

ing was the frank recognition by Sir Henry Thornton that unionism is here to stay, that our problem is not how to get rid of it or to curb it but how to get along with it and benefit from it.

The successful operation of union-management cooperation requires more than the mere will to work together. It demands knowledge of how to deal with many specific problems which are bound to arise in connection with any plan. There is real danger that the movement will suffer mishaps because enthusiasts, more aware of the possibilities of cooperation than of its difficulties, will initiate experiments without sufficient study of the difficulties which must be surmounted. Against this danger Captain Beyer's paper on "The Technique of Cooperation" should be a warning. It deserves intensive study by managers, industrial engineers, and union officials who bear the responsibility for the successful operation of cooperative arrangements.

The Taylor Society is doing a notably work in raising the plane of discussion of industrial relations in the United States. The meeting on Union-Management Cooperation was a substantial contribution to this work.

SUMNER H. SLICHTER²

An Historic Occasion

AS I sat listening to the papers and addresses at the joint meeting of the Taylor Society and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers on "Union-Management Cooperation in the Railway Industry," I felt that the occasion should be one of very great historical importance. I was much less concerned about the content of the papers than I was interested in the composition of the list of speakers.

The Chairman, F. H. Ecker, who is the President of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York—a very conservative body of business men—happens also to be a chief executive of the largest investor in railway securities in the United States and is himself an authority on the subject of railroad securities. His presence at the meeting as Chairman was, therefore, of very great significance from several angles, and none of greater importance than indicating that the time has come when business men realize that industry requires not only the enterprise of investors and the intelligence of

management, but the organized intelligence and thinking cooperation of labor.

The broad-minded statements of Sir Henry Thornton regarding the right relationship of employer to employee were gratifyingly in harmony with sound present day thought, but of more importance was his expressed belief that the intelligence of labor could be mobilized in a systematic and sustained way to promote the success of an industry.

Mr. Beyer's exposition of the plan and method he has used in the development of the actual practice of cooperation on several railroads is always immensely interesting to me, but there again the significance of his appearance was rather to emphasize the fact which is new, namely, that organized labor is employing professionally a technically equipped engineer to facilitate its relations with its employers and to guide, the extra, organized contribution which it is prepared to make to the success of the business. At last!

And then Mr. Jewell, speaking for his unions, said things which though sensational were so only because they are now being uttered for the first time. He spoke of the readiness of labor to identify itself with the fortunes of a business to the extent of seeking with every resource available to it to contribute to its stability, economy of operation and prosperity.

Little emphasis was given throughout the meeting to the rewards that would come from this cooperation either to management or labor, but they are clear enough provided that the relationship upon which the cooperation is based is truly a mutual one and that there is indeed the belief that labor can give much besides the routine performance of its assigned tasks.

The meeting will become historical, I thought, if labor will increasingly realize that its combined strength, no matter how mobilized, in what units or where, need not be reserved to coerce employers to grant concessions, but should be, must be, used to demonstrate capacity to increase production by organizing to produce and to cooperate.

The occasion will be historical, I thought, if employers in the railroads and without recognize that encouragement to labor to understand the problems of management, sustained efforts to get labor to participate in their handling and means to permit labor to share in the rewards of the more skillful

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discharge of business are purposes that are worth the best of ability and zeal, such as was so splendidly exemplified by the statements of Sir Henry Thornton and proved by his action and that of Mr. Willard of the Baltimore and Ohio.

All in all, the meeting was an occasion of which the engineers have a very great right to be proud because it remained for an engineer with judgment, capacity and sympathy, to link together the two forces in industry on a non-sentimental, practical, constructive platform of active cooperation.

What an astonishing thing it is that labor should have so long waited to discover in itself this extraordinary power, much greater than the persuasive force of numbers or public opinion! There is no resource equal to the undeveloped capacity of labor to think and act cooperatively and constructively with management for the good of industry and the contributing factors in industry. It was a great occasion.

HENRY BRUERE³

What the Record Promises

THE human being endowed with a mind has inherently a desire to improve his position in the world. Unionism is a modern collective expression of such a feeling.

Twenty years ago we wondered why that desire was not an asset instead of a liability to industry, and regularly the answer came in the shape of a strike or eruption of primitive struggles for the mere existence of a union.

Education, time and the war have now stabilized the unions, as such, and the activities of minds and body which are necessary to foster and hold a group of men together for any purpose have been able to go afield for constructive objectives.

The methods and results in union-management cooperative effort in the railroad mechanical department—so ably worked out by labor and management on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and recorded and approved so impressively by the speakers of the evening—are noteworthy and most interesting. This meeting confirms the possibility of mutual helpfulness by unions and management cooperation which many knew existed in the situation but could not help to develop until labor itself voluntarily sought such a constructive solution.

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The record made of technique and results should be most encouraging to capital, for it points a way to stabilize our prosperity. Our prosperity, progress, and the high standard of living which we maintained during the past generation in competition with the rest of the world was due in large part to inventions and machinery and in spite of occasional industrial strife. If union-management cooperation is as effective as it promises to be, then that impulse behind our industries and constructive methods will insure our taking still greater steps forward during the next generation.

The responsibility lies first with capital to have the patience and desire to work for cooperation, believe in it and go across the middle of the road to meet it; and second, with labor unions to have the whole hearted desire to make their efforts continually helpful to all concerned.

Capital's part is a state of mind transmitted into action through management.

Labor's part is more difficult, more trying and requires a high order of intelligence. The men have got to work together, have common ideals and objectives, be amenable to certain discipline which should be administered by themselves rather than by management, have a democratic ladder up to leadership, from small units to larger responsibilities—all of which is impossible effectively without a closely knit collective effort of employees such as is possible with a company or national labor union. Their major ambition should be to make the union an asset rather than a liability to the industry, expecting with justice continuity of employment and their share of prosperity.

The greatest difficulty which management and labor have to meet, assuming both desire a fair return from the cooperative movement, is to keep up their interest and effort. Almost any movement can be kept up for a week, or a month, or a year, but to become effective for a generation requires a habit of thought, education, measurable result, and effort by both parties to satisfy the mental and physical necessity of the co-workers.

From an engineer's standpoint the result in sight in the case recorded is well worth the effort and by example should encourage many other earnest endeavors to improve human relationships.

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