

Lesson 7

READ THIS STORY #1, Advanced

Labor Relations

The Labor Relations Bureau had asked Harry Charcot to mediate the latest dispute between the union and the auto company. Harry, who always wore a beret, tried to establish a friendly rapport between the parties during a buffet dinner. But threats of a major strike, and the personalities of the negotiators, had made that impossible.

The nickname of the auto company's CEO was "Bulldog." He prided himself on being tenacious as he clung to his point of view. He had a reputation for slashing the work force to increase profits for the stockholders.

The union representatives weren't asking for shorter hours or higher pay, but they did want better medical insurance. They also refused to sign a new contract unless there was a guarantee of job security for union members. One union rep was quite obnoxious. He kept insisting that the auto company could not be trusted.

In order to break the impasse, Harry knew that both sides needed to make concessions. He would have to persuade them that it was in their best self-interest to compromise and avert a strike. But they would have to be able to justify their compromise to union members and stockholders.

It's no wonder that Harry felt the start of a migraine headache.