PREFACE

In the course of my serving, in diverse capacities, a number of private and public undertakings, I have the fortune of gathering experience - both inspiring and lamentable. The phenomenon of innumerable man-days either lost or misused falls into the second category. It is not easy to accurately apportion the blame of this labour-management discord. But it is undeniable that either of the parties is party responsible for the absence of a goal congruence between them. It has been my earnest endeavour for the last few years to make an attempt to ascertain the causes of the discord mentioned above, and to offer suggestion to create an atmosphere of labour-management unity and cooperation.

Considering the illiteracy, immobility and poverty strickeness of the majority of our workers, it is quite obvious that the initiatives for labour-management unity must come from the side of the management. The personnel department is the managerial wing to look after the labour force. The importance of the personnel functions can hardly be over-emphasised. Well organised and dynamically oriented personnel departments can contribute considerably in generating healthy labour relations and thereby increasing the national industrial productivity. It is needless to say that in a basically labour-intensive production system like that of ours, labour-productivity is the key to the overall industrial productivity. The personnel departments are required to move with the time. Without being well acquainted to the changing socio-economic aspirations of the moment, no personnel department, however well-equipped it may otherwise be, can be expected to yield the desired results.
It is indeed unfortunate that the personnel functions of our industrial undertakings have not grown in a way they should have. In most cases, the personnel department is either a mechanical or a consolation entity. The personnel function has, strangely enough, failed to acquire the importance in the way the sales and production functions have. No doubt, the acute shortage of technical experts to handle the delicate operations of the personnel department is a hurdle in installing effective personnel departments in many cases. But, the neglect of the personnel department is itself the cause of non-emergence of technical hands in requisite numbers. Quite a vicious circle indeed! Some of the industrial concerns in Assam have, however, been earnestly engaging themselves in installing effective personnel departments. These are definitely examples worth emulating by others too. With this view in mind, we have attempted here to analyse a few of the personnel departments that have attained quite a laudable measure of success. As per desire of the expert examining the feasibility of this research project, the Assam Oil Company Limited, Digboi, has been given a special treatment. Considering the age of the Company as well as the fruitfulness of its personnel policies, this special treatment is quite justified.

We shall deem our effort fruitful if this analysis helps in reorienting the personnel programmes of the industrial concerns of Assam.

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