

ment, his department chiefs and assistants, and representatives of other departments, such as for example the service of supplies or stores department. These conferences on major railroad systems are held regularly every three months. Occasionally in cases of emergency, when problems arise involving the welfare of the shopmen or the railroad, experience has demonstrated the wisdom of convening the joint system cooperative conference to consider the situations precipitated by such an emergency.

Minutes<sup>3</sup> are kept of both the local and system meetings in keeping with a definitely prescribed form, each proposition submitted by representatives of either management or men being given a clearly recognizable designation. Copies of the local conference minutes<sup>3</sup> are furnished to the local shop committee, are kept on file by the local shop management and are also sent to the secretary of the system federation and to the chief of the equipment maintenance department. Copies of the minutes of the regular tri-monthly and special system cooperative meetings are furnished all representatives present as well as the various railroad officers concerned with carrying out the policies agreed upon at these cooperative conferences.

It is distinctly understood that these cooperative conferences are not for the consideration of grievances. The regular union machinery provided by the wage agreement which prevails between the system federation and the management continues to handle all these matters as in the past. The nature of the subjects discussed at the cooperative conferences, in keeping with the basic principle underlying them, are constructive in nature. Criticism, fault-finding, bargaining in the narrow sense of the term and the adjustment of disputes are handled in their proper places and at their proper times. Among the subjects which are customarily considered at these cooperative meetings are the following:

1. Job analysis and standardization;
2. Improving tools and equipment;
3. Proper storage, care and delivery of material;
4. Economical use of supplies and material;
5. Proper balancing of forces and work in shops;
6. Coordinating and scheduling of work through shops;
7. Training apprentices;
8. Recruiting new employees;
9. Improving quality of work;

10. Conditions of shops and shop grounds, especially in respect to heating, lighting, ventilation and safety;
11. Securing new business for the railroad;
12. Securing new work for the shops;
13. Measuring output; and
14. Stabilizing employment.

In general the local conferences confine themselves to local matters and the system conferences to system matters and such local problems as may be referred to them from time to time. A very definite agenda for the local or the system conference to follow is obviously not feasible. Common sense and the spirit of cooperation must be the chief guides in determining detailed conference procedure. The main object sought is for the duly accredited union representatives of the employees to confer with management in respect to matters in addition to those which they have been in the habit of considering in the past, matters in which they have as great if not a greater interest at stake than in their immediate hourly wage rates or detail working conditions. For in the end only in so far as the organized worker through his union can show that he contributes to the greater success of industry by means of helping to eliminate waste, does he enable industry to provide him a higher standard of living. At the same time he greatly strengthens his rightful claim upon the progressively improving benefits of industry.

With cooperative machinery, such as that described, available, it immediately becomes clear just how the proposals, ideas and suggestions of the shopmen are mobilized and receive consideration by the local and system cooperative conferences. Such proposals and ideas naturally come to life through the daily observations around the shops, benches and machines where the men are employed and are then referred to the local craft committee. The local shop committee of each craft frequently gets together at noon or some other time convenient to all in order to become acquainted with the various matters and suggestions referred to it. It has also proved desirable for individual members to bring their ideas to the lodge room for consideration during local lodge meetings, and subsequent reference to the proper committee-man for handling at the next cooperative meeting, provided, of course, the ideas submitted receive the endorsement of the lodge. In general, in getting important matters considered by the joint cooperative committees, the same procedure is followed as in

the handling of grievances. Whenever the subject advanced is important enough, the lodge discusses it at its next meeting so that the union representatives to the joint cooperative meetings will have the full benefit of the experience and judgment of the lodge as a whole. In short, the regular union channels either functioning in the shop through direct contact between committeemen and the men or through the lodge by means of discussion from the floor are used in getting matters before the joint meetings for consideration. The importance of the proposal usually determines whether or not the local craft committee will refer the matter in point directly to the joint cooperative conference through the local craft representative or will first refer it to the local committee for discussion at the next lodge meeting, or even to the local shop federation meeting for action. It has been found that by following this procedure the ideas of everyone get fair and adequate consideration.

As a result of this procedure it will be noted that there is thrown into the conventional local lodge gathering a new matter of interest and discussion, turning chiefly around the job of the man, the way he works in the shops, his skill, craftsmanship and personal value to his union and the plant, all of which is of most intense interest and significance to the great bulk of organized workers. It is thus that the local lodge in addition to being an agency for protecting the immediate human welfare of its constituent members functions also as a technical and advisory organization in the actual operation of the plant in which its members are employed.

#### Typical Problems Met by Union Management Cooperation

Under a properly organized program of cooperation, management recognizes the necessity and accepts the responsibility for helping the employees and their unions to solve some of their problems. Likewise the employees recognize the necessity and propriety of helping management through their unions to solve some of management's problems. For the basic object of union-management cooperation is mutual helpfulness.

How this attitude of mutual helpfulness manifests itself in dealing with difficulties confronting men and management will perhaps be best illustrated by considering a few typical problems which have been dealt with under union-management cooperation. Five such examples will be given.

#### Improving Conditions of Employment

Railroad employees naturally have a great interest in the conditions of employment with respect to safety, health, ventilation, lighting and sanitation. It is the employees and not the passengers, shippers or security holders who must spend a large part of their lives in railroad work. So in the last analysis it is of more concern to them than to any one else that conditions of employment should be satisfactory. It is also true that management is greatly assisted in accomplishing its purpose when these conditions are satisfactory. Ordinarily matters of safety, health and sanitation, when recognized officially by unions and management, are covered by some working rule. A typical example of such a rule is the following, taken from a regular agreement between the standard shopmen's unions and the management of a large railroad:

Good drinking water and ice will be furnished.  
Sanitary fountains will be provided where necessary.  
Pits and floors, lockers, toilets and wash-rooms will be kept in good repair, and in clean, dry and sanitary condition. Shops, locker rooms and wash-rooms will be lighted and heated in the best manner possible consistent with the source of heat and light available at the point in question.

Obviously, this rule is quite elastic in its scope and permits of considerable latitude in its application by management, except in so far as the shop committees or the city and state health authorities insist upon the establishment of definite or standard conditions.

In consequence of the general nature of these and similar rules, the average shop committee, where union-management cooperation is not in effect, is forced into a position of protest in respect to correcting or improving conditions covered by these rules. In other words, all the committee can do is to launch a complaint or register a grievance when sanitary conditions are not satisfactory. The status of the committee becomes still more awkward when bad conditions develop which are not covered even in general terms by the working rules. Broadly speaking, it is bad for the morale of the service when the only method open to the employees for correcting unsatisfactory working conditions is by way of protest. It is this inherently unhealthy state of affairs in matters of this kind which the cooperative program corrects.

It does this simply by changing the function of the union representatives of the men from one of protest to one of advice, counsel and cooperation with management in effecting progressive betterments in

<sup>3</sup>A typical set of minutes of a local cooperative committee is printed on page 20.