Correspondence

From: Dr. G. S. Brosan, M.I.Prod.E.,
Principal, Enfield College of Technology.

CONSUMERISM IS KING?

The status of the production engineer is not what it might be. You, the reader, will disagree with this, since you are a production engineer. But I reassert what I say; this is not that the status is low, but that it is not high enough.

The reason is not far to seek. The production engineer in today's philosophy is a human extension of the machine. He carries out the making function when a need has been identified, and his services are required exactly insofar as there is no machine available to do the job. The other functions he discharges, such as the routines of production control, are mere technological and financial book-keeping, and in any case can be done better by a computer; the only thing that keeps men on the job is cost. Men are cheaper.

Production engineers who have reached high status are too often those who have broken away from the strict production situation and are engaged, be it ever so feebly, in management. And in the present industrial society there is only one criterion for success; do your products sell enough and well enough to make a profit?

Since we are all conditioned from birth to engage in a status scramble (except those who have got there already and by not playing pretend there isn't a game) I will now state my law for success in production engineering. It is as follows:

"A production engineer is judged not by what he makes, but by how other people sell what he makes."

If — as I, at least, am certain — this is true, then the answer for production engineers is to become marketing men. Not, please, salesmen — sales is but one aspect of marketing. The marketing man is concerned with adapting every aspect of the business to meet the needs of the customer. It is he who pays your wages, not the 15% saved on floor-to-floor time.

Provided you do not go to extremes you must succeed. You may also become a better production engineer.

From: F. B. Willmott, M.I.Prod.E.

"MAN AND INDUSTRY"

In the May, 1963 issue, is published detailed argument and analysis on two opposing methods of payment to which production is related and in so doing a crystal clear indication is exposed of what can or cannot be done to produce identical results.

The respective Papers by W. B. D. Brown and A. C. Main are conflicting in approach and application. For that reason each fails to convince and in a way to be acceptable to exponents of systems which differ and which in context deals more specifically with human relationship, the germ and fertile soil of originality in honesty of purpose, faith in ourselves, merit and hard work within the framework of each factory.

In treating every person as a human being, it is impracticable to attempt to indoctrinate a system in the belief that everyone will embrace it in a bond of sincere contentment. Sooner or later, seeming acceptance would give way to resentment. Under such impact management could be caught unawares and unprepared, simply because initially it failed to recognise the need to reason out the meaning and the necessity for basic philosophy and psychology, in and through which the minds of men are as an open book.

From: J. Yardley, Grad.I.Prod.E.

"PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION"

The above Paper by T. M. Higham, which appeared in the April issue of The Production Engineer, was read with interest and is, beyond doubt, written with authority. Therefore, the following remarks are in no way intended as a criticism, but rather as a further indication of the "problems of communication".

Writing on the "nine dot problem", Mr. Higham inferred that the solution was found by "going outside the square", and that remaining "inside the square" prevents one arriving at a suitable answer. Diagram 1 (opposite page) illustrates, I think, the "outside" solution, whilst Diagram 2 is a suggested "inside" solution.

(d) go out and see things for yourself — even if it's not in the firm's time.

Provided you do not go to extremes you must succeed. You may also become a better production engineer.