover, he is dealing for the most part with employees—with unlettered people whose whole development has taught them to judge by observation, not by words. For this reason they share the baffling capacity of children to see through subterfuge and sense the spirit behind. Among employees, even more than among more lettered men, does what one "is after" speak so loud that they can't hear what one says.

On this account, in the development of executive technique should we not lay greater emphasis than has hitherto been customary on the development of purpose? If our purposes as managers are right, will not fairly crude methods succeed? If our purposes are awry, will perfection of technique or program avail us? Is not the primary task of a manager in handling industrial relations problems, whether as a foreman or as president, to establish and to maintain in his own mind right purposes in regard to these problems? For example, in handling the broader

problems of general industrial relationships, will either employee representation, employee stock ownership, unemployment insurance, or profit sharing bring about a more cooperative relationship between workers and managers, if what the management "is after" is to keep the workers quiet and thus be enabled more effectively to exploit them? Again, is not the most important element in managerial technique in any case of individual discipline the careful establishing and maintaining throughout of the purpose of seeking openly and for the right, in spite of the many and insidious temptations to let this purpose degenerate into a desire to win out or to save one's face?

The control of purpose—of what one is after—is far from simple. As purpose is so often different from conscious intent or objective, it is very elusive. Purpose being emotional—being a question of desire—is not subject to direct, deliberate control. We cannot just decide on a particular purpose—as we can on a particular objective—and then act accordingly. We cannot just decide that our purpose will be to seek the truth openly and honestly, any more than we can decide that we will like to listen to classical music. A changed purpose, like any form of changed desire, must ordinarily be gradually ingrained into one's personality. Usually, as Mr. Tead has pointed out, this is a process of habit formation. If a manager constantly thinks out purposes that are adequate to the situation, if he constantly watches himself to check the lightning invasions of inconsistent, primitive desires, he will gradually build up habits of desire that will cause him more and more truly to "be after" those adequate ends he has devised. In this way, technique in objective and method join hands with the technique in purpose.

Regardless of how purpose is created or controlled, the fact remains that from the point of view of the individual manager, as well as of the major industrial groups, purpose is as important to successful management as immediate objective or method. For, if one looks beyond the superficial, one's true purpose, in the long run, controls what one does, how one does it, and the results one gets. Accordingly, great though the importance of program and method may be in successful management, we must never forget that much of their importance lies in their effect upon purpose, and that the most fundamental problem of managerial technique is devising or determining proper purposes and helping individuals to acquire and maintain right purposes once they have been determined.

N. I. Stone.⁸ Mr. Tead's paper reminds me of Horace Greeley's famous saying, "the way to resume is to resume," when this country was confronted with the problem of the resumption of specie payment.

The way to eliminate conflict among different groups in industry, says Mr. Tead, is to substitute harmonious purposes for conflicting ones. The lion should lie down with the lamb, presumably with the lamb on the outside. Each should give up some part of its purpose insofar as they are in conflict with the purposes of the other party, and a new set of purposes more in harmony with each other will arise, and bring about cooperation between the different groups in industry.

It is difficult to find fault with the recipe when reduced to these simple terms. The difficulty will lie rather in getting the patient to take the prescribed medicine.

Stripped of its psychological terminology Mr. Tead's thesis discloses that the dominating motive of group action lies in the economic interests of the individuals comprising the group. Managers, particularly those charged with industrial relations, have been too prone to believe that plant loyalty and harmonious cooperation could be built up by means of perfected methods of employment and by the use of some magic word or slogan, which ignored, glossed over or denied outright the existence of conflict of interest, or regarded it as the invention of the industrial devil—the agitator.

Mr. Tead with refreshing candor recognizes the existence of conflict of interests between different groups, but seeks effective ways of turning the conflict into a creative force from the destructive force which it has been, as a rule, so far. There is no gain-saying the fact that in the division of the product of industry, the interests of employer and employed are in conflict. All things being equal, the more the employer retains for himself as profit, the less there is left for the worker as wages, and vice versa. The Socialist and the trade-union leader have made excellent use of this fact in their efforts to organize labor into trade-unions and on political class lines. The old fashioned employer and mill superintendent has obligingly furnished chapter and verse for the use of the union organizer and socialist agitator by his arbitrary assertion of power and all too frequent disregard of the human interests of his employees.

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