

management is sometimes less active and determined than it should be; arguments are allowed to go on too long, and rigid procedures are accepted where flexibility should be insisted upon. These defects however are in no way inherent in the Whitley system itself. Its principles are fully compatible both with a different structure and with more flexible methods of consultation.

273. Our recommendations, if accepted, are bound to have a profound effect upon the pattern of joint consultation. The introduction of a common grading structure; manning the work by job evaluation rather than by reference to membership of a class; training arrangements that lead to fast promotion routes; career management that will open up new and wider prospects of promotion; an increase in late entry and short-term appointments—all of these will call for co-operation and goodwill between departments and the Staff Side centrally, departmentally and locally. These changes will surely also lead to structural changes among the associations themselves.

274. A remodelling of the Service on this scale is bound to impose strains on the Official and Staff Sides alike. There will be both a short-term and a long-term problem. The period immediately following the publication of our report will be a particularly testing time. It will call for a high degree of adaptability and readiness for speedy decision in a situation in which the long-term pattern of staff associations and joint consultation for the future cannot yet have become completely clear. For the longer term, we think that the staff associations and the Civil Service Department should jointly take part in a review to determine the new pattern of joint consultation that will be appropriate for the Civil Service in the light of the Government's decision on our report. It is clearly essential that the pattern of joint consultation should reflect, not determine, the results of the changes we propose. We are convinced that its principles are of immense value to the Service and will continue to be so.

CHAPTER 8

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE COMMUNITY

275. We said in Chapter 1 that the Civil Service "must continuously review the tasks it is called on to perform and the possible ways in which it may perform them; it should then consider what new skills and kinds of men and women are needed and how they can be found." This has led us to emphasise throughout our report that the Service should develop greater professionalism among both specialists and administrators. For the specialists, it means more training in management and greater responsibilities. For the administrators, it means that the old concept of the gifted amateur, the all-rounder who passed easily from one job to another, should give way to one of greater specialisation. Our proposals are, therefore, designed to create a fully professional and dynamic Service.

276. It would be naive to suppose that our emphasis on professionalism will not produce its own problems. All professionals look both inwards and outwards: inwards to their fellow-professionals, outwards to the community they exist to serve. The Civil Service must keep these two aspects of professionalism in a healthy balance and thus guard against the danger of isolation. It is particularly important for a professional Civil Service to keep in mind that, in carrying out the tasks of modern government, it should remain the servant of democracy and be responsive to the control of Ministers. It is, too, a major public interest that the manpower of the Service should be kept to the absolute minimum required for the efficient and humane discharge of its duties. We discuss these problems in the following paragraphs; we also comment on the need for other complementary reforms and put forward specific proposals about the implementation of our report.

CONSULTATION AND SECRECY

277. We think that the administrative process is surrounded by too much secrecy. The public interest would be better served if there were a greater amount of openness. The increasingly wide range of problems handled by government, and their far-reaching effects upon the community as a whole, demand the widest possible consultation with its different parts and interests. We believe that such consultation is not only necessary in itself but will also improve the quality of the ultimate decisions and increase the general understanding of their purpose.

278. We welcome the trend in recent years towards wider and more open consultation before decisions are taken; and we welcome, too, the increasing provision of the detailed information on which decisions are made. Both should be carried much further; it is healthy for a democracy increasingly to press to be consulted and informed. There are still too many occasions

where information is unnecessarily withheld and consultation merely perfunctory. Since government decisions affect all of us in so many aspects of our lives, consultation should be as wide as possible and should form part of the normal processes of decision-making. It is an abuse of consultation when it is turned into a belated attempt to prepare the ground for decisions that have in reality been taken already.

279. We recognise that there must always be an element of secrecy (not simply on grounds of national security) in administration and policy-making. At the formative stages of policy-making, civil servants no less than Ministers should be able to discuss and disagree among themselves about possible courses of action, without danger of their individual views becoming a matter of public knowledge; it is difficult to see how on any other basis there can be mutual trust between colleagues and proper critical discussion of different hypotheses. But the material, and some of the analyses, on which these policy discussions are going forward, fall into a different category; unless there are overriding considerations to the contrary (e.g. on grounds of national security, the confidential nature of information supplied by individual firms, or to prevent improper financial gain), there would be positive advantages all round if such information were made available to the public at the formative stage of policy-making.

280. Civil servants, and perhaps also Ministers, are apt to give great and sometimes excessive weight to the difficulties and problems which would undoubtedly arise from more open processes of administration and policy-making. In this connection, therefore, we wish to draw attention to practice in Sweden. At the formative stages of policy-making, there is wide and prolonged consultation, which normally takes the form of setting up a committee of inquiry; its report is generally published; the report and the public discussion that follows are then a major part of the basis on which the Minister has to come to a decision. In addition, all files of any administrative office (in Swedish terminology, ministries and agencies) are open to the press and the public if not declared secret on grounds of military security, good international relations or for the protection of individuals named in them (e.g. because they may contain criminal or medical records); when policy decisions are in preparation, however, working material is not made available for public use. This shows that open government is possible; we suggest that the Government should set up an inquiry to make recommendations for getting rid of unnecessary secrecy in this country. Clearly, the Official Secrets Acts would need to be included in such a review. Some restrictions on the objective of "open decisions openly arrived at" will doubtless remain necessary; but a mature democracy rightly demands that they should be kept to the absolute minimum. The fuller the information, the closer the links between government (both Ministers and civil servants) and the community; and the smaller the gap of frustration and misunderstanding between "them" and "us".

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND PARLIAMENT

281. We should also like to see Members of Parliament more purposively associated with the work of government than they are now. The traditional methods of parliamentary scrutiny have often failed to enlarge Parliament's

knowledge of what goes on or to secure for it a proper influence; at the same time they frequently impede the efficiency of administration. Even the work of the Public Accounts Committee has not escaped criticism for inducing a play-safe and negative attitude among civil servants (it has been referred to as a "negative efficiency audit"). We have noted the potential significance of the development of the new specialised Parliamentary Committees on agriculture, science and technology and education. We hope that these will enable M.P.s to be more closely associated with the major business of government and administration, both national and local, in these fields; we hope too, that their consultations with departments will increasingly include civil servants below the level of Permanent Secretary. It would be deeply regrettable, however, if these committees became an additional brake on the administrative process. We hope, therefore, that in developing this closer association with departments, Parliament will concentrate on matters of real substance, and take fully into account the cumulative cost (not only in time but in the quality of administration) that the raising of minutiae imposes upon them. We wish to draw special attention here to our proposals in Chapter 5 for accountable management and our recommendation that departments should be organised on the basis of accountable units. As we pointed out there, these proposals entail clear delegation of responsibility and corresponding authority. In devising a new pattern for a more purposive association with government departments, Parliament and its committees will need to give full weight to these changes.

282. We have noted the appointment of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman). He has not been at work long enough for us to assess the full implications for Ministers and the Civil Service of this new office. It is clear, however, that the office of Parliamentary Commissioner is to be regarded as a further means of ensuring the proper responsibility and accountability of civil servants to Parliament and to the public.

THE ANONYMITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS

283. The argument of the preceding paragraphs has important implications for the traditional anonymity of civil servants. It is already being eroded by Parliament and to a more limited extent by the pressures of the press, radio and television; the process will continue and we see no reason to seek to reverse it. Indeed we think that administration suffers from the convention, which is still alive in many fields, that only the Minister should explain issues in public and what his department is or is not doing about them. This convention has depended in the past on the assumption that the doctrine of ministerial responsibility means that a Minister has full detailed knowledge and control of all the activities of his department. This assumption is no longer tenable. The Minister and his junior Ministers cannot know all that is going on in his department, nor can they nowadays be present at every forum where legitimate questions are raised about its activities. The consequence is that some of these questions go unanswered. In our view, therefore the convention of anonymity should be modified and civil servants, as professional administrators, should be able to go further than now in explaining what their departments are doing, at any rate so far as concerns managing existing policies and implementing legislation.

284. We do not under-estimate the risks involved in such a change. It is often difficult to explain without also appearing to argue; however impartially one presents the facts, there will always be those who think that the presentation is biased. It would be unrealistic to suppose that a civil servant will not sometimes drop a brick and embarrass his Minister. We believe that this will have to be faced and that Ministers and M.P.s should take a tolerant view of the civil servant who inadvertently steps out of line. On balance we think it best not to offer any specific precepts for the progressive relaxation of the convention of anonymity. It should be left to develop gradually and pragmatically, though the inquiry we have recommended in paragraph 280 above may well result in specific recommendations on this closely related problem. The further it develops, the closer the links between the Service and the community.

MINISTERS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

285. We considered whether we should recommend that Ministers at the head of departments should be served by a personal *cabinet* on the French model, or alternatively that they should make a substantial number of largely personal and political appointments to positions at the top of their departments as in the United States. These are both devices that could be used to strengthen the Minister's control of the departmental policy-making process and to increase the sensitiveness with which the department responds to the needs of Parliament and the public. We have welcomed in Chapter 4 the introduction of the practice whereby Ministers make a small number of temporary appointments. We think it important that Ministers should be free to arrange for the holders of such appointments to be closely associated with the work of the many "official" committees (i.e. committees of civil servants without ministerial membership) which make an essential contribution to policy-making; the work of these committees places a heavy responsibility on civil servants to ensure that the choices subsequently presented to Ministers are not unduly circumscribed*. In Chapter 5 we also propose that the Minister should be assisted by a Senior Policy Adviser as well as by the Permanent Secretary and we suggested that the Minister's own methods of working would determine the pattern of relationships at the top and the precise division of responsibilities. These developments should increase the control of Ministers over the formulation of policy in their departments. In the light of them (taken in conjunction with our proposals in the next paragraph), we see no need for ministerial *cabinets* or for political appointments on a large scale.

286. A related issue is the extent to which a Minister should be free to change the staff immediately surrounding him. There is no problem about those who have been personally appointed on a temporary basis by his predecessor; when a new Minister comes in, they will go anyway. Thus the issue really arises only over the positions of the Permanent Secretary, the Senior Policy Adviser and the Private Secretary. Because of the nature of the

*One of us (Dr. Norman Hunt) considers that junior Ministers should also be sometimes not in a position to make a full contribution to departmental work. Their inclusion in official committees could strengthen the political direction of departments.

Private Secretary's duties, he must be personally acceptable to his Minister; there should therefore, in our view, be no obstacle in the way of a Minister's selecting from within the department, or on occasion more widely within the Service, as his Private Secretary the individual best suited to his ways of working; no stigma should attach to a person who is moved out of this job. As far as Senior Policy Advisers are concerned (whether career civil servants or those appointed from outside the Service on a short-term basis), we would hope that, as they will be selected for this job as men of technical competence and vitality, Ministers will not normally wish to replace them. This must however be possible when a new Minister finds the current holder of this office too closely identified with, or wedded to, policies that he wishes to change; or when an adviser's capacity for producing and making use of new ideas declines. It should be more exceptional, however, for a Minister to change his Permanent Secretary. Ministers change often, whereas the running of a department requires continuity. Even so, Ministers should not be stuck with Permanent Secretaries who are too rigid or tired. Any changes of this kind affecting Senior Policy Advisers or Permanent Secretaries will require the most careful consideration by the Head of the Civil Service and the Prime Minister, whose joint task it is in this context to safeguard the political neutrality of the higher Civil Service.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

287. It is manifestly in the interests both of the Service and of the community at large that they should not be remote from one another. In the past the Administrative Class of the Civil Service has been on easy and familiar terms with the learned professions and particularly with the older universities, less so with the world of industry and commerce; familiar with London, less so with the regions; and so on. We would wish, not that familiar relationships should be lost, but that they should be enlarged and made more comprehensive.

288. Where recruitment is concerned, we hope that the proposals we have made in Chapter 3 will increase the attractiveness of the Civil Service to the graduates of the great civic and the newer universities. We have noted with satisfaction the recent trend towards an enlarged entry to the Administrative Class from these universities. Those of us who propose that emphasis should be placed in selection on the relevance of subjects studied for degrees believe that this development will give further impetus to the trend. In addition, a graduate entry drawn from a wider range of universities should help to ensure that graduate recruits to the Civil Service become more representative, geographically, educationally and socially, of the nation at large than they have been in the past; we regard this as a desirable objective in itself.

289. We have also set out in Chapters 3 and 4 our proposals for the sharing of post-entry training with staff from nationalised and private industry, business and local government, and for a greater flow, both of "outsiders" coming in for varying periods to work in departments, and of civil servants going to take part in work outside. We regard these proposals as a means not only of increasing the effectiveness of Civil Service work but also of avoiding the risks of professional isolation.

290. We are aware that service to the community demands more than

greater professionalism and efficiency. In formulating our recommendations we have tried throughout to bear in mind the overriding importance of good relations between the Service and the public. As the responsibilities of government have widened, so has the influence for good or ill of the Service itself. Ordinary citizens confront the State at many points in their everyday life: it taxes them and determines their rights to social benefits; it provides for the education of their children and the protection of their families' health. As householders, many are dependent on the State's housing policies; as employers or employees, they are deeply affected by its success or failure in its management of the national economy. In practice, most people can discharge many of their obligations to their families only with the help of the services provided and controlled by the State. The Civil Service, as the agent of the State, is bound constantly to touch very sensitive nerves. In consequence, its qualities of integrity, understanding and efficiency are profoundly important to ordinary men and women.

291. We believe that the measures we have proposed can make a contribution to a closer relationship between the Civil Service and the community. But this problem has to be grasped in the wider context of other, complementary reforms, which go well beyond the reform on the Civil Service.

COMPLEMENTARY REFORMS

292. Our proposals for the reform of the Civil Service need to be seen as part of the more general reappraisal that is being made of our inherited forms of government and social and economic organisation. For example, since we began our work Royal Commissions have been asked to examine the structure of local government in England and Scotland; the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations has already reported; Parliament is modernising its procedures. The ability of the government to promote the country's well-being requires more than the reform of the Civil Service; so we attach great importance to the outcome of these other wide-ranging inquiries and developments, particularly those that affect the relationships between central and local government, between central government and private and nationalised industry, and between government departments and Parliament.

293. In this connection we considered whether we should propose a major review of the whole machinery of government, which has not been systematically examined by an outside body since the Haldane Committee in 1918. A number of witnesses who gave evidence to us thought that such a review was needed. Certainly, the division of responsibilities between departments, and the lines drawn between the responsibilities of central government and those of other public bodies, have a decisive influence upon the work of the Civil Service. The speed and effectiveness of decision-making are inevitably affected when, under the current organisation of the work of government, several departments have a legitimate interest in most major social and economic problems, and when these problems accordingly have to be handled through a large network of departmental and inter-departmental committees. Machinery of government, however, was outside our terms of reference, and we have not examined whether or not there was merit in the proposals put to us on this subject; but if the review of "living off", which we have proposed in Chapter 5, recommended substantial changes, this would

also provide the opportunity for simultaneous consideration to be given to a general review of the machinery of government.

MANPOWER

294. Throughout our work we have been conscious of the widespread public concern over the growing size of the Civil Service. The size of the Service (excluding the Post Office) since 1950 is shown below:—

	Administrative	Executive	Clerical (including Clerical Assistant)	Professional, Scientific and Technical	Other	Inland Revenue Customs and Labour (1)	Thousands Total (2)
1950	3.1	63.9	198.6	89.2	80.1	93.9	434.9
1955	2.7	62.7	155.4	104.5	62.5	88.4	387.8
1960	2.3	62.7	157.1	107.5	52.9	92.8	382.5
1964	2.5	68.7	168.9	121.4	55.1	95.1	416.6
1965	2.5	70.2	166.9	112.9	67.0	94.5	419.5
1966	2.3	73.4	172.1	123.1	49.5	98.4	430.6
1967	2.5	71.7	179.7	126.3	68.3	104.4	454.5
1968	2.7	83.3	191.9	132.3	61.4	110.9	471.6

(1) These are totals for the three departments. The figures are included in the other columns.

(2) Includes the Diplomatic Service which numbered 13,000 on 1st January 1968.

295. Naturally, the size of the Service is related to the size of the tasks directly carried out by the government. Today, although the Service accounts overall for less than 2 per cent of the working population, the figures conceal a larger claim on the qualified manpower of the country. It is regrettable that Civil Service and national statistics are inadequate to tell whether this claim is a growing one relative to other employments. But it is clear for example that the proportion of school-leavers with two or more "A levels" and equivalent qualifications in 1965 who joined the Civil Service was substantial. It is, therefore, of great importance to ensure that the Service uses its qualified manpower as efficiently and economically as possible.

296. Looking to the future, the Treasury have supplied us with short-term forecasts of the numbers of recruits who are expected to be needed, and the Department of Education and Science with longer-term projections of the output of the educational system, both at the various levels of educational qualification. We publish these papers, with other statistical material, in Volume 4, Section II. On the supply side, there is likely to be a shift in the pattern. Two main points are of particular significance. First, the actual output from the educational system to the labour market will increase at each of the graduate, "A level" and "O level" output points. Secondly, however, within these all-round figures, the increase in the output of graduates will be proportionately greater than the increase in the "A level" output, and the increase in the "A level" output will be proportionately greater than at "O level". On the demand side, the future is necessarily more obscure. We think however that the general trend, a continuing rise in the demand for qualified manpower, which seems to be common to all advanced countries, is likely to be reflected in the British Civil Service as the work demands increasingly advanced management techniques and higher technological sophistication. We would therefore expect a steady advance in the standards of skill and qualification of the Civil Service as a whole. We discuss the

effect of this trend on the recruitment of graduates to the Service in Appendix F.

297. We see no reason in principle why the Civil Service should not be able in future to recruit the numbers of staff it needs, though there are, and will no doubt continue to be, temporary shortages of people with specific kinds of skill. The Service will however need to be truly competitive in what it offers, if it is to attract its share of really able men and women at all levels; our proposals are intended to make it so.

298. We are conscious that some of our own proposals call for increases in qualified staff. The main proposals that do so are:—

- (a) the establishment of Planning Units;
- (b) the creation of a Civil Service College and the expansion of the training programme;
- (c) greater attention by departments to personnel management and career development;
- (d) the expansion of departmental management services in the cause of increased efficiency and economy;
- (e) the new Civil Service Department, which with its increased responsibilities will need to be larger than the present "Pay and Management" group of the Treasury.

In addition, the new grading-system we have recommended in Chapter 6 will require a comprehensive job evaluation throughout the Service; we doubt if it can be done without a further, even if temporary, increase of staff.

299. These increases must be viewed both against the size of the Service as a whole and against the benefits they will bring. As to the former, they are likely to be relatively very small, though as a claim on qualified manpower, they will be more significant. The case for them however depends wholly upon the latter; we can justify them only by the results we expect them to achieve.

300. We believe that the reforms we propose are necessary to make the Civil Service equal to the tasks of modern Government. In spite of the increases in staff to which we have referred, we believe that they will also lead in the end to worthwhile economies and greater efficiency in the use of manpower. This is not because we have found civil servants to be under-employed today. But we are not convinced that every job they do is essential in order to meet the demands that are placed on the Service by the country; there is not in our view adequate machinery for ensuring that this is so. We therefore set great store by the potential gains from the large-scale programme of job evaluation we have called for in Chapter 6 and from the expansion of management services proposed in Chapter 5. Together, they should do much to ensure that the nation gets value for money, by providing a built-in safeguard against over-staffing, both in quantity and in quality.

301. We stress that Ministers and civil servants alike should keep the need for economy in administration constantly in mind in devising their policies. Increasing sophistication in the methods and techniques of government, for example in those that arise from the large-scale introduction of computers, offers constant temptations to go in for complexity. Even in a

computer age, complexity costs time and money—a cost which often falls upon the organisations and individuals who have to respond to new government initiatives as well as upon the government itself. Since most new legislation involves additional tasks for civil servants, we attach considerable importance to the developing practice of recent years whereby new policy proposals are accompanied by detailed estimates of manpower costs. We think that these, no less than other costs, should be the subject of parliamentary and public debate. Simplicity, and thus economy, in administration should be a constant goal. We would also add that where work can be done more economically by outside organisations, the Civil Service should always be ready to take advantage of this.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR PROPOSALS

302. We have not spared our criticisms of the way in which the Service is run and of its other defects. We have however been deeply impressed by its very considerable strengths: its integrity, humanity, willingness at every level to carry the load of detailed work which composes so large a part of the country's public business. Any Minister or Parliamentary Secretary who has ever had to carry a complicated Bill through Parliament or to bear the brunt of an unpopular policy, knows this well. We have seen too, in the evidence we have received from civil servants, many signs of a strong desire that the organisation within which they do their work should be remodelled to enable them to do it more effectively.

303. Fully to implement our recommendations will naturally take a number of years. It will call for much discussion, especially with the various staff associations. As a first priority, however, there is an immediate need to:—

- (a) set up the new Civil Service Department, designed and staffed to carry out the basic principles of our recommendations;
- (b) set up an extensive training programme, so that present civil servants who have not been given adequate opportunities for training in the past can acquire the knowledge and skills they need.

304. For the longer term we hope that the government will take steps to review the progress made in implementing our proposals. This could be by means of an annual report to Parliament during the next five years. Alternatively, the Government might consider whether there is a need at the end of that period to set up a small committee to review progress and report to Parliament*.

305. A modern Civil Service reconstructed on the basis of these proposals (some of which are elaborated in more detail in the various appendices to this volume) will, we believe, make possible the progressive and efficient conduct of our affairs.

306. We have made far-reaching proposals on many important matters. We know that they will not be easy to carry out. A great deal of prolonged, difficult and complicated work will be needed. We have seen that the Service

*Five of us (Sir Philip Allen, Mr. W. C. Anderson, Sir James Dunnett, Sir Norman Kipping and Lord Simey) hope that the Civil Service, which has been in a state of uncertainty during the two years we have been sifting, will not have to face the prospect of a review by another committee after five years. A committee on the lines suggested would hardly limit itself to considering the implementation of our proposals.

has men and women with the ability, vision and enthusiasm to carry the task through to success. The new Service they will be creating will be one that offers a stimulating and challenging career to the men and women who work in it.

FULTON (*Chairman*)

NORMAN KIPPING

P. ALLEN

W. C. ANDERSON

EDWARD C. G. BOYLE

WILLIAM R. COOK

L. J. DUNNETT

N. C. HUNT

R. R. NEILD

ROBERT SHELDON

SIMEY

J. E. WALL

R. W. L. WILDING (*Secretary*)

M. A. SIMONS (*Assistant Secretary*)

19th June, 1968

RESERVATION TO CHAPTER 1

1. I sign Chapter 1 of the Report subject to the following reservations.
2. I think that the chapter is unfair to the Civil Service. While I agree that far-reaching changes are now desirable, the chapter fails to recognise, in my opinion, the contemporary relevance of the great contribution the Service made to the successful conduct of the war and, subsequently, in the transition from war to peace. I believe that full recognition should be accorded to the British Civil Service for its many achievements and qualities, and that the chapter's emphasis on the Service's present shortcomings gives a misleading impression of its future potentials. The Committee were told in France that those who were responsible for remodelling the French Civil Service at the end of the war had much in mind the qualities of the British Administrative Class. There have been recommendations also from time to time in the USA, that something equivalent to the British Administrative Class might, with advantage, be established.
3. Whilst it is no doubt true to say that the foundations of the Civil Service were laid in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is surely also true that the main characteristics it displays today are mid-twentieth-century developments. Although its creation has been called "the one great political invention of nineteenth-century England", it is also evident that its continued growth is an achievement of our own times. The Northcote-Trevelyan reforms led to the creation of the Civil Service Commission, the open competition and to a structure which was the forerunner of what we have today. But events alone have produced a very different and more positive-minded Administrative Class over the years, starting perhaps with Lloyd George's Insurance Act, followed by two World Wars and all the developments since. After each of the World Wars the Service in fact did a good deal to reorganise itself and, if it has not gone as far as is called for in fully integrating the professional classes of the Service, the place that they have been given since the Second World War is very different from the one that they held before.
4. What we have now to face is essentially a situation which has arisen in the post-war world; this requires a capacity to face the truth at all costs, however inconvenient it may be to do so. This capacity is, I believe, already available to us in the Civil Service as it exists at present, but a degree of reorganisation and further development is required if its fullest potentialities are to be made available to us. This is common ground. I am therefore disappointed that the proposals embodied in this report, and fore-shadowed in the present chapter, assume that what is required is something approaching revolutionary changes. My own view is that necessary reforms could be obtained by encouraging the evolution of what is basically the present situation, given the necessary amendments in direction and emphasis. The Treasury proposals before us already suggest many ways in which this may be achieved.