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APR 28 1924

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BULLETIN OF THE TAYLOR SOCIETY

AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY TO PROMOTE THE SCIENCE
AND THE ART OF ADMINISTRATION AND OF MANAGEMENT

Published by the Taylor Society at
Engineering Societies Building
29 West Thirty-Ninth St.
New York

Copyrighted 1924, by the Taylor Society. Published every
other month. Per Year to Members, \$2.50; to others, \$3.00.
This Issue \$.75.

Entered as second-class matter, Dec. 17, 1921, at the Post Office at New York
N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. IX APRIL, 1924 No. 2

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Comment

THE Prague International Management Congress (see page 93) is an undertaking in which American executives and engineers should have a genuine interest, for a joint committee representative of American management societies has accepted the responsibility of organizing the program. The Congress is an evidence on one hand of the enterprise and perspicacity of the Czechoslovak people, and on the other hand of the high regard in which Europe holds American achievements in management. The Joint Committee on American Participation hopes that there will be a large attendance of American delegates

WITH this issue is completed the printing of all but one of the papers presented at the January meeting of the Society. If our readers will take the time to review these papers it will be discovered that, notwithstanding the variety of phases of management considered, practically all the papers called attention to two things—the fundamental principles of management as formulated by Taylor and the larger responsibility general management is being forced to assume by present industrial conditions. It was natural that there should be such general reference to the Taylor principles in the papers of the January meeting, for the general theme of that meeting was the development of scientific management during the past decade; but it is interesting to note in this connection that generally more frequent references to those principles are to be found in the current books on management—evidence of the fact that under present industrial conditions, problems of management are being thought of more in terms of principles and less in terms of mechanism, and of the further fact that no one but Taylor has yet formulated a coherent, logical body of principles.

IT IS obvious that under present conditions general management is being forced to assume greater responsibility for management than ever before, and the reasons seem equally obvious. Ownership is vitally interested in the results of management and holds general management directly responsible for results. General management may desire to pass responsibility along to department heads and on a sellers' market is likely to yield to the temptation so to do; but on a buyers' or an uncertain market general management cannot afford the risk of shifting responsibility. Under such conditions it must assume its responsibility of leadership, inspiration, education and general control. For that reason under present conditions we see a great awakening of general management to a sense of its responsibility—and activity. The general manager's first reaction to red-ink balances was to cut expense right and left—sometimes ruthlessly and unwisely—but his second reaction was to take the initiative in constructive effort. Now he spends hours with department heads, sharing with each the responsibility for policies and plans and bringing them together into new cooperative effort. Great as was the advance in management during the decade before the war, the advance during the next decade promises to be much greater because of the new responsibility forced by industrial conditions upon the general management.