
The thesis of this book is that industrial organization is inherently unjust since it attempts to impose a disparity between the amount of effort put out by the worker and the wages he receives; industrial unrest on this assumption, so far from being the exception, must be the most characteristic feature of industry. In order to discover the nature of effort, work is analysed into work realities, which are the physical working conditions, repetitiveness, and coercive routines, deprivations, which are impairment (i.e. actual physical discomfort caused by work), tedium, and weariness, and finally there are what Mr. Baldamus reluctantly describes as relative satisfactions including inurement, traction, and contentment—the latter term denoting the absence of unpleasant feelings rather than the presence of good ones.

As wages are costs to the firm, so the deprivations inherent in effort represent "costs" to the employee for which he deserves remuneration whilst being continually bilked by the employer who attempts to lower the value of effort. In the process of putting forward these views the writer demolishes, or attempts to demolish, almost every concept in industrial psychology since Elton Mayo: that work can be really satisfying, that high employee morale results in greater efficiency, that formal and informal structures in the firm are of any significance, and so on. As for improving human relations and social satisfactions, their main function is "... to conceal from the worker precisely those managerial objectives which amount to increased wage disparity".

J. A. C. Brown


This booklet was prepared under the guidance of a committee consisting of representatives of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants, the Institute of Personnel Management, and the British Institute of Management. It is anonymous, however, so that it is not possible to examine the statistical or medical qualifications of the authors.

The section on Incidence deals with the experience of manual workers in some 70 companies in the 12 months ended June 1956 and with the effect on absence rates of sex, seasonal influences, length of working week, size of firm, industry group, and locality. The interaction of the last four factors suggests that the conclusions based on this small sample of firms should be viewed with caution. The figures are not standardized for age and the effect of age on absence is not studied in detail.

The section on Costs relates to studies in 11 companies. The results varied widely; the total cost of absence to these firms ranged from 9d. to 15s. per week for each employee.

The section dealing with methods of controlling absence in five organizations is based on interviews with Officers of the firms concerned, and is almost entirely descriptive.

There is a useful bibliography.

C. J. Cornwall


This is an account of the proceedings of the second conference in the Royal Festival Hall promoted by the Chest and Heart Association.

For the industrial physician it contains very little with which he should not be already familiar. For the executives concerned, it must have been a stressful day, with 11 para-medical discourses to absorb, followed by question time, It might be asked for what purpose the Chest and Heart Association (formerly the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis) gathers executives into the arms of its wisdom, when so many