

**THE ROLE OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION OF CANADA**

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Mr. Chairman, I had come here with the intention of presenting a few thoughts on what The Institute of Public Administration of Canada aims, or should aim, to do and of suggesting some of the benefits which we hope to derive from it. But the very able addresses and lively discussion which we have enjoyed at this meeting affords far more convincing evidence of the value of an institute of public administration than anything I could say. I am advised, however, that an orderly programme demands a full measure of compliance and for this reason I should proceed. Before I do, may I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Walters for the many helpful suggestions in connection with the preparation of this paper.

My purpose is to deal with the Institute's present aims and advantages. You will well realize that, as conditions change and new matters absorb the attention of the members and of the public generally, there will be modifications or shifts in emphasis with a view to achieving the highest possible result.

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada was incorporated on December 15th, 1947, less than two years ago, in response to suggestions by public servants and university professors that an Institute of Public Administration should be set up in Canada for furthering the study of public administration. While the founders found inspiration and example in the two American associations—The Institute of Public Administration and the American Society for Public Administration—they adopted the basic form and the aims of the Institute *of Public Administration of Great Britain* which, since its establishment in 1922, has achieved a distinguished reputation under many able presidents, including Lord Haldane, Professor Graham Wallas, Lord Stamp and the present incumbent, Sir John Anderson, former Lord President of the Council and Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Churchill War Administration.

Underlying the creation of The Institute of Public Administration of Canada is the conspicuous fact of the wide range of government activities—the expansion of old functions and the proliferation of new. In many respects we are entering into untried fields. Whether we like it or not, the expansion of public services seems ordained. In earlier years, the duties of governments in Canada were limited to providing a few essential services which nearly everyone recognized could be performed efficiently only if carried out by a public authority. Today, the duties of government are much more impressive and complex. Governments are expected not only to provide a great array of services undreamed of a generation ago, but to operate as a positive force in the economic field to the end that both a high level of prosperity and a high degree of stability are maintained. I hardly need say that this new role poses many nice questions of timing and balance and that it places a heavy premium on administrative competence. Mistakes or weakness here strike at the whole economic structure, sapping the nation's strength. It is imperative therefore that we should support any means which will make the machinery of public administration in Canada better fitted and able to do those things which it now has to do and those which it may have to undertake in the future.

Can The Institute of Public Administration help achieve these purposes ? Can it help guard against administrative obsolescence and inefficiency? I believe it can. By the terms of its charter, the Institute is dedicated to the improvement of administrative organization and the maintenance of high standards in the public services. It plans to progress towards these ends by several routes.

A Meeting Place for Ideas

In the first place, the Institute offers an opportunity to public-servants, administrators in all types of government agencies, university teachers, students of administration and all other interested persons to come together in an informal and friendly way to exchange ideas and experiences. It is expected that national meetings will be held annually, while regional conferences may be held at any time at the discretion of the regional units. By meeting in this way with officials from all levels of government and with members from the universities, and from other fields, the Institute hopes to

foster a better understanding of the relations between government and the community and to establish a closer inter-relation between administrative theory and practice.

There are several reasons why these meetings should be of value. Many of the services which governments render today require continuous administration. The senior public servant applies laws and performs acts requiring the exercise of discretion and judgment in a great variety of situations. Although he is subordinate to his Government on all matters, he takes an active part in planning and advising on policies and he possesses a good deal of latitude on questions of administrative organization. The type and quality of administration practised is, therefore, to an important degree what the senior public servant makes it. At the municipal level, as Professor K. Grant Crawford has said, the quality of administration is probably even more dependent on the officers than at either of the other levels of government, for in the municipalities there is not that degree of supervision of work of personnel which occurs where the various departments operate under the full time direction of a member of the government. Moreover, the upper ranks of the permanent municipal service sometimes have more influence upon policies than do their corresponding numbers in the provinces or the Dominion.

While no doubt their influence varies, public servants, from many points of view, are well placed to analyze administrative organization, to discern shortcomings and to propose improvements. In fact, however, the public administrator has no easy method of judging the efficiency of the organization under his charge. The operation of a public department cannot be determined by whether or not it earns a profit. If the aim is a high level of performance, it must be judged against outside standards. Thus, it is wise for public servants to come together periodically to compare notes and explore methods for administrative improvement.

There is another reason why these meetings are a good thing. In a federation such as Canada, with its many economic and political regions, its diverse resources and its social peculiarities, both federal and provincial officials need the close contact with each other and with the municipal officers who have the most intimate knowledge

of local problems and conditions. In turn, the local administrator requires the broader perspective which discussion with provincial and federal officials can provide. The municipal officer is probably exposed to a more repetitious diet of the same problems and difficulties than is his counterpart in the other services. He needs the opportunity to view his work in relation to the whole picture; he needs the broadening influence of discussion with administrators who have to think in wider terms. By furnishing a channel of communication, the Institute may serve to make public servants at different levels of government better informed, more tolerant of opposing views and more capable of providing imaginative administration and of tying in with a co-ordinated national policy.

So far, I have confined myself to Canada, but promising results lie in the development of exchanges in the international field. The Institute of Public Administration of Canada looks forward to close co-operation with other professional bodies and in particular with the Institute of Public Administration of Great Britain, the American Society for Public Administration and the Institute of Public Administration with its headquarters at New York.

A Canadian Journal of Public Administration

The Institute of Public Administration of Great Britain, through its Journal, has earned an enviable reputation in a field where high quality in professional journals is commonplace. Dr. Coats, former public servant and Dominion Statistician of outstanding achievement, has referred to the British Institute's Journal as "a gold mine" and he has suggested that we ought to have such a journal in Canada. It is the intention of the Institute of Public Administration to introduce a journal on public administration. There is without doubt a great fund of knowledge and thought in the Canadian service which, if made available in published form, would greatly enrich the science of state administration. Unfortunately, public servants who are qualified to make contributions to administrative problems have been hesitant to express themselves in writing. There is no body of literature on public administration in Canada. Indeed, as Professor Brady says:

"There is no book by a Canadian public servant discussing his craft. Even articles of such authorship on administration are too few. There is no biography or autobiography which

relates how a Canadian civil servant tackled his tasks and the peculiar difficulties which he faced. There is nothing comparable to that rich literature in England, contributed to by public men and public officials, which illuminates the study of state administration. The absence of writing in Canada does not, of course, indicate a poverty in administrative achievement. But it certainly indicates either a poverty in intellectual interest or an unhealthy inarticulateness. It is perhaps also due to timidity, to an absorption in detail, and to insufficient recognition of the fact that the transmission of pragmatic knowledge and wisdom contributes to good government; in fact, it is imperative for good democratic government."

The editors of "Public Affairs"—the quarterly Journal of the Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University—have from time to time included articles on public administration. The Canadian Political Science Association has also published a number of able and informative articles on this subject—for instance, those on treasury control and training for the public services by Mr. Balls, Dr. Coats, Dr. Brady, Mr. C. H. Bland, and by two of our own distinguished members, Dr. W. C. Clark and Professor Crawford. In the November, 1945, issue of the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, the editors declared they would welcome more articles dealing with administrative problems and topics and they assured public servants that space would be provided even if it became necessary to expand the Journal or issue a supplement. I believe that the invitation is still there and as long as it is, it is a challenge to public servants to make their talents and experiences available on a wider scale.

It is significant that many of the articles on public administration which appeared in the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science originally appeared as papers at the Association's meetings. Through the holding of national and regional meetings, The Institute of Public Administration of Canada will have access to papers prepared for these purposes, and these, together with articles from other contributors, should add to the body of administrative knowledge and experience in Canada and contribute to a better recognition of the work of the public services.

The Institute as an Instrument for Education

Although the Institute must look to its senior members for leadership and the main contributions to the analysis of problems, it must at the same time open its doors to junior members and seek to assist them to develop their abilities and their powers, and to attain training in the principles of administrative work. Professor Callard spoke on this matter and I agree entirely with him. The vitality and continuity of the Institute and of the public services, in fact, can only be assured by providing opportunities for the active participation of "juniors". With this in mind, the Canadian Institute intends to encourage the establishment of courses in public administration in the universities which alone have the facilities, the knowledge and the skill for this work.

Some progress has, of course, been made in this field. Several of the provincial governments have sponsored courses, particularly for municipal officers on select subject, and some of the universities have set up courses. Prior to the war, a post-entry system of training was started in Ottawa by the Canadian Seminar of Public Administration, and produced what Mr. Bland has called "interesting and effective results".

In addition to in-service training, the alliance of the Institute with the universities provides a means of co-relating the great fund of practical experience the public service possesses, and of formulating principles which would serve as guide posts to all who seek to improve the machinery of administration. Dr. Mackintosh mentioned holding periodically a seminar of public administrators and professors for two or three weeks. It is a splendid proposal. Professor Brady has pointed out that while the universities can, and should, contribute to research in public administration, the most fruitful results can only come from a closer merging of the work of the universities with the experience of public administrators. "It is a platitude," he says, "that the complex problems of modern government can be explored and resolved only by an alliance of varied minds, especially those of the lawyer, the economist, the political philosopher, the sociologist, and the psychologist. . . . But research in the problems of government demands the ready co-operation and aid of the public servants. Indeed members of the federal service should give a lead in such research. But one could

wish that a larger number of senior men were more positively interested in the science of administration besides its practice."

The contact between the university and the Institute offers a great deal of promise. The benefits are mutual. University professors have felt the need of contact with the practicing administrator, while the administrator in turn gains from the professors' broad academic viewpoint and explorations in analysis. The co-ordination of the work of the administrator with that of the university affords an opportunity for constructive progress capable of yielding real benefits.

The Professional Interest of Public Servants

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada has no power or mandate to reform government services or to improve the lot of any member. It does aim to serve as an instrument to promote efficiency. One of the methods by which it may contribute to this end is by fostering a pride, a genuine pride, in the profession. With the growth in the public sector of administration, it has become imperative that governments attract men of first-class ability and character, men of creative imagination. The public service should be made so attractive that it will not merely draw good men to it, it will keep them.

Public servants should have a better programme of public relations. By this I mean that a good performance should be publicly appreciated. We do not seek to put a good face on undeserving things. The Institute recognizes that the best way of improving public relations is to improve the standard of public services. Nevertheless, when a job is well done, there is such a thing as bringing attention to it. Making the public conscious of work well done, will not only raise morale in the services and give servants more incentive to do a good job, it will serve equally to make the public -services more attractive to bright minds and industrious workers to engage in this tremendously important work.

Relations With Governments

The Institute is completely non-partisan and should so guide its activities that it does not side with any government or pass judgment on public or controversial issues. The question arises as to how free a public servant may be to express opinions on a specific organization of which he may have the most detailed knowledge.

May not the fear of violating confidences or incurring ministerial displeasure render sterile much of what a public servant may contribute to discussions and publication? This is an important question and my remarks here are drawn from British experience.

An extreme view has been expressed that a civil servant should not make any statement upon the subject with which he is officially concerned, except through ministerial or official channels. Adherence to that concept would, of course, seriously handicap the value of discussions. The public servant must naturally respect confidences, but at the same time he can act co-operatively. It is grossly wasteful to deny from those who may constructively profit from it, the rich store of knowledge and experience which the public service possesses. Naturally, there is a question of timing and a need for discretion; ultimately it should be made accessible as the opportunity presents itself.

The British Institute, according to Sir Henry Bunbury, has evolved a policy on the lines that to refrain from all criticism would destroy a large part of the Institute's value; for without it, no constructive work is possible. Criticism of policy and practice is, therefore, freely allowed on the responsibility of those who express it. On matters of current political controversy, on the other hand, its policy, says Sir Henry Bunbury, has been to hold itself rigidly aloof. The Institute does not lend itself to partisanship in political issues even though they may give rise to administrative aspects. With respect to the relations between permanent officials and their political superiors, the Institute has felt itself obliged, while not excluding the subject, to see that the matter is handled objectively and that the discussion does not degenerate into criticism of the policies themselves. In all these matters, the limitations which responsible persons naturally impose upon themselves have proved an adequate safeguard.

Although The Institute of Public Administration of Canada is an independent body, it is concerned with official matters. It recognizes that it must handle its subjects dispassionately and without bias. At the same time, if it is to be successful in carrying out its objectives, it needs the understanding and goodwill of governments.

Summary and Conclusion

May I take a few additional minutes to sum up ?

The increased complexity of social organization and the expansion and multiplication of government functions have given rise to a need for analysis and the discovery of administrative and technical ways for improving the machinery of public administration. The Institute of Public Administration of Canada aims to carry on a multiple programme with a view to meeting some of these difficulties. First, it plans to hold meetings of the national and regional bodies. These meetings will form a focal point for bringing together men in varied professions and engaged in many types of administrative work for the purpose of acquiring and pooling knowledge, insight and experience and for stimulating thought. Second, the Institute proposes to publish a Journal, to include the papers of good quality presented at the meetings and those submitted by other member and non-member contributors. Third, the Institute plans to assist junior members of the public service in various ways and, in particular, by encouraging university courses in public administration. Fourth, the Institute seeks to establish itself as a learned society for the benefit of its own members, others in the public service and the public at large.

By carrying through this programme, the Institute will achieve three main purposes. It will:

- (a) improve the efficiency of public services;
- (b) develop the principles and technique of public administration, and
- (c) promote a well-informed public opinion.

To make the programme successful, it is necessary to have the co-operation and unstinted support of public servants at each level of government—and of men in all walks of life, whether in the universities or in industry, who are interested in furthering the science of public administration.

What will the members of the Institute derive from it? A short and correct answer is, only what they put into it. Benefits are likely to be in proportion to the thought and effort that the members are prepared to devote to the Institute's discussions and

other activities. Actually, the benefits, while incalculable, are potentially large.

The discussions of the Institute at its national and regional meetings and the publication of its Journal will provide members with an opportunity for testing ideas and proposals, and for making many friendly contacts which often serve in conducting official business to avoid time-wasting red tape. Through its meetings, the Institute will present and analyze problems in the theory and practice of public administration in an atmosphere favorable to frank exchange of viewpoint. The interaction of the work of the services with the universities is welcome indeed. Given support, the Institute can be an educational instrument in a very real sense. The Institute, however, provides only the machinery, only the opportunity. If there is to be real achievement and benefits which will go out beyond to the public at large, there must be capable, hard-working persons who are prepared to give of their talents and energy to organizing and advancing the Institute's programme, not only in the national level but in the regions. If the regional units thrive and flourish, the Institute will grow and be a wonderful success. But it will be only by continuing effort that the Institute will succeed and make a contribution to the sustained progress of this nation.