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Contents

Comment	1
Fondation Michelin	2
Waste in Office Work	3
By Wm. H. Leffingwell	
Taylor the Creative Leader	5
By Oliver Sheldon	
A Critical Analysis of Scientific Management	16
By Henry H. Farquhar	
Business Meeting	30
The Influence of Scientific Management Upon Government	31
By Morris L. Cooke	
Scientific Management and Personnel Work	39
By Mary B. Gilson	
Section Meetings	51
Reviews	51
Necrology	52

Comment

THE January meeting ranked with the best of earlier meetings in the value of its papers and discussions, and in addition displayed a quality unusual in society meetings. That quality was a fervor which appears to have been the outward manifestation of two things: a feeling of gratification in the past accomplishments of Scientific Management as related in the papers and discussions, and a feeling of confidence in its future inspired by the very frankness of the discussion of Scientific Management's shortcomings in the past. It was a fervor which proved the value of the policy of standing for something definite.

THE general theme of the meeting had been announced as an appraisal of the achievements of Scientific Management during the past decade; and as one paper after another presented details of these achievements—in general administration, in industrial relations, in the conduct of public business, in other countries than the United States—the conviction grew that the work of the Taylor Society rests upon a solid foundation of idealism and practicality proved by experience, that no matter what the shortcomings may have been, the movement shows an irresistible forward surge. As one speaker put it: "It was absolutely necessary during Mr. Taylor's lifetime for him to battle in and out of season not only for the maintenance of broad principles but quite as much for the scrupulous observance of details—some of them seemingly quite unimportant. By means of a fine mind, broad sympathies, a wide range of knowledge, a willingness to spend and be spent, a never-suspended unwillingness to compromise, and by other means, he built up an integrated philosophy of work adequately expressed at many places by appropriate mechanisms. In the face of opposition from a thousand quarters he made this demonstration. The world accepted his thesis as much as it ever accepts the work of innovators. And then the Great War came and we saw all that Mr. Taylor stood for in production proved out on a gigantic scale. Opposition to Scientific Management rightly conceived is no longer heard in responsible quarters."

CONSIDERATION of shortcomings usually produces discouragement when unaccompanied by consciousness of a reasonable measure of positive achievement. It is only when there is consciousness of positive achievement that consideration of shortcomings has the value of arousing that type of emotion which incites to resolution and action. The recital of shortcomings of Scientific Management at the January meeting was frank and full. It began with the first paper of the first session and ended only with the last discussion of the final session. Yet so gratifying was the accompanying recital of constructive achievements that statements of shortcomings were received with what might almost be called enthusiasm. They seemed to be accepted rather as challenges than as criticisms; some of them simply challenges to a more precise formulation of mental attitudes and statement of methods in practice—as with respect to workers' participation in management under Scientific Management; some, challenges to greater cooperative