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THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

THE ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN INDUSTRY¹

FINDING AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF COMPETENT MEN

TWENTY-FIVE years of doing, finding and encouraging others to do scientific research in industry, and of organizing the machinery for the smooth and effective conduct of such research, have left me with a feeling that so far as this branch of human activity is concerned the problems in essence are not materially different from those met elsewhere. Years ago, in a less mature period of life, I may have thought that the effective industrial research man was a being somewhat different from his fellow workers in adjacent fields. I may have thought that some peculiar slant of mind, some slightly different outlook on life or some special appraisal of relative values branded him with a distinguishing hallmark that designated him unescapably for special treatment and special relationship in the industrial environment.

If such ideas were ever mine, I have long since outgrown them. My present view is that except in those details which are the direct consequence of a particular function, the problem of finding and encouraging competent men in industrial research is in no substantial measure different from the finding and encouragement of competent men in any walk of life. If this conclusion is correct, the subject I have been asked to discuss narrows itself down to a consideration of the things which distinguish achievement in industrial research from achievement elsewhere.

In any discussion of this sort one must have clearly in mind at the outset that which we wish to consider. I take it that we are not here concerned with the finding and encouragement of the rank and file of those who do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay in the field of industrial research, nor even with those who do somewhat more than a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I take it that we are considering what the title of the subject implies, namely, the finding and encouragement of competent men, that is, men competent in a creative sense or competent in

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