

G. E. BOLTON,

*Mr. Bolton was Director of Personnel, Air Canada, Montreal. He died in 1967.*

## COUNSELLING SERVICES IN INDUSTRY

Most of us living in urban areas are aware of the degree to which complexity is an increasing factor facing citizens of the community. Within industry a double-barrelled type of complexity faces employees and their families. Individuals are faced with dramatic changes at the work place as well as accepting different pressures in the community at home. Our social structure today calls for a much more sophisticated type of community agency to meet changing needs than was required twenty-five years ago. Industrial growth in form and emphasis has created these new needs and usually the worker is first to show signs of the strains of change. Too often we have spent our energies to treat the effect rather than the cause. Just as the new approach of social agencies has been to put their energies in the area of prevention of social crisis, rather than the basket method of picking up the remains of chaos, so industry is bending every effort to understand the changing pressures to prevent rather than treat hardship.

In all probability, the forces of complexity will move at an accelerated pace in coming years. The shifting focus will call for improved skills and techniques from all persons engaged in counselling services. Indeed, the educational system has already been caught up in organized approaches to guidance and counselling. This action parallels work done in community services to consolidate forces and face the problem on the basis of a broad plan. These actions are forerunners to similar services in the total complex of society required by the forces of change. Business and industry are now engaged in the process of meeting the changing personal needs of employees and yet avoiding unnecessary duplication of community services already available.

On the assumption that guidance and counselling within the school system has as its chief function educational and job guidance and counselling, it would appear that close liaison between the school system and business and industry is a "must." Through employment offices, business and industry give, at least in relation to their own companies, and in many cases in relation to the business community generally, guidance and counselling similar to that carried on within the school system. Job counselling has been accepted as a normal activity. The employment office is taking on the growing function of job counselling within the company as well as off-the-street employment. With additional instruction, the duties of the employment office have been expanded to include other types of counselling of a non-professional character. Service to those seeking employment and to the employed is the picture of present-day employment offices. However, once a person is employed, industry believes it has a responsibility to assist in the growth needs of the individual. With expanding interest, an attempt will be made to encourage in a comprehensive fashion the personal development of the individual in keeping with company growth or continuance needs. Pre-business experience has an important part to play in this assessment.

In the opinion of us in business and industry, it is important that the counselling that is engaged in within the educational system will be effectively

related to a similar function slowly developing within business and industry. A *high degree of continuity* is bound to assist in fulfilling the objectives of counselling. No doubt the work of this Conference, and others to follow, will bring about a meaningful dialogue. If we are successful in relating the counselling services of the educational system and business and industry, then the individuals involved will lead more healthy, fulfilled, and productive lives, and society in turn will be the richer.

To the extent that the information accumulated as supportive evidence for an individual is objectively meaningful, it would seem important that such information be quickly translatable as part of the file of an individual entering business or industry. It is to be hoped that, as our confidence grows in the action and projections of insight evolving within the educational guidance and counselling programme, it should be possible for business and industry to build upon the data rather than go clueless for many weeks or months of employment without important background information being available.

No doubt our discussions will give greater clarity to this aspect of the bridging. On the assumption that we understand the need for continuity between school and work, it would serve no useful purpose to pursue the point further. All that needs doing in this regard is to find the most efficient method for the exchange of relevant experience.

The changes and growth within industry have made mandatory the establishment of an effective training and retraining programme in most large companies. Smaller companies will soon be involved in a similar activity to survive. The planning required to upgrade or retrain employees calls for a well-developed and integrated scheme akin to a counselling service. Projection of staff needs co-ordinated with local and national expansion plans will have increasing relevance to both educational and industrial activities.

For proper planning, an effective feedback system is urgently needed. Integrated counselling services between educational institutions and industry is a logical starting point. In industry, management and supervisory and training specialists and employment counsellors share the role described under the terms of guidance and counselling. Although not specifically defined within a *classification*, the function is being performed and can easily be marshalled to provide useful exchange of ideas, plans and pertinent data. The exchange could also ensure that compatible methods of data storage and compilation are fed into the system at the outset. Agreement in other areas, such as what type of data is worth building into the record, could save many dollars and much time and effort for all concerned. Because the individuals are the same people throughout life in the world of school and work, it should be possible to see the solution of their life needs in a continuum rather than as closed compartments in sequential relationship. Although there are Orwellian overtones possible in such a proposal, I am confident that effective control systems could be developed to ensure against an invasion of personal prerogatives.

During the last war, business and industry extended its concern over what was happening to people at work and off the job to a much greater extent than that which was considered normal prior to the war. Scarcity of skilled help, which caused companies to employ, as was said, "even if the body was warm," reached to the point of ensuring that the person, once employed, was given every assistance to squeeze out the last ounce of capability. Many companies

went to great lengths to extend counselling services in the face of this challenge, and I am certain that the fruits were beneficial, not only to the war effort but also to those who were the recipients of this extra service.

It is sad to relate that the shifting figures of unemployment since the war have caused an ebb and flow of this kind of counselling service. Just as the ebb and flow of the sea has tended to build an increasingly higher beach head, we must assume that at each turn of the tide we have established a stronger sense of how to give assistance to employees in the strictly off-the-job areas of their personal life. To put it another way around, I am sure that industry has learned that a man being at his work place does not necessarily mean he is at work. A person in a worried frame of mind, because of personal preoccupation, often needs assistance to become fully aware and effective as he stands actively in his work place. It is this growing understanding of the fuller aspects of what constitutes a productive employee that is *directing the mind of management* into areas related to guidance and counselling. I wish to stress at this point that the growing emphasis is related to a desire to assist employees to fulfil their own capabilities, leading in turn to increased production. This increased productivity is socially needful for the individual as well as for the larger context of community health and welfare.

Studies under way indicate that the systems *within industry* related to organization structure and methods affect in many ways the well-being of the employee. The form of the organization can affect the productivity of the industry as well as the life of the employee group. New understandings of the forces operative in different situations will allow for more health and creative relationships at work, which in turn will affect society outside the factory.

Those engaged in this programme of restructuring industrial organization are doing a counselling function. Business and industry have now accepted the fact that the size of companies makes difficult, and often no longer within the capability of the individual, the ability to plan his future meaningfully on his own. Therefore, part of the counselling services within industry now increasingly includes, under the heading of *Manpower Planning*, close-up discussion with the employee.

The intention of this session is to plan with intelligence and understanding a meaningful relationship between his work history with his company and his and management's desires, and the projected picture for the future. This aspect of counselling is done either through the specialists in the employment counselling field, or through the special direction of supervisory insight. This type of planning has proven to be healthy for both employees and industry generally.

Because industry now sees the employee as an important aspect of the future growth and development of a particular business or industry, the general health, physical and mental, of all employees is receiving increasing attention. This is done, either through planned programmes for medical review or through training of supervisory and management personnel, to ensure there is an ever-increasing ability to detect and give guidance to individuals who are showing signs of breakdown in either area. This would also ensure that they would receive professional help.

Industry, too, has in one form or another learned how to give counsel to employees faced with a financial or home-management problem, and to obtain

skilled assistance either through specialist activity or through supervisory direction or through the formation of such institutions as credit unions within the plant areas.

Industry is also becoming much more alert to the need to give counselling services to those involved in re-location from one city to another. Experience to date would indicate that we must become much more skilled in handling the monetary and non-monetary aspects of this potentially dis-locative aspect of modern business and industry. It is only of recent date that we have learned of the extent to which the movement of a family from one area to another can create problems beyond the capacity of an individual family to handle. Although larger corporations have managed to cope with the many problems to the point that economic hardship is no longer a factor, the desire or capability to move into the sociological or psychological problems related to re-location is relatively untouched.

It would appear from the above that in order for business and industry to react meaningfully within the counselling area, it will be necessary for a lot of research to be carried on to determine the most effective way to give guidance to employees. Faced with the problems of an increasingly complex, industrialized society, more specialized help from industry and government, all supported by research, will be required to assist in the transition to more effective methods.

The most important starting point in this research must be the acceptance on the part of business and industry that it has a role to play in assisting employees at this point in history. Industry must prepare itself to extend to its employees a service of knowledge related to the kinds of agencies ready and willing to give assistance at each point of need. At least until the research is completed to determine the extent of need and the type of community agencies required, business and industry could provide services internally, and where it is known that services do exist, to give direction as to how services can be obtained. This involves a familiarity with the various types of agencies at work in the community to assist families in their plight. If the community provides professional services in certain areas, then industry would be off base in establishing duplicate services. But where such are not provided, and it is pertinent to employee health and welfare that such services can be provided, it seems advisable that industry take a leadership role in establishing the needed services inside or outside the plant.

In my opinion, community planning, related to guidance and counselling services, must include a responsible spokesman for business and industry to ensure that there is co-ordination of services within the educational system, within business and industry, and within the community generally. This type of co-ordination will ensure efficiency of service, avoid duplication, and will treat the life of a community in continuum rather than in a bits-and-pieces fashion, typical of our present approach.

It seems to me that it is not only possible but necessary that education and business and industry engage in a meaningful exchange related to value systems and objectives. From such a confrontation, it should be possible to meet the forces of change with health and vigour. The evidence of co-operation in this sphere will be a sign of our increased maturity of insight and activity in both sectors.

## LES SERVICES DE COUNSELING DANS L'INDUSTRIE

*G. E. Bolton*

Selon moi, la présence d'un représentant du monde des affaires et de l'industrie est requise lorsqu'il s'agit de l'organisation communautaire des services d'orientation et de counseling. Cette initiative permettrait une coordination des services tant au niveau du système d'éducation, des affaires et de l'industrie qu'au niveau de la communauté en général. Cette coordination assurerait une efficacité accrue des services; elle éviterait le recouvrement et elle contribuerait à faire concevoir la vie communautaire comme une fonction continue; car notre approche actuelle est beaucoup trop morcelée.

L'échange engagé entre l'éducation, les affaires et l'industrie quant à nos objectifs et à nos schèmes de valeurs communs m'apparaît non seulement souhaitable mais nécessaire. Cette confrontation de nos points de vue permettrait une prise de conscience saine et vigoureuse des forces de changement. L'existence d'une coopération agie entre ces deux domaines de la communauté se révélera un indice de maturation de notre conscience et de la qualité de nos activités communes.