

ordination of policy and action, of course, is achieved through the Council of Ministers as a whole). So what you do must be consistent with the wishes of your Minister, communicated to you down the line from the permanent head of your department. This is a firm tradition. The public servant accepts this tradition or code, no matter what political views he may hold, because he believes in parliamentary democracy and public service in accordance with the wishes of the Legislative Assembly.

As the scope of government grows in extent and variety, the Ministers and the Legislative Assembly find greater difficulty in keeping in touch with vast masses of detail. So it becomes harder for the public servant to be sure that what he does accords with the policy of the Minister and the Legislative Assembly. The scope for discretion and the use of good sense grow. Correspondingly, the public servant's sense of responsibility to the public must be heightened.

Fortunately, much of the work of the public servant, especially the routine work which helps to keep the wheels of society going round, offers little scope for debate or for party political controversy. All parties acknowledge that there is only one right way of performing most of the tasks that fall to the public servant. But even when his work springs from great party measures, the duty of the public servant is clear. As a servant of the public, through the government of the day, he is bound by a great tradition of public service, under the usages of parliamentary government, to give effect efficiently and fairly to the policies of the dominant party or parties. He is the servant of the public, not the partisan of any particular policy. The Service is non-political and the public servant should serve impartially and to the best of his ability whatever government may be in power.

*Criticism of Service.*—In the past, some have held that the great tradition of the public service has suffered through a lack of a sense of proportion and a sense of fitness. Few have quarrelled with its emphasis on political neutrality, but a common criticism has been that it has placed altogether too great an emphasis on caution and accuracy and on keeping out of trouble to the detriment of constructive action, rapid decision, and sympathetic insight into the needs of the community.

Again, the Service has been criticised for excessive formality or 'red tape' and for circuitous administration arising through the vast machine being cumbersome and slow. It is claimed that responsibilities are never clearly defined, and that public servants hesitate to assume responsibility, even when defined.

Some, at least, of the criticism results from a misapprehension of the role of the Public Service. In the past the Public Service has sometimes been unenterprising, but this reflected the traditional 'laissez-faire' outlook of government and society. Society's approach to the Service used to be purely negative. The great social objectives were to get rid of patronage and to reduce the cost of government. To-day the outlook has changed. The objective of administration is to perform