

File 20110627.1107: Notes from [1] printout:

Page 224 (Chapter 17) on ‘the bureaucratisation of the scientist’. Committee/team results. ‘In highly applied or urgent research, like making a radar, this discipline is valuable in keeping people focused on the matter at hand, and in any research some coherence and direction is necessary. Too much, however, and the scientist is kept focused on the outward and, in many respects, secondary matters.’

Page 225 (Chapter 17) ‘A vicious cycle has set in. In making application for a grant before World War II, a few lines or at most a paragraph or two sufficed for the experimental design; now it may extend over six to eight single-spaced typewritten pages. And even then committee members may come back to ask for more details. Under these circumstances, passing the buck has come to be practiced very widely.’

Page 226 (Chapter 17) ‘As one young scientist, Walter Roberts, puts it: “There is a tremendous difference between science as it is done in the laboratory and science as it is reported. True science is helter-skelter, depending on one’s hunches, angers, and inspirations, and the research itself is done in a very personal fashion. Thirty or forty years ago, it was written up this way. In reporting a great discovery a scientist would say, ‘I was working on such-and-such a reaction when I dropped some sulphuric acid by mistake. When I examined it I found, to my surprise, a strange thing going on. . . .’ But today nobody would write it up in this way.”’

References

[1] William H. Whyte. *The Organization Man*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1956.