

ditions, wages, benefits, and the like, are more in keeping with his needs and desires.

Most people are generally reasonable creatures, even bosses—if approached in the right manner and with the right attitude. Any who are not reasonable in the face of such an approach will soon realize their error when workers begin to go elsewhere for employment.

The workers, however, must be patient with their bosses, good ones and bad ones alike. Employers also have responsibilities to their workers. The principles that make for a successful labor-management situation are built on a two-way street.

Deal Justly

Justice is a very broad subject when it comes to labor. It involves not only the proper payment for work done but also the general manner in which one treats employees.

The phrase “an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay” applies to employers as well as to employees. If one expects to obtain quality work he must be willing to reward the laborer.

It should go without saying that the wage one receives should be the wage agreed upon before the work began. But how often do disputes arise over the agreed-upon price *after* the job has been completed?

What should employers do when workers present complaints over

wages, hours, benefits, or conditions? Deal justly. Listen to the complaints, try to understand the workers’ viewpoints, and, if possible, do something to alleviate or reconcile the problem. He, as well as the workers, is to be patient.

Pay Promptly

An employer has an obligation not only to pay his workers *properly* but also to pay them *promptly*. The agreed-upon payday might be daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, upon completion of the job, or a variety of other times. Regardless of the method agreed upon, pay must be given promptly at the designated time.

I remember several times when my father would wait several months for a paycheck to come in payment for a job completed. He would have to call, pester, and almost beg to get payment from the contractor. The contractor, who had received what he wanted, seemed in no hurry to fulfill his end of the bargain. To say the least, he was not one of Dad’s favorite accounts.

Don’t Threaten

Some employers are very hasty to tell employees what will happen if things are not done “according to Hoyle.” The sole incentive for workers becomes keeping their jobs or avoiding penalties. The whip is constantly being cracked just above the workers’ backs. The boss yells and

demands and threatens and snarls.

Under such circumstances, the newly-hired, timid, or dull workers will “knuckle under” to these threats. The others, however, will begin to develop a negative attitude not only toward their boss but also toward their work itself. They will soon answer threat with threat and snarl with snarl. The quality of their work will suffer. Their demands will increase. Job dissatisfaction will spread like a cancer.

One employer and his supervisors tried to “encourage” loyalty and quality by threatening. Workers were repeatedly fed a diet of threats, criticism, and negativism. It seemed, to listen only to the boss, that no worker could do the job right. Whenever someone offered constructive criticism or suggested a different approach to improving job quality, they were told, “If you can’t take the heat, get out of the kitchen.” The re-

sult: mass resignation. The workers got out of the kitchen. And what of job quality and loyalty? It was worse than ever.

There is a place for threats and negative action in labor relations. In fact, some workers deserve more of it. But generally a more reasonable and positive approach will work better.

These principles of labor and management are very simple yet so infrequently applied. If incorporated on a regular basis by workers and bosses alike, the labor movement would practically cease to exist. There would be very little need for it.

Everyone would benefit from the application of these principles. The results, however, are not in question. The question is whether or not we as Americans are really willing to apply them. ☪

Self-help

IDEAS ON



LIBERTY

“HEAVEN helps those who help themselves” is a well-tried maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigor and strength. Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates. Whatever is done *for* men or classes, to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves; and where men are subjected to over-guidance and over-government, the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless.

SAMUEL SMILES