

ROTARY GOLDEN ROUND TABLE
"Working Together"
(Employer-Employee Relations)

ANNCR: The Rotary Club of (Name City), in cooperation with Radio Station _____ brings you a projection of the drama you have just heard--a discussion by local community leaders of the community problems dramatized in Rotary Golden Theatre. Does (Name City) have any labor problems? If so, whose responsibility is it to solve them? How does the relationship between local employers and their employees affect you? Rotary Golden Round Table, a local contribution to the world-wide observance of Rotary International's fiftieth anniversary, feels that discussion is the start toward accomplishment. So, for the next 15 minutes, let's think about management and labor....working together!

VOICE: (OFF, CALLING) (Name City) employers are the best in the world!

SECOND VOICE: (OFF, CALLING) I disagree! There's plenty of room for improvement!

VOICE: (OFF, CALLING) We need a lower wage scale if business is to prosper.

SECOND VOICE: (OFF, CALLING) We need higher wages for a better community!

ANNCR: You can find a difference of opinion on almost any subject, and the subject of labor relations is certainly no exception. Our Golden Round Table members are prepared to discuss (Name City) labor relations from an objective viewpoint. Members of today's discussion group are:

Mr. A _____, (Identification) _____;

Mr. B _____, (Identification) _____; and

Mr. C _____, (Identification) _____.

Mr. A, before we get into the discussion of today's problem, what is the local Rotary Club's interest in labor relations?

MR. A: That's easy, John. As early as 1906, the first Rotary Club declared this to be one of its main objectives, "The advancement of the best interests of our city and the spreading of the spirit of civic pride and loyalty among its citizens." It certainly isn't a contribution to the best interests of any city to have bitterness or distrust between management and workers. You don't get civic pride and loyalty when either management or labor is unhappy. No business can prosper when any part of the people in it are unhappy--and a community can't prosper unless the people who are a part of it are getting along satisfactorily. Consequently, local employer-employee

MR. A (CONT.) relations are important to us. And Rotary operates on the principle that he who serves must act. You have to put the theory of service in community affairs into action to make it practical.

ANNCR: I can see how a strike in a major industry could easily affect the welfare of a community--but our city also has a great many small businesses with only a few employees. There can't be much of a labor problem there, can there? How about it, Mr. B?

MR. B: A grievance is every bit as important to a man working in a small business as it is to a man working in a large factory. Since the small business may not have collective bargaining or management-labor arbitration, the grievance may be much more difficult to settle. And a small employer who must depend on a few men to run his business is in serious trouble if any one of those few men doesn't do a good job. I'd say that harmony and mutual understanding are even more important in a small business than in a large one. If a big business in (Name City) has trouble, we all recognize the effects immediately. But the failure of a small business hits every one of us, too. Every time a worker is laid off, the whole community suffers--and every time a worker gets a raise in pay, we all benefit. If one family's standard of living is raised, the community has advanced.

ANNCR: What you're saying, in effect, is that small businesses and large businesses are both made up of people--and that every person in (Name City) is important.

MR. B: That's right.

ANNCR: I suppose there's bound to be some difference of opinion between management and labor in any community--and (Name City) can't be an exception. If there is such a difference of opinion in some instances here, what's the cause of it? Do you have any answer for that question, Mr. C?

MR. C: The major cause of friction between management and labor is the same everywhere--lack of understanding. Management knows that a worker who is happy, and proud of his job, is the best kind of an employee--but sometimes management doesn't know why employees are dissatisfied. It's not always a case of wanting more money, by any means.

ANNCR: What are some of the more common causes of employee dissatisfaction?

MR. C: Lack of opportunity for advancement, lack of on-the-job training, a feeling of job insecurity, indifference of management to ideas submitted by workers, and the difficulty of communicating with management.

ANNCR: And what are the major reasons for management dissatisfaction with employees?

MR. C: Most of them stem from the same thing--lack of understanding. When workers aren't earning their pay, the problem usually stems from some grievance, either real or imaginary. Management has to find out what that grievance is before it can do anything to correct the situation.

ANNCR: Does the (Name City) Rotary Club make a practice of trying to iron out these misunderstandings?

MR. C: Not as a club, and not in specific cases. Our Vocational Service Committee tries to keep both management and labor informed on business relations, so that misunderstandings won't exist. (GIVE EXAMPLES OF LOCAL BUSINESS RELATIONS CONFERENCES, EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE SESSIONS, VOCATIONAL TRAINING WORK, ETC.)

MR. A: Most of all, we try to serve through our own businesses and professions.

ANNCR: How do you go about that?

MR. A: We try to keep ourselves well informed on business relations through discussions at regular Rotary Club meetings. We try to serve through out own businesses and professions in a number of ways--by supporting trade associations and codes of correct practice, by establishing friendly and cooperative relations with competitors so that we won't become involved in forced lowering of working standards, and by doing the best job we possibly can at management level. We try to recognize the dignity of the worker as a human being. We have learned that it's good business practice to set up channels of communication between management and worker and keep them open. We know that employees do better work when they have fair pay, security, and an opportunity to advance. Our membership is encouraged to take an interest in youthful employees and to train them--and we know that workers should be provided opportunity to contribute ideas in regard to matters of policy.

MR. B: Rotary has found that good employer-employee relations are like measles in one way--they're catching. If one man in a business or profession shows an understanding of employee relations, his competitors are quick to follow. They have to be, because it's simply good business to function efficiently at every level.

ANNCR: You say it's good business, B. I can remember when it was considered good business to hire workers for the least possible pay and get them to put in the longest possible hours. Why isn't that method still sound?

MR. C: It never was sound. That idea was responsible for the tenement sections in our large cities. It was responsible for bad health and shoddy craftsmanship. It was also responsible for labor trouble that cost management millions of dollars. There are two systems of gaining maximum productivity--one is a system of slave labor and ruthless planning that regards the individual as expendable. The other system is a society of free men with equal opportunity to co-operate for their own self-interest. Whichever method does the better job will eventually run the other one out of business. The future of mankind depends upon the success of the second method--a society of free men.

MR. B: The problem of productivity is one of the world's toughest--and most important. Taxes, prices, wages and profits, our living standard and our personal success all depend on our individual productivity, whether we're employers or employees. And when we increase productivity, we get more results from less effort--which doesn't make anybody unhappy.

ANNCR: Well, how do you go about increasing productivity?

MR. A: You should start on your own job, dignifying it as an opportunity to serve society. Most of us, if we'll look at our own jobs critically, can find blind spots, wasted effort and missed opportunities. We can all find more and better ways to be of service to society.

MR. B: Rotary expects us to persuade others to look at their jobs in the light of service to society--and that means workers and executives, alike. Just imagine a factory where every worker has this vision of his job. The lines of communication are open. There are no blind alleys and no clock watchers. Ideas for improvement are welcomed. Incentives and short-cuts are being developed. You have a feeling of partnership and team work at every level. And think of a store geared to that same single purpose of giving more service and of raising the living standards of its customers. You'd like that store, wouldn't you? You'd give it your business.

ANNCR: I certainly would.

MR. C: And the same idea applies to professional work. Imagine a professional man who doesn't bury his talents or monopolize his services, but works with his colleagues to the sole end of increasing their usefulness to the community. Multiply such factories and stores and professional men by all the towns and cities throughout all the nations, and the problem of productivity would be licked.

- MR. A: The idea is a real challenge to every person who wants a better world, a better country and a better community. Rotary Clubs all over the world are asking their members to consider what changes each one of them can make in his own occupation to dignify it by greater service to society. As an international group with clubs in 89 countries, Rotary is trying to spark enthusiasm and practical efforts to increase productivity in factory, store and office. You can't do it without understanding and cooperation between management and labor--but it's worth all the effort you can give.
- MR. B: Nobody can stand aloof from the problem, because productivity affects all of us, whether we're workers, employers--or even retired.
- ANNCR: I overheard a discussion the other day about a strike against a certain big manufacturer. A couple of people in the discussion said that the management of the company "deserved" the strike. I don't know anything about the merits of the case, but isn't it possible that a company gets what it deserves when its employees strike?
- MR. A: Perhaps--but do the employees of that unfair company deserve the loss of income they suffer from the strike? Does the community in which the factory is located deserve the problems a big strike creates? And, just as logically, when employees strike for unreasonable demands, does the company deserve the loss it takes? Regardless of whether employer or labor has been unfair in its past dealings, it's never too late to turn over a new leaf. It's never too late for industry and labor to make an honest effort to understand mutual problems. It's much more sensible to settle things at a conference table than to settle them in a way that's bound to hurt you, yourself. We hear about the strikes, but we don't often hear about the disputes that are settled quietly and satisfactorily by arbitration. At a Rotary business conference in Port Huron, Michigan, labor and management agreed on this conclusion, "A labor-management committee can work provided the top leadership of labor, management and citizens honestly want to take the time and patience to make it work."
- ANNCR: Do individual Rotary Clubs do much along that line?
- MR. C: They certainly do. One outstanding instance comes from Auckland, New Zealand. For several years, the Rotary Club had been interested in better understanding between trade union leaders and employers. There had been many meetings in the homes of Rotarians. Personal acquaintance had developed, and a group had been formed that developed certain principles

MR. C (CONT.) of agreement in labor relations. There came a day when the water-front was in turmoil through a wild-cat strike which threatened to become general. The trade union leaders who had participated in these discussions with Rotarians were able to avert this disaster by convincing the men that they could get a square deal from the employers.

ANNCR: I can see how better understanding can result in better labor relations--but do you honestly think that management and labor can ever really get together?

MR. B: We know they can. It's happening all the time. You don't get the news stories any more about plants where labor has an active voice in management--because those stories are no longer unusual. I know of several cases where organized labor has offered to take a wage reduction to help management weather a critical period. The "suggestion box" which offers prizes to employees for the best ideas was once a rarity and is now in widespread use. You see more and more instances of management offering training courses for ambitious workers. Many companies have profit-sharing plans for their employees--and more and more workers are buying stock in the companies that employ them. Both workers and management are realizing that their interests are almost identical, that their success is inter-dependent on each other. It all gets back to that problem of mutual understanding.

MR. C: That's right, C. And it's a lot easier for both management and workers to do their job harmoniously than it is for them to distrust each other... easier and more profitable. Economies in the use of time can benefit both employers and employees. Changes in business procedure can hurt or help both, changes in products that benefit one can't help but benefit the other.

MR. A: And anything that helps employers and employees here in (Name City) helps all of us. It means that somebody helps us share the taxes, that somebody has more money to spend with local firms, that living standards are higher and people are happier, that our community is more solid and will offer better inducements to newcomers.

MR. C: That's why this business of starting with your own job is so important. And it shouldn't start with the other fellow, but with you. When you dignify your own job, you help to dignify the job of every other person in the community. No person climbs without pulling others up with him, just as nobody slides down the human ladder without hurting someone else.

MR. B: It gets right down to this. When employers and employees both concern themselves with greater service to society, society benefits. Good

MR. B (CONT.) management-labor relations help all of us. We can't sit by and say, "That's a company problem. It doesn't concern me." We're all proud of (Name City) and its progressive, ambitious, successful business leadership-- but we all know that (Name City) can be an even better place in which to live and work.

ANNCR: You've convinced me. Good vocational service is something that starts with the individual--and Rotary International is doing its utmost to encourage not only its own membership but management and labor throughout the free world toward a higher concept of service. The more who catch the spirit of Rotary's Ideal of Service, the better this world will be. As long as we have open-minded discussion of labor-management problems, those problems can be solved. That just about winds up this session of Rotary Golden Round Table, but I'll look forward to this same time next week. Rotary Golden Theatre will present a drama built around a problem that affects all of us, and then, immediately following, Rotary Golden Round Table will present a discussion of that problem as it applies to (Name City). Our panel next week will consist of (Names and Identifications)--all particularly qualified to discuss the subject to be presented. Be sure to be with us next week for another program in observance of Rotary's Fiftieth Anniversary, presented by the Rotary Club of (Name City) and Station _____ as a public service--in your interest.