

## XII

### ADMINISTRATION: PERIODIC AUDIT OF PROGRESS

Progress in the art of personnel administration has been characterized by an increasing effort to employ objective measurements to indicate, by comparison with accepted norms, what are the results obtained from pursuing certain policies and practices. Some years ago when a centralized employment department was the mark of advanced procedure for attacking personnel problems, the rate of labor turnover was generally considered the ideal index of the "labor situation." Improvements have been introduced in the method of measuring labor turnover, or "labor mobility," as some prefer to describe the set of facts observed, and more and more attention has been given to the classification and weighting of its causes. But, however computed and with all its refinements, the rate of labor turnover can be regarded no longer as an adequate single index for judging the wisdom either of particular personnel practices or of the general personnel policy.

#### DIFFICULTIES OF EVALUATING PERSONNEL POLICIES

In isolated instances where little progress has been made, where foremen still hire their subordinates and exercise supreme authority over their advancement, discipline, and dismissal, a marked reduction in labor turnover may be expected to follow the centralization of these functions. But where such centralized control has long been established, the slight fluctuations in labor turnover, attributable as they are to so many diverse causes, tell very little as to the wisdom of continuing or abandoning any specific practices. The value of particular methods for reducing accidents, for instance, cannot be shown by the rate of labor turnover; the rate of accidents from the causes which the methods in question were designed to remove must be observed. The wisdom of giving employees vacations with pay, of reducing the hours of work, of subjecting applicants to physical examinations or