

QUESTION: If we were generally to adopt a 35-hour work week, what would be the impact on (1) the economy, and would it absorb this 25-year age group, (2) the social structure, and (3) management?

DR. BROWN: I am tempted to duck, by simply saying that it depends on how it is adopted. Perhaps, however, that is the answer. If you had asked this question when we were in a 45-hour week, and asked what would be the effect of our going to a 40-hour work week, I think the answer would have been the same. It depends on how it is done, and over what period of time it is done. If we did this by fiat tomorrow, I think it would be catastrophic. If we do it, however, by gradations and variations and over a period of time, with each decision moving in the direction of the objective, but being tested in terms of the circumstances that exist at the time it is taken, perhaps it will work.

There is a difference. How would you distribute it throughout the week? Would you lump it all in 3 days, and have 4 days off? Would you go to 4 days, or stay on 5 days and cut off part of each day?

Each one, you see, has to be a separate decision. Here I think the computer might be helpful. It has to be tested in terms of its result for any specific organization.

I think we are moving in that direction. As a matter of fact, a lot of people who are now on the payroll for 40 hours are working 35 hours already.

QUESTION: Dr. Brown, you have painted a fascinating and a somewhat disturbing picture of some future problems that management is going to have to face, with the underlying needs for new concepts and theories, for example, in economics and social relationships. Since we tend to look to universities to develop some of these fundamental theories and concepts, do you see them coming along now, or is this something that is still in the future?

DR. BROWN: I can only answer that by saying that I have disclosed to you all of the information and knowledge I have, and I did not provide the solutions. Let me, a little bit more seriously, say that these are problems that are being thought about and discussed and worked with in the universities. But we have no ready-made answers that I know of.