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UBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS

WORKERS AND BOSSES ARE HUMAN

Collective Bargaining at Work

Y T. R. CARSKADON

DO YOU KNOW—

How workers' efficiency can be increased?

Why workers join unions?

How to handle grievances?

How to improve labor-management relations?

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PAMPHLETS
No. 76 1943

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WORKERS AND BOSSES ARE HUMAN

By THOMAS R. CARSKADON

WHAT do men work for?

Money? Offhand, you probably would say "yes." People must have money to buy food, clothing, and to obtain a house to live in.

But there's much more to it than that. So much, in fact, that many experts nowadays are speaking of "revolutionary" new facts about why people work and how they work. It is interesting to follow some of the experiments that have been tried.

Take a group of workers off the regular production line and put them in a room by themselves. Give them more and better light. Production goes up—they do more work. Ah, the new lighting did it. Wait a moment! After a few weeks, reduce

This pamphlet is based on the three following studies: *Fatigue of Workers,* Its Relation to Industrial Production, by the Committee on Work in Industry of the National Research Council, published by the Reinhold Publishing Corporation; *The Dynamics of Industrial Democracy* by Clinton S. Golden and Harold J. Ruttenberg, published by Harper & Brothers; and *How Collective Bargaining Works:* A factual survey of labor-management relations in sixteen major industries in the United States, published by The Twentieth Century Fund.

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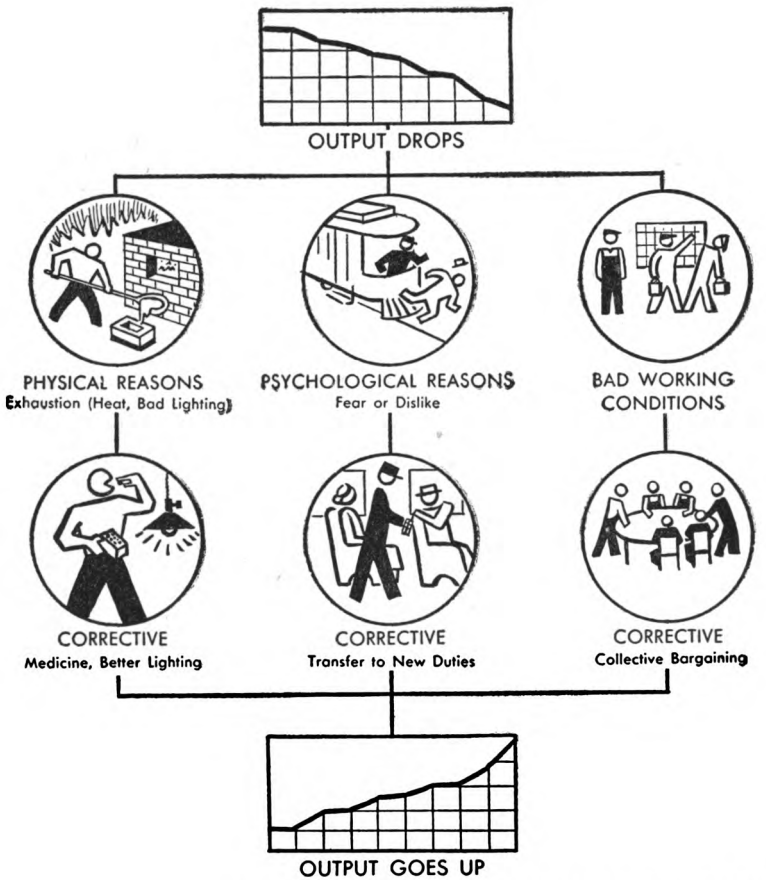
WHAT HELPS THE WORKERS' OUTPUT?



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the job, may directly affect his health. Do such things also affect his output?

This led the committee to investigate the famous experiments of the Western Electric Company at their Hawthorne plant in Chicago. These experiments began back in 1928 and, in one form or another, kept on for about ten years. The committee studied the record of these experiments, talked with

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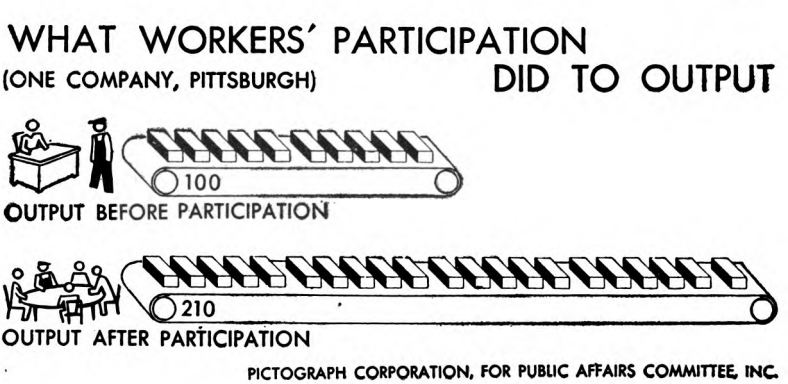
The president of one of the largest companies in Pittsburgh challenged his statement. Mr. Ruttenberg replied: "You bring in your engineer and let him tell me the spot where he thinks the most ideal situation prevails, with the greatest amount of production. I will double it in a month."

The company gave permission to try. Mr. Ruttenberg invited one shift of workers, most of whom were members of the union, to his home. He explained the whole situation and asked them what they could do. One man said: "We've never really tried." Another thought they might double production. Mr. Ruttenberg asked them to try for that—and a little margin



more. He passed along the company's pledge that rates would not be cut and the men would not be penalized in any way.

The men were on their mettle. What had been a group of workers, reluctant to step up output too much for fear that piecework rates might be reduced, became a production team. For about ten days they tried one hour on each shift to see what they could do—no speed-up, no forced draft, but a steady pace that could be maintained when their hearts were in their work. Then they put on this new pace for the full 8-hour shift, day in and day out. In a month production went to 210 per cent—better than double.

The Committee on Work in Industry considered other matters in its research such as: labor unions as a means of affording self-expression to workers; the way factories decide how much time to allow for a given operation or a given job; and the theory of executive power. The committee carefully pointed out that it was trying to discover general principles

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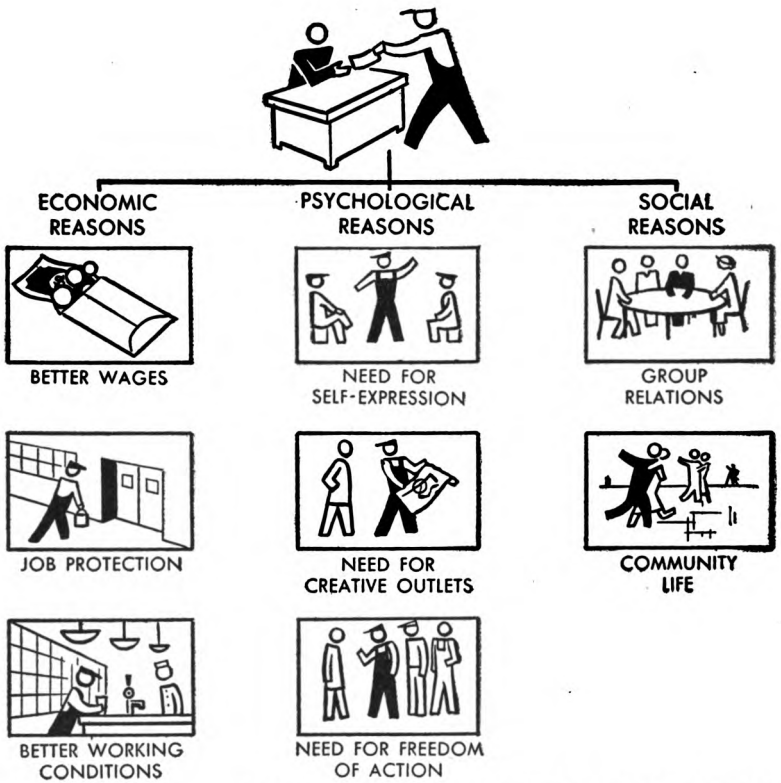
WHY WORKERS JOIN A UNION



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The interesting thing is that the Committee on Work in Industry, on the basis of scientific experiments, arrived at almost exactly the same conclusion as two labor union officials on the basis of their long practical experience.

Mr. Golden and Mr. Ruttenberg say that American workers join a union to satisfy three basic needs: (1) Economic —an adequate plane of living and the necessary amount of job and wage protection; (2) Psychological—the personality needs of freedom of action, self-expression, and creative outlets; (3) Social—the ties and bonds of group relations and community life. One fact the authors turn up is that companies of

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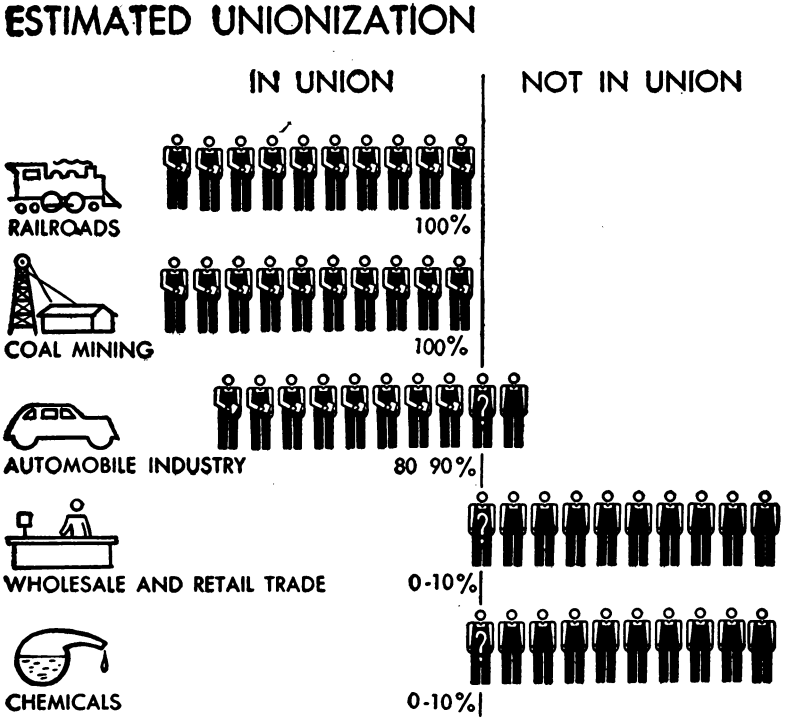

ployees, agricultural workers, domestic workers, employees in the financial and service trades, as well as hundreds of thousands of workers in industries that are only partially unionized, such as textiles and chemicals. Trade union membership appears to be increasing, and both major organizations in the field, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, report constant gains of new members.

Industry-Wide Collective Bargaining

The Twentieth Century Fund survey of *How Collective Bargaining Works* was supervised by a special committee which included representatives of management, labor, govern-

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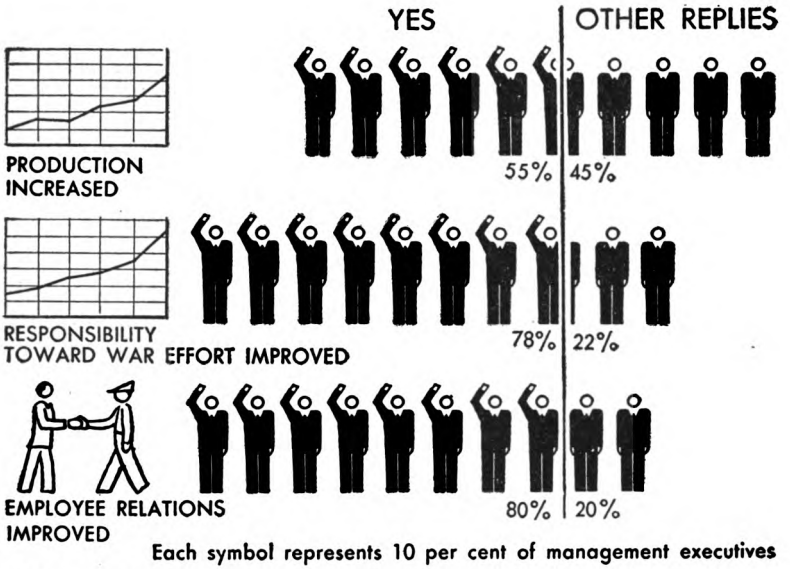
WHAT EXECUTIVES THINK OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES



NOTE: Sample from 181 plants employing 405,634 workers. From Factory Management and Maintenance, Oct. 1942.

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How well did they work? To answer this all-important question, the magazine *Factory Management and Maintenance* sent out questionnaires and in its October, 1942 issue tabulated replies from management executives in a 15 per cent "sample" representing 181 plants employing 405,634 workers. Here are some results:

Management testifies that four out of five labor-management committees have been generally successful. (Labor-management co-operation, the production driver's peacetime counterpart, has been a rare thing in the past. From this point of view, any substantial percentage of success, whether 80, 50, or 30 per cent, can be considered well-nigh astonishing.)

93 per cent find *no* evidence that labor is attempting to usurp the prerogatives of management.

55 per cent believe that production has been increased.

78 per cent believe that their workers' sense of responsibility toward the war effort has been improved.

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