

# Western Regional Conference Report

## Popular Topics Are: Teaching Machines, Management Development and Retraining

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When, for the 11th time, a Western Regional ASTD Training Conference was called to order on October 10, the host chapter was San Francisco and the announced theme was "Opening Doors to New Ideas in Training and Development." It soon became evident that the newest idea that the Training Directors really wanted to talk about was teaching machines. Almost as if by some pre-arranged signal, teaching machines were also the most evident part of the exhibitors' displays. The pressure on training departments seems to make almost everyone feel that he must explore the possible time savings through programs conducted with the help of teaching machines. In spite of the amount of time required for planning and programming, as well as the exacting writing skills required to organize programs for teaching machines, there was an evident current of feeling that training directors would find it a good investment of time.

"What's New in Management Development" seemed to be a vital topic. Dr. George Halverson of San Jose State College felt that the one really new thing in management development is

the shift from developing employees by doing something *to* them to providing an atmosphere for self-development with an emphasis on the work situation rather than on the individual. Robert Nelson of Columbia Geneva Steel speaking on the same topic emphasized the need to find more time to manage. Dr. Dale Yoder of Stanford University emphasized that management needs to give more attention to "theory" of management rather than the "how." In expanding on this point, he showed that the most significant attitudes are those that explain what management thinks about management theories — that theories were born to be tested — that management theory must be dynamic because theories do change over the years. Faulty theories hold back many organizations according to Dr. Yoder. Correcting those faulty theories can make a tremendous contribution in any organization. Training directors, he concluded, must continually ask management "What's your theory on —?"

The recently passed federal legislation on re-training was another one of the new ideas to which the conference

gave considerable time. Dr. Max Kossoris of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics called attention to the phenomenon of pages of want ads in our newspapers on the one hand and the large pool of chronically unemployed on the other hand. The re-training act has the potential of making technological change work for us rather than against us. Other speakers followed him illustrating specific re-training programs with which they had already experimented. Their illustrations certainly left no doubt but what re-training programs

are going to make a valuable contribution in the next few years.

The conference was well summarized by James E. Patrick, President of the Valley National Bank of Phoenix though he actually made his presentation as the opening key-note speaker. Mr. Patrick spoke on "Training — Past, Present and Future." His comments fell on especially receptive ears since Mr. Patrick himself was previously a training director. So, for once, training directors felt that the President speaking to them really understood his audience.



PAKISTAN STUDENTS AT WESTERN CONFERENCE

Among those attending the Eleventh Western Training Conference in San Francisco were nine students from Pakistan who are in the United States as part of a Training of Trainers program at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Shown in the photograph are the Pakistan trainees with Mr. Ralph E. Boynton (4th from left) Executive Vice President ASTD, Vice President and Director of Training, Bank of America N.T. & S.A.; and Mr. Marshall Fels (3rd from right) Coordinator of Training of the Pakistan Project, University of Southern California, School of Public Administration.