Mr Henry stated that industrial harmony in the forest industry had been good for several years, and that pay and conditions had greatly improved, especially the standard of accommodation. However, people tended to drift into forestry work when other employment could not be obtained, and then to leave after a short period. Both quantity and quality of labour were insufficient. A major difficulty was to get forest labour to undertake training for more skilled work and for supervisory positions. He felt that industrial disharmony throughout the country could affect the present good relations between labour and management in the forest industries; there were factors over which neither could exercise control.

There were still aspects which management must improve if there were to be sufficient skilled men to carry out the ever-expanding forestry programme. In order to attract men to take on more skilled jobs, and to advance to supervisory positions, both becoming more necessary owing to advances in mechanization, there should be better margins of pay for higher skills. Responsibility can seem onerous and scarcely worth the few cents an hour above pay for less important work. Secondly, employers should encourage workers to put their roots down by assisting in the provision of good accommodation. The attitude of management is important in maintaining morale and well-being of those working in the forest industries.

Field forestry covers planting, tending and harvesting. In the early days of forestry in New Zealand, establishment was the main operation and work was seasonal; men lived and worked under appalling conditions, but there was a surplus of labour and there were few industrial problems. After 1946 employment was more constant, but labour was mainly from rural backgrounds, programmes were small, and there were close personal relations between labour and management. Difficulties were solved quickly and easily and there were few industrial difficulties. A period of great expansion began

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in the 1950s with the advent of large-scale logging, together with expanding planting programmes. This in turn led to a loss of personal touch between labour and management — a matter largely of communication. Where communications break down, both management and labour can be misled into taking unreasonable attitudes, and when this happens a stoppage is likely sooner or later.

There has also been an increase in militant unionism, or the formation of militant groups within unions. This can put the employer, or the union, or both, into a difficult position, for it only takes one to start a quarrel, and a minor point can easily be built up into a major one. A major difficulty for those in the employ of the Government is that there are usually long lines of communication and hence decisions cannot be made speedily. Nor can improvements be achieved quickly (for example, improved accommodation or transport) owing to uncertain future financial allocations. Both management and labour can be reluctant to accept proposed changes, and rigidity on either side can be disastrous.

The best defence against industrial disharmony is that both sides should adopt a reasonable attitude, that each should maintain good communications with the other, and that difficulties should be investigated and resolved promptly. There is no substitute for good relations: small organizations seldom suffer from disharmony.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS — THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

F. A. Conlon*

SYNOPSIS

An industrial relations officer is concerned with all matters which affect personnel and conditions of work. His field is really one of human relationships and as such he needs qualities of fairness, integrity, sound moral standards and, in particular, the ability to get along with people. He should be able to appreciate and understand the motives and rationale of unions, and of the union delegate’s role. A prime factor in securing a good industrial relations climate is the establishment of sound and effective two-way communications, between management and employees. There is a very real need for both management and unions to realize their mutual interdependence as it is only by co-operation between the two that an enterprise will be able to flourish.

INTRODUCTION

The term “industrial relations” is not easy to define as it embraces a very wide field. It is now generally considered to cover all areas of relationships with employees and with other employers, whether described as personnel administration, labour integration, manpower planning, industrial liaison or

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human organization. According to the International Labour Organization, industrial relations is "the careful use of human resources in a country, in an industry and on the shop floor, to attract, maintain, and increase the efficiency in using labour, with a joint sharing of the fruits of progress". As far as I am concerned, industrial relations covers almost anything which bears upon personnel and conditions of work. The following notes are written in this context. The various points raised cannot here be treated in depth. My purpose is to set down some factors which I consider to be important for the development of the true industrial relations role.

**HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

As one of the basic functions of an industrial relations officer is to foster good relations between employer and employees, the problem is really one of human relationships. Successful human relationships, whether between nations, members of a family, neighbours, or members of a club, depend on the contribution made by all parties and on the sincerity shown by all sides to achieve and maintain good relations. One side alone cannot obtain satisfactory results. This same principle applies to human relationships at work, and one of the main functions of an industrial relations officer, and also the union official is, or should be, to achieve satisfactory results in the field of human relationships. In striving for such results it is fundamental to recognize the respective objectives of management and labour.

The minimum conditions for effective management should include concern for economic growth, technical progress and good labour relations, as well as the earning of satisfactory profits. Not one of these objectives can be fully achieved without the co-operation of an effective and well-trained work force. On the other hand, trade unions represent members' interests and viewpoints in seeking to provide job security, to improve their economic well-being, and to stress the personal as well as the economic aspects of employment. For too long these objectives of management and trade unions were considered to be in serious conflict, but I hope that there is now on both sides a much greater awareness of the need for co-operation.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

In my opinion, management has to recognize the following qualities and principles. First, in the particular sense of negotiating conditions of work and dealing with disputes and general labour requirements, industrial relations is not a science but an art. An effective industrial relations officer may be an intellectual, or have high academic qualifications, but inevitably these must take second place, and a distant second place at that, to the qualities of fairness and understanding of others' points of view, allied to sound moral standards. Personality traits, especially the ability to get along
with other people, and to deal with them in a proper manner, are particularly important.

Secondly, industrial experience is of critical importance. It is only through such experience that the industrial relations officer will, it is hoped, develop that sense which will enable him to determine when a matter is of greater or lesser importance than it may appear at first sight. It is on the basis of experience that he can decide what steps are necessary to resolve a dispute on terms reasonably satisfactory to both sides.

Thirdly, it has truly been said that: "The biggest single enemy of good labour relations is smartness, cleverness or slickness; you may 'put across a fast one' once, but you will never be allowed to do it again".

Fourthly, a very important quality is a sense of humour. If an industrial relations officer does not possess, or cannot retain, a sense of humour, even in the face of difficulties, his life could become difficult, even grim at times.

Finally, it is necessary to remember always that one is dealing with people and not inanimate objects such as payroll numbers; and that these people have their own feelings and problems. The industrial relations officer should not be misled by logic alone, as most industrial problems are loaded with emotion. He should ask himself: "How does the problem appear to the other side? What forces are acting on the union or the delegate?" When he decides on the steps to be taken in respect of a particular problem, he should, before he applies them, try to place himself in the position of the other man and determine what his own personal reaction to such steps would be. He may save himself a great deal of trouble by applying this rule.

COMMUNICATION

A prime factor in establishing good industrial relations is sound and effective communication. By this I mean the adoption of a policy of ensuring that, wherever possible, all employees are kept "in the know" as to developments, or proposed developments, in company operations. While some employers have established good systems of communication with their employees, some are still inclined to adopt the view that secrecy must be maintained about proposed changes, so as to avoid unrest amongst employees over possible redundancy or some other likely consequence. It is much wiser to tell people what is going on in order to obtain a greater understanding from employees, and possibly ideas or suggestions could even be received from this quarter for cushioning the effect of changes on the labour force.

In this regard it must be recognized that there is a gradual, but nonetheless definite, change in the pattern of power in the trade union movement itself. I can do no better than quote Mrs Barbara Castle who, as Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity in the United Kingdom Government, stated in an address to the Institute of Directors on 6 November 1969: "We have to recognize, whether we like it or not,
that real power now resides in the workshop and on the office floor. It has, if you like, returned to the grass roots whence it came. We have got to accept, again whether we like it or not, that workpeople have a veto which they are increasingly prepared to exercise: in other words, that management these days can no longer function by the arbitrary exercise of traditional ‘prerogatives’, but only by winning the consent of its workpeople”. Mrs Castle went on to say that this meant that a new dimension had come into the whole art of management — something which had in the past been given a subordinate role — communications. There are possibly some statements in the quotation with which there could be disagreement, but the emphasis on communication is very much to the point.

CO-OPERATION

Many unions have a strong tradition that it is their business to exact the best terms they can from employers and to leave the employers to adapt their methods to these terms. It is to be hoped that it will become recognized that this traditional attitude is no longer justified, because higher production has become not merely desirable for management, but also indispensable for the maintenance and improvement of the standard of living. There is a real need for the positive co-operation of workers if higher production is to be achieved. I believe that the average responsible worker realizes only too well that co-operation is essential and is to the mutual advantage of both worker and employer.

One of the principal difficulties facing trade union leaders is that, as with politicians, they must satisfy their members to be re-elected. All too often a policy of responsible co-operation with an employer is taken as a sign of weakness on the part of the union official in the minds of some of the members. This traditional feeling can be altered only by some positive system of education which underlines the responsibilities which must be accepted by trade unions and also by employers. The job of the union official is difficult and should be viewed with sympathetic understanding. A full-time officer in a modern trade union is faced with a pattern of increasing complexity. He is often called upon to play multiple roles as negotiator, administrator, research officer, public relations officer, and often social welfare officer. In turn, the delegate at local level is confronted with an increasingly complex role in relation to his shop, his membership and his face-to-face relations with his managerial opposite number — the foreman or supervisor. In each case there is need for education in order to grapple with the many problems met on the job.

These brief notes are in general terms, and are set down essentially as a personal view. Industrial relations has become, of recent years, a critical matter for managers, and one demanding their sympathetic understanding if the operations of the enterprise are to make continuing progress. I hope my views may be of interest, and possibly, of value, to others.
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS FROM THE UNION POINT OF VIEW

J. W. Sylvester*

Tomorrow depends on how we think today; today's dreams can be tomorrow's realities. Perhaps as never before new ideas are being aired, norms challenged, conventions reviewed. The whole world is convulsed with change. Technological advances are revolutionizing production media, design techniques and vocational requirements. Skills that have been unchanged for a thousand years are suddenly redundant. In the midst of all this explosive achievement, human relations have not kept pace completely. Elevation of living standards and equitable rewards for working people, albeit accepted as normal today, were but yesterday bitterly contested and grudgingly conceded. Women won universal suffrage half a century ago and in New Zealand have enjoyed the vote for 100 years. Today they still plead for equal pay and opportunity. Any victim of a disabling industrial accident must rely on the whim of a jury or the skill of a lawyer for compensation. Exploitation of child labour, finally banned and outlawed by popular outcry, can still be found in some areas of agricultural production on rates below half of those for adults.

Yet we have come a very long way and there are signs that the new era may yet bring new concepts in industrial relations that may lead to fairer sharing of the rewards of production or service. Today a growing number of employers and Government administrators, as well as trade union leaders are recognizing the vital need to find ways and means of resolving differences without the waste attendant on disruptive tactics, or trials or strength through strikes and lockouts. Such are the complexes of industry and society that a single instance can cause distress to the whole country.

Against these generalizations, forestry and the forest-based industries, being comparatively young, have no great history of industrial strife. In the 1930s, forest development tended to be a relieving industry at a time of high unemployment and depression. Later it became a stop-gap employment for seasonal workers. In the last two decades, the expansion of secondary industries has created wider prospects of permanent employment. Forestry industries, requiring a range of skills common to those in other industries, have had to bid for labour in competition with them. This has led to a liberal wages policy which has been to the advantage of unions. In the circumstances, better relations between labour and management were possible, and this has led to a desire to maintain the harmony which has enabled the industry to progress so well. Another factor of no small importance was the accident of union coverage in the early development period. Industrial unionism is a concept that, in practice, has led to stability in spite of early fears on the part of management.

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that too much power may be concentrated in a single union. On the contrary, this power imposed responsibility, and also removed several causes of industrial disharmony. Among these were the avoidance of demarcation disputes, and the ability to make and observe consistent contracts and awards.

So much for the past. The future is now of more concern. Management is accepting, without any great objection, the proliferation of craft unions in the industry as expansion leads to decentralization. This can only lead to the ills that plague other labour-intensive industries' progress.

There is a growing acceptance that fair solutions to industrial problems are of vital importance. It is recognized that major causes of disruption are hardened or hostile attitudes, poor communications, inadequate machinery or unrealistic rules. The solution to the first must be education for union and management alike, in progressive stages. To improve communications, union and management opposite numbers must be versed in the proper procedures and trained to process disputes or complaints speedily. Machinery and rules should be designed to facilitate quick decisions at properly authorized levels, and not to act as buffers between workers and senior management.

Industrial relations are a major preoccupation of agencies of government, universities, management associations and trade unions. Every effort should be made, through the coordinated thoughts of these organizations, to evolve techniques and formulae for resolving conflict and achieving harmony. These should form the basis of formal training so that those coming to the negotiating tables and disputes councils may be highly skilled in the art of finding solutions, rather than, as at present, "big guns" confronting each other with closed minds bent on proving to the other which is "the greatest".