

All this not only saves the time of other officers but also makes a favourable impression.

Consistent with maintaining economy, of course, and the nature of the inquiry, use the telephone whenever you can. Make sure, however, that you leave some record of action and decisions.

(5) **Be prompt**, but do not sacrifice accuracy for speed.

**Be accurate**, but do not sacrifice promptness for accuracy. In other words, aim to cultivate both accuracy and speed and to keep them in their proper relation to the purpose to be served. There are certain jobs for which speed is all-important and others for which accuracy is all-important. Time may prevent you from verifying all relevant opinions or statements, but always avoid taking anything for granted. In your endeavour to be prompt, never try to cover up your ignorance of relevant facts.

(6) **Do not postpone difficult tasks.**—Having taken up a paper with the intention of dealing with it, do not put it aside in favour of something easier. Repeated postponement of the 'hard ones' gives rise to a sense of inability to handle them.

(7) **Be decisive.**—A favourite pretext for indecisiveness is the claim that one needs more time to 'think it over'; but remember that very often a man is indecisive simply because he fails to think things over fully. The rule should be, therefore, to think it over and make up your mind promptly and decisively.

(8) **Be ready to exchange ideas** and information with other officers. This will promote good personal relations and team work within the office.

These, then, are the most important general precepts. Detailed advice and guidance about your particular job will be given to you as part of your departmental training; but if you are wise you will try to apply the above rules throughout your career. They appear to be platitudes, or commonplaces, when simply stated, but they are so important as marks of a good craftsman that they deserve further discussion.

### *Understanding Your Job*

Ask questions about what you have to do, how you can best set about doing it and what its purpose is and when you have to complete it. As far as possible, get to know how work comes to your particular section and where it goes on leaving the section; that is, obtain the best possible idea of the general setting of your job.

We have mentioned already the special place held in the Public Service by written records, written evidence of decisions and written reasons for these. The Service is a moving world of files, memoranda and minutes, and of Ordinances, regulations and orders. Nowadays more