

Samuel S. Board.⁹ May I say before proceeding to a more detailed discussion that I agree fully with the speakers who have discussed the paper before me. I shall, in fact, merely amplify from our experience some of the points already made.

Mr. Hull's paper undoubtedly shows a great many hours of labor and a careful attention to the working out of the elaborate machinery involved but I cannot help but feel some doubt as to the underlying basis on which it is established. I had the privilege of sitting in, a year and a half ago, upon a conference of distinguished educators and students of this problem, where rating scales were discussed as part of the agenda. After thorough discussion a subcommittee appointed for the purpose reported that the rating sheets so far in use seemed of very questionable value, and the others agreed. Because this has been so popular a tool, however, they undertook to lay down some of the principles involved and to devise a tentative one which might be tried out. I understand that this is now available.

Our own experience in the Yale Graduate Placement Bureau would confirm this. We have tried to use two. One was devised for use in a reference blank to employers in order to check their observations of a man on the job. We have found this fairly successful, but it is far from an objective measure of a man's success. We have three questions as cross-checks in the blank which enable us to detect obvious bias on the part of the man making the rating. The other rating sheet was one devised to register the first impression of the interviewer when an applicant came for a job. We took pains to include only those items which might be gauged by observation. Frankly we found this so difficult to do at all that we have abandoned it and are now looking for some better means of doing the same thing.

The most serious objection, however, seems to me to be the fact that the man must rate himself, even if it is in answer to a series of questions. A very interesting paper given recently at the Conference of the Personnel Research Federation discussed at length the variability of men's emotions over a period of time and produced some evidence, which looked interesting at least, to show that this was of a periodic nature. I think most placement officers will agree also that just the

⁹Director, Yale Graduate Placement Bureau, New York.

being out of a job not only upsets a man's emotional stability but seriously interferes with his judgment, especially as it refers to himself. We have one man, for instance, who, when he is out of work with nothing in sight, expresses willingness to consider \$5000 or even \$3000 but as soon as there appears to be a job in the offing his price goes up to \$7500. This is simply a numerical index of his rating of himself, which really varies just about as radically. Again I have had the experience of having a man rate himself verbally very low on the scale of successful human relationships because of some bad break, only to have his confidence rebound as soon as he has been able to rationalize the situation in his own mind. One would question, therefore, whether the profile of a man's rating might not differ radically under varying circumstances.

One of the things I learned in college from a very famous professor of mathematics has stayed with me ever since, even though the course itself has been largely forgotten. He insisted, and repeated again and again, that the larger the number of variables in a given equation the larger the chance of error, and that no equation was any more accurate than any of its variables, even though it might be worked out carefully. No one would welcome with more enthusiasm a tool such as Mr. Hull has devised if it could be validated, but there are so many elements subject to fluctuation that validation would seem to be almost an impossibility.

C. R. Dooley.¹⁰ Mr. Hull's suggestions appear to me very complex and therefore difficult of appreciation because of lack of time. And to make the best use of his technique an expert, possessed by few employment offices, would be required.

After going to a great deal of trouble to measure accurately a list of characteristics it sometimes happens that a man fails on some point that has been quite overlooked. It is, of course, impossible to measure every possible characteristic. For example, domestic and social relations may be rather difficult to check on, and may even be entirely overlooked. Yet in the end they may cause a great deal of trouble.

It frequently happens that an organization is prevented from making transfers even when the

¹⁰Manager, Personnel and Training, Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, New York.

factors are known concerning an individual's characteristics. That is, it may be impossible to take a man from one position where he is not altogether efficient and place him in another for which he is apparently better suited, because it would interfere with tradition and general matters of morale in the group to such an extent that the result as a whole would be worse than in the first place. I mean by this that such moves cannot be based entirely upon the man himself but must be based upon the whole situation.

I think it possible that Mr. Hull's plan might prove helpful in the selection and training of junior help and those engaged in routine work. His questions to be used at the time of the interview are very stimulating and should be suggestive to any employment man who is trying to build up a set of questions tending to make the interview more efficient.

Mr. Hull has shown that he realizes that his suggestion cannot completely take the place of other factors in the interview. It should be used as one factor and for just what it is worth. I for one feel that some such suggestion as Mr. Hull has made is valuable.

We have discussed a great many personal qualities which might be measured with profit. Conduct and adjustment to situations are very complex matters, however, and I do not believe that they can be predicted entirely from the abstract qualities of the individual alone. A man reacts not only according to his own qualities but according to the environment in which he is placed. Conduct is really a reaction. While there may be considerable value to be gained from discussing many qualities and their proper measurement, from a very practical point of view I think there are only a few fundamental qualities which it is absolutely essential to consider. The first is absolute integrity or honesty, or whatever other name you may give to that quality which makes a man stick to the thing he knows is right at any cost. It may be called loyalty, but often it is the higher loyalty to a cause rather than an individual. Second is ability, sheer brain power and common sense. Of course it is necessary to determine just what kind of ability each man has, and yet there is such a thing as general good sense and ability. I am not talking about genius or anything phenomenal, but about a good level head full of ordinary brains.

The third quality is ability to get along with associates. This consists of ability to fit in pleasantly, to co-operate, to keep one's temper, not to bore the life out of one's associates, and so on.

To these three characteristics, there might be added purposefulness, ambition, energy, industry, and other things which help to determine just what kind of work a man should take up. On the whole, however, I believe that the three qualities given above are so fundamental that, if they are satisfactory, the others can either be developed or their lack put up with. Many a man because of his ability and honesty is so effective as a salesman that you put up with his peculiarities and count him a good man. Given men who are honest, who have ability and who can somehow fit in with their associates, the problem of the manager is not to hire and fire men but so to adjust them that their efforts will complement each other. Shortcomings will be compensated for and an efficient organization produced.

R. H. Fogler.¹¹ I am glad indeed to be one of those chosen to discuss Mr. Hull's paper, for it gives me opportunity to pay tribute to the care and thoroughness of its preparation and the clear and interesting manner of its presentation. It is surely a helpful and very worthwhile contribution in the field of scientific management.

My comments will be limited largely to a consideration of just one of Mr. Hull's statements. It reads as follows: "The laborer probably cannot answer the questions and the candidate for president will not." This refers to the questionnaire which Mr. Hull has suggested for use in selecting sub-executives. The first clause is, I think, a direct challenge to those of us who were formerly laborers and the second an equally direct challenge to any among you who may be presidents or aspiring to be.

Well do I recognize the lack of native ability of many individuals, but I believe it is a mistake and contrary to the principles of good management to infer that some of the individuals in any group, whether laborers, salesmen, clerks, or office boys, cannot do a particular job just because it happens to be different, and possibly more difficult, than those which are being done. Surely there will be

¹¹Director of Personnel, W. T. Grant Company, New York.