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Title: Management of Men

Creators: [Hibbs, William](#)

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Abstract:

There is no subject of more interest to the mine manager than the management of men. This may seem at variance to the exact truth by the thoughtless and unconcerned, but by a little reflection any one will admit it to be a great factor in the role of success and the most difficult to learn. Very little is ever said or written upon this subject. Our State governments ask no questions of mine officials about their knowledge of men. It may be, to a certain extent, unnecessary to read long essays or to make extensive speeches about controlling men, for some mine officials seem to govern instinctively; but it is reasonable to think that by a little philosophizing and honest discussion all may learn to govern better.

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MANAGEMENT OF MEN.

Fellow Members of the Ohio Institute of Mining Engineers:

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Great executive ability is a quality that is sought after by mine owners, well knowing that without it, the most learned in the arts and sciences are of little value. Examples of this kind can be found in the History of the Rebellion. Good managers of the "Boys in blue" scored success, while poor ones met dishonor in defeat.

If some one wise enough will be kind enough to lay down a series of rules or principles by which we can reach eminent success in this direction, he will confer one of the best favors upon the profession that it has been blessed with for a long time.

One thing is certain that is, to manage men well means success and to do the opposite means an approach to ruin. When entering the mining business it is always best (and is practiced by the majority of coal operators) to have the mining enterprise under one head. And in order to accomplish this, a superintendent is employed. A question now arises: Who should this be? It matters not who he may be. If he is a member of the company—so much the better; but his qualifications should be that of a mining engineer.

Now a common practice, in the state of Ohio, which is very much at fault is as follows: Pap goes into the mining business and Johnny is made superintendent, or a member of the company is put into the place.

In either case a knowledge of accounts and a business training is all that is asked or required. An experienced mine boss is then employed to do the drudge work of the mine, and it often happens that he is forced to do things that are contrary to his own will and judgment. He draws the smaller wages while his so-called superior draws the larger. When the under-ground workings are thought to be near the boundary lines, in order to keep out of a law-suit, a land surveyor is called in to tell them where they are. No estimates are ever made of any work previous to its working and the generalissimo does his share of grumbling at the unexpected cost.

Let the manager be a mining engineer. Let him employ clerks to do his book-keeping, weighing and shipping, deputies to do the work and follow out the detailed maneuvers of the mine. Let him do his own surveying, keep a constantly corrected map of the inside, showing excavated parts, drains, air courses, strike and dip of strata, cleavage of the rocks and any and all features of the mine, or any thing that might be an advantage or a hindrance to the working of the seam, either driving rooms or drawing pillars. Let him represent the surface by the boundary lines, creeks, ravines or bluffs as well as roads, buildings and forms of relief. Let the superintendent keep sections of this map in pocket form and carry them with him for study and consultation at any moment. Let him make a tour of his mine as often as possible, seeing every thing, and directing whenever necessary.

This we think a better way and in all probability the cost of operating would be less, besides putting the management into more skilled hands.

This mine official has a duty to perform, viz.: The employing, management and discharge of men. Just here is where a knowledge of humanity is most necessary. How is this knowledge to be obtained? In the first place, by a long and constant study of the different statures, different powers, different incentives to action, different educations, different habits, different traits of character and all that goes with the make-up of man.

When a strange applicant presents himself for a certain position, all this knowledge is or should be called into play. The first thing that is got from him is an impression which is very lasting but not always correct. Then should follow a good little conversation, all the while noticing his every movement. And just here, we may say that an inferior man can not judge well of a superior, but a superior mind is most capable of thorough search. One may take notice of his physical

condition at a glance or his inner nature if an extreme in any one direction may be seen very easily, but to know all of his powers and qualifications one must judge and have the power to do it well.

Suppose an engineer is wanted. The applicant must not have a blossom on his nose. He must be cool-headed, or in other words extremely self-possessed. He must have the power to know all that is going on about his engine. With his hands on the lever, he must have the habit of noticing with his eyes and ears, the movements, rattle and rumble of the machinery.

The man's incentives to action should receive special notice, because without such, his service will be worse than none. Now one may ask, what are they? 1st. a desire of honor; 2d. the maintenance of a splendid family; 3d, desire for wealth, and 4th. the luxuries which money can buy. If all these are combined into one man's actions, the best may be expected of him. The most successful and hard-working citizens of our country have this powerful combination of prompters to aid them in their daily toil. But, let an applicant be found deficient, or partly so, in any one or more of these and he is pretty sure to be fond of idle days. If he is partly wanting in all but the desire for mere luxuries that money can buy, his services should be rejected. He is likely to be a drunkard or a something else.

His education is a matter of considerable interest. While it is not necessary to be a good scholar in order to do good mining or a good part of the common mine labor, yet good scholarship is indispensable to mine officials and a powerful aid to all. If a man is illiterate, it argues that his idle moments of younger days were wrongly spent or his older days were very careless. Such a man in case of trouble and otherwise, is likely to be difficult of access by reason. While, if a man has a fair education, is well read or has a general knowledge of the world around him and keeps posted in the news of the day, his company is likely to be a pleasure as well as a profit to his employers. His circle of thoughts will have a greater radius and his work be a source of satisfaction to himself and all concerned.

There is too much illiteracy in our mine officials as well as in those who do the harder work. There is no excuse for this evil. We have common schools for the children, high schools and colleges for the young men and cheap books for all. Our State University is open and the cost of attending is not above the price of board at a miner's boarding house.

No two mines need the same regulation—that is a series of rules, for one may be found very inconvenient for another. All the writer can do, is to mention these in a general way. Some rules are necessary; the fewer the better and the easier enforced. Some mine officials seem to have none at all, and depend upon their own immediate decision, the result of which, the orders are too frequently given in a fit of anger. Rules put forth in this way can not be wise or pleasant to employers or employed. At any rate, a rule, before put down to be followed, should be as well studied as any other maneuver of the mine, and when once in force, it should be kept strictly so as long as used. The best of orders, not obeyed, are worse than none.

The right man should be put in the right place. Some men are incapacitated for certain work, and if they should try it ever so hard, would only fail. John and Billy are drivers. It may be noticed that John gets angry and beats his mule. Instead of having a place for his sprags to lay, he carries them from car to car as he blunders along and just when he needs them at a certain place they are not within reach. He loses his couplings and has to hunt them, thus spending time. Besides, he gives one man six cars while another gets but four, and the miners complain of the injustice. He does this work in his awkward way in spite of himself. He is by nature unfit for the duty. Billy keeps things in order, knows at all times where his everything is and keeps an even turn among his men. Billy can be a good driver with little effort while John can not.

When a piece of work is to be done too few men should not be put to the labor. It may require too much time, or it may be necessary in the course of the work to have a united effort to lift a heavy stone or to put a car on the track. Neither should too many men be engaged. They might be in one another's way, and thus retard the work instead of hurrying it on. But a previous calculation should be made of the amount and cost of the work, based on theory and experience. Then the best of results may be expected.

The unpleasant duty of discharging men from employ should be accompanied by as much manliness as possible, remembering that it only does harm to wound feelings, and it is much better to teach a good lesson than not.

Many discharges may be avoided in the act of employing, if the proper thoughts are used. When a man with a red nose is employed, he is pretty sure to be an aggravating case about, or after, pay-days, and his discharge a necessity. If a man

seeks employment accompanied by his better half, who does the talking, his services are likely to become tiresome and result in a discharge finally. Or if an individual finds work who wears elevated collars; wears one eye-glass; talks without sounding the letter "r," and has smooth, soft hands, his case will suit the poet's rhyme, which says:

"First day hired,
Second day tired,
Third day fired."

To make (as requested) a short paper on this long subject I will close by thanking the reader for his kindness, and the members of the Institute for their attention,

I am, yours truly,

WILLIAM HIBBS, Linton, Ohio.

THE CHAIR: Gentlemen, I think we have had a very able and instructive paper from Mr. Hibbs and much more truth all through it than poetry; notwithstanding there was some poetry there to. It is full of truth all through. What is your wish to do with the paper?

MR. ROY: Mr. President, as the writer is not here and time is precious, I suggest that without stopping to discuss it, we pass to another one.

THE CHAIR: The next paper is by Capt. J. L. Morris,—
"Mine Explosions in England and Wales and the Number of Lives Lost."