

## VIII

### THE REACTION OF WORKERS TO MACHINE WORK AND WORKING CONDITIONS

*By* H. S. PERSON

I BELIEVE we may be permitted to interpret this evening's subject, especially the words "working conditions," very broadly as including all stimuli focused upon the worker at his work except those reserved for the following talks. You will recall that next week we are to give our attention to orders, instruction cards, performance records and other devices of supervision and control; and the week following to wages and other forms of incentive.

My interest is primarily in discovering and defining the problem. I cannot find in the literature of research and exposition sufficient data to warrant the assumption that anyone can bring to conference definitive knowledge concerning workers' reactions to machine work and working conditions.

Assuming that to be the situation, I think we may properly give attention to sources of information, and classify them roughly as follows.

In the first place, there is a source that we may call the reporter group, a rather numerous group of self-styled "investigators" who are not conducting intensive and sustained research, and who have never been responsible executives in industry. They may, perhaps, have had a pretty thorough training in social sciences and may be able to bring to bear upon specific problems such as this some of the generalizations of the social sciences. The greater part of the great bulk of managerial literature that is growing with such rapidity is filled with discussions of work, conditions of