

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESOURCES STUDIES

*European Impressions
of the American Worker*

by ROBERT W. SMUTS

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Conservation of Human Resources

A RESEARCH PROJECT

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The CONSERVATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES project was established in 1950 within the Graduate School of Business, Columbia University, by General Eisenhower. Philip Young, then Dean of the Graduate School of Business, assumed responsibility for the general administration and supervision of the project from its inception until the spring of this year, when he became Chairman of the Civil Service Commission. Eli Ginzberg, Professor of Economics in the Graduate School of Business, is Director of the project.

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Foreword

IN 1950 General Dwight D. Eisenhower established the Conservation of Human Resources project to continue and expand studies in the human resources field initiated at the Graduate School of Business of Columbia University in the 1930's. The principal objective of the project is to increase basic knowledge in the field of human resources and thereby provide a solid foundation for policies aimed at conserving this most valuable national resource. *The Conservation of Human Resources Progress Report, Summer, 1953*, summarizes the results of the project's investigations through the middle of this year. Some of these results have been published either in book form or as articles in scholarly journals.

We consider it desirable to introduce at this time another method for making our findings available. We have decided to issue a series of monographs entitled *Human Resources Studies* in order to reach a wider audience than is possible through journals for those aspects of our work which are not suited for full-scale book publication. A major objective of this monograph series is to present our preliminary approaches and findings in the hope that we will profit from criticism and suggestions while our larger investigations are still under way.

The publication of *European Impressions of the American Worker* inaugurates the *Human Resources Studies* of the Graduate School of Business. Two other studies are also being released: *Psychiatry and Military Manpower*

*Policy: a Reappraisal of the Experience in World War II
and Issues in the Study of Talent.*

This first monograph is a by-product of a major investigation by the Conservation of Human Resources project into the key changes that have taken place in the position of the American worker since 1890. In evaluating how the American worker lived, worked, and thought in 1890 in contrast with today, we reviewed the impressions of foreign visitors who studied the American worker then and now.

Perspective is required for balanced judgment. Because of lack of perspective, Americans have frequently failed to understand the sources of their country's strengths and weaknesses as well as those of other nations. Many of the difficulties which the nation has encountered during the post-war years in its efforts to assist the free world to rehabilitate and expand its economic structure are the results of the way Americans view their own history and that of other nations. The Conservation of Human Resources project seeks to increase our knowledge and understanding of our own development, and it is hoped this monograph will contribute to this objective.

The first of the two chapters summarizes the reactions to work and workers in America of a large number of European travelers who visited the United States between 1885 and 1910. It uses selected reports of these visitors to gain perspective on the American worker, but it is not a comprehensive review of the treatment of the American worker in the travel literature of the period. The second chapter is based on the reports of the British Productivity Teams which studied American industry during the last few years. Since it is concerned mainly with British comments on the human factors in productivity, and not with the technical analyses which constitute the bulk of the reports, it should

not be taken as a balanced summary of the findings of the teams.

In preparing these materials Mr. Smuts had the guidance of Professor Henry David, who has primary responsibility for the project's larger study, *The American Worker, 1890-1950*.

We are indebted to the following for permission to quote from their publications: Dodd-Mead and Co., G. W. Steevens, *The Land of the Dollar*; Doubleday and Co., Hugo Münsterberg, *The Americans*; Harper and Brothers, H. G. Wells, *The Future in America*; Methuen and Co. Ltd., Katherine G. Busbey, *Home Life in America*; John Murray Ltd., Monsignor Count Vay de Vaya and Luskod, *The Inner Life of the United States*; Charles Scribner's Sons, Price Collier, *America and the Americans from a French Point of View*; the British Productivity Council, *Reports of the British Productivity Teams*.

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HUMAN RESOURCES

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