WORKING RULES AND
SHOP PRACTICES**

I. General


A discussion of union attitudes toward job changes and innovations in mass production industries in which the policies of industrial unions are contrasted with those of craft unions. The author, who is Research Director of the Textile Workers Union of America, holds that the “advent of industrial unionism in the United States has meant greater tolerance by the industrial worker for technical and job changes” and the replacement of former insistence on job controls “by a broad program demanding clear procedures regulating the process of making changes and specific benefits to protect the worker and assure him some of the gains of productivity.”


Examines the “social implications” of output restriction through study of the attitudes of machine operators and incentive engineers toward incentive pay. Since the study was made during a period of high income and labor scarcity and in shops where the workers were protected from rate cutting by unions, job insecurity did not seem to be a contributing factor. Instead, the authors concluded that “Restriction of output reflects status conflict between ‘office’ and shop,” that it “is an expression of resentment toward management-instituted controls,” and that it is “an expression of a cleavage in social ethics” between workers and management.

* Compiled by Hazel C. Benjamin, Librarian.
** Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.

In a recent address, Professor Arthur M. Ross, Director of the University of California’s Institute of Industrial Relations, suggests six principles which he believes would facilitate the handling of work rule problems through collective bargaining.


The authors define the slowdown as "a form of on-the-job activity in which workers, while appearing to be engaged in their usual routines, deliberately limit their output in order to exert pressure upon management to make some desired change." They discuss the causes and organization of slowdowns, the role of the union, how cooperation of all the members of the group is secured, and what the attitudes toward the justification of slowdowns are among union leaders and members.


A pioneering research study which considers the basic causes for limitation of output among non-union production workers. The data was accumulated through work experience in non-union shops and through discussions with workers and employers. The volume also includes a chapter on "The Economics of Restriction of Output," by William M. Leiserson and one entitled "What Can Employers Do About It?" by Henry S. Dennison.


The author maintains that restrictive practices associated with craft unionism are spreading into manufacturing. He cites examples of increasing separation into craft units, the growing idea of craft ownership of jobs, seniority restrictions, and so on.


The author holds that union policies which have the effect of restricting output grew out of the insecurity of industrial employment and the desire to prolong trade life. In general he found that they had failed to accomplish their purpose over the long run.
2. Studies of Experience in Specific Occupational Groups


An abstract of the October 1, 1959 decision of the board of arbitration which covered four grievance cases involving an interpretation of Section 2-B of the United States Steel contract. Interesting for the historical background included, as well as for content of the decisions on the cases, all of which were concerned with reduction of crew sizes.


From their study of various types of working rules in the building industry, the authors find that while some of these are undoubtedly uneconomic and have imposed “a burden of costs . . . in excess of any reasonable gains to be obtained by the unions or their members,” “their adverse effect is much less than has been widely alleged.” The evidence obtained in the survey upon which the study is based did not support the charge of organized restriction of output on the part of the unions.


In these articles the author examines three different types of railroad wage payments for their make-work effects. Only in the case of wage guarantees does he find that compensation is received for services not rendered, although he concedes that the rules may be punitive in other respects.


Gives a brief history of the development of working rules in the railroad industry, explains their nature, and discusses their effect on collective bargaining. Concludes that the breakdown in collective bar-
gaining and grievance settlement on working rules "is a factor in the explanation of the unstable labor relations in the railroad industry . . . ."


This history of the American Federation of Musicians gives a good picture of the way in which this union has attempted to meet the problem of technological unemployment through the use of restrictive practices.

3. Governmental Controls


Examines legislative, judicial, and administrative restraints on make-work practices at both the federal and the state level. On the basis of experience under these restraints, the author concludes that the broadest and most effective approach to the problem is through collective bargaining.


Reviews the origins of featherbedding practices and of attempts to control them through federal legislation. Points out the reasons why these laws have not provided a satisfactory solution to the problem.


This article includes an analysis of the published decisions of arbitrators, chiefly in manufacturing industries. Among the conclusions arrived at by the authors from their study of these decisions and of federal legislation are that grievance arbitration has not resulted in the fostering of make-work practices, that employers have not taken sufficient advantage of the Anti-Racketeering Act to end make-work, and that "Section 8(b) (6) of the Taft-Hartley Act should be amended so that its terminology will be similar to the Lea Act."


Discusses "the legal protection and the self-help techniques available to the individual employer when faced with output restrictions which he may feel to be unjustified" and "the appropriate line between labor's legal right to engage in collective bargaining . . . and labor's legal duty to refrain from undue restrictions on productivity." The author also recommends "changes in the current legal-administrative control of make-work practices" and proposes a "voluntary national program for the reduction of undue hindrances to industrial productivity."