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Review of "Dictionary of Personnel and Industrial Relations," By Esther L. Becker

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federal government is subject to no independent review except the unwieldy one of Congressional investigation. But the unanimous preference for governmental restraint based upon conduct rather than character or affiliation, the unarimously manifested desire to minimize the scope of such restraints when based upon prediction of conduct, and the generally professed aversion to decisions based upon ex parte contributions of casual informers raise a reasonable standard for public policy even in crisis. This position endorses conservative values against the fears of the moment, and with stouthearted faith in the republic refuses to permit the pressures of the enemy to convert us into his likeness.

IVAN C. RUTLEDGE†

DICTIONARY OF PERSONNEL AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. By Esther L. Becker. New York: Philosophical Library. 1958. Pp. 366.

Each field of human endeavor develops its own jargon, its own cant. This is as true of the field of personnel and industrial relations as it is of law. Today a great many lawyers become involved in industrial relations matters and they must become familiar with the terminology of that field. A good dictionary of personnel and industrial relations terminology could be of invaluable service to lawyers. This book is not a good dictionary. Actually, it is a very poor dictionary.

The jacket of the book states there are 2,468 entries. Indeed, there are a lot of entries. Many of the definitions are inaccurate. A great many more of the definitions are incomplete and vague and of no value to one seeking an understanding of a particular word or term. There are significant omissions. The author has obviously scanned many books, studies, and magazine articles to pick up words and various definitions. Sometimes in lifting a word out of text, she entirely misses the real significance of the word. She includes many esoteric meanings while ignoring many generally accepted meanings.

A few illustrations will suffice:

“Bargaining unit” is defined as:

“A group of employees accepted or designated by an authorized agency or an employer as appropriate for representation by one union.”

Any employer who relied on this definition and insisted on designating the appropriate bargaining unit would soon find himself facing an unfair labor practice charge if he were covered by the Labor-Management Relations Act.

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At this writing suite a furor is going on in Congress as to whether or not the so-called "secondary boycott" provisions of the Labor-Management Act should be amended to prohibit certain secondary boycott activities not now prohibited by the Act. According to the author, all of this is unnecessary. She defines "secondary boycott" as follows:

"boycott, secondary. The act, on the part of a union involved in a labor dispute, of causing, or attempting to cause, by inducement, persuasion, or coercion, third persons not directly involved in the dispute, to refrain from business dealings with the adversary employer. Such acts may try to keep suppliers and customers to refrain from business dealings; may seek sympathetic pressure by other labor organizations, as where they are induced to refuse to cross a picket line or refuse to work with nonunion men or materials. Under the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Labor Act of 1947, secondary boycotts have been made illegal."

The author clearly has had little, if any, practical experience in the industrial relations field. The following is characteristic of her naivete:

"discipline. The ideal type of industrial discipline is 'self-discipline,' where employees by their own free will follow the rules. Such discipline is the result of constructive, positive leadership, exercised within the framework of a clear, consistent disciplinary policy. An appeal to reason is much superior to an appeal to fear. Authority should not be used as a whip. The supervisor who has authority but who depends, rather, upon his leadership to control his subordinates will find his authority is more highly regarded than if he made use of it at every opportunity. Authority should be thought of as reserve power to be used only after all else fails. There are, of course, occasions and situations which justify the use of full authority. It requires fine judgment to know where to draw the line—to know when an appeal to reason has failed and rigid authority must be asserted."

The definition of "executive" can hardly be called illuminating. It is:

"executive. A person possessing the ability of executing, administering, governing and carrying out ideas, rules, laws and orders. An executive is anyone who is responsible for the direction and control of others and for the work performed by them. Certain traits and manners of conduct are essential to executive success. A few fundamental characteristics must be inborn, but others may be developed. See Executive Ability, Development of; Executive Development."

There is a complete distortion of values in the emphasis placed upon the various words. Compare the two following definitions:

"flannel board. A large, usually black, board covered with flannel to which cards or other items, specially treated, will adhere upon contact. Each step, or unit, of a talk or lecture is put in

place at the exact moment when mentioned by the speaker. The board always shows the relationship between the steps in clear, graphic terms. When a talk is completed, the flannel board provides an immediate summary or review or may serve as a guide to returning to previous points for more discussion. If desired, the cards may be taken from the board singly or in groups, or may be removed to another part of the board, where they adhere on contact."

"**efficiency.** (1) The ratio of standard performance time to actual performance time usually expressed as a percentage. (2) The ratio of actual performance numbers (e.g. number of pieces) to standard performance numbers usually expressed as a percentage."

No doubt a flannel board can be of considerable use in personnel and industrial relations. "Efficiency" is, however, a matter of prime concern. The definition of "efficiency" scarcely covers any of the myriad of meanings the word has in the personnel and industrial relations field. The author dismisses "hiring hall" with less than two lines!

A list of personnel associations is given. It is interesting to note that such organizations as Kiwanis International, Lions International and Rotary International are personnel associations.

Among some of the words and terms omitted from this purported dictionary are: "hot cargo," "agency shop," "flexible work week," "lateral transfer," "funeral leave," "jury duty," "economic action," "free riders," "employable," "disaffiliation," "counter-proposal," "bogus work," "captive shop," and "co-determination." This list could be substantially extended.

This is certainly not a book to be used by one seeking accurate, full and informative meanings. Because of its errors, inaccuracies and misconceptions, this book can be harmful to one who might rely upon it.

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