Trends

(Industrial Leaders Misunderstood)

Men and women are as a rule so busy with their own particular field of work that they have little or no time to familiarize themselves with what goes on in other fields. That fact does not disturb them however for holding strong and sometimes violent opinions on the methods and particularly the privileges of the leaders of other fields. The result is a strange mixture of mis-judgment and this is disturbing, sometimes exceedingly dangerous, for whether you know something or not about matters we are living under a system where the sense of responsibility as the large vanity of wanting to have a part in things drives most of us to express ourselves by word of mouth or by ballot. Not only the most vociferous are the most ignorant for coming to know something about any group or any undertaking has the effect of making one hesitate before speaking. One can believe that if the whole country should by any stroke of the omnipotent be suddenly made aware of the actual facts and conditions of men and their undertakings in fields outside of the one where you or they are operating, that it would almost stop the presses of the land.

Of the many unhappy popular misconceptions which sway the country at different periods the present notion which for political reasons is being over-worked in certain quarters is one that the public has always readily responded to, and that is the idea that the man who conducts an enterprise, an industry, for profit does it necessarily without feeling for human beings and the higher you go up in the organization of an industry the harder becomes the

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heart uhtil you get into the ruling of the higher archives. You have a group which looks upon the organization of men which it has formed to carry out its enterprise less feelingly as it looks upon the cogs of its machine.

The commonest slight of radical orators and radical writers and radical politicians concerns this super-interest of industrialists for steel. Their utter indifference to man.

It is fantastic nonsense, of course, and it is based on the utter ignorance of what goes on in the heads and hearts - here I am admiting what the vociferous do not admit - the men who make up what we call industrial management have a heart. It is a strange reality of the imagination as well as the ignorance of the facts that suppose a group of men can actually carry on without constant conscious consideration and understanding of the men from high or low necessary to its success.

It has happened to me several times during the years of the depression to spend time, here or there, in one or another of the great industries to talk with stranded laborers and to talk to management and the higher up I have gone the deeper have I felt the suffering to be. Management recognizes its responsibility and when a situation arises where that management is impotent and must see all the human cooperative institutions which it has developed crumbling, the individual units which it has known so long over long periods of years displaced, and it is quite helpless to do anything about it.

The serious misery that I have seen in all this bad business has been in men at the top who saw themselves become powerless when they had felt such power, who still were responsible

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without any means of exercising that responsibility to save the institution.

Many in those institutions are usually inarticulate men, their minds and days are intent on affairs, plans, organizations, holding together the human units. There are most effective examples of cooperation.

The one that has yielded themselves the most completely to those laws so much greater than laws written on any statute books, laws of human nature, laws of trade, laws of nature, their affairs must be conducted according to these greater laws and now their organization for achievement has failed. I can't tell you what they feel and most of the critical world looking on has not the imagination or the knowledge of what they have done, what their problems, to feel their suffering. But it is exists. I have had many and many poignant proof in the last five years, but none has touched me more deeply than one that has just come to my desk - a little collection of privately printed verse from a scholarly, thoughtful and studious executive in one of our greatest and best organized industries - verse in which he has set down which he as a responsible, long-time executive tells his thoughts as he faces the impotence of this great organization, so to carry on its activities, that it can keep together the great human cooperating mass which it has built up and which through patience and wisdom and eternal deliverance it has been able to keep a cooperating unit.

this W. Trench General Electric?

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Interested in nothing but his figures and the balancing of his books Now how about these figures; this man who pours over them - what did he see in them? Only his personal profit cries the orator.

Merely a column of figures, etc. Page 24

Clear it is enough but to the orator they are simply columns of figures, but to this executive who pours on them the red ink which makes the closing line, which splashes the door steps of a thousand homes and seeing that all over this land, all ~~this~~ through this long period thousands upon thousands of executives in our industrial life. And it is because of that that all over this land the heads of thousands upon thousands of executives in these past five years have slowly whitened. I have seen those white heads myself.

How personal ~~has~~ this executive ~~been in his great force~~ the man who has come down to only an hour's work. Listen to this:-

"I met Bob as he left the factory gate
His tools just laid aside, etc.
No one but Bob wished to hurry by

And here is he as he sees himself, the manager. He must hang on to that great structure built on dreams and inventions and labor and saving and enthusiasms and hopes of ten thousand men. This industry which contributes to the life of the nation, the comfort and ease of all these men - orators and columnists included - must be ready to go on. Holding on to the and somewhere in the land men are holding on. How do they recognize themselves? In ability of finite mind to

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And this is what my exectuvie says - this old world has never known security and peace

In these lines on the "Finite Mind" Mr. Trench realizes that those who from the outside without any knowledge of the structure of human organizations cannot realize and whose vanity and lack of imagination, as well as ignorance, seem to them finding out.

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