

CHAPTER 8

HOW TO GO ABOUT YOUR JOB

THIS IS a subject that can be dealt with adequately only in the course of actual 'on-the-job' training. To draw out any rules or principles we need experience of a particular job. Rules have to be established by trial and error in the actual situation. Remember therefore that, although they have been discovered in this way, the following principles are generalisations to be related to your own needs. We shall state them briefly, to begin with.

- (1) **Understand your job and its setting.**—Develop an inquiring, critical and analytical attitude. Ask questions. Identify every aspect of your work with a purpose to be served or a problem to be solved. Make sure you know—

What is expected of you.

How you can best go about it.

Why it has to be done.

When it has to be done.

- (2) **Be methodical and keep up the flow of work.**—That is to say: Keep your papers in order and on the move.

Form the habit of surveying your work on hand each day and arranging in order of priority; check the priority of work as it comes in: keep your desk clear of pending work so that you generally have only one job on your desk at a time.

Remember that your habits may be taken to reflect your mind.

- (3) **But do not get rid of papers without carefully examining them.**—Before passing papers on, make sure (*a*) that they do not concern you, and (*b*) that you know whom they do concern. This rule, like all others, will pay dividends. In finding out just who does deal with a particular file, you will add to your knowledge of the organisation. But above all, you will help to prevent aimless circulation of papers and consequent delays.

- (4) **Before seeking information, think out clearly exactly what you want to know.**—Put your question concisely, whether it is in writing, or over the telephone, or in a personal interview. If the answer is complicated, make a note of it.