

"RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION"**C. H. BLAND**

Chairman, Civil Service Commission of Canada.

MR. R. B. BRYCE: Mr. President and members. As the chairman has explained, Mr. Bland is unable to be with us and he asked if I would read the paper which he has prepared. Inasmuch as I had asked him to prepare it, I could not very well refuse.

The effectiveness of any public administration depends in large measure upon the quality of the personnel engaged in it, and it is perhaps a truism to say that public administrators must be carefully selected, effectively trained and wisely utilized if the best results are to be obtained from their services.

Public administration has been defined as "the activities of the executive departments in the conduct of government." Are there fundamental differences between this public form of administration and that which prevails in private business? There are at least certain distinctive elements in each. In private industry the profit motive is a much more important factor than it is in government. Similarly the question of remuneration bulks more largely in private industry than it does in public administration. While the old conception of a post in a Public Service as "a job for life and a pension afterward" may have passed away, the financial rewards attached to administrative positions in the Public Services are not such as to render the public administrator subject to what Seneca speaks of as the most fertile source of human sorrow, namely, great possessions. Then, too, a public servant must be much more responsive to public opinion than his counterpart in industry. He must not only administer a policy but must sense whether or not that policy meets with public approval. He is subject at all times to public criticism and to investigations as to his acts, and this factor has a determining effect upon his methods of administration to a greater degree than exists in industry.

Subject to these considerations and to the more modern conception of government which, in the words of Lord Stamp, has "increased in scope from the acts of policemen and regulators to those of doctors and social reformers," what qualities should we say

that a public administrator must possess if he is to do a good piece of work in his post?

We could probably agree at the outset that he must be a man who knows sufficient of his field of work to be able to see that its activities are being properly carried out without actually viewing each particular detail himself, and he must likewise be a man who is able to delegate responsibility to others and supervise their efforts in such a way that without doing the work himself he can be satisfied that a good job is being continuously done.

These are general characteristics which might be required for any administrative post. What others should the public administrator have? From the point of view of knowledge, it has generally been agreed that his must be a capable mind endowed with natural gifts and developed by education so that he *possesses an* adequate background of one of the arts or sciences. Modern developments have *tended* to the view that a better mental background can be provided by training in what are regarded as the special instruments of public administration, namely, economics, commerce, history, law and political *science*.

In addition, the good public administrator must possess certain personal characteristics which, while not necessarily imparted in educational channels may, nevertheless, be developed and strengthened in such channels. First among these, I would place character or integrity. Given all the intellectual attainments under the sun and the pleasant personal characteristics which meet with the admiration of all, if a man has not character he will *not* make a lasting and effective public administrator. He must, furthermore, have the ability to maintain proper relationships with his staff, with the government, and with the public. Edmund Burke says that manners are of more importance than laws, and it is an unhappy public administrator who believes that laws can be administered without manners. It also goes without saying that the successful public administrator must have that elusive quality which we sometimes call wisdom, sometimes tact, and sometimes common sense. He must have the kind of disposition that will enable him to accept philosophically *the lack of those things* which his career cannot possess, and at the same time derive genuine satisfaction from being of service to his country and from doing a good job.

Above all, as has been said before, he must have the ability to get things done.

We now have a tough conception of the kind of men we are seeking. How can we find them and, having found them, how can we *tram* them?

The recruitment of public administrators involves some factors which are not found in the recruitment of private administrators. In the first place, any citizen who is qualified to fill a position in his administrative service is entitled to receive consideration for that position if he so desires. In the second place, if we are to have the best possible public service we must have the widest possible field of recruitment. Both considerations lead *to* the factor of open competition, which has been generally accepted for modern public personnel recruitment. "The best shall serve the State" was never truer than in the troubled conditions of government administration which exist today.

The technique of selection is not so important as *the* result, though it is generally carried out in modern practice by a Civil Service Commission or some such independent recruiting agency. If recruiting plans are wise they will include methods of securing and training administrative assistants and junior as well as senior administrators. There must also be a programme of advancement that will meet the needs of administration and also be an attraction to the best class of applicants.

It is desirable that a recruiting system for public administrators should be closely articulated with the educational *systems of* the country. Let us examine, in the light of history, the theory that public administrators can *best be* obtained by selecting the most brilliant minds from the ranks of *university graduates* without much regard for the particular course which they may have taken, and then training them in the technique of public administration. This, in a general way, *has been the system* followed in the British Civil Service. Quality of mentality rather than accurate knowledge of administrative detail has been the test, and on the whole the results have been *good*.

In the Canadian Public Service, from 1909 to 1914, a somewhat similar but not so selective a course was followed. The junior executive posts in the Service, or the training positions from which

such posts would normally later be filled, were recruited by means of an examination along university lines, so that a good general knowledge of second or third year university standards enabled the applicant to qualify for an appointment. True, there was competition, but generally speaking, not too high a level of knowledge was sufficient to insure admission to the Service. It is interesting to note that by no means all the persons who entered the Canadian Service on this basis secured or retained administrative posts, giving rise to the theory, with which we have dealt briefly, that personal characteristics, as well as educational background, are essential to make good administrators.

A second stage in the story of recruitment for administrative positions in Canada was that of the last five years (and to some degree, the five years preceding the war), when the British system was more closely followed and an endeavour was made to secure the best minds among university graduates, the emphasis being placed *on* quality, adaptability, and promise of development rather than upon specific knowledge in any particular field.

In the United States the approach has been somewhat different. More emphasis has been given to the desirability of education along the specific lines which have been regarded as particularly connected with the field of public administration. Special courses have been designed, special faculties set up and a special attempt made to instruct students in the technique of government, with the idea that the graduates so equipped would make better public administrators than those with other types of training. The courses often included actual internship in the Public Service, where the student dealt not only with theory but with actual practice. Some excellent administrators in both the United States and Canada have been developed in this way.

In general, public administrators in Canada have moved up the ladder of promotion, often from professional or technical ranks, or been recruited for the set purpose of administrative work.

The most desirable system of administrative recruitment should provide a clearly established period of probation in which the probable capacity of the appointee may be carefully estimated so that unsuitable material may be released and the most suitable employees may be wisely advanced. There must also be sufficient security, provided satisfactory service is given, to counterbalance

the comparatively limited opportunities of financial advancement, though within reasonable limits the compensation of the public administrator is at a much higher level than it was some years ago.

One of the difficulties experienced in many jurisdictions in connection with the "career system" is the reluctance of many heads of departments to release promising juniors from their own staffs and, sometimes, to accept promising juniors from the ranks of other departments. The British Public Service has much to teach us in this regard. It is common practice in Great Britain for an outstanding administrator to have served in several departments during his lifetime and even during his period of apprenticeship. This is not as common as it should be in Canada and the difficulties which have so far surrounded its acceptance by departmental heads, have been a barrier to the recruitment of promising material and to the all-round efficiency of the Public Service itself. There is, however, an indication that improvement in this particular direction may be expected in the near future.

While good public administrators may be "born", they must also be trained, and it is to the credit of public personnel bodies that post-entry training is now being given in a much larger way than it was some years ago. New appointees in many jurisdictions are now being given induction and orientation training immediately following their appointment, and training schools, panels, and seminars are in common vogue well up into the higher administrative hierarchy. The Institute of Public Administration itself, I am sure, can do much, through *its meetings and its publications*, to make available to public administrators the lessons of experience which are of the utmost value in any training scheme.

Sir William Beveridge has said that the three principles underlying any Public Service are poverty, anonymity and obedience. Poverty among public administrators is no longer the common condition that it was at one time and the salaries of public administrators now much more generally approximate the salaries paid in private industry, though it must be admitted that the opportunities of ultimate financial advancement are more limited.

While most public administrators will appreciate the desirability of anonymity as far as they are concerned, it is probably true that a greater appreciation of the importance and value of a Public

Service now exists both in the minds of the Government and of the people.

The "obedience" of the public administrator is frequently resented in the public mind as denoting the scorned characteristics of tradition, routine and red tape. It must not be forgotten that public administration necessitates certain checks and balances which are not necessary in private industry. At the same time, the public administrator may well remember that while tradition and procedure will warn him of pitfalls, they should not be allowed to prevent him from seeing that the "activities in the conduct of government" for which he is responsible are carried to a prompt and satisfactory conclusion. Evasion, procrastination and self-interest are still too much in our midst.

The public administrator has a high goal before him. Some of his tasks may seem thankless. Some of his rewards may seem small. "Pro patria" must be his watchword. One of the proudest titles of the Pope was "Servus servorum Dei", and the good public administrator must adopt the same attitude. If he does, he will find that no peace is higher and no compensation deeper or more enduring than the privilege of taking his part in the public administration of his community, his province, or his country. (Applause).

MR. L. E. PEVERILL: Thank you, Mr. Bryce. As we are pressed for time, we will not ask for discussion at this time. However, an opportunity will be afforded you later for discussion.

Our next speaker, as you will see from your programme, is Dr. W. A. Mackintosh. Dr. Mackintosh is the Vice-Principal and Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Queen's University. He is, I believe, eminently fitted to speak on his subject today. While he has been active in the academic field during most of his career, his administrative experience is very great, having been on leave from Queen's University from 1939 to 1946 when he held advisory posts in the Department of Finance and Reconstruction at Ottawa. He was special assistant to the Deputy Minister of Finance during the years 1939 to 1944 and Acting Deputy Minister of Finance during the year 1945, when Dr. W. C. Clark was recovering from a serious illness. In addition to the administrative posts held by Dr. Mackintosh during the war he was a member of the advisory board of Tariff and Taxation 1926-1929, the director of research of the

Canadian Pioneer Problems Committee, 1929-1934, a member of the National Employment Commission in 1936, a research assistant to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial relations in 1938-1939, and the Director General of Economic Research in the Department of Reconstruction during 1943-1946.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. Mackintosh. Dr. Mackintosh.