

induced a controversial element into the meeting. But these propositions were presented as generalizations of the author having a bearing on the subject of technique, were stated briefly, and were not repeatedly referred to and otherwise emphasized in the course of the evening; and there was not general discussion from the floor. A reading of the papers printed in this issue will convince one that the case was presented in that dispassionate manner to be expected of speakers of such distinction and responsibility.

THE reactions of the audience which have come to us directly indicate a general judgment that not only is the cooperative experiment impressive in its spirit but it is also becoming impressive in its results. There is, for instance, significance in the statement of Mr. Jewell that "minor grievance cases on the Baltimore and Ohio and the Canadian National have been more than cut in two, and as for appeal cases—those which are not settled locally on the ground where they originate—these have been reduced by approximately 75 per cent"; in the statement of Captain Beyer that since the beginning of the cooperative movement in the spring of 1923, some 14,000 propositions concerning operating conditions and methods, most of them originating in the ranks of labor, have been handled by representatives of the shopmen, and that of these over 11,000 have been approved and put in practice; and in Sir Henry Thornton's declaration that the Canadian National is definitely and irrevocably committed to the principle of cooperation with employees. The four statements printed in this issue, by a specialist student of railroad problems, an executive of an insurance company, an engineer and an economist, are typical of the great majority of appraisals which have come to us.

ON the other hand, some of the audience were not so favorably impressed, according to an editorial in the February 13 issue of *Railway Age*. We quote, at length from that editorial: "The Taylor Society and the cooperating organizations . . . have done a real service in attempting to have an authoritative statement of the principles and benefits of this plan placed on record in a dignified, detached and scientific atmosphere . . . Judging from the expression of several of the (engineers and economists), it is doubtful whether this group as a whole was very greatly impressed by the

extent of the practical results thus far obtained, as outlined by the different speakers, although there is no question but that they recognized the value of the spirit of the movement . . . The benefits, while logically presented and in the utmost sincerity, cited a minimum of concrete results which without question can be credited to the cooperative movement, or rather are not being obtained on other roads under other forms of a cooperative endeavor . . . The railroad shop crafts are to be commended for retaining an expert to advise them as to how to cooperate with management in eliminating waste and increasing production. Undoubtedly this has produced real and tangible results for both the men and the managements. The fact must not be overlooked, however, that those workers and managements which prefer 'employee representation' have also been making progress, although this development, like union-management cooperation, is yet largely in the experimental stage in various forms on different railroads . . . We are in a new era and managements and workers generally are recognizing the fact that their interests are mutual and that they must cooperate in their own best interests . . . The problem of improving human relationships in the railway industry is a big one and unquestionably the union-management cooperation program is a significant attempt at its solution: But others are approaching the same problem with equal sincerity but with a somewhat different technique . . . The problem is difficult enough to merit much varied study and experiment . . . The more ways it is approached the better . . ."

RESPONSE to this editorial appeared in an editorial of the March issue of *The American Federationist*. "The *Railway Age* in a lengthy editorial on the whole discussion sought to belittle the principle (that unions are essential to the success of cooperation) . . . Cooperation has been a word that many have invoked to gain favor for all kinds of proposals, but to have real cooperation it is necessary to make sure of technique as well as objective. Essential to the whole development is organization of workers to provide ways and means by which their experiences and views may be presented in discussion of work problems and help develop unity of understanding and purpose. The presentation of the development made plain that independent association of workers into organizations of their own making is necessary for achieving the spirit and the

purpose of cooperation. No substitute can serve this purpose. The success of the method depends on the degree with which it brings the release of creative work from each person in the whole group. The trade union is the only agency which workers have developed to serve their needs. It is the only agency which they control and consequently it is the only agency which they fully trust. In a conflict of opinions with management, only an independent agency can maintain the contentions of wage earners. Whether in maintaining their rights or expressing their views on production problems or technical change, if the workers are to make their real contribution they must be free to speak their minds and contend for their position. For example, trade unions helped scientific management to correct early mistakes by refusing to permit men and women to be treated as mechanical machinery. Scientific management learned it was necessary to understand human nature and to work with it instead of against it. Consent is necessary to cooperation—cooperation implies volition, not passive non-resistance. Obviously employee representation plans drafted by management are essentially different from trade unions. The trade union is a natural outgrowth from the experience and ideals of those concerned. It is the creation of the workers, while the employee representation plan originates with another party, interested from another point of view."

Catching Up with the Ants

THE occasion was, beyond praise. The conception was thrilling and the treatment of the subject by the speakers matched the conception in sanity, understanding and vision. Too often it has been true that the ants on their anthills have attained higher team play than man with all his boasted devices of "civilization." This is a most commendable endeavor to catch up with the civilization of the ants. Neither men nor managements need lose one iota of their militant reserve power, while each will tremendously entrench itself in the understanding of the other by devoting its organized strength to the problems that are common to both, and in this way enhancing the wealth of each.

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Raising the Plane of Industrial Relations Discussion

THE February fifth meeting of the Taylor Society on Union-Management Cooperation impressed me as the most significant meeting on industrial relations in this country since the President's Conference on Unemployment.

As a contribution to the art of business administration, union-management cooperation is important because it provides a much needed method for encouraging good production and workmanship in that extensive field within which the individual performances of wage earners cannot be readily measured. It is well known that individual rewards and penalties are effective instruments for stimulating efficiency only when the performance of individual workmen can be ascertained. It is not, however, generally appreciated how large is the area within which individual efficiency cannot be easily discovered. Union-management cooperation has made the important discovery that the trade union, because of its peculiar ability to command the confidence of workmen, can be used to encourage efficiency in the large field where individual performance cannot be inexpensively measured.

The full significance of the meeting of the Taylor Society can be appreciated only when it is realized that, as Mr. Jewell pointed out, the proposal for cooperation originated, not with managements, but with trade unions. Organized labor has awakened to the fact that it is capable of rendering valuable assistance to managements and it is now demanding the opportunity to render that help—with the understanding, of course, that it will share equitably in the gains. This development in union policy is bound to raise anew the question of union recognition. Public opinion in this country has been tolerant of the employer who refused to deal with organized labor because the man in the street—rightly or wrongly—has felt that unions took insufficient interest in production and were too disposed to practice restrictive policies. If it now appears that unions are both able and willing to render substantial assistance to management in increasing output and reducing costs, the open shop employers of the country are likely to be faced with an ever more insistent demand that they recognize unions and accept their offer of cooperation. One of the outstanding features of the meet-