

upon which a strong society must rest. In the years to come this challenge will become even more severe as technology and popula-

tion shifts work their changes into the fabric of American life. It will be interesting to note in what way and how well those who set the out-

lines of the larger learnings in the college will meet this challenge.

## "Strengthening

College  
and  
Industry

Communications  
for

Improved  
Student  
Understanding"

MR. R. C. MORTON

*Manager, College Relations  
Ralston Purina Company  
St. Louis, Missouri*

It is an honor to address this group of educators today and to be a part of your Annual Convention Program. In recent years, I have watched the activities of NACTA and this Conference is certainly an indication that your organization is making the necessary adjustments to play even a more important role than in the past.

Most every agricultural conference that I have attended over the last ten years has sent me home with renewed faith in my selection of agriculture as the field in which I could possibly make the greatest contribution to our society and achieve the most personal satisfaction. Each of you has attended dozens of such meetings, some excellent, some good, some not so good; but the facts and figures invariably presented an extremely favorable picture of the challenge which American Agriculture was facing. This was true in spite of the usual ill winds, surplus situations, public relations complications and a host of other "enthusiasm-dampening factors."

It has been obvious for quite a few years that the supreme test and challenge of our food production machinery was yet to come. "Never Was the Future So Close As It Is Now" . . . says Dr. Earl Butz of Purdue University . . . "American Agriculture is an expanding industry in every important respect except one . . . the number of people required to run our farms."

In the past six months I have had the pleasure of talking with over a thousand fresh young college students who are probing many different industries and companies in search of a career that will meet their expectations. They grant that the facts and figures indicate as much or more opportunity in agriculture than other industries, but

they have watched *people*, neighbors, their own families respond to the trends. They are anxious to enter the agribusiness phase of this fascinating industry, but they do so with uncertainty and inadequate information, consequently, a weakness in that vital quality, enthusiasm.

I hasten to add that other company representatives from various areas of industry share my concern over student attitudes toward the business world. Then let me qualify this statement to some degree, at least, and assume a great share of the blame for industry. My thoughts along these lines parallel those of many educators, but the remedy is not simple.

Enrollment in our universities from coast to coast is skyrocketing; Colleges of Agriculture which were sagging a few years ago are also enjoying new growth. And at the same time, most businesses are surging forward with good profits, expansion, mergers, diversification and the like. We are both so busy going up our own ladders of success that we can't take time to understand each others' motives.

We can't expect instructors who have never really been exposed to the business world to sell the opportunities which are available with sincere enthusiasm. And on the other hand, we can "crack industry on the knuckles" for being so busy in their "busy-ness" that they have neglected to accept their responsibility in this important area of education and attitude development.

Our colleges of agriculture have made excellent curriculum changes in recent years, with particular emphasis on economics, certainly an indication that our economic system has a great deal to be desired. Many schools have been able to develop economic courses with practical application to our changing business world; others, however, are deep in theory and may not be accomplishing the desired goal.

There has long been a distaste on the part of college students for sales positions, and this will not change overnight. Possibly it stems

from an unfortunate incident, contact with a particular sales representative on the farm. As the influence and acceptance of technology reached new proportions in all of industry, the need for company sales personnel to become extensor-type representatives was extremely important. Agribusiness organizations exist on low-profit margins compared with most other industries and repeat sales are essential for survival. The one-shot, high pressure salesman is a thing of the past. Today's successful marketer, man builds a working business relationship with the producer that must be based on strength and profitability for all concerned.

If these observations are in any way accurate, there appears to be a big job ahead for both of us if we are to perpetuate the economic system which has produced for us the greatest society in the history of mankind.

*Business, however,* must bear the bulk of this load, but it will require your understanding and cooperation. Industry must be willing to give time and thought, our two most valuable assets to communicating with instructors and students and attempt to bridge the gap between these dynamic areas of education and business which are now thrusting forward too independently for each others' own good.

In addition, industry must be willing to invest dollars, a third asset of considerable importance to most businessmen.

Possibly industry's greatest concern today is in this vital realm of motivation. Every company can point to numerous examples of young men who entered their ranks with a weak scholastic record, or no college work at all. Yet these individuals had the capacity to recognize and reach for a challenge and become personally involved to the extent where they readily overcame their shortcomings. This is the exception rather than the rule, since the student's academic record is probably the best single measurement of performance potential.

"Life is an adventure in personal

experience and individual involvement."

"Anyone who is really alive knows that life cannot be a spectator sport. It is a game of personal involvement, of individual participation."

"Personal involvement in life also teaches the individual another inescapable truth, the necessity for teamwork in every endeavor. While life is not a spectator sport, neither is it a game for the loner. All people in a society, and in a company are interdependent. The active participants are the first to learn this. They see a personal opportunity in teaching the beginner, in informing the ignorant, in respecting the competitor, in understanding the enemy, in admiring the victor, in giving aid and comfort to the injured man or woman on the street, regardless of personal inconvenience."

This is the philosophy of our Company President, Mr. R. H. Dean.

Many peoples of the past have failed because they did not understand the *challenge of change*. This is why our most difficult problem in the era ahead will be our relationship with ourselves and our fellow man in the face of tremendous change. The 20th Century will go down in history as "a massive attempt at improving human relations."

The relationships which exist between all segments of agriculture have room for improved understanding. We have witnessed a

change from a production oriented industry to one that has rapidly accepted the importance of marketing. Assets and liabilities have become everyday language and the term "profit" does not seem to upset quite as many young people and non-industry workers as it has in the recent past.

A business school study at one of our widely recognized eastern universities showed that only 12% of their student body favored going into business as a career. This is disturbing, when you think of the contribution which American industry has made in the growth of this nation. Strangely enough, those countries behind the Iron Curtain which have scoffed at our business policies and methods have found it timely to re-introduce the profit principle into the operation of certain segments of their industry. These efforts will be marketing oriented, geared to meet the needs and desires of consumers.

Over the years, our company has sponsored a program exposing agricultural students to the actual operations of the business world. The response has been most gratifying. Programs of this nature take a great deal of time if they are to be effective. Too often, industry expects a "tour of the facility" to sell the merits of business. Concern in this area is genuine and not prompted by current manpower needs. We are sincere in our desire to see stu-

dents develop a greater appreciation for the business world, for profits, for competition, for personal involvement and deeply rooted motivation.

I don't believe there is a simple solution to the problem. Scholarships and other monetary offerings will do little to correct these areas of misunderstanding. Possibly the greatest single factor which could improve this relationship between the student, academic field and business world, would be in face to face discussions of topics involved. The printed word, unfortunately, often lacks the human qualities that are essential for understanding and thus acceptance.

Our Agriculture today faces the greatest challenge in its history. You are well aware of the population growth around the world, and the inability of other nations to meet their own needs. American agricultural technologists are in demand wherever food can be produced. You and industry, together, must accept this challenge if we expect to foster the type of freedom for mankind that we have enjoyed here at home.

I offer the hand of industry to your group, without reservation, realizing that both of us are deeply involved in our own responsibilities, but knowing that we can develop better young men that can meet that challenge if we strengthen our lines of communication.

# The Roll of American Society for Engineering Education

An address by

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SUMMARY—Editor

A major point made in discussion of the purpose of the organization was the concern with the total program of education for engineers. A unique characteristic of this organization was pointed out as its being the only one of its type in existence. Its success has created interest in the establishment of similar organizations in foreign countries.

An individual membership of 12,000 and an institutional membership of 500 were reported. Various conditions and requirements of membership were discussed.

Attention was given to the organizational structure which relates to all aspects of engineering education. The necessary concern with technical programs was brought out at this time.

It was pointed out that levels of

college institutional membership were determined by accreditation of programs by the various professional societies. Commitment to continuous evaluation was presented as a basic tenet of the society.

Communication between the society and the membership was established as the primary function of the JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION. It is structured in three divisions: the staff, papers, and advertising.

The committee structure of the society was divided for discussion into two categories: (1) those needed by the society for continuous operation and (2) those concerned with special projects. These project

committees are charged with developing programs in new areas of concern within the scope of engineering education such as computers, space, ocean, etc.

Special studies such as curricula development, faculty development, and institutional development are among the concerns of the group. Outside funding of special studies is sought. Presently, examples are the National Science Foundation supporting a study of goals, the Ford Foundation supporting a study in programmed learning, while a program of faculty exchange is being financed by industry. A deans' conference is concerned with techniques of instruction.

Faculty development was presented as a major concern of the society. Colleges and universities are assisted in this regard by summer insti-