

If He's Idle . . .

. . . educate him. That's Carboly's formula for riding out a strike—when only a few employees come to work.

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When a union strikes a company, it often allows all or at least some of the office and supervisory help to stay at work. But often as not, there's no work for them to do.

General Electric Co.'s Carboly department at Detroit was faced with that kind of poser recently. CIO's United Auto Workers had tied up production workers from last September until last month. But Carboly had an answer: Instead of letting the office help stand around idle, the company educated them.

Plugging the Gap—Most companies can find something for the staff to do for a while, of course. There's always planning, catching up, and maintenance work. But after that's done, many concerns are up against the problem of whom to lay off and how to be sure that efficient employees don't wind up taking jobs somewhere else (BW—Oct.21'50, p116).

Carboly's program kept nonstrikers on the job, gave some of them training that they would have had to get anyway, and gave others information and education about company operations that they never would have got otherwise. Some actually came away with cooking,

interior decoration, fashion, and even art knowledge.

What'll You Have?—The company set up a whole program of courses, tours, and movies on company time for any of its supervisors and office workers who wanted to take them. The course in Carboly products and uses, normally open only to customers, was given for everyone. Tours and explanations of operations of all parts of the plant were available.

Films about business and economic principles and current affairs were shown at lunchtime every day. There were industrial housekeeping courses—safety, fire fighting, and the like. The Red Cross conducted an 18-hour course in first aid. Lecturers from the phone company, the power company, and a local department store gave talks on phone courtesy and technique, proper home lighting, furnishings, style, and grooming.

The Payoff—Carboly people figure they turned a tough break into an opportunity to boost employee efficiency, interest, and understanding of the company. They think it was well worth the price—\$3,000 to \$4,000 above normal operating expenses.