

Progress Through Training

"Progress Through Training" was the theme of the second annual conference presented by the Canadian Industrial Trainer's Association. The meetings were held May 6 and 7, and were attended by more than 300 persons from four provinces and five states. Chairmen for the program included William Stansfield, public relations; Lewis G. Hearle, publicity; Harry Filiatrault, program; Joseph A. McCann, housing; and Gerry U. Maurice, L. Constantineau, D. W. Harvey and J. Wilson, registration.

The proceedings of the conference, which are available at \$2.00 from the association's secretary, 107 Craig Street West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, list eleven major addresses. The following excerpts have been selected from the complete transcripts.

In opening the conference, F. S. Laffer, of The Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co., expanded upon the general theme, noting that "The most outstanding characteristic of the business system under which we live has been free, competitive effort. We know it as the 'free enterprise' system. Enterprise takes courage, daring and willingness to risk—the same qualities which impelled our ancestors to bravely face and develop this continent, which was then a wilderness. We retain sufficient of those traits that 'enterprise' still appeals to us. We understand it; we thrill to its excitement. Competition has given to our peoples a standard of living which is the dream of people living under any other system. It has given us incentives and presented us with the necessity of striving constantly for improvement and betterment. The theme of this convention is 'Progress Through Training'. The word progress as defined by Webster implies militant, aggressive, forward movement. It is a well-chosen word to apply to training, for our field must be militant and aggressive if we are to do our rightful job in the industrial picture. . . . With this conception of the training job, we find that you and I are confronted with an endless opportunity. From the day we first help to induct the new employee into our company, to the day of his retirement, we can

be of service to him, to our companies and to the society in which we live. We must enlist others to aid us, for the job is too big to do alone. In this particular we are in a unique position, in that we are in a measure supervisors without any of the authority usually attached to a supervisory job. We must get our work done through others while we have no authority over them.

"Let us resolve to seize this opportunity to enlist the aid of others, to think and study and plan and execute. Let us by such meetings as these make training progress and by that means make industry progress through training. Our reward will come in the rise of training to a respected useful position in industry. As men grow in stature by our guidance, we shall grow by their reflection and our contribution to peace, understanding and world happiness will grow ever greater and more effective. In such a manner, we will pay to our children the debt we owe the past."

Dr. J. C. Cameron, speaking on "The Heart of Any Sound Training Program", detailed the characteristics of a good trainer. He added, "I earnestly appeal to this group to beware of catch-words and slogans, to avoid streamlining everything you do in the field of education. There is no royal road to learning. In the last analysis, however, you will have to concentrate your efforts on the quality of the people who earn their living as industrial trainers. I'm sure you will agree with me that the men and women who do this training must be people of substance and good character. Every year, as in the past, there will be new ideas, new fads and new methods of teaching. Some will be good and some bad, but let me repeat—the prime requisite of a good training job is a thoroughly qualified industrial trainer."

"Personnel Selection and Training" was the subject covered by Dr. Charles W. Kepner, who pointed out that "it has become generally recognized that manpower selection is very important. It was found that employees differed in their abilities to perform routine jobs, get along with people, work under supervision, use good judgment, apply manual skills and

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other typical job characteristics. From the careful selection of employees we find that their work becomes more efficient when they are placed on jobs for which they can provide for necessary qualifications to meet the job requirements. Of equal importance, the properly placed worker is a more contented worker. The problem created by improper labour on the wrong jobs can be avoided only when the employer himself assumes full responsibility of placing the right man on the right job. The fact that many executives are aware of this today is borne out by the publicity being given to personnel testing and training in industry. In some cases, executives claim that the right selection of employees by testing not only helps them to obtain the right man for the right job, but more and better classes of labour are attracted to their industry because of the selecting program.

"The key to this programme is the selection of the right man to conduct the training of your employees. The success or failure of the programme is almost entirely in his hands. It would be through the training programme that the company would find out the people who have the will to work and the capacity to advance beyond the jobs for which they are employed. If we are reasonably sure that we have chosen the right man for the right job, we are now ready to train the man to do the job at a standard satisfactory to all concerned, and in the training programme we will pay special attention to the fact that the man, or men, must be able to get along with his fellowmen in a cooperative and friendly manner."

Eric Taylor, of Canadian Industries, made a stimulating contribution to the program in his address on the subject "Training—a Criticism". He said "Training, while a young and vigorous branch of management, is coming of age and the time has arrived for us to take stock of ourselves and our accomplishments. Now is the time for use to indulge in the healthy exercise of self-analysis and self-criticism. If some committee should establish the qualifications which every training man

must have, how many of us could qualify? I was interested in reading an article by Jay H. Calvert¹ in which he listed what he would expect a training director to have:

1. The ability to express himself clearly, concisely and effectively in correct English.
2. A working knowledge of psychology and business economics.
3. A working knowledge of the principles of industrial engineering and industrial management.
4. Complete and intimate acquaintance with the past and present activities and organization of his company.
5. A sincere belief in the important role training must play in the ultimate success or failure of the Company.
6. Ability and willingness to conduct training activities as a professional.

No doubt each of us could suggest additions to that list. But taking the list as it is, how many training directors or training supervisors meet these specifications? What have we read and what do we know? What do we know about economics, psychology and human relations? Have we mastered the tenets of organization and administration? Have we kept abreast of developments in our field? Are our techniques and methods modern? I do not pose these questions to embarrass or annoy you, but as a fellow trainer I am earnestly suggesting that we would do well to take stock of our performance and qualifications. I am also suggesting that we do it, not sometime, but now!"

An analysis of the proper use of visual aids was presented by S. Alexander MacKay, who spoke on the subject "The Psychology of Visual Instruction". "Employee difficulties can oftentimes be traced to an unsympathetic boss. Perhaps a boss who does not study his employees and their reactions to his methods and his characteristics. Men who are promoted to positions of authority as foremen, super-

1. "Training as a Profession", *Proceedings, 1947 ASTD Conference.*

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visors and office managers should be given the opportunity to know how the people under them will feel about the things they do. Industrial trainers can save many headaches and heartaches by allowing these men to live through an experience without suffering from the knocks which experience gives. We all recognize the fact that experience is the greatest teacher, but it also gives the greatest amount of pain. Films which can appeal to the emotions are the closest thing to actual experience, with one exception, there is no pain and no regrets accompany them, if they have been shown at the right time."

The address given by H. F. Irwin, of Primary Textiles Institute, was based upon a survey he made of current practices in the training of the supervisory force in the administration of collective bargaining agreements. The survey covered the practice of 112 firms in North America, employing 577,764 union members. 67% of the firms indicated they held pre-negotiation discussion meetings with their foremen. One significant fact pointed out by the survey was that less than a third of the firms requested their line supervisors to maintain any sort of written record of activities within their departments as they pertained to the administration of the agreement. Discussion meetings and question and answer programs were the chief media for transmitting

official interpretations of the provisions of the Agreement.

Speaking on "Employee Training", K. W. MacDermott of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, concluded by saying "The results of the Training Director's work will only be acknowledged by others, by the way in which the supervisors and learners apply the training they have received. We and all our assistants in training can be encouraged in our work by the words of Elbert Hubbard: 'It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.'"

J. H. Brace, vice president of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, spoke on "Supervisory Training in Human Relations", saying ". . . industrial leaders today face a challenge in leadership, probably greater than at any previous time in our history. The industrial situation must give satisfaction to those involved in it, or face the consequences. On the one hand, industrial management today is confronted by social changes far beyond its control which have changed the very nature of its job. On the other hand, management cannot escape the fact that the political developments of the future may well depend upon the quality of industrial leadership—on management's ability to provide satisfaction in the work situation. Surely this is a time for training."

CALENDAR

- August 17—Cleveland ITDA golf tournament; Pine Ridge Club, Cleveland.
- September 7—MITC monthly meeting, Detroit; R. R. Crow, speaker.
- September 15—Industrial Training Directors' Association of St. Louis.
- September 21—Cleveland ITDA annual meeting; Hotel Carter, Cleveland.
- September 23-24—American Management Association Industrial Relations Conference; Hotel Pennsylvania, New York.
- September 23-25—National Association Foremen, 25th annual convention; Benjamin Franklin Hotel, Philadelphia.
- September 29-30—Conference on Industrial & Business Training, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana; co-sponsored by Purdue and six ASTD state chapters.
- October 14-15—Pennsylvania Society of Training Directors, annual conference; Hotel Adelphia, Philadelphia.
- October 18-22—National Safety Congress; Stevens Hotel, Chicago.
- October 20—Industrial Training Directors Association of St. Louis.