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THE MANAGER, THE WORKMAN, AND THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST¹

By H. S. PERSON²

DISCUSSION

DR. HENRY C. METCALF.³ I have read the paper by Dr. Person with great interest. I have read it several times, and I have listened to the reading of it by the author this afternoon with fresh interest. It is difficult for me to understand how anyone can adversely criticize its fundamental philosophy.

I might state at the outset, perhaps, that my chief disappointment in the paper is due to the fact that it offers no constructive machinery for putting the fundamental ideals it embodies into practice. As I interpret it, the paper is a vital contribution to the theory of the science of management. There is at the present time, however, a widespread and growing interest in getting something in the nature of a sound coöperative mechanism in the practice of the business world—a practice that will enable the employees to have a larger voice in management-sharing where the assistance of qualified outsiders may be of some practical service.

Dr. Person's point of approach to the problem of the science of management, and his interpretation of that problem is different from my own but that does not matter here, and the suggestions I have to offer I do not intend as adverse criticism of the paper.

They occur to me, however, as helpful in directing attention to what we might perhaps call emphasis.

With this general statement I want to direct your attention for a brief time to a few thoughts with reference to the so-called advantages and disadvantages of the employer, the workman, and the social scientist.

With reference to the employer manager, the first disadvantage is stated as the concentration of attention upon the unstable elements of the varying details of the business. That certainly, in so far as it operates, is a disadvantage. I am wondering, however, whether such concentration of attention upon that which is not fundamental and permanent should be regarded as a disadvantage to the manager in the sense that it is inherent in his position, or rather should it not be regarded as evidence of managerial weakness.

¹A paper presented at a meeting of the Taylor Society in Boston, Mass., Saturday afternoon, March 3, 1917, and printed in the BULLETIN of the Taylor Society, Vol. III, No. 1, February, 1917.

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