

The National Outlook

Output Per Manhour
By RALPH ROBEY

Productivity is a term which is widely used and just about as widely misunderstood. Yet it is an extremely important concept. Perhaps the most common definition of productivity is output per man-hour. This is accurate but raises the further questions of how does one measure such output and what causes an increase or decrease. This definition also has the disadvantage of appearing to place the entire responsibility for changes in productivity upon labor, which of course is far from true.

Three Basic Factors
Actually three basic factors cause variations in productivity. These are energy, organization and capital.

Energy includes both human labor and all other kinds of power used in production. The changes here over the past several generations have been fantastic. Formerly human energy provided well over ninety per-

cent of all the power used. Today human energy is used primarily to direct other sources of power. Even in steel mills a worker no longer has to lift any appreciable weight, and in many industries he does not have to lift anything. This change in the type of energy used has been an enormous boon to both our workers and our economy as a whole.

Organization includes both the function of management and production layouts. Both of these have a profound influence upon the efficiency of an organization, and efficiency is a prime element in output per man-hour. One also should include under organization the skill of the working force. With increased mechanization of the productive process more expert workers are required, even though many jobs become mere routine. The character of our labor force has changed greatly over the years in regard to skill,



PAINTING CONTEST—The call of the wild lures scores of painters to the Rome Zoo. Amateur artists painted polar bears as part of a contest for "Sunday artists."

but there still is a shortage of those with highly technical training.

Capital is an absolute necessity for an overall increase in output per man-hour, and there is a close correlation between investment and productivity. Granted, in an individual factory it may be possible to increase output by better management, improved organization and better industrial relations, but such betterment is necessarily limited. Today it takes about \$17,000 investment to provide the essentials of each job, and the total continues to increase with the development of better and better machines. In some industries the investment per worker is much less than \$17,000, but in others it is several times this amount. Even in farming the investment per worker is up to this figure.

A Significant Variable

With all of these elements influencing productivity it is to be expected, and is true, that output per man-hour varies from company to company, from industry to industry, and from year to year. Measuring the result, therefore, is extremely complicated and many of the data that are published are misleading.

This is a field, in other words, where one can prove almost anything he desires by statistics. By picking his base year he can show that the increase has been either large or small. An honest and conscientious analyst will not indulge in such manipulations, but unfortunately a lot of it goes on all the time. And one must add that it is not easy to select a base year even under the best of circum-

stances. The best protection is to ignore year-to-year changes and rely on long-term trends. Even this does not provide complete protection against wrong conclusions, but at least under this procedure there is an opportunity for errors to be washed out.

One final word must be said: increasing productivity is what gives us a rising standard of living, protects the value of our currency, and determines the over-all growth of our production. Even though we have difficulty in measuring it, therefore, we have no choice but to improve productivity.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

all else to this one great and abiding Cause and Being.

Jesus said: "You cannot serve God and Mammon." (Matthew 6:24b). Mammon, translated quite literally, means "property." He who thinks continually about his property simply has no time to think of the greater issues of life. He has no time to think about eternity, and all its vast and awesome implications, nor does he build for eternity. Strangely enough, we who are the only creatures of our earth who have the potentialities of eternity, fail to build for that one event. The kingdom of God is not a place, but a state or condition in which the mind and soul exist.

Only too often our view does not include that which God sees. We look beyond, or in front of, his concerns. Consider, just for one moment, what evils would be eliminated if we but took the

come anxious (distracted) over things. Things, alas, so distract, distort, twist, corrupt, blind and drive mankind. We sorely need to remember the rock from which we were hewn—the rock which is from God himself, in whose image we are made. Fundamentally we are both moral and spiritual beings. We have much more important things to do than merely be concerned with drinking and feasting.

Let man fulfill his nature, and God will care for him. And what is his nature? Have we not already answered that question when, as we have just noted, we claim he is made in the image of God? He is made for truth, justice, mercy, kindness, holiness and beauty. He becomes ill when he lives for material possessions and covets them until greed or hate or jealousy rule his life. We are restless until we find our rest in Him. Let man fulfill his God-intended nature and find his fulfillment in Christ.

(These comments are based on outlines of the International Sunday School Lessons, copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission).

Love thy neighbor. —Thales.

Business District
The estate agent was showing Bodger over the house.

"Isn't this rather a poor district?" asked Bodger.
"Certainly not," replied the agent. "You will find that your neighbors never borrow less than five dollars."

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—Lord Chesterfield.

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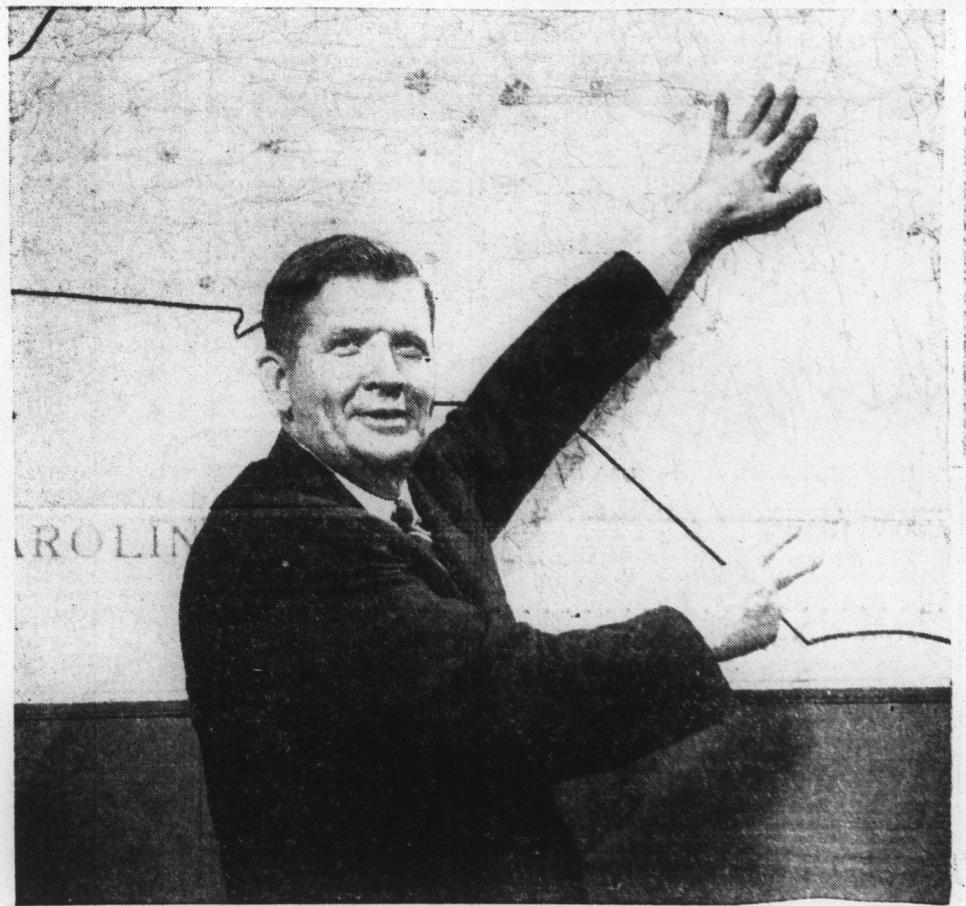
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"We should continue the present State-wide approach for primary and interstate roads, but

the secondary road program must be returned to the people. Our Highway Commission should be enlarged to 10-14 members who represent every area of the state, understand the local road problem, and have authority to do something about it. As taxpayers footing the bill, our people are entitled to a stronger voice in local road programs.

"Yes, this is an ambitious program. It has to be. It will require much time just to catch up. But I say, 'LET'S GET STARTED NOW!'"

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