What 'Big Business' Says about Employee Benefits

GOLFDOM asked several executives of major firms to express their views on the importance of employee benefits, medical insurance and retirement income. Here's what they had to say on the subject:

Lloyd Whitfield, manager of public affairs for the DuPont de Nemours Corp., whose area of concern includes employee benefits, pension plans and so on, recently told us, "DuPont, of course, pioneered pension plans way back in 1904. We recently revised our plan where 40 per cent of the income may now be paid to the former employee's survivor. I would say pension and benefit plans are definitely needed to attract good employees. If you don't have attractive benefits, potential talent will just go next door where they can be found."

A spokesman in employee relations at the Radio Corporation of America, who preferred not to be identified, maintains that a strong, financially-
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rewarding health insurance program is the best "benefit" to offer a small work force. He expressed the view that attracting competent help, particularly into specialized fields, such as electronics, was no problem for big corporations. Retirement plans and benefit packages are, of course, inducements, but among those who go beyond inquiry about salaries, chances for advancement and job challenge, concerns are usually about overcoming possible major medical expenses. The spokesman felt this was a significant factor in dealing with the lower middle income echelon of the work force, who could not sustain the high costs of prolonged illness or hospital stays.

Xerox's Peter Biggins, corporate manager of benefits administration, told us of Xerox's innovative package of employee benefits. "Xerox has a profit sharing fund based on company profits, which matches about 15 per cent of yearly salaries, and an additional 8½ per cent goes into our pension plan fund. After only three years, employees have a 30 per cent vested interest in profit sharing and pension funds. If for some reason, they have to leave Xerox, they can withdraw these accounts. We found benefits are definitely needed and work to the advantage of the employer as well as the employee."

Carl Stevenson, assistant vice president and director of compensation and benefits for Eastman Kodak, is highly in favor of pension plans. "Using Social Security as the foundation," he said recently, "it is essential to have your own plan to build on top of it. Small organizations in particular have a problem, because generally no one on the board is knowledgeable enough about pension plans to initiate them. So they are not created. It's not because of a lack of concern for the employees, but rather a lack of understanding. I would recommend some expert counseling in the benefits field be sought. The money spent on consultants will be well worth it." Stevenson added his own feelings, "There is an obligation to your employees in any field. Benefit plans are absolutely necessary."

The Sterling Drug Company, accord-