

familiar with the background of your inquiry as you will have made yourself.

In submissions, state first the purpose of the submission and end up with a short recommendation for action.

### *Handling Papers*

So far we have tried to bring out the need for exactitude, accuracy, thoroughness. It is now time to change the emphasis to promptness and the spirit of decision. Here we cannot do better than give the gist of remarks by an English civil servant, Sir Henry Taylor, 'concerning certain points of practice', in *The Statesman*, ironically described as a treatise 'on the art of succeeding'.

When reading what follows, remember that even the most junior job offers scope for initiative, and that you cannot begin to cultivate good working habits too early.

Taylor recommends that as fast as papers are received you should examine them quickly to ascertain whether any are in need of immediate attention. Then separate and arrange them. Settle anything on which action can be taken at once; for example, if a glance definitely shows that you will need more papers on any case, send for these straight away. Once your papers are arranged, so that you know the order of urgency of each paper or file, do not allow yourself to look at a paper or handle it, except with the fixed purpose of going through with it and finishing it off. The reason for this rule is that the practice of looking at papers, and handling them without disposing of them not only wastes time, but lends to them an air of difficulty and trouble. Moreover, it is desirable to act upon a paper or file whilst it looks fresh; for it becomes uninteresting if the eye has got used to its lying about.

Take up the urgent things first and deal with the others in their order of priority, or in the order in which you receive them. Avoid the temptation to deal with the easiest things first. Taylor says that a man of business should accustom himself, when there is no other ground of priority, to deal first with the question of the greatest difficulty, for this is the question which requires to be taken up when it is new and while you are fresh. This precept should always be followed. Men who feel themselves unequal to important tasks usually pick on the smaller ones, and satisfy themselves that they are fulfilling their duties by disposing of all these, until they have time to undertake the complex affairs; whereas their practice should be to delegate to others, wherever possible, the easy and less important matters, thereby making time for the important.

Keep a diary for notes of things to be done later. Do not hold up a file because you cannot deal with it at the moment. Keep a note of what concerns you and pass the file on for action elsewhere.

If marking a file 'resubmit, to follow up or take further action', note it in your diary; it takes little time and helps check against any accident in the working of the records system.

Another valuable aid is to keep in an indexed folder the lists showing distribution of work, circulars outlining office and financial