

Comments on paper on Constituent Economies in Institutional Environment

RETYPE FROM ORIGINAL
Quarterly Conference Meeting August 3, 1903

Dr. Rogers:

I am very glad this matter of conscientiousness has been referred to, because I think it is one of the hardest things in the selection of employees, to find those who are conscientious. Conscientiousness is worth more than any kind of training in the public service. I can generally agree with my friend, Mr. Tate, on most everything, but there were a few little points in his paper concerning which I should take exception. I wouldn't turn out that gas jet, for instance, I should insist on having the person that left it burning turn it out, so that he would remember it. I think when he struck the subject of the farmer he struck the very root of the matter. It isn't altogether a question of the salary of the farmer, it is a question of finding a man who is a good farmer who will accept a position on a salary. As a rule successful farmers run their own farms and it is a very rare thing to find a man who will accept a position on a salary at all. But sometimes you can find a first-class man who will do so. It is like the class of men we have in other branches of the public service. You often find a good postmaster, a man who understands the technique and routine of the government service, who makes a good postmaster, but who couldn't handle a business of his own. And that is a good deal the way it is with the farmer.

I believe the time is near when we will have to consider the question of shorter hours for employees, and while perhaps it is a little early now to give the matter thorough discussion, I would suggest that in Massachusetts, where the effort was made very strongly to introduce shorter hours in certain branches of the public service, this suggestion was made, that if the eight-hour law were insisted upon, the only way to handle state institutions would be to divide the time by weeks and require so many hours a week which would be equivalent to eight hours service per day.

There is one point with regard to saving fuel that I think we can all do, in the absence of mechanical stokers, and that is to impress upon our engineers, and I think most intelligent engineers today are trying to carry out the principle, that the waste of fuel comes very largely from over-stoking, and insist on very frequent stokings and very light stokings. I think in that way very much fuel can be saved. There is a firm in Mankato, a mill, where the engineer has a clock with an alarm bell attached. I think it is every (five) minutes that that bell taps and the stoker is required to have his shovel of coal ready the instant that bell sounds to open the door and put in the coal. At the next tap he takes the next one in order and takes the (routine) of the boilers. I understand from the engineer, whom I was talking with recently, that you would very seldom see smoke from that mill. It is very hard to get the fireman to do that but I think it would pay us to adopt some such system as that. If when the coal is put in the door is opened and shut very quickly most of the carbon will be consumed before it reaches the chimney.

Supt. Dow: Do you know anything about experiments that have been made along that line by one of our railroads?

Mr. Morey: there is a device with a lever used on every boiler and engine, by the Great Northern railroad, so that the fireman will open the door, put his foot on that lever and he can't put in but one shovel-full of coal at a time. The door shuts immediately after his foot is off from that lever, and to open the door he must put his foot on that lever again.

Dr. Rogers:

The principle certainly is important in whatever way it is solved. In regard to Mr. Tate's slop bucket, I should state another thing, that while he was very anxious about having indigestible articles kept out of the swill buckets and having the buckets labeled to avoid mistakes, I think that we are learning all the time that as we get our dietaries looked after very closely we haven't any swill. We don't have swill enough to take care of our hogs any longer and I think that is true, that with the establishment of efficiency in the dining room service you will have very little swill, and efficiency in the dining room will consist in finding out just the amount of food each one takes. You can't average up the amount of butter, the amount of bread and the amount of meat, but the dining room girl can make a study of these things and find out just about what each one's liability is in that respect. One man wouldn't be satisfied with his two ounces of butter a day but will eat four to six ounces, while there will be others who will eat only half an ounce; and so on, and by a study of these things the swill bucket will be decreasing in size.

There is another matter that hasn't been referred to and that is the waste of water. While water is a little more inexpensive than coal, yet in some of our large institutions it is a difficult problem to keep in repair the hundreds of little water valves and faucets, and that suggests to my mind the necessity of just that very thing I think some of our engineers should have an apparatus for re-seating valves, which I think would pay for itself in a very short time, by which an engineering may step too a valve of any size, with the proper apparatus, and reseal the valve and can replace the valve almost absolutely water tight.

RETYPE FROM ORIGINAL