

Shamrock Hotel Training Program

by D. L. BELCHER

The Industrial Extension Service of Texas A. & M. College was given the task of training the 1200 employees of Houston's famed Shamrock Hotel. The training program was designed to leave in the hotel a competent staff of personnel trained to carry on the various units of the program.

On January 10, 1949, the training project was initiated. On that date the writer began a fifteen hour conference with the top administrative personnel, managers, assistant managers and department heads, to give them an overall view of the three main units of the supervisor training program. These units were described in the January-February issue of the Journal; Unit I, Analyzing the Supervisor's Job; Unit II, Handling People; and Unit IV, Accident Prevention.

At the conclusion of the fifteen hour Executive Conference, each department head picked out an assistant department head to be the department trainer. This held true with the exception of one department head who thought so much of the program than he elected to be his own department trainer.

These department trainers were then given forty hours of observation and practice in conducting Unit I. The writer conducted a regular 20-hour Unit I with a group of supervisors from various departments. The Trainer group observed this conference and then met two hours following it for discussion and practice of the procedures observed.

Following this two week training period the Department Trainers conducted the course for their department supervisors as fast as they were added to the payroll, with the writer sitting in on all the twenty hour units the first time the trainer conducted them in order to coach and polish performances.

Unit I of the Supervisor Training program as carried on at the Shamrock included conference discussions on such topics as: What are my responsibilities as a supervisor to management, to my employees and to the guest; How can my department cooperate with the other departments in the hotel to make their job easier and more pleasant?; How can costs be reduced in my department?; and How can I train each person to perform his part of the department's operation and be sure he knows his job thoroughly?

Each supervisor, as a result of the training given, was equipped to train his employees in a new standard of operation "Shamrock Service" which it is hoped will set a new high for the industry.

All the routine type jobs in the Service Department and the Housekeeping Department were broken down and standardized for operating and training purposes. All supervisors follow the standardized Job Breakdowns in breaking in new employees. These two departments come in closest contact with the guests and were deemed the most important for pre-opening training.

All of this training was done before the Shamrock opened March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. Most of the nation knows the difficulties the employees had in carrying out their assignments that evening but the efficiency and dispatch with which they worked in spite of handicaps is a tribute to the type of training their supervisors gave them.

The balance of the training program as outlined and a short course in Hotel Law will be given, following the same plan of having Department trainers, as soon as operations level off and the hotel gets down to what may be termed normal operation.