

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Donald V. NIGHTINGALE, Richard J. LONG : *Gain and Equity Sharing. Quality of Working Life*. Case study Series, Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, Canada, 1984, 51 pp., ISBN 0-662-13138-X

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des relations industrielles (Proceedings) et dans la série des documents de travail de l'École de relations industrielles de l'Université de Montréal. Mais il peut s'agir, faut-il s'empresse de rajouter, d'écrits dont l'intérêt n'est pas toujours évident ou dont l'apport à la connaissance n'est pas des plus manifeste compte tenu des critères qui ont guidé la démarche de l'auteur.

Reste que cette bibliographie est un instrument de travail bien fait et suffisamment complet pour rendre des services appréciables aussi bien aux étudiants qu'aux praticiens. Mais il est clair que c'est avant tout le milieu de l'enseignement qui bénéficiera le plus de ce document de références. Les étudiants y trouveront une source précieuse d'informations pour leurs travaux. Nous avons d'ailleurs noté avec intérêt que l'auteur a colligé quelques ouvrages utiles pour fins de familiarisation avec des systèmes comparés de droit du travail.

En définitive, cette bibliographie du droit québécois et canadien des rapports collectifs du travail apporte une bonne contribution à l'enseignement et à la recherche. Étudiants en droit, en relations industrielles et en sciences de l'administration y trouveront un ouvrage attendu depuis longtemps.

Qu'il nous soit permis en terminant d'espérer qu'il y aura une prochaine édition, car il est impérieux que l'auteur assure le suivi de cette bibliographie. À cette occasion, l'ouvrage pourrait être accompagné d'index et plus particulièrement d'index analytique, alphabétique, par auteurs, etc., ce qui serait un complément fort apprécié. Il en irait de même de la présentation d'une liste des sigles utilisés.

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Gain and Equity Sharing. Quality of Working Life, by Donald V. Nightingale & Richard J. Long., Case Study Series. Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984, pp. VII + 51, ISBN 0-662-13138-X

Employees may share in company profits on a fixed rate basis in cash or in shares. Under the deferred payout plan they may have to wait for gratification a certain period of time. These two arrangements may be combined together. Productivity sharing is another possibility. The Scanlon plan was designed originally to increase productivity in U.S. steel mills and is based on the collective initiative of the employees to lower the current costs of production. The Rucker plan is similar but is calculated on the basis of changes in the value added by manufacture of each dollar of payroll cost. The improshare plan is based on gains in productivity shared on the 50/50 basis between employees and the company. There are several cost savings plans which take allowable costs and share savings on these costs. In all these cases a careful appraisal of the business and the mobilization of the personnel are crucial for the success.

Trade unions are quite often against gain sharing. They do not like fluctuations in income, do not want union members to participate in making decisions influencing profitability, are aware of the hesitancy of management to open books, are suspicious about any form of union-management cooperation. In the case of employee share ownership it would be easier to gain cooperation of unions, as this is promoted in Sweden. In Canada in 1981, 27 percent of public corporations had on active employee stock purchase plan. From time to time it happens that employees purchase falling firms. There are also few worker cooperatives. «There are several functions that a union can serve, even in an employee-owned firm. First, the union can provide representation of certain groupes of employees (...) Second, it can still provide an independent channel to protect the rights of shareholders as employees. Finally, in many cases, not all employees are shareholders, and the union may be the only mechanism to represent the rights of these individuals» (pp. 32-33).

The authors formulate the following suggestions: participation in ownership should be significant: shares should be broadly distributed; investment shall be real; direct

ownership is more effective than indirect ownership; administration of the plan must be fair and clearly spelled out; gains sharing should not serve as a substitute of good pay; there should be enough opportunity for employees to increase their involvement; training of managers and supervisors in participation is required; implementation of innovation has to be carefully analysed and corrected whenever necessary (pp. 33-34). At all levels of the organizational hierarchy participation should be welcomed, but the specificity of a given level has to be taken into consideration. Equity sharing as well as gain sharing both are needed.

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Employment Injuries and Occupational Illnesses 1972-1981 (including preliminary data for 1982), prepared by Jim Wong, Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984, pp. XV + 134, ISBN 0-662-53002-0

Injuries and illnesses take away a considerable value, in addition to suffering. The number of work days lost due to work injuries and occupational deceases has grown in the period 1972-1982 from 10 million to 15,4 million in comparison with respectively 8 million and 6 million of person days lost due to strikes and lockouts. In addition, in the first case we do not have the exact numbers; the real injury and fatality incidence rates may be understated up to 20 percent.

In terms of the total worktime, the loss due to injuries and deceases has grown in the period 1972-1981 from 0.6 percent to 0.8 percent when the loss on work stoppages has remained at the level of 0.4 percent (0.2 percent in 1983 and 0.25 percent in 1982). It is clear from these basic data that work stoppages may be more spectacular but injuries and deceases are actually much more harmful.

If taking arbitrarily the ratio 1:5 of direct to indirect cost (failure to meet customer demands, lower employee morale,

decreased efficiency, lost supervisory time, etc.) in the period 1972-1981 the loss in GNP due to injuries and illnesses has grown from 2.4 percent to 3.4 percent (\$ 11,4 billion in 1981). The benefit payments have grown in the period 1972-1981 per \$ 100 payroll from 0.68 to 0.92, in current dollars totally from 368 millions to 1,627 millions (in 1982, 1,966 millions). In the period 1971-1981 the actual increase of compensation (in 1971 dollars) was 7 percent. A half of compensation goes to pay for wage loss, 29 percent goes to pensions and the rest to medical aid expenses.

A half of all reported injuries are disabling. One third of all injuries result from striking against or being struck by objects. Close to another one third arise from overexertion of bodily reaction. About 20 percent result from falls on the same or to a different level. 25 percent occur to the hand or finger; about 20 percent occur to the back or spinal cord. Most of accidents happen in services (31 percent), manufacturing (20 percent) and trade (17 percent); the fatality rates are highest in fishing (147 cases per 100,000 workers), forestry (91 cases per 100,000 workers), mining (71 cases per 100,000 workers) and construction (37 cases per 100,000 workers).

There is an obvious need in Canada of the effective preventive measures. Employers should have more vested interest in this prevention instead of shifting the main burden on the taxpayers. In the period 1972-1981 the real increase of funds allocated to prevention was 61 percent but much more has to be done. First of all, a close cooperation between trade unions and employers is needed in this field; much may be learned in this respect from Sweden. Secondly, management has to be better trained in the accident and sickness prevention in order to provide a much better ground for an effective administration of human resources.

The statistical study here under review is a very useful source of information. At the same time it shows the limits of our current collection of data. We should know at least something who actually is responsible for a given accident. Comparison with other countries should be made possible by paying more