DYNAMIC ADMINISTRATION

The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett

Edited by

HENRY C. METCALF, Ph.D.

Director of The Bureau of Personnel Administration, New York
Co-Author of "Personnel Administration: Its Principles and Practice" and "Labor Relations under the Recovery Act"

and

L. URWICK, O.B.E., M.C., M.A., F.I.I.A.

Chairman, Urwick, Orr & Partners Ltd., London (Consulting Specialists in Organization and Management)
Sometime Director of the International Management Institute, Geneva
Author of "The Meaning of Rationalisation," "Management of To-morrow"
Co-Author of "Papers in the Science of Administration," etc.

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

FOREWORD

MAJOR URWICK and Dr. Metcalf have rendered a conspicuous service by editing this collection of Mary Follett's lectures on business management. They contain teaching which was of importance when the lectures were delivered, and which many people felt should be preserved in a collated form and given a wider public. The circumstances of to-day have increased that importance. Many people are being called upon to fill new administrative posts, and these lectures teach the principles which should underly all administrative method.

As the Editors point out in their Introduction, Mary Follett devoted a lifetime to searching for the true principles of organization which would ensure a stable foundation for the steady, ordered progress of human well-being. That her search was not in vain will be evident to all who read the lectures. Her teaching is not theoretical, but is based on a close study of the practice of a large number of business undertakings. She chose this field of enquiry to supplement her work on local and national government because she realized that the principles which should determine organization are identical, no matter what the purpose which that organization is designed to serve. As she said in one of her lectures, "I am studying business management because it is among business men, not all, but a few, that I find the greatest vitality of thinking to-day, and I like to do my thinking where it is most alive."

I have often listened to Mary Follett's lectures, and I enjoyed her friendship for many years. As one who, as a business administrator and in other spheres, has tried to act on the principles she enunciates, I can say with confidence that there is not a single administrator who, if he has an open mind (and all others are hopeless!), would not benefit

by reading this collection of her papers. They are not abstruse, nor overloaded and difficult to read; on the contrary, they are simple, straightforward and easily understandable. Yet the teaching they contain is so profound as to merit study by even the most successful of practical administrators.

The Editors have very wisely provided an introductory chapter in which Mary Follett's work is outlined against the background of her active life. The principles which she outlined are fundamental to all human progress. They should be widely known and acted upon, particularly at the present time, when good organization is a matter of supreme importance to national survival. They will be found more necessary when the war is over and humanity is faced with the almost superhuman task of fashioning a new and better world.

It is with every confidence that I commend this book not only to every administrator in England and in the United States, whether great or small, whether in business or in Government, but also to those whose duty it is to select and train men who will hold responsible positions in the future governance of society.

B. S. ROWNTREE.

HIGH WYCOMBE.
December, 1940.

II

THE GIVING OF ORDERS[1]

THE chief thing I have to say to you in this paper is that I wish we could all take a responsible attitude toward our experience—a conscious and responsible attitude.[2] Let us take one of the many activities of the business man, and see what it would mean to take a responsible attitude toward our experience in regard to that one thing. I am going to take the question of giving orders: what are the principles underlying the different ways of giving orders, which of these principles have you decided to follow? Most people have not decided, have not even thought out what the different principles are. Yet we all give orders every day. Surely this is a pity. To know what principles may underlie any given activity of ours is to take a conscious attitude toward our experience.

The second step is to take a responsible attitude, by deciding, after we have recognized the different principles, which ones we will follow. In the matter of giving orders, I wish we might all of us decide now, if we have not already done so, on the way we think orders should be given. We shall not arrive at the same conclusions, there may be a good deal of difference of opinion among us. What I urge is not that you adopt my principles, but that you stop to think what principles you are acting on or what principles you intend to act on in this matter, and then try giving orders in accordance with those principles as far as the methods of your firm permit.

And next I urge you to note results; for our first decision should be tentative. We should try experiments and note

[1] See note, p. 30; this paper was presented in January, 1925.

[2] *Cf. Creative Experience*, p. xi: "But we wish to do far more than observe our experience, we wish to make it yield up for us its riches."

whether they succeed or fail and, most important of all, why they succeed or fail. This is taking an experimental attitude toward experience.

We have then three steps: (1) a conscious attitude—realize the principles which it is possible to act on in this matter; (2) a responsible attitude—decide which we will act on; (3) an experimental attitude—try experiments and watch results. We might add a fourth step: pool our results.

In doing all this we should observe carefully what opportunities the methods of our particular firm afford for giving orders in the way we have decided provisionally is best, and come to some conclusion as to how far and in what way those methods would have to be changed if our principles were adopted. This will increase our consciousness in the matter.

Behaviour Patterns and Obedience to Orders

To some men the matter of giving orders seems a very simple affair; they expect to issue their orders and have them obeyed without question. Yet, on the other hand, the shrewd common sense of many a business executive has shown him that the issuing of orders is surrounded by many difficulties; that to demand an unquestioning obedience to orders not approved, not perhaps even understood, is bad business policy. Moreover, psychology, as well as our own observation, shows us not only that you cannot get people to do things most satisfactorily by ordering them or exhorting them; but also that even reasoning with them, even convincing them intellectually, may not be enough. Even the "consent of the governed" will not do all the work it is supposed to do, an important consideration for those who are advocating employee representation. For all our past life, our early training, our later experience, all our emotions, beliefs, prejudices, every desire that we have, have formed certain habits of mind, what the psychologists call habit-patterns, action-patterns, motor-sets.

Therefore it will do little good merely to get intellectual agreement; unless you change the habit-patterns of people,

you have not really changed your people. Business administration, industrial organization, should build up certain habit-patterns, that is, certain mental attitudes. For instance, the farmer has a general disposition to "go it alone," and this is being changed by the activities of the co-operatives, that is, note, *by the farmer's own activities*. So the workman has often a general disposition of antagonism to his employers which cannot be changed by argument or exhortation, but only through certain activities which will create a different disposition. One of my trade union friends told me that he remembered when he was a quite small boy hearing his father, who worked in a shoe-shop, railing daily against his boss. So he grew up believing that it was inherent in the nature of things that the workman should be against his employer. I know many working men who have a prejudice against getting college men into factories. You could all give me examples of attitudes among your employees which you would like to change. We want, for instance, to create an attitude of respect for expert opinion.

If we analyse this matter a little further we shall see that we have to do three things, I am now going to use psychological language: (1) build up certain attitudes; (2) provide for the release of these attitudes; (3) augment the released response as it is being carried out. What does this mean in the language of business? A psychologist has given us the example of the salesman. The salesman first creates in you the attitude that you want his article; then, at just the "psychological" moment, he produces his contract blank which you may sign and thus release that attitude; then if, as you are preparing to sign, some one comes in and tells you how pleased he has been with his purchase of this article, that augments the response which is being released.

If we apply this to the subject of orders and obedience, we see that people can obey an order only if previous habit-patterns are appealed to or new ones created. When the employer is considering an order, he should also be thinking of the way to form the habits which will ensure its being carried out. We should first lead the salesmen selling shoes

or the bank clerk cashing cheques to see the desirability of a different method. Then the rules of the store or bank should be so changed as to make it possible for salesman or cashier to adopt the new method. In the third place they could be made more ready to follow the new method by convincing in advance some one individual who will set an example to the others. You can usually convince one or two or three ahead of the rank and file. This last step you all know from your experience to be good tactics; it is what the psychologists call intensifying the attitude to be released. But we find that the released attitude is not by one release fixed as a habit; it takes a good many responses to do that.

This is an important consideration for us, for from one point of view business success depends largely on this—namely, whether our business is so organized and administered that it tends to form certain habits, certain mental attitudes. It has been hard for many old-fashioned employers to understand that *orders will not take the place of training.* I want to italicize that. Many a time an employer has been angry because, as he expressed it, a workman "wouldn't" do so and so, when the truth of the matter was that the workman couldn't, actually couldn't, do as ordered because he could not go contrary to life-long habits. This whole subject might be taken up under the heading of education, for there we could give many instances of the attempt to make arbitrary authority take the place of training. In history, the aftermath of all revolutions shows us the results of the lack of training.

In this matter of prepared-in-advance behaviour patterns —that is, in preparing the way for the reception of orders, psychology makes a contribution when it points out that the same words often rouse in us a quite different response when heard in certain places and on certain occasions. A boy may respond differently to the same suggestion when made by his teacher and when made by his schoolmate. Moreover, he may respond differently to the same suggestion made by the teacher in the schoolroom and made by the teacher when they are taking a walk together. Applying this to the giving

of orders, we see that the place in which orders are given, the circumstances under which they are given, may make all the difference in the world as to the response which we get.[3] Hand them down a long way from President or Works Manager and the effect is weakened. One might say that the strength of favourable response to an order is in inverse ratio to the distance the order travels. Production efficiency is always in danger of being affected whenever the long-distance order is substituted for the face-to-face suggestion. There is, however, another reason for that which I shall consider in a moment.

All that we said in the foregoing paper of integration and circular behaviour applies directly to the anticipation of response in giving orders. We spoke then of what the psychologists call linear and circular behaviour. Linear behaviour would be, to quote from Dr. Cabot's review of my book, *Creative Experience*, when an order is accepted as passively as the woodshed accepts the wood. In circular behaviour you get a "come-back." But we all know that we get the come-back every day of our life, and we must certainly allow for it, or for what is more elegantly called circular behaviour, in the giving of orders. Following out the thought of the previous paper, I should say that the giving of orders and the receiving of orders ought to be a matter of integration through circular behaviour, and that we should seek methods to bring this about.[4] The rest of this lecture could profitably be spent on this point, with further explanation and with illustration, but I am trying to cover a good deal of ground

[3] *Cf. Creative Experience*, p. 65: ". . . we shall have to keep in mind—first, the objective situation as constituent part of the behaviour process; secondly, that internal conditioning is of equal importance with external conditioning. . . . Often for instance we see the head of an industrial plant trying to solve a situation by studying his men rather than by considering men and situation, and the reciprocal effect of one on the other."

[4] *Cf. Creative Experience*, p. 69: "We cannot study the 'psychology' of the workman, the 'psychology' of the employer, and then the 'facts' of the situation, as so often seems to be the process of the investigation. We must study the workman and the employer in their relation to the facts—and then the facts themselves become as active as any other part of the 'total situation.' We can never understand the total situation without taking into account the evolving situation. And when a situation changes we have not a new variation under the old fact, but a new fact."

in these talks by making suggestions for you to expand for yourselves.

Psychology has another important contribution to make on this subject of issuing orders or giving directions: before the integration can be made between order-giver and order-receiver, there is often an integration to be made within one or both of the individuals concerned. There are often two dissociated paths in the individual; if you are clever enough to recognize these, you can sometimes forestall a Freudian conflict, make the integration appear before there is an acute stage.

To explain what I mean, let me run over briefly a social worker's case. The girl's parents had been divorced and the girl placed with a jolly, easy-going, slack and untidy family, consisting of the father and mother and eleven children, sons and daughters. Gracie was very happy here, but when the social worker in charge of the case found that the living conditions involved a good deal of promiscuity, she thought the girl should be placed elsewhere. She therefore took her to call on an aunt who had a home with some refinement of living, where they had "high tastes," as one of the family said. This aunt wished to have Gracie live with her, and Gracie decided that she would like to do so. The social worker, however, in order to test her, said, "But I thought you were so happy where you are." "Can't I be happy and high, too?" the girl replied. There were two wishes here, you see. The social worker by removing the girl to the aunt may have forestalled a Freudian conflict, the dissociated paths may have been united. I do not know the outcome of this story, but it indicates a method of dealing with our co-directors—make them "happy and high, too."

Business administration has often to consider how to deal with the dissociated paths in individuals or groups, but the methods of doing this successfully have been developed much further in some departments than in others. We have as yet hardly recognized this as part of the technique of dealing with employees, yet the clever salesman knows that it is the chief part of his job. The prospective buyer wants the article

and does not want it. The able salesman does not suppress the arguments in the mind of the purchaser against buying, for then the purchaser might be sorry afterwards for his purchase, and that would not be good salesmanship. Unless he can unite, integrate, in the purchaser's mind, the reasons for buying and the reasons for not buying, his future sales will be imperilled, he will not be the highest grade salesman.

Please note that this goes beyond what the psychologist whom I quoted at the beginning of this section told us. He said, "The salesman must create in you the attitude that you want his article." Yes, but only if he creates this attitude by integration not by suppression.

Apply all this to orders. An order often leaves the individual to whom it is given with two dissociated paths; an order should seek to unite, to integrate, dissociated paths. Court decisions often settle arbitrarily which of two ways is to be followed without showing a possible integration of the two, that is, the individual is often left with an internal conflict on his hands. This is what both courts and business administration should try to prevent, the internal conflicts of individuals or groups.

In discussing the preparation for giving orders, I have not spoken at all of the appeal to certain instincts made so important by many writers. Some writers, for instance, emphasize the instinct of self-assertion; this would be violated by too rigid orders or too clumsily-exercised authority. Other writers, of equal standing, tell us that there is an instinct of submission to authority. I cannot discuss this for we should first have to define instincts, too long an undertaking for us now. Moreover, the exaggerated interest in instincts of recent years, an interest which in many cases has received rather crude expression, is now subsiding. Or, rather, it is being replaced by the more fruitful interest in habits.

There is much more that we could learn from psychology about the forming of habits and the preparation for giving orders than I can even hint at now. But there is one point, already spoken of by implication, that I wish to consider

more explicitly—namely, the manner of giving orders. Probably more industrial trouble has been caused by the manner in which orders are given than in any other way. In the *Report on Strikes and Lockouts*,[6] a British Government publication, the cause of a number of strikes is given as "alleged harassing conduct of the foreman," "alleged tyrannical conduct of an under-foreman," "alleged overbearing conduct of officials." The explicit statement, however, of the tyranny of superior officers as the direct cause of strikes is I should say, unusual, yet resentment smoulders and breaks out in other issues. And the demand for better treatment is often explicit enough. We find it made by the metal and woodworking trades in an aircraft factory, who declared that any treatment of men without regard to their feelings of self-respect would be answered by a stoppage of work. We find it put in certain agreements with employers that "the men must be treated with proper respect, and threats and abusive language must not be used."

What happens to a man, *in* a man, when an order is given in a disagreeable manner by foreman, head of department, his immediate superior in store, bank or factory? The man addressed feels that his self-respect is attacked, that one of his most inner sanctuaries is invaded. He loses his temper or becomes sullen or is on the defensive; he begins thinking of his "rights"—a fatal attitude for any of us. In the language we have been using, the wrong behaviour pattern is aroused, the wrong motor-set; that is, he is now "set" to act in a way which is not going to benefit the enterprise in which he is engaged.

There is a more subtle psychological point here, too; the more you are "bossed" the more your activity of thought will take place within the bossing-pattern, and your part in that pattern seems usually to be opposition to the bossing.

This complaint of the abusive language and the tyrannical treatment of the one just above the worker is an old story

[6] This is probably a reference to the *Annual Reports and Comparative Statistics of Strikes and Lockouts*, subsequently incorporated in the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Labour.

to us all, but there is an opposite extreme which is far too little considered. The immediate superior officer is often so close to the worker that he does not exercise the proper duties of his position. Far from taking on himself an aggressive authority, he has often evaded one of the chief problems of his job: how to do what is implied in the fact that he has been put in a position over others. The head of the woman's cloak department in a store will call out, "Say, Sadie, you're 36, aren't you? There's a woman down in the Back Bay kicking about something she says you promised yesterday." "Well, I like that," says Sadie. "Some of those Back Bay women would kick in Heaven." And that perhaps is about all that happens. Of course, the Back Bay lady has to be appeased, but there is often no study of what has taken place for the benefit of the store. I do not mean that a lack of connection between such incidents and the improvement of store technique is universal, but it certainly exists far too often and is one of the problems of those officials who are just above the heads of departments. Naturally, a woman does not want to get on bad terms with her fellow employees with whom she talks and works all day long. Consider the chief operator of the telephone exchanges, remembering that the chief operator is a member of the union, and that the manager is not.

Depersonalizing Orders—Obeying the Law of the Situation

Now what is our problem here? How can we avoid the two extremes: too great bossism in giving orders, and practically no orders given? I am going to ask how *you* are avoiding these extremes. My solution is to depersonalize the giving of orders, to unite all concerned in a study of the situation, to discover the law of the situation and obey that.[6] Until we do this I do not think we shall have the most successful business administration. This is what does take place, what has to take place, when there is a question

[6] *Cf. Creative Experience*, p. 122: "We should notice, too, what is sometimes forgotten, that in the social situation two processes always go on together: the adjustment of man and man, and the adjustment of man and the situation."

between two men in positions of equal authority. The head of the sales departments does not give orders to the head of the production department, or vice versa. Each studies the market and the final decision is made as the market demands. This is, ideally, what should take place between foremen and rank and file, between any head and his subordinates. One *person* should not give orders to another *person*, but both should agree to take their orders from the situation. If orders are simply part of the situation, the question of someone giving and someone receiving does not come up. Both accept the orders given by the situation. Employers accept the orders given by the situation; employees accept the orders given by the situation. This gives, does it not, a slightly different aspect to the whole of business administration through the entire plant?

We have here, I think, one of the largest contributions of scientific management: it tends to depersonalize orders. From one point of view, one might call the essence of scientific management the attempt to find the law of the situation. With scientific management the managers are as much under orders as the workers, for both obey the law of the situation. Our job is not how to get people to obey orders, but how to devise methods by which we can best *discover* the order integral to a particular situation. When that is found, the employee can issue it to the employer, as well as employer to employee. This often happens easily and naturally. My cook or my stenographer points out the law of the situation, and I, if I recognize it as such, accept it, even although it may reverse some "order" I have given.

If those in supervisory positions should depersonalize orders, then there would be no overbearing authority on the one hand, nor on the other that dangerous *laissez-aller* which comes from the fear of exercising authority. Of course we should exercise authority, but always the authority of the situation. I do not say that we have found the way to a frictionless existence, far from it, but we now understand the place which we mean to give to friction. We intend to set it to work for us as the engineer does when he puts the

belt over the pulley. There will be just as much, probably more, room for disagreement in the method I am advocating. The situation will often be seen differently, often be interpreted differently. But we shall know what to do with it, we shall have found a method of dealing with it.

I call it depersonalizing because there is not time to go any further into the matter. I think it really is a matter of *repersonalizing*. We, persons, have relations with each other, but we should find them in and through the whole situation. We cannot have any sound relations with each other as long as we take them out of that setting which gives them their meaning and value. This divorcing of persons and the situation does a great deal of harm. I have just said that scientific management depersonalizes; the deeper philosophy of scientific management shows us personal relations within the whole setting of that thing of which they are a part.

There is much psychology, modern psychology particularly, which tends to divorce person and situation. What I am referring to is the present zest for "personality studies." When some difficulty arises we often hear the psychologist whose specialty is personality studies say, "Study the psychology of that man." And this is very good advice, but only if at the same time we study the entire situation. To leave out the whole situation, however, is so common a blunder in the studies of these psychologists that it constitutes a serious weakness in their work. And as those of you who are personnel directors have more to do, I suppose, with those psychologists who have taken personality for their specialty than with any others, I wish you would watch and see how often you find that this limitation detracts from the value of their conclusions.

I said above that we should substitute for the long-distance order the face-to-face suggestion. I think we can now see a more cogent reason for this than the one then given. It is not the face-to-face suggestion that we want so much as the joint study of the problem, and such joint study can be made best by the employee and his immediate superior or employee and special expert on that question.

I began this talk by emphasizing the advisability of preparing in advance the attitude necessary for the carrying out of orders, as in the previous paper we considered preparing the attitude for integration; but we have now, in our consideration of the joint study of situations, in our emphasis on obeying the law of the situation, perhaps got a little beyond that, or rather we have now to consider in what sense we wish to take the psychologist's doctrine of prepared-in-advance attitudes. By itself this would not take us far, for everyone is studying psychology nowadays, and our employees are going to be just as active in preparing us as we in preparing them! Indeed, a girl working in a factory said to me, "We had a course in psychology last winter, and I see now that you have to be pretty careful how you put things to the managers if you want them to consider favourably what you're asking for." If this prepared-in-advance idea were all that the psychologists think it, it would have to be printed privately as secret doctrine. But the truth is that the best preparation for integration in the matter of orders or in anything else, is a joint study of the situation. We should not try to create the attitude *we want*, although that is the usual phrase, but the attitude required for co-operative study and decision. This holds good even for the salesman. We said above that when the salesman is told that he should create in the prospective buyer the attitude that he wants the article, he ought also to be told that he should do this by integration rather than by suppression. We have now a hint of *how* he is to attain this integration.

I have spoken of the importance of changing some of the language of business personnel relations. We considered whether the words "grievances," "complaints," or Ford's "trouble specialists" did not arouse the wrong behaviour-patterns. I think "order" certainly does. If that word is not to mean any longer external authority, arbitrary authority, but the law of the situation, then we need a new word for it. It is often the order that people resent as much as the thing ordered. People do not like to be ordered even to take a holiday. I have often seen instances of this. The wish to

govern one's own life is, of course, one of the most fundamental feelings in every human being. To call this "the instinct of self-assertion," "the instinct of initiative," does not express it wholly. I think it is told in the life of some famous American that when he was a boy and his mother said, "Go get a pail of water," he always replied, "I won't," before taking up the pail and fetching the water. This is significant; he resented the command, the command of a person; but he went and got the water, not, I believe, because he had to, but because he recognized the demand of the situation. *That*, he knew he had to obey; *that*, he was willing to obey. And this kind of obedience is not opposed to the wish to govern one's self, but each is involved in the other; both are part of the same fundamental urge at the root of one's being. We have here something far more profound than "the egoistic impulse" or "the instinct of self-assertion." We have the very essence of the human being.

This subject of orders has led us into the heart of the whole question of authority and consent. When we conceive of authority and consent as parts of an inclusive situation, does that not throw a flood of light on this question? The point of view here presented gets rid of several dilemmas which have seemed to puzzle people in dealing with consent. The feeling of being "under" someone, of "subordination," of "servility," of being "at the will of another," comes out again and again in the shop stewards movement and in the testimony before the Coal Commission. One man said before the Coal Commission, "It is all right to work *with* anyone; what is disagreeable is to feel too distinctly that you are working *under* anyone." *With* is a pretty good preposition, not because it connotes democracy, but because it connotes functional unity,[7] a much more profound conception than that of democracy as usually held. The study of the situation involves the *with* preposition. Then Sadie is not left alone by the head of the cloak department, nor does she

[7] If it is understood as indicating an interweaving, not mere addition (M. P. F.). *Note.* To distinguish between Miss Follett's own notations and the editorial notes, we are initialling the former, as here.

have to obey her. The head of the department says, "Let's see how such cases had better be handled, then we'll abide by that." Sadie is not under the head of the department, but both are *under* the situation.

Twice I have had a servant applying for a place ask me if she would be treated as a menial. When the first woman asked me that, I had no idea what she meant, I thought perhaps she did not want to do the roughest work, but later I came to the conclusion that to be treated as a menial meant to be obliged to be under someone, to follow orders without using one's own judgment. If we believe that what heightens self-respect increases efficiency, we shall be on our guard here.

Very closely connected with this is the matter of pride in one's work. If an order goes against what the craftsman or the clerk thinks is the way of doing his work which will bring the best results, he is justified in not wishing to obey that order. Could not that difficulty be met by a joint study of the situation? It is said that it is characteristic of the British workman to feel, "I know my job and won't be told how." The peculiarities of the British workman might be met by a joint study of the situation, it being understood that he probably has more to contribute to that study than anyone else.

(I should like to say incidentally here, that what I am talking about when I say joint study is entirely different from what is being advocated in England, and tried out in mine and factory, as "the independent investigation of the worker," "independent workers' control." I think they are on quite the wrong track in this matter, and this I shall try to show in a later paper.)

There is another dilemma which has to be met by everyone who is in what is called a position of authority: how can you expect people merely to obey orders and at the same time to take that degree of responsibility which they should take? Indeed, in my experience, the people who enjoy following orders blindly, without any thought on their own part, are those who like thus to get rid of responsibility. But

the taking of responsibility, each according to his capacity, each according to his function in the whole (all that we shall take up in the next paper under the title of *Business as an Integrative Unity*), this taking of responsibility is usually the most vital matter in the life of every human being, just as the allotting of responsibility is the most important part of business administration.

A young trade unionist said to me, "How much dignity can I have as a mere employee?" He can have all the dignity in the world if he is allowed to make his fullest contribution to the plant *and to assume definitely the responsibility therefor.*

I think one of the gravest problems before us is how to make the reconciliation between receiving orders and taking responsibility. And I think the reconciliation can be made through our conception of the law of the situation.

Obedience and Liberty

I have spoken of several dilemmas: how to take orders and yet not to be "under" someone, how to take orders and yet to keep one's pride in one's work, how to take orders and yet to have a share in responsibility. There is still another dilemma troubling many people which our present point of view helps to solve—namely, whether you can have obedience *and* liberty.[8] That group of political scientists and guild socialists who are denying the power of the State, say that we cannot have obedience *and* liberty. I think they are wholly wrong, but I think we should ask ourselves to what we owe obedience. Surely only to a functional unity of which we are a part, to which we are contributing. I agree with the guild socialists that the State is not that now. Those who are concerned with the reorganization of industry should take warning from the failures of the state.

James Myers, author of *Representative Government in Industry*,[9] comes near involving himself in this dilemma of the political scientists when he tells us that men in industry have so long merely obeyed orders that we have there a real social danger.

[8] *Cf. The New State*, Chapters XXVIII–XXXII, on political pluralism.
[9] Doubleday-Doran, New York, 1924.

He says, "We must reawaken the instinct of self-assertion." While I think Myers recognizes a real problem here, I certainly do not think that the instinct of self-assertion needs to be reawakened in many of us.

We have considered the subject of symbols. It is often very apparent that an order is a symbol. The referee in the game stands watch in hand, and says, "Go." It is an order, but order only as symbol. I may say to an employee, "Do so and so," but I should say it only because we have both agreed, openly or tacitly, that that which I am ordering done is the best thing to be done. The order is then a symbol. And if it is a philosophical and psychological truth that we owe obedience only to a functional unity to which we are contributing, we should remember that a more accurate way of stating that would be to say that our obligation is to a unifying, to a process.

This brings us now to one of our most serious problems in this matter of orders. It is important, but we can touch on it only briefly; it is what we spoke of in the foregoing paper as the evolving situation. I am trying to show here that the order must be integral to the situation and must be recognized as such. But we saw that the situation was always developing. If the situation is never stationary, then the order should never be stationary, so to speak; how to prevent it from being so is our problem. The situation is changing while orders are being carried out, because, by and through orders being carried out. How is the order to keep up with the situation? External orders never can, only those drawn fresh from the situation.

Moreover, if taking a *responsible* attitude toward experience involves recognizing the evolving situation, a *conscious* attitude toward experience means that we note the change which the developing situation makes in ourselves; the situation does not change without changing us.

To summarize, what have we learned from these two papers on the subject of the giving of orders? That, integration being the basic law of life, orders should be the composite conclusion of those who give and those who receive

them; more than this, that they should be the integration of the people concerned and the situation; more even than this, that they should be the integrations involved in the evolving situation. If you accept my three fundamental statements on this subject: (1) that the order should be the law of the situation; (2) that the situation is always evolving; (3) that orders should involve circular not linear behaviour —then we see that our old conception of orders has somewhat changed, and that there should therefore follow definite changes in business practice.

There is a problem so closely connected with the giving of orders that I want to put it before you for future discussion. After we have decided on our orders, we have to consider how much and what kind of supervision is necessary or advisable in order that they shall be carried out. We all know that many workers object to being watched. What does that mean, how far is it justifiable? How can the objectionable element be avoided and at the same time necessary supervision given? I do not think that this matter has been studied sufficiently. When I asked a very intelligent girl what she thought would be the result of profit-sharing and employee representation in the factory where she worked, she replied joyfully, "We shan't need foremen any more." While her entire ignoring of the fact that the foreman has other duties than keeping workers on their jobs was amusing, one wants to go beyond one's amusement and find out what this objection to being watched really means.

In a case in Scotland arising under the Minimum Wage Act, the overman was called in to testify whether or not a certain workman did his work properly. The examination was as follows:

Magistrate: "But isn't it your duty under the Mines Act to visit each working place twice a day?"

Overman: "Yes."

Magistrate: "Don't you do it?"

Overman: "Yes."

Magistrate: "Then why didn't you ever see him work?"

Overman: "They always stop work when they see an overman coming and sit down and wait till he's gone—even take out their pipes, if it's a mine free from gas. They won't let anyone watch them."

An equally extreme standard was enforced for a part of the war period at a Clyde engineering works. The chairman of shop stewards was told one morning that there was a grievance at the smithy. He found one of the blacksmiths in a rage because the managing director in his ordinary morning's walk through the works had stopped for five minutes or so and watched this man's fire. After a shop meeting the chairman took up a deputation to the director and secured the promise that this should not happen again. At the next works meeting the chairman reported the incident to the body of workers, with the result that a similar demand was made throughout the works and practically acceded to, so that the director hardly dared to stop at all in his morning's walk.

I have seen similar instances cited. Many workmen feel that being watched is unbearable. What can we do about it? How can we get proper supervision without this watching which a worker resents? Supervision is necessary; supervision is resented,—how are we going to make the integration there? Some say, "Let the workers elect the supervisors." I do not believe in that.

There are three other points closely connected with the subject of this paper which I should like merely to point out. First, when and how do you point out mistakes, misconduct? One principle can surely guide us here: don't blame for the sake of blaming, make what you have to say accomplish something; say it in that form, at that time, under those circumstances, which will make it a real education to your subordinate. Secondly, since it is recognized that the one who gives the orders is not as a rule a very popular person, the management sometimes tries to offset this by allowing the person who has this onus upon him to give any pleasant news to the workers, to have the credit of any innovation which the workers very much desire. One manager

told me that he always tried to do this. I suppose that this is good behaviouristic psychology, and yet I am not sure that it is a method I wholly like. It is quite different, however, in the case of a mistaken order having been given; then I think the one who made the mistake should certainly be the one to rectify it, not as a matter of strategy, but because it is better for him too. It is better for all of us not only to acknowledge our mistakes, but to do something about them. If a foreman discharges someone and it is decided to reinstate the man, it is obviously not only good tactics but a square deal to the foreman to allow him to do the reinstating.

There is, of course, a great deal more to this matter of giving orders than we have been able to touch on; far from exhausting the subject, I feel that I have only given hints. I have been told that the artillery men suffered more mentally in the war than others, and the reason assigned for this was that their work was directed from a distance. The combination of numbers by which they focused their fire was telephoned to them. The result was also at a distance. Their activity was not closely enough connected with the actual situation at either end.

One matter in regard to giving orders which seems to me of the utmost importance for business administration, I wish you would enlighten me about. When the numbers of employees are as large and as widely scattered as in the case of the Elevated and Telephone employees, how should the orders be conveyed? Someone said to me one day, "How do you suppose the Elevated gives its orders?" I didn't know what she meant and asked her, and she replied, "The uniform courtesy of the Elevated employees is such that I often wonder how the people at the top get their wishes across to so many widely scattered people."

Our time is more than up, but let me, in order to indicate the scope of this subject, mention some of the things we have not touched on, or not adequately: the relation of orders to training; the effect of the emotions (hope, fear, etc.) in the obeying of orders; how to keep control and yet give control

and responsibility to subordinates. Moreover, perhaps I have not said explicitly that the participation of employees in the planning of orders should take place before the order is given, not afterwards. After the order has been given the subordinate must obey. I certainly believe in authority—of the right kind. And I am sure that I have not emphasized sufficiently the careful, painstaking study that is necessary if we are to anticipate how orders will be received. A man grumbles at an order; this makes trouble and the one over him says: "Why is that man kicking?" and he begins to study the situation. But perhaps by that time it is too late; the trouble has perhaps got too much headway. To anticipate the kicks, to learn the most successful methods of doing this, is an important part of the work of the order-giver.

I began this talk by saying that I was going to consider order-giving merely as an illustration of a method, the method of taking a conscious and responsible attitude toward our experience. I feel strongly on this point, on the necessity of taking a responsible attitude toward our experience. We students of social and industrial research are often lamentably vague. We sometimes do not even know what we know and what we do not know. We can avoid this vagueness only (1) by becoming conscious of what we believe in, (2) of what we do not believe in, and (3) by recognizing the large debatable ground in between those two fields and trying our experiments there. Don't let us try experiments where they are not needed, in regard to matters about which we have already made up our minds. For instance, there are certain things which people continue to urge about employee representation which are almost universally accepted. There is no need of saying these particular things any longer, there is no need of studying them; let us give our efforts to the things we don't know—there are plenty of them.

Another point: we should always know whether we are considering principles or methods. A confusion here is disastrous, as we often see in discussion. I have heard a discussion on whether shop-committee meetings should be held in company time, which seemed to me quite beside the mark

because the distinction was not being made between the principles underlying the matter and the possible methods of carrying out the principles. Some were talking about one, and some about the other. Moreover, let us not confuse our methods one with the other; let us try out one until we have come to some conclusion about it. As a coach used to tell the Harvard boat crew, "It's better to have a method and stick to it, even if it's not the best possible method."

This is all involved in what I spoke of as taking a conscious and responsible attitude toward experience. It is also taking a scientific attitude. The growing appreciation of the advantage of such an attitude is evidenced by the subject chosen for this course of conferences: *the scientific foundations of business administration.*