

more accurate evaluation of the work involved in any activity than is provided by past experience or guesswork. Modern work measurement can be applied to more than 90 per cent of the work done in industry; but this is not generally realised. While the measurement techniques have been evolving, large areas of industry have been content to rely upon the man-hour as a yardstick. The man-hour is, however, merely a measure of attendance time and has no direct relationship to the work done in the time passed. Progressive management cannot fulfil its essential tasks unless it makes use of the much more accurate bases of evaluation that are now available for determining the work content of a job for many purposes.

To conclude, may I anticipate the question which is bound to come into the minds of readers of this article? We are certain to be asked, why—since scientific method has been evolving over centuries—it has taken so long for thinkers in the field of Work Study to develop their approach? The only explanation is that Work Study people, like others, have the normal human built-in obstacles to progress. They are prepared to admit that this approach is nothing more than organising common sense: but like every reader of this article they are blessed with above average common sense

and therefore do not need so much as others to organise it. Another difficulty arises from technical arrogance or smugness—what Sir Charles Snow calls “technological conceit”. Sir Charles says that we have let technology go to our heads, and it has made us “sleepy, self-indulgent and self-congratulatory for nearly a century”. Those who have tried to apply new techniques will recognise this as a description of the “we’ve always done it” attitude or—in its more sophisticated Irish bull version—“disciplined thinking is insufficient for my problems—they are too complex!”

This is no new phenomenon. In his *Opus Majus*, Roger Bacon quotes “the long duration of custom” as one of the four chief hindrances to the understanding of truth. Truly, there is no new thing under the sun . . . The prejudices are old, and in this article I have tried to point out that the broad basis of the cure is also no new thing. What is new, and what has been proved over and over again in my experience to increase the likely incidence of correct decisions, is the single-minded and whole-hearted intensity with which logical method is applied.

For those who humbly accept this discipline (which is largely self-discipline) there are rich rewards both in their own development and the results they achieve.

INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC BUSINESS

in association with

SLOUGH COLLEGE

announces

A SUMMER HARVARD SEMINAR FOR BRITAIN

HIGHER BUSINESS CONTROL

led by Harvard Professor Pearson Hunt

Slough College — 21 and 22 July (1½ days) 5 gns

Full details from Department of Management at the College: very limited number of places available only: write to Gordon Wheeler at Slough