

The Third International Management Congress

Held at Rome, Italy, September 5-9, 1927. A Report

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IT IS impossible to conjure up a more beautiful or more historically interesting rostrum for any occasion than the famous Campidoglio of Rome, designed by Michelangelo to succeed the more ancient Palazzo del Senatore of 1389, and to crown the Capitoline Hill with a monument of architecture worthy of the epoch making events that had there found dramatic expression. The glorious statue of Marcus Aurelius which Pope Sixtus V and Michelangelo had moved from the Lateran, and for which the city of Rome still pays the tribute of a rose a year, continues to dominate the magnificent Piazza of the Capitol; but almost equally eloquent, according to the wise books, are the ghostly presences of those who murdered Caesar and who came not here to praise him; of Curtius who died for the people and of Tiberius Gracchus who fell in their cause; of Arnold of Brescia, who would have proclaimed the Republic here; and of Victor Emmanuel, whose monument attests to his devotion to the unity and freedom of Italy. So the Campidoglio of Rome has been the rallying place of the people and the high altar of Republicanism for hundreds of years, and its atmosphere is still charged with the spirit of unquenchable enthusiasms.

The government of Italy signally honored the Third International Management Congress by staging its opening and closing sessions on this historic spot. For both occasions the balconies of the Piazza (and I need not remind you of the Italian meaning of this word) were hung with gorgeous tapestries; flags waved gayly in the September sunshine, and the broad outside stairway leading to the Senate Chamber was lined with soldiers in bright uniforms. Within, the seats of the hall were covered with crimson; flags and banners added color to the gold of the Renaissance table and of the chairs on the stage, and masses of palms banked the corners. Portrait busts of the King, of Garibaldi, of Cavour, of Mazzini and of other Italian patriots punctuated the wall spaces.

The Senate Chamber was filled with a brilliant and cosmopolitan audience, many of whom stood against the walls throughout the session.

On the opening day, Monday, September 5, at ten o'clock, there was an imposing array of high officials to welcome the delegates in the name of His Majesty, the King, and of His Excellency, the Head of the Government.

The first address was made in Italian by the Secretary of the National Economy, who spoke on behalf of the Governor of Rome, unavoidably absent from the city. This was followed by a remarkable tour de force on the part of the charming and versatile President General of the Congress, Senator Luigo Luiggi, who extended a delightful welcome in Italian, French, Spanish, German and English, which latter language he declared to be especially sympathetic to him because of his many English speaking relatives. The third speaker was Professor Francesco Mauro, able organizer of the congress, and recent visitor to the United States, an indefatigable host in Rome, never finding anything too much or too little to do for the comfort and pleasure of the guests of the Congress. Mr. Mauro made a moving address in French explaining the necessity for the co-operation of all classes in order to secure greater production and to assure more general prosperity. He spoke of the need of standardization and of the elimination of waste, and the necessity of persuading both the employer and the worker to unite in a common effort to accomplish this end. Quoting Mr. Hoover's approval of these objectives, Mr. Mauro followed with a touching tribute to the vision of Mr. Taylor, and to the inestimable contribution he had made towards a scientific solution of industrial problems. In words fraught with sincerity and earnestness he pledged himself and his associates to unfaltering consecration to Mr. Taylor's ideas, and to a relentless campaign against the apathy of outworn traditional attitudes of mind. Finally, in most sympathetic

October, 1927

BULLETIN OF THE TAYLOR SOCIETY

487

words, Mr. Mauro announced the presence of Mrs. Taylor at the Congress, paying her an appreciative and grateful tribute on behalf of the Congress and of himself, and exciting a burst of enthusiastic applause from the audience. Then, as on several subsequent occasions, we were conscious of a deep reverence in the hearts of our European comrades for the memory of Mr. Taylor, a bond evidenced by an almost electric response running through the audience at any special mention of his name.

After President Luiggi had announced the heads of the various sections of the Congress, the meetings were declared opened, and the Congress was adjourned to meet the following day at the building of the hospitable International Institute of Agriculture, itself a fine piece of architecture located at the end of a beautiful drive through the park of the Pincio. Among the notable appointments were those of John R. Freeman, who represented the United States government at the Congress, as President of the Industrial Section and, as rapporteur, Henry S. Dennison, Past President of the Taylor Society and official representative at this Congress of the five societies included in the American Committee on Participation in International Management Congresses.

Tuesday and Wednesday, September 6 and 7, were devoted to the presentation in abstract of as many of the one hundred and fifty papers as was practicable. The official bulletin reported about twelve hundred registrations including about forty-two nationalities. This list comprised professional and industrial groups as well as members of the families of the delegates who accompanied them. Many of those registered could not be present personally, but on the other hand there were many present whose names were not received in time for the record. In any case, all were to be recipients of the completed literature of the Congress, which would include every article accepted. This in itself is valuable and far-flung publicity for Scientific Management. Besides this all the Roman morning and evening papers carried three column stories covering all the activities of the Congress, generally on the front page, and we were told that similar publicity was to be given in all Italian papers.

¹American Management Association; Management Division, American Society of Mechanical Engineers; National Association of Cost Accountants; Society of Industrial Engineers, Taylor Society.

As the standard of the addresses was high and covered many phases of the four subjects, industry, government, agriculture and domestic science, the educational value of the meetings is self-evident. It is significant that speakers were requested not to use any time on arguments in favor of Scientific Management, because all present were already fully convinced of its importance.

Among the American contributors of papers who were present were Mr. Wilfred Lewis, Dr. John H. Gray, Mr. William H. Leffingwell, Mr. Henry S. Dennison, Mr. Wallace Clark, Mr. John R. Freeman, and General William Crozier by special request addressed the Congress on Scientific Management as it has been applied in government and industry.

As all papers will be available to those interested, it is necessary only to refer to the manner of their presentation. An abstract of each paper was read in the original language and immediately translated into English, French, German or Italian as required. This translation was remarkably well done by experts from Geneva. Discussion was limited to five minutes. If there was little new to learn of an old story, at least it was refreshing to hear the gospel preached by such recent recruits that their enthusiasm had all the freshness and ardor of a crusade. Here were men and women dead in earnest on the subject of Scientific Management. The speaker who sang the old refrain about "the difficulty of applying the system to our particular business" was promptly answered by the five-minute man who claimed the floor for discussion. Avalanches of words were poured forth in eager and often heated discussion, if one could judge by the gesticulations and the inflection of the voices. Our Anglo Saxon meetings will seem very cold after the fervid, dramatic scenes enacted in the halls of the International Institute of Agriculture in the City of Rome. It may even seem desirable to import some of that dynamic vigor for the better conversion of the United States to Scientific Management!

One left the final sessions of the business meetings of the Congress with a lively sense of the tremendous vitality inherent in the subject, and a renewed consciousness of its appeal to the fundamental thinking of intelligent and truth-seeking men.

The fourth and last day was limited to ceremonies arranged for the closing of the Congress.