

but of political. Mr. Robert B. Wolf has said that "no matter how skillfully the management determines the one best way, it ceases to be the one best way, if the workman does not want to do it that way." As I see it, determining the best way pertains to economics, while getting the worker to want to do it that way pertains to politics. And I take it that politics never can be wholly excluded in the affairs of human beings, so that the management engineer must be both an economist and a politician. I judge, for example, that Mr. Wolf is a very fine politician, indeed. This aside, it is to be observed that Taylor did not assume his extreme stand against collective action by employees until after it had become plain to him that most of the then labor chiefs were resolved on decorating a sour-apple tree with his shot-riddled body without pausing to find out what he really was up to. His extreme stand, I take it, was largely the reaction of his intense nature to labor's extreme stand; and surely with such a handsome modification of labor's old attitude as is represented by the principles subscribed to by the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union he would have hailed it as a union with which he could cooperate and modified his own attitude accordingly.

This much is certain, that the idea should perish that Taylor, like a regular old Bourbon of a capitalist-employer, presented a hard-boiled countenance to all kinds of labor unions, and labor unionists. Actually there was not a leading unionist of his day he did not seek to convert. True, he was not his own best convert; but to me, at all events, there was an element of pathos in his warm regard for such labor unionists as William B. Wilson and John Tobin who, mind you, never spoke a single word in favor of his work, but simply refrained from condemning it.

Just one more statement in Mr. Fitch's review which I think needs correcting in justice to Mr. Taylor. I quote:

... he [Taylor] fell into errors of various sorts, and often contradicted himself. For example, he declared in his "Principles" that scientific management has as its "very foundation" the idea that the interests of employer and employee "are one and the same." He thought that the question of the rate of wages could be reduced to a scientific formula, no more to be bargained over than the question of the hour for the sun to rise. But he forgot these theories in the face of concrete realities. When he was promoted to a foremanship over the machinists with whom he had formerly worked, he "told them plainly that he was now working on the side of the management"—a thing that could hardly be said to exist apart or different from the

"side of labor," if the principle of identity of interests as confidently set forth above was true.

This implies that when, in 1879¹ at the age of twenty-three, Fred Taylor became a boss over those Midvale machinists, he had got his theory of scientific management already worked out in his head. Surely Fred Taylor's biography was written in vain if it did not make plain that when he began his career as a boss he was as guiltless of any theory of scientific management as the legislature of Tennessee is guiltless of any theory of evolution. Instead of Taylor's forgetting, "in the face of concrete realities," his theory that the interests of employer and employee are one and the same, it was the concrete realities he encountered throughout his many years as manager and engineer that finally led to his forming the theory. And this leads me to quote once more from Mr. Tead's review of Dr. Levine's book:

Indeed, if its present program carries on, this union will go down in history as among the very first of those within the fold of the American Federation of Labor to realize that its prosperity and the industry's prosperity are inseparable, and that all the union can do to strengthen the industry will in turn strengthen it.

Is it too much to call this a very strong labor endorsement of the very principle or theory that Taylor said lay at the very foundation of scientific management? And is it not probable that the endorsement also was arrived at, not in spite of concrete realities, but in consequence of them?

One of Taylor's objections to collective bargaining was that a wage is not necessarily a just one simply because it is agreed upon by employer and employees in conference—such a wage, by making necessary an increased price of the product, might very well be unjust to the third party, the whole people, or that element which at the last analysis gives employment to capital, management, and labor alike. Taylor saw, in fact, that the unions of his day often forced up prices by their wage demands; and he feared that any form of collective bargaining would throw the door open to this unionism. But here, now, is a union enlightened enough to see that its prosperity is bound up with that of the industry. Well, then, such a union may be depended upon to recognize that it cannot exact wages which make necessary prices that are discouraging to consumption; and here, as sure as you are born, is more evidence that Taylorism and unionism are not necessarily incompatibles, but may derive great support, the one from the other.

Improving Department Store Technique¹

How a Functionalized Department at Macy's Investigates Problems and Plans Methods for Other Departments

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IT WOULD not be possible to cover adequately in one paper such a subject as scientific management applied to department store practice. I have, therefore, chosen to limit my subject to what a planning department can do to help to introduce scientific management into department store practice. I should like to emphasize "help to introduce" because I feel that a planning department is not the only agency through which the principles of scientific management have become known or are finding expression. Such a department is merely a tool of management to assist management to do its job better.

Before pointing out the need for a planning department in a department store it may be well to review the conception of a planning department in a factory, the place where it originated. The department which Frederick W. Taylor originated is an agency primarily for the centralized control of production; that is, it not only devises and establishes better methods of operation, but it also provides for the proper scheduling and routing of work through the plant. A still broader conception of a planning department has been indicated recently by Mr. Keppele Hall, who makes the responsibility of a planning department include "devising methods, forms and procedure for handling all the routine procedure incident to the business and seeing that the prescribed routine is followed."² This implies planning for the whole business, i.e., for sales, finance, production and personnel. One tri-part idea animates both these conceptions, namely, that of discovery and establishment of better methods, pre-planning work to be done and controlling work as it is being done.

Forward looking department store executives are recognizing more and more the need for such planned

and controlled procedure as a means of reducing operating expenses. But in establishing planning rooms they have departed in two respects from conventional factory practice; because of the nature of merchandising operations they have not attempted to establish centralized planning-room control of operations, but have limited planning-room work to research and the discovery and promotion of better methods; and they have hesitated formally to introduce scientific management as such and to employ specialists whose sole purpose would be to put its principles into practice. This hesitation has been due partly to the realization that most engineers and specialists in scientific management have gained their experience in other fields than the department store and therefore cannot be expected to have a thorough knowledge of store problems. It was for this and other reasons that the executive in our store who was responsible for the establishment of the Planning Department preferred to choose persons with the necessary qualifications from within the store to organize and develop the department.

Let us consider some of the major problems which a department store faces in trying to introduce better methods and in trying to increase individual efficiency. One of the greatest problems encountered is variety of work. Few persons realize that there are about twice as many employees behind the scenes in a store as there are in public view. These employees are engaged in occupations which are quite as important to the life of the store as selling. Varied as are the kinds of merchandise sold, and the appeals which must be made to sell it, still more varied are the jobs which are performed before and after the merchandise is offered for sale. First, it is handled by the Receiving Department, where a record is made of its receipt from the manufacturer or vendor and where it is marked and sent either to be kept in reserve stock or immediately to the selling floor. Before its sale is complete, the salesclerk's record of sale—the salescheck—

¹Paper presented before the New York Metropolitan Section of the Taylor Society, January 22, 1925.

²"The Planning Department as an Instrument of Executive Control," *Bulletin of the Taylor Society*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, June, 1923.