

## *Accuracy in Thinking*

If at any time you have occasion to ask for information about work in your section or in another section or division, think out carefully beforehand exactly what you want to know; put your question as shortly and clearly as possible; and make a note of the answer if it is important. In this way you will both make a good impression and save the time of other officers.

As for addressing yourself to any actual task, we hardly need to emphasise that exactitude and sense of fair play are minimum demands in business, public or private. In the first place, study your task closely until you feel that you fully understand it. Then, after collecting your facts carefully and checking them over, think out all the considerations bearing on the problem. Verify all opinions expressed or statements made. Take nothing for granted, accept nothing as 'near enough'; unless of course, there is a strict time limit on your job, and you have done all you can in the time at your disposal. For although accuracy is important it sometimes has to give way to speed. The aim should be to cultivate habits of both speed and accuracy.

In your anxiety to finish the job, resist the temptation to cover up your ignorance of any relevant fact, or of any step in the argument by vague general statements. Do not attempt to mislead. Pursue your inquiry until you are fully satisfied. If you fail to get to the bottom of any question, say so, indicating any difficulty that remains.

## *Submissions and Letter-writing*

In writing down the results of your work, be simple and clear. Practise making your words convey your exact meaning, and after a time you will find yourself making surprising progress in exact expression. Most people can easily see through an attempt to use words to hide your thoughts or to cover up a difficulty.

Your drafts or your letters should be short and to the point, accurately expressing what you mean. Answer the question, asked of you; give the information required, not some other information, and express it in language which the person addressed will understand in the same sense as you do. Clearness is helped by connecting phrases and passages. Design your writing so as to throw most emphasis on the important points. End by bringing out quite clearly and distinctly your conclusion and the decision or action recommended. Always read over critically what you have written.

Try to settle in one letter the whole question asked of you. Do not leave the matter incomplete so as to give yourself breathing space in which to obtain further information or think over a problem you could have dealt with fully at once. Deal with the matters thoroughly and fully. Give full reasons for any decisions. If your department has not the power to accede to any request or afford any service, explain this.

If your file of papers is long and complicated, preface your argument with a brief summary of previous action, setting down the essential points, but not condensing overmuch, for the reader will not be as