

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Alain LAROCQUE, Yvan BORDELEAU, René BOULARD, Bruno FABI, Viateur LAROUCHE, Alain RONDEAU : *Technologies nouvelles et aspects psychologiques*. Sillery, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1987, 171 pp., ISBN 2-7605-0450-6

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arbitration and return to collective bargaining. By 1913, however, this initiative had died as these unions were unable to achieve better results than those unions that remained within the arbitration system. Moreover, as the result of this union militancy, the arbitration system was suddenly embraced by employers and conservatives who now perceived it as a more palatable alternative to collective bargaining with its attendant economic sanctions.

By the beginning of World War I compulsory arbitration had become a firmly entrenched institution in New Zealand. The events of the next twenty years, however, placed it under very severe strain, clearly illustrating the problems associated with a centralized mechanism for wage setting. First, the inflationary pressures of the wartime economy caused substantial industrial unrest as the awards of the Arbitration Court failed to maintain real wages. In these conditions union militancy increased with the stronger unions establishing collective bargaining arrangements and resorting to strike action at will. In the early 1920s, however, a sharp drop in prices for New Zealand's exports brought about a depression. The response of the Arbitration Court was to issue in 1922 two general wage orders reducing wages. At the same time, employers took advantage of the deteriorating economic situation by forcing the more militant unions back into the arbitration system.

The author makes the observation that during this period there was a close relationship between the state of New Zealand's economy and the attitudes of employers and unions to the Arbitration Court. In good times arbitration would fall out of favour with trade unionists who saw it as a brake upon wage increases but, in bad times, employers and conservatives would be critical of the system for braking the fall of wages. By the late 1920s farming interests had become particularly critical of the arbitration system which allowed wage increases at a time when the prices of agricultural commodities were falling. The onset of the depression in 1930 gave rise to an even further pressure from conservative and employer interests, and in 1932 the operation of compulsory arbitration in New Zealand was drastically curtailed by legislation removing the right of either party to compel the other party to go to arbitration. This legislation effectively suspended compulsory arbitration in New Zealand until the process was revived four years later by further legislation.

This book, because of the author's sudden death, is necessarily an incomplete account of the evolution of compulsory arbitration in New Zealand. The reader is taken from the origins of compulsory arbitration in the early 1890s up to its suspension in the early 1930s. Nevertheless, the book is still a worthy piece of scholarship, providing interesting insights on the implications of compulsory arbitration for New Zealand's industrial relations system. It is to be hoped that some other scholar will bring us up to the present and do so with the same clarity and attention to detail as this history of the first forty years.

Donald CARTER

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Technologies nouvelles et aspects psychologiques, par Alain Larocque, Yvan Bordeleau, René Boulard, Bruno Fabi, Viateur Larouche et Alain Rondeau, Sillery, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1987, 171 pp., ISBN 2-7605-0450-6

Il s'agit d'un volume qui traite des technologies informatiques et de la culture organisationnelle. Le titre pourrait faire croire que les articles qu'il contient traitent de deux sujets, de façon intégrée. Mais c'est rarement le cas. C'est regrettable, mais cela se comprend aisément. Les textes sont réunis à l'occasion d'un colloque et leur intégration n'a probablement pas été

planifiée de longue date. Le fait que le volume est sous la responsabilité d'un comité d'édition est un élément d'information qui nous inquiète, non pas que les comités fonctionnent toujours mal, mais parce que la qualité de l'intégration y gagne habituellement lorsqu'un individu en fait «son affaire». Toujours au niveau des faiblesses, il faut dire que le travail d'édition et de correction n'a pas été impeccable. Voilà pour les faiblesses.

Au niveau des points forts, mentionnons la diversité des contributions. Il y a des articles de Québécois, de Français, d'Américains et de Britanniques. Cela ajoute beaucoup de valeur au volume, qui ne se laisse pas emprisonner dans une vision étroite.

On y aborde les thèmes habituels du domaine des relations industrielles: la participation, la consultation, la QVT et les cercles de qualité. Il y a de très nombreuses références à la nécessité de dépasser le taylorisme et la bureaucratie. On pourrait même dire qu'il s'agit là du véritable fil conducteur du volume, mentionné entre autres aux pages 28, 40, 70, 83, 90, 94, 113 et 116.

Un autre élément intéressant vient d'un consensus qui se forme peu à peu, et parfois laborieusement, sur l'impact des nouvelles technologies sur le travail. C'est un progrès qu'il faut noter, même si des écarts d'opinions demeureront nombreux. Par ailleurs, nous en arrivons à dédramatiser l'effet de l'informatique des organisations, tout en mesurant toute son importance.

Dernier point. Les articles sont de qualité inégale, ce qui est habituel dans ce genre de recueil. Presque tous, par contre, soit par l'aspect empirique, théorique ou par les qualités de synthèse, comportent un certain intérêt. Les textes des auteurs britanniques, américains et français m'ont paru particulièrement réussis, mais cela est peut-être attribuable à mon incorrigible intérêt comparatif.

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Managing Technological Development. Strategic and Human Resources Issues, by Urs E. Gattiker and Laurie Larwood, ed., Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1988, pp. VIII + 232, ISBN 3110110849

With the progressive acceleration of technological change in modern business there is a growing need of scientific assessment of organizational and managerial consequences. This first volume of the book series *Technological Innovation and Human Resources* deals with the macro side of technology (the first part), as well as with the micro perspective on human resources. The questions considered are: how to obtain innovation, what kind of cultural differences are influencing its development, what kind of strategies are successful to gain a competitive edge, what kind of costs and benefits are involved, how managers use electronic workstations and computer technology, how the managers differ in the acceptance of technology from the support office personnel, which problems arise in teaching employees to use new technology.

Radical product innovation meets several bureaucratic obstacles originating from the hierarchical organizational arrangement, suppressing the collegial professionalism and the absence of an adequate form that would liberate creativity. In most large organizations the ap-