

However, I preserved everything in the book except the title. Mr. Taylor sent for me and told me that he believed, from what he had read, that I could take an honest view of his system when it was explained to me and that I could be frank enough to say whatever I believed after the explanation. He spent two days with me in his house and took me on the third day to visit certain plants. I will say that the first impression of what he intended to do hit home; that through co-operation would be accomplished the cheapening of production, greater consumption, more employment and more happiness all around. I know that nothing better than that could I ever seek for, and I was very willing to be the listener while he was the expounder. Once in a while, however, we locked horns. After the visit was over I told him that the thing was too big for me to be able to give him an immediate answer; that I would have to go home, think it out, read his books and he would hear from me later. When I had read those books and had digested the notes that I made of our conversations, that first impression of favor toward the system was lost. You may be willing to regard me as a friendly enemy, but I must say frankly to you that at this moment I am an enemy of the Taylor System.

It happened that after my correspondence with Mr. Taylor and his untimely death, the Industrial Commission appointed Professor Hoxie, Mr. Frey and Mr. Valentine as a sub-committee to investigate and report. It also happened that Mr. Hoxie, with whom I had had some acquaintance and correspondence previously, read my letters to Mr. Taylor and wrote me that those letters portrayed a vivid forecast in many respects of what his investigation brought about. When I read the report and found that it was unanimous, my opinions which I admit were not based on practical knowledge and investigation, were greatly strengthened. It was only theory with me, based on a study of principles and methods, but the report of the Hoxie committee confirmed my reasoning.

I have a new book now in process of writing and there is a chapter in it which will be headed "Efficiency." It won't be the usual talk about getting up early and keeping your eyes off the clock, be virtuous and you will be happy, or that sort of thing. It will be principally, almost entirely, a discussion of the Taylor system. I fear you will not like it.

In listening to Mr. Wolf here tonight I concluded that there are heretics among you, or else that what I found to be a very decided dogmatism in Mr. Taylor's books and conversation is being leavened. Either I entirely misunderstood Mr. Taylor's talk and books, or there is a leaven among you. When I hear such expressions as "Self-expression is one of the

things the men need; that the industries must be humanized; when the workmen do not want to do it that way it ceases to be the best way," I believe that what I have written will be received by you in a spirit that I had not anticipated. I believe now that if and when that book finds publication, it may and I hope will find readers among you who will see that what I have said about the humanizing of industry has some basis, and deserves a place in your system. I think that Mr. Wolf is absolutely right when he hinted—he did not say it quite as plainly as I am going to—that you have too much system and too little humanizing, and that probably you will find when you have read what I have to say, that that was my principal objection to the Taylor system.

It was Mr. Taylor's intention to ask me to go into plants, look them over and report. I told him if I did anything of that kind I would do it in my own way, and that I would have no leading strings; that I would not be taken to the Link-Belt or Mr. Hathaway's plant and shown how lovely it was. For instance, I declined to be convinced that anybody in those plants did not want to be a member of the union if I had to ask him while I was walking through the plant with the boss. I would never be convinced that way; a walk through the plant with the boss was not my way to get at the real truth of the Taylor System. One of our spats occurred in the street while we were walking to Mr. Hathaway's plant. I said, "You cannot get under the skins of the men"—when he told me how they loved him and everything that was done in real Taylor plants—"you don't know how." He said, "How do you know? I was a working man." I said, "That was thirty years ago." He insisted that he could. I dropped the subject, because I felt that at that moment with my very insufficient knowledge I was not prepared to dispute it; but I disputed it afterward in those letters that we exchanged. And I would dispute it more than ever now, since I have learned that he was not a workingman in the ordinary meaning of the word, although he began at the bottom.

I have heard enough here tonight to assure you that there will be a postscript to my chapter on efficiency. I do not know to what extent Mr. Wolf's departure from your point of view has penetrated the skulls of some of you, nor to what extent in any of your plants it may hereafter be applied; but the fact that I could come to a Taylor Society meeting and hear what has been said, the fact that there seem to be some among you anyhow who have the same point of view from a different angle as I have, leads me to believe that maybe the Taylor System can some day be reformed so that the man who made it won't know it.

March, 1917

MR. RICHARD A. FEISS:<sup>1</sup> I am very sorry, as you are, that Mr. Cooke was not here to present his subject, because I think that all of the discussion so far, from what I know of Mr. Cooke and his paper, has fallen far short of the mark, just as Mr. Portenar's very honest disagreement has fallen far short of the mark of what Mr. Taylor was and stood for and what the Taylor Society means.

I shall try to enlighten our guest from one point of view. I do not want to take the time to convince him nor to start an argument at this time, but in justice to Mr. Taylor and to Mr. Portenar also, I want to say this: that a lot of misunderstanding on the part of most intelligent people has been just such misunderstanding as Mr. Portenar has of the real spirit of Mr. Taylor and his system. The reason that it survives and has found its place in history is because the Taylor principles are proper principles for the development of men. That is a thing that is misunderstood. The fact that Mr. Taylor was very gruff in his manner, very direct towards his friends has had some influence also. The hidden motive of Mr. Taylor was not always disclosed. He hid behind a real modesty, and I am afraid he sometimes displayed unintentionally a rough exterior when in an argument, covering up his human side which vibrated in every fibre of the man. We do not disagree. We just misunderstand. It appears that neither Mr. Portenar, from what he himself has said, nor Mr. Drury, has had a thorough acquaintance with Mr. Taylor or his principles or the way in which those principles have actually worked out. This is all. They are only talking theory now as it seems to them to work out in a general way. If they really understood and saw the thing working there would be no disagreement. I can throw a little light upon that from Mr. Taylor himself. He once said to me:

"Feiss, you know there would be no disagreement if people just understood each other. There is nothing else to this thing; it is merely a question of words, of language. If we could only make ourselves understood there would be nothing to it."

So here is Mr. Wolf who seizes upon what I think is the meat in the nut of Mr. Drury's argument and is also the big mistake; that is, the idea that scientific management secures individual efficiency through restraint and not through opening the way for individual self expression, etc. The idea is not a mistake, but the fact of making it the basis of a discussion of the Taylor system is a big mistake. It shows an entire misunderstanding of the real thing, the heart of the situation. He is talking about the old style stuff that Mr. Taylor devoted his life to getting

<sup>1</sup>General Manager, The Clothcraft Shops of Joseph & Feiss, Cleveland, Ohio.

away from. That is what he is talking about. Mr. Wolf himself stands for what Mr. Drury here says, but he misunderstands that this is put here in the light of criticism of the Taylor principles or the Taylor Society if you wish. As such it cannot stand.

I question some of the other things that have been stated here. There is altogether, in my opinion, too much said about this question of self-expression—too much said that is meaningless; there is too much vague criticism on this score. Mr. Wolf has taken the trouble to try to give us a concrete example. I do not disagree with him in anything; I heartily subscribe to it, the same as Mr. Portenar does, the same as Mr. Taylor would if he were here, and the same as all of you do,—but here is a man who is talking about the question of initiative and the joy of the worker in it. Now let us get down to a few facts. The inmost that he is through speaking about it, Mr. Wolf shows us the information relating to an operation on a chart that no workman in the world could produce on his own initiative. I do not see the consistency in his statement that certain things are left to be done by the worker in order to develop his initiative and then going ahead (as he shows us) and doing all that he can to standardize the job and to procure all the information necessary, things that the worker would not be able to do if left to worry about on his own initiative.

Mr. Taylor in his writings has said that initiative has a place, that it should find its place, and should be encouraged and rewarded in the proper time and in the proper way. But initiative is not the only thing by which business lives, and we must not give it a place in business out of all proportion. It has an important place in the Taylor system of management, and the system of management which we know as the Taylor system is the only system of management that has provided a proper field for initiative. Mark that. It is not merely a matter of practice. It is inherent. Initiative on the part of the worker is both provided for and rewarded. It is essential to the practice of scientific management to functionalize business and to create definite fields of responsibility along which initiative must be exercised. It must be exercised along given lines, in the planning department, which, as Mr. Hathaway has illustrated, must be made up almost entirely of men from the plant who show initiative.

Men who have initiative are not in the majority; they are a small minority, and they are hard to find. Those men are not left to operate such machinery as is suitable to men without initiative but are generally put in the planning department where there is always a dearth of competent help. There is just as much play for initiative in the following of instructions as in the following of tradition, which is the only alternative which has been offered. In the second place