

NEWS AND NOTES

CASE METHOD OF LEARNING MANAGEMENT*

"In a dynamic society, it is only through continued adaptation to changes that an industrial enterprise can survive and grow. The main purpose of management development programmes should, therefore, be to make managers alive to the different factors influencing a situation and to develop the necessary skill and attitude to take correct decisions in making the organisation responsive to changing conditions. This involves viewing the situation in its totality and to foresee vividly the potential meaning and relationship of facts. This can be achieved effectively through a series of cases discussion", observed Mr. J. A. Panakal, Management Research Officer, the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Jamshedpur, and a member of the Case Research Programme of the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad. He was addressing the Jamshedpur Rotary Club on the 5th February, 1962 on 'Case Method of Learning Management.' Rotarian President Dr. A. V. Sukhatme presided.

The speaker said that many industrial organisations were seeking help in giving attention—consciously and continuously—to the qualifications and preparation of managers. Academic institutions, professional bodies, management associations, productivity councils and management consultants, were finding it difficult to cope with the growing demand for assistance in this area. In his opinion, some of the basic factors which were responsible for this trend were the (1) changing concept of business objectives;

(2) increasing complexity of management job; (3) growing recognition of management as a profession; and (4) unprecedented demand for managers in a developing economy.

Of the different instructional methods adopted for executive development programmes, Mr. Panakal referred to the case method of learning management. He said that a case was a record of a real situation faced by a manager somewhere at some time. It was an exposition of the situation, the way it presented itself to the manager for solution. Apart from the mere activities involved in the situation, the case gave the interactions of people involved, the standards available in the organisation and, the sentiments and attitudes developed by people. In case discussion all available facts in the case were analysed and discussed in detail before action was recommended.

Mr. Panakal pleaded for a vigorous programme of preparing more Indian cases based on actual business situations so that all management topics could be effectively taught by the case method. For practising managers, he said that that method would prove to be a stimulating and rewarding experience. By prolonged exposure to case method of learning management, the process would become a part of their life. They would gradually become sensitive to the different pressures, influences and controls operating on industrial enterprises and prove to be competent managers able to take right decisions under changing conditions.

*A summary of the talk given at the Rotary Club, Calcutta.