GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE

SERVING SINGAPORE

A HANDBOOK FOR NEW ENTRANTS

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Personnel Branch

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Preface

You have now become a member of the Singapore Public Service and will be anxious to know what that really means and how you can become a good Public Servant.

You may have joined the Service for one of many reasons. You may have followed in the footsteps of a member of your family who is already a Public Servant. You may have been attracted by the variety of work offered or by the size of the salaries paid, or even by the distant prospect of a pension.

The Public Service covers an immense range of occupations. The places of work range from head offices in the City to small post offices in distant villages. A Clerk in the Records Branch of the Chief Secretary's Office is a public servant, as is a School Teacher in Pulau Tekong; so is a Customs Preventive Officer on the wharf at Telok Ayer, a labourer on a road project at Bukit Timah, a typist in the Printing Office at Bidadari, or an Inspector of Timber in the Kallang Basin; in other departments we find scientists, engineers, lawyers, economists, research workers and general administrators.

In this small handbook, we do not aim to explain all the detailed procedures and organisation of the Singapore Public Service. We concentrate on the common features of the Service. There is much to learn; at the beginning the important thing is to present a broad picture of the work of a public servant.

Read it through carefully and it will help you to see your place in the whole Service simply and clearly. As you settle down in your job, sections of this handbook will take on more meaning. Keep it beside you and read it over again occasionally. You will still get some new ideas from it.

When your departmental training begins you will learn how your particular department, division and section operate, and what is expected of you in your particular job. This more detailed information will have to be expressed in more formal language and will fill out the present brief sketch. This handbook is written quite informally, aiming to do no more than describe the setting of your job in the Service as a whole and not replacing or overruling any more formal instructions which you may receive.

CHAPTER 1

GOVERNMENT AND THE SINGAPORE PUBLIC SERVICE

THE WORD 'government' is used loosely in many ways. At times it is used to mean the whole state organisation—the Legislative Assembly, the Council of Ministers, the Administration and the Judiciary. At other times it is used to denote the dominant party or coalition of parties in power for the time being in the Legislative Assembly. Again, in popular language, the acts of a government department or even of an individual public servant are frequently spoken of as acts of the 'government'.

Under the Constitution of 1955, the Executive Government of Singapore consists of the Council of Ministers, with the Governor as President. The departments of the administration are arranged in groups, each of which is in charge of a Minister. There are nine Ministers. Three of these nine (the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary) are officials. The other six are appointed and are normally drawn from the party or group of parties in power for the time being, i.e., with a majority in the Legislative Assembly. Of these six, the principal minister, called the Chief Minister, is at once the leader of the Government of the day in the Legislative Assembly and the leader of his party.

The Council of Ministers, like the Cabinet in other forms of parliamentary government throughout the British Commonwealth, is the centre of gravity of the Singapore political system. It forms and gives effect to all executive policies, prepares and authorises the legislative programme and exercises control over financial affairs.

The Ministers who comprise the Council are responsible to the Legislative Assembly, and through that body to the people, for the administration of all departments. They are, whether *ex-officio* or appointed, the political heads of the departments. Subject to their responsibility to the Council of Ministers and the Legislative Assembly, they have ultimate control of the departments that go to make up the Singapore Public Service.

The permanent heads of departments, the Permanent Secretaries, on the other hand, are permanent public servants and are responsible to the Ministers for the organisation and conduct of their departments or groups of departments.

As a public servant you serve the Minister in charge of your department. Through him, you serve the Legislative Assembly and hence the people of Singapore.

Your minister has to accept responsibility for your actions—do not let him down!

If you look at the back of this book you will find two appendices. Appendix I shows you at a glance the structure of the Government of Singapore. Appendix II will show you which Minister your department serves.

The Public Service of Singapore comprises all those officers, technical, professional and administrative, skilled and unskilled, who are responsible for carrying out the functions of all these departments.

The Administration has increased in size and complexity with the rapid growth of Singapore. Economic crises, world wars and greater participation in South-East Asian affairs have all hastened its development. It is interesting to trace briefly the evolution of the Singapore Public Service from 1826 to the present day, over more than four generations.

In 1826, Singapore was joined with the Presidency of Penang under the control of the Governor-General of India. In 1832, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, alarmed at the lavish expansion of the Presidency administration, reduced the status of the Straits Settlements to that of a Residency.

Singapore's total public service at that time consisted of a Governor and two Assistants, who economically shared all the various duties. They divided between them the functions of Superintendent of Lands, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Convicts, Magistrate and Commissioner of Court of Requests and Superintendent of Public Works. The Governor retained the right to act as a judge and sit with the Recorder. In certain departments this economy of staffing was too drastic and new appointments were made: a Superintendent of Convicts and a Government Surveyor in 1843; a Secretary and Aide-de-Camp to the Governor in 1851; a Commissioner of Police in 1856; and a Chief Engineer and a Postmaster in 1858.

By 1867, when the Straits Settlements were transferred to the Colonial Office, the civil service had attained high standards; it had, however, a very haphazard development. Its senior officers were recruited mainly from the Bengal Civil Service. These Indian Civil Servants saw little prospect of promotion comparable with that to be gained in India and rarely settled down with any intent to make a career in this country. Knowledge of a local language was not compulsory, and any familiarity with the native laws and customs was left to the processes of time and the routine of duty.

The era between 1867 and 1955 has been one of extremely rapid change, and every single aspect of government and administration has had to be continuously adapted to the changing needs of our time. To show the extent of those changes, it is sufficient here to draw attention to the variety of departments ranging from Social Welfare and Elections to Fisheries, to the Higher Schemes of Service open to the young men and women of Singapore, to probationary periods of service with compulsory examinations in local languages, laws and regulations and to the evolution towards full Ministerial government.

CHAPTER 2

A CAREER PUBLIC SERVICE

As a public servant, then, you are a member of a large service which mans the Singapore Administration.

Every civilised country has developed some form of government, together with public servants to help carry on the work of the state. In ancient Egypt, China and Rome, for example, there were mature and highly organised civil services, and all modern states are directed by governments, advised and helped by a civil service.

In the past, the appointment of civil servants was the personal prerogative of patrons. To begin with the patron was the head of state or his immediate circle of friends—in the United Kingdom, the King and his nobles. After 1689 in the United Kingdom, this prerogative of appointment passed into the hands of the newly formed cabinet. Later as parliamentary government continued to evolve, patronage of civil service appointments became the prerogative of the majority side of Parliament. Such a system of appointment by family or political influence often resulted in corruption, incompetence and lack of continuity.

From the Reform Act of 1832, the character of parliamentary government began to change. The extension of the vote and greater popular representation gave a new bias to the administration of government. Good government, from being the enforcement of law and the levying of taxes according to the requirements of a privileged minority, became the instrument to carry out the more constructive operations which would satisfy the social needs of the majority. The functions of government, once comparatively simple, became complicated and incompetence and corruption could not be tolerated.

It was becoming clear that the Administration required a staff or civil service, which was of good quality, which would carry out the policies expressed by the parliamentary representatives of the people and which could maintain the administrative machinery in good working order at all times so that there would be no breakdown in the everyday life of the people when there was any violent change of opinion expressed in the popular franchise.

In 1855, the recommendations of the Northcote-Trevelyan Commission were accepted and the English Civil Service Commission was set up as a central examining and recruiting agency. The principle of open competitive examinations was accepted in 1870 and since then the idea of a Commission which is able, independently of all persons

and authorities in the state, to guarantee the impartiality of all appointments to the Public Service, has found a steadily widening application in the democratic world.

In Singapore, a Public Services Commission was established by the Public Services Commission Ordinance, No. 55 of 1949. This body, the embryo counterpart of the Civil Service Commissions in many other parts of the Commonwealth, is able, independently of all other persons or authorities in Singapore, to advise the Governor on appointments, methods of recruitment, promotion beyond the timescale, and where required on terms of service or any matter affecting the Public Service which may be referred to it by the Governor. The Commission constitutes the guarantee in the future of the maintenance of a Career Service devoted to the service of the people of Singapore.

The development of such a non-political Public Service, sometimes called a 'career' or 'merit' service, is possibly one of the greatest political inventions of recent times. A 'career' service, with recruitment by open competitive examination, promotion by merit and frequent transfers to afford a wide range of experience for its officers, is as great a public achievement as parliamentary government, and it is difficult today to imagine the one without the other in a democratic country.

Structure of the Service

The Public Service, like other large enterprises, finds it necessary to order and sort out staff by classifying its officers. The prime classification is into Divisions, employed in every department. This was carried out on the recommendation of the Trusted Salaries Commission of 1947.

Paragraph 44 of the report reads:—

'44. It appears to us that the Government service in the Malayan Union and Singapore may be conveniently divided into four divisions:—

Division I containing administrative officers with high educational qualifications, legal and professional officers and others specially qualified by training and experience for senior posts.

Division II containing officers whose qualifications or responsibilities fall short of those required for Division I and officers holding 'prize' posts to which officers in Division III are eligible to be promoted.

Division III requiring a good secondary education and containing technical assistants, a number of teachers, interpreters, the clerical service and some other grades.

Division IV containing the more lowly paid members of the service: such as postmen, peons, watchmen, process servers, hospital servants and the like.'

Based upon the nature of the grade and not merely the amount of salary attached to it, this separation into Divisions aimed at greater flexibility and elasticity in the Service.

The following table, which shows the Government establishment as it was on 1st January, 1955, will indicate the relative strengths of staffs in the four Divisions and in the larger departments.

—	Division I	Division II	Division III	Division IV	Total	%
Police	87 (89)	308 (297)	558 (565)	4136 (4115)	5089 (5102)	23%
Education ..	129 (63)	1778 (1439)	2121 (2304)	796 (645)	4824 (4451)	22%
Medical and Health ..	248 (164)	288 (242)	1707 (1301)	2551 (2170)	4794 (3877)	22%
Postal	9 (8)	10 (9)	421 (401)	408 (366)	848 (784)	4%
Customs and Excise	21 (21)	24 (12)	152 (158)	443 (452)	640 (643)	3%
Public Works ..	58 (46)	16 (16)	337 (323)	217 (186)	628 (571)	3%
Telecommunications	9 (9)	8 (6)	423 (408)	95 (95)	535 (518)	2½%
Others	391 (352)	374 (357)	1892 (2135)	1815 (2295)	4472 (5235)	20½%
Total	952 (752)	2806 (2378)	7611 (7395)	10461 (10656)	21830 (21181)	100%
%	4.4%	12.8%	34.8%	48%	100%	..

Figures in brackets are the figures as at 1st January 1954 to show changes in one year of development.

The tendency in highly developed Public Services is to recruit persons to the Public Service as a whole and not to each department separately. This is a safeguard for the principle of appointment and promotion by merit. It is important that the officer should regard himself as an officer of the Public Service, and not just a particular department. His career lies in the Public Service. Another advantage of this system in that departments, which among themselves are equally parts of the administrative arm of the Government, avoid competing with each other for the ablest candidates. A conception is fostered of direct public service to the State and community, and not exclusively to any one department.

Singapore is moving steadily along the road towards a Public Service which can fully implement these principles. You should make sure that you know what they are and how vital they are to your work as a servant of the people of Singapore.

To sum up, a career service is dependent on certain principles: independent non-political control; open competitive recruitment; public and judicial rules governing transfer, promotion and dismissal; a regular system of position classification; fixed salary grades with regular increments; security of tenure, subject to good behaviour, involving a career of permanent service; and a distinctive retirement system. In the succeeding chapters, these fundamental principles will be considered in detail.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROCESS OF ADMINISTRATION

BEFORE WE examine the various conditions of service which are going to affect your career in the Public Services, it might be wise to make sure that we know what the main ingredients of administration are.

Marshall E. Dimmock in his book, *The Frontiers of Administration*, writes: 'Whenever people associate for common purposes, the problem of administration presents itself'. That sentence suggests that there are three elements involved: an organisation or association of people; a common purpose or policy; and a problem (How is this organisation or association of people to achieve its purpose or execute its policy?).

The people of Singapore, through the Legislative Assembly and through the executive Council of Ministers, associate to define their needs in the form of a policy. So much for the first two elements of Dimmock's definition. What of the third?

To achieve this purpose or carry out this policy two basic resources are essential, namely men to do the job and money to buy materials, to pay for services, etc.

We can then define the process of administration as being concerned with the use of men and money to achieve an agreed purpose. Public administration simply limits this purpose to the carrying out of public business.

The domestic arrangement of the basic resources of men is known as Personnel Administration; that of money as Financial Administration. In Singapore, personnel administration is co-ordinated throughout the Service by the Director of Personnel, a senior officer in the Chief Secretary's Office. Financial administration is similarly co-ordinated in the Treasury.

The roles of the Personnel Branch in the Chief Secretary's Office and that of the Treasury are for the Public Service as a whole the counterparts of the roles of the Personnel and Accounts (Finance) sections in a department. These sections co-ordinate the personnel and financial administration of the department. The principal broad aspects in personnel administration to which Establishment Officers must give their attention are briefly:—

(*a*) systems and methods of working;
(*b*) organisation and classification of positions;
(*c*) general conditions of employment (including welfare);
(*d*) recruitment and staffing (including appointment, transfer and promotion); and
(*e*) training of staff.

You will find in your department a personnel (or staff) section. This unit exists to help you contribute to your maximum to the purposes of the organisation and to help you in return to receive the maximum satisfaction from your employment. You should remember, of course, that you are one of many people employed in the organisation and that yours are not the only problems with which the Personnel Officer has to deal. By respecting this fact, you can help the Personnel Officer to help you.

The very nature of public administration demands consistency in managing men and a recognition of responsibility to the public. In private undertakings the test of efficiency is profit, and responsibility is to the shareholders or the employer. It is not so easy to find 'cut and dried' criteria of efficiency in the Public Service. The pattern of personnel management is essentially derived from legislation. Personnel administration in the Public Service is therefore inherently more rigid than in non-government organisations.

Similarly, with financial administration, accountability to the public is a primary consideration. The legislative framework within which the accounting officer in the Public Service must work is provided by the Colonial Regulations, General Orders and Treasury Circulars. The procedures followed involve the reconciling of the principles of the maximum of decentralisation, to give the most effective action, with the maximum of control, out of regard for responsibility to the public. We find throughout then a specified system of checks and balances. To this the public applies the label 'red tape'. But to relax these provisions generally would be to ignore responsibility to the public for the expenditure of its money. On the other hand, checks must have real value. The results of employing them must, both justify the cost involved, and restrict the effectiveness of action as little as possible.

The Treasury is the bookkeeper for the whole of the Singapore Public Service, and it is in that Ministry that final control is centred. Just as the Accounts Section in a department is the bookkeeping unit and provides the financial control of the department.

Checking for accuracy, honesty and legality of financial transactions (but not for detailed efficiency) is the responsibility of the Director of Audit.

The main aspects of financial administration consist of:—

(*a*) determining what money is required;
(*b*) getting that money;
(*c*) spending that money;
(*d*) accounting for the money spent and relating it to the money received or in hand; and
(*e*) the checking or auditing of transactions.

Men and money are then the lifeblood of your organisation and their proper use is the essence of good administration. Financial and personnel administration are important functions and you should learn all you can about them so that you will be better equipped to help them serve the primary functions of your organisation.

CHAPTER 4

GENERAL RULES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

IN THE Singapore Public Service, as in many other organisations employing large numbers of people, it is necessary to establish rules governing conditions of work, in order to maintain control, discipline and equal treatment. Rules afford protection to the worker and guarantee that public servants are fairly compensated for their work uniformly throughout the Service.

The broad outline of conditions of employment in the Singapore Public Service is contained in the General or Standing Orders of the Singapore Government, and in the Regulations for Her Majesty's Colonial Service in so far as they are applicable.

You should make yourself conversant with these instructions and with any staff instructions which your Department may issue in addition to them.

G.O. 22 reads as follows:—

> '22. Officers in Government service are subject in every respect to the provisions of Colonial Regulations, to the General Orders for the time being in force in Singapore and to any other Orders or Regulations or terms of service which may be made applicable to them.'

IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT ON ANY POINT YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR SENIOR OFFICER

Probation

New entrants to the established Civil Service normally have to service a period of probation, two or three years according to grade, with extensions in certain cases. Until this period of probation has been satisfactorily completed, the new entrant is not finally appointed to the Civil Service; and the services of anyone who during probation shows himself or herself to be really unsuited for Civil Service work will (perhaps after a trial on a different type of job) be terminated. Temporary staff are usually appointed for a period of trial in the first place, and may be dismissed at any time; the period of notice to be given is prescribed when they are appointed. In some cases, the successful passing of examinations in Law, Languages and/or Regulations is necessary before an officer is confirmed in the established Service.

Pay and Allowances

Most established civil servants are paid according to scales of pay with regular increases known as 'increments'. Usually the date of the increment is the anniversary of the first of the month following the

date of appointment to one's grade. On some scales there is an 'efficiency bar' and advancement beyond that point depends upon capability to perform the full range of duties of the grade. All increments depend upon satisfactory service, and may be withheld for inefficiency or misconduct. Temporary staff in some grades have regular increments like established staff, but in other grades they have 'ranges' of pay and are paid at varying rates within the range, with varying increases according to individual merit.

Salaries are usually paid monthly after deductions have been made. Deductions may be compulsory as, in the case of certain officers, Widows and Orphans Pensions Fund contribution, repayment of loans, and, if you are in government quarters, the payment of rent, etc.; or they may be voluntary, as contributions towards income tax, co-operative societies, family remittances and the like. Such deductions and transfers are made free of charge.

Emoluments are made up of a basic salary and a variable allowance. Certain types and grades of officers are eligible for other allowances, some of which are pensionable. Pensions are calculated only on the basic salary plus any pensionable allowances.

The variable allowance which is based upon the basic salary, and whether the officer is married and whether there are children of the marriage, is intended to offset the abnormal cost of living in Singapore and is liable to review at intervals.

Other allowances fall into two main classes:—

(i) Payments for additional duties performed e.g., overtime, acting and language allowances.

(ii) Payments made to reimburse an officer for additional out-of-pocket expenses incurred through the conditions of his employment, e.g. transport allowance, subsistence allowance, removal allowance on official transfer and the like.

For further details of these allowances, officers should read the relevant Regulations, General Orders and Circulars.

Hours of Attendance

Attendance books are kept in every Department and you will be required to record the actual time when you arrive at the office and the actual time when you leave each day.

The hours when you work will depend upon your office and your grade. General Order 140 lays down the hours of public business and broadly those are the hours kept by office workers. Your department will tell you the exact times and you will be required to be punctual and regular in your attendance. Your Head of Department may call upon your services beyond these when necessary.

The fact that you live at a considerable distance or have a difficult journey will not be accepted as an excuse for irregular attendance or as a sufficient reason for applying for special hours for attendance.

Overtime is not as a rule paid to the higher grades of the Service; their hours of work cannot be exactly regulated by the clock but must depend on the amount of business to be done, so their rates of pay are fixed on the assumption that they will work any long hours that may be necessary without extra payment. Some grades are paid overtime when it is necessary and when it has been approved by a senior officer in advance. In other grades, arrangements are sometimes made to compensate for overtime hours, by having an equivalent number of hours off instead. The exact conditions applying in your case will be explained to you in detail by your Department if the occasion for overtime arises.

Whatever your hours of duty, spend your time as fully as possible on useful work. If you are not fully occupied, tell your supervisor and keep telling him until you are fully occupied. Meanwhile, in the intervals of work, there is always enough to do learning about your department and the conditions of service. You will always enjoy your job best when usefully occupied.

Leave

There are at present two leave schemes affecting officers of the Public Service. You will qualify under the 1951 Scheme which applies to all officers appointed after 1st April, 1951, and to those who did not opt to stay on the 1933 Scheme.

Vacation Leave.—Officers are eligible for vacation leave according to their grades and length of service: this is leave on full pay in respect of active government service. In certain Departments, some categories of officers are eligible for leave under separate Departmental schemes. Officers in Divisions III and IV must ordinarily use their vacation leave during the year in which it is earned.

Half-pay and no-pay leave, which may be granted in addition to vacation leave, are normally granted on compassionate grounds only.

Within limits you can take your leave when you wish, but of course everyone cannot be away at once, and your plans have to fit in with office convenience.

Sick Leave.—If you are absent from duty on account of illness you are granted leave on that ground, only during such time as you are certified by a registered doctor to be unfit to discharge your duties. It may be a private doctor or a Government Medical Officer.

If you are absent owing to illness for a lengthy period you will be granted sick leave with pay (full or half) or without pay within the limits prescribed in General Orders.

On each occasion when you are too ill to attend the office you must do all you can to let the head of your branch or section know as soon as possible. The usual method is to get someone to phone him. You must obtain a medical certificate and send it to your head of department within twenty-four hours of absence. If your illness continues, medical certificates, each of which should not exceed seven days, must be supplied to cover the entire period of absence.

You need not stay away from the office if you have been in contact with certain infectious diseases, but you should report the facts to your head of department as soon as possible. If you have been in contact with any other acute infectious disease, you should ask a medical officer whether you should stay away from the office or not. Whether you have to stay away or not, you should tell the head of your department about your contact with the disease.

Certain other forms of sick leave are granted to officers suffering from Tuberculosis or Leprosy and to those daily-rated employees who by reason of accidents come within the meaning of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

Retirement and Pensions

Public servants may retire with permission at any time after reaching the age of 50 and usually do so at some time between that age and the age of 55.

Consideration is however being given, as this handbook goes to print, to the raising of the age of retirement; and in the meantime, under certain conditions, individual officers are permitted to serve beyond the age of 55 if they wish.

It is possible too for a retired pensioner to be re-engaged for a further period in the Public Service.

Medical.—Officers who retire from the Service at an earlier age on the authority of a Medical Board leave under the same conditions of pension as those who retire after normal service.

Pensions.—There is at the time of publication no Contributory Superannuation Scheme, but various forms of Superannuation payments are made to officers on retirement.

Permanent officers on the pensionable establishment with a minimum of 10 years service are awarded annual allowances on the basis of 1/60 of the pensionable emoluments normally of the last year of service for each year of service plus 5 years. Such officers may choose to receive a lump sum equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ of 10 years pension together with a reduced pension of 75 per cent of the full pension earned.

Consideration is being given to a change in the calculation of these allowances and the regulations as they affect you will be explained to you when you enter the service.

Permanent officers on the non-pensionable establishment receive annual allowances normally at the rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ of those they would have received had they been pensionable.

Permanent officers and temporary officers, not engaged on a month to month basis, on the Open Vote list, normally receive a gratuity.

Central Provident Fund.—At the time of publication arrangements are being worked out for officers who are not in pensionable employment to participate in the Central Provident Fund. Such officers will have to make monthly contributions to this fund and Government, as their employer, will have to make equal contributions. These contri-

butions will go towards insuring that such officers will be able to look forward to receiving a lump sum on retirement which will help them to face the problems of old age.

There will probably thus be two classes of officer only in the Service: those in pensionable employment and those contributing to the Central Provident Fund.

Find out to which category you belong and discover how you are affected. This will be a matter of great importance to you later on.

Decease of Officer.—A gratuity of one year's pensionable emoluments is normally paid to the estate of pensionable officers who die while still in service

A gratuity based upon a sliding scale rising to one year's salary after fourteen years service is paid to the dependants of temporary and non-pensionable officers who die in service.

Officers on the pensionable establishment who have contracted registered monogamous marriages may contribute towards the Widows and Orphans Pensions Fund subject to the approval of the Directors of the Fund. All Christian and Ceylon Hindu Officers, whether married or single, must contribute to the Fund.

These contributions are deducted monthly, at the rate of 4 per cent of the pensionable emoluments.

The widow of a deceased officer who has contributed to the Widows and Orphans Pensions Fund receives a pension. This pension is calculated according to actuarial tables which are based on such factors as initial salary, age of the officer when he commenced contributions, age of wife, number of contributions made and the like. The pension is paid to the widow until she dies or remarries, and from then on to the children of the marriage until the boys have reached the age of 18 years or the girls reach the age of 21 years or marry before reaching 21.

If you wish to know more about pensions, consult your Personnel section, for this handbook can only give you a broad outline of these problems.

Resignation

There is nothing to prevent a public servant, permanent or temporary, from resigning at any time. However, resignation is normally final, for it is undesirable to have permanent officers resigning and returning at will. Only in exceptional circumstances will an officer be considered for re-instatement.

An officer resigning is required to give one month's notice or else he will be required to refund a sum equal to his total emoluments for one month.

Punishment and Dismissal

As the Government is a public employer, rules have been laid down to ensure that an officer is not punished or dismissed without full enquiry and proper consideration of the officer's view point. Only for

really serious misconduct can a public servant be dismissed. For staff not on the pensionable establishment, the procedure is generally less formal, but the same principles are observed.

When there is reason to believe that an officer has committed an offence, other than a minor offence, he may be charged. If the charge is serious, he may be required to discontinue the performance of his duties, while the charge is being investigated. An officer may be deprived of salary during the period of such cessation of duties.

Upon a charge being laid, the officer has to be furnished with a copy of the charge, and he is asked for an explanation.

Where on consideration of the charge, for other than a minor offence, it is considered that the charge has been sustained, the officer may be fined, reprimanded, reduced in rank or be awarded a stoppage of increment. For the most serious offences, his dismissal may be recommended to the Chief Secretary. Examples of charges for which officers may be dismissed are inefficiency, improper behaviour, fraud in insolvency.

For minor offences an officer may be fined.

The procedure which has been briefly outlined mainly relates to conduct as an officer of the Service. Such conduct may or may not involve the officer in court proceedings, but when he is charged with a criminal offence, and a conviction follows, the Chief Secretary may dismiss him from the Service.

An officer may be dealt with for circumstances associated with his bankruptcy if there is evidence that he has been guilty of fraud, dishonourable conduct or extravagance. The extreme penalty in this case is dismissal from the Service.

Code of Official Conduct

Secret and Confidential Papers.—Papers or files of a secret or confidential nature must never be left lying about. Always put the papers away and lock them up.

Papers should never be taken out of the office, except for some special purpose approved by the appropriate authority. Any loss of such papers must be reported to the head of your branch or section.

You should become security conscious. Remember, such things as carbon papers, shorthand notebooks, careless disposal of waste and leaving keys in hiding places are an aid to the seeker of information.

Observe too, the following:—

General Order 143 which reads—

> '143. No officer may, without the written sanction of the Chief Secretary, make public or communicate to the press or to individuals any documents, papers or information of which he may have become possessed in his official capacity or make private copies thereof, except as provided elsewhere in these General Orders.'

Gifts, Bribes and Corrupt Practices.—For obvious reasons, you are not allowed to ask for or to accept gifts, presents or entertainment for any help or information whatsoever given to the public on official matters, either inside or outside the office. In certain circumstances where refusal might indicate lack of courtesy, an officer may accept such gifts or presents, which acceptance should then be reported to his Head of Department and the gift sent to the Treasury. Should you be in doubt speak to your senior officer: he may be in a better position to see whether the circumstances are likely to be prejudicial to the good name of the Service and yourself.

Complaint—Outside Influence.—Every officer has a right of appeal against instructions. If you have a complaint of any kind to make, take the matter up with your senior officer or with your Service Association, if you need further advice. Officers are specifically prohibited from seeking the influence or interest of any person in order to obtain promotion, transfer or other advantage.

Like everyone else, a public servant may write as an individual to his elected representative in the Legislative Assembly about a matter of public interest—even about a question affecting the Public Service as long as it is a public problem affecting others besides the officer himself. But on matters peculiar to yourself you must not write to a member of the Legislative Assembly, or to any outside person, to ask him to help you obtain, in effect, a personal advantage over other officers. Such actions prejudice your claims with the department, and in serious cases, may be treated as disciplinary offences.

Use of official stationery.—Official paper and envelopes should not be used for private purposes. Except for unavoidable urgent calls, you should also avoid using official telephones privately. Likewise, avoid as much as possible having private letters addressed to you, or private calls received while at the office.

CHAPTER 5

PRIVATE ACTIVITIES

THE 'PUBLIC' character of the duties of the public servant makes for special conditions of service. In a similar way, the distinctive role of the public servant in the national life places on him special obligations in the conduct of his private life. In other words, the State requires of its servants a higher standard of conduct than that demanded by private employers.

Code of the Public Servant.—The report of the United Kingdom Board of Enquiry in the Gregory or 'francs' case, in 1928, is the best modern source of the code of the public servant. In this case, a Foreign Office official was charged with injudicious speculations in francs. There was no speculation of public money, but the official indulged in speculative transactions while employed in a department to which, rightly or wrongly, the public attribute the power of obtaining special information, such as the future course of political or financial events likely to affect the rise and fall of markets. These transactions were adjudged not only inexpedient but wrong, since the knowledge that civil servants, so employed, are engaged in them 'could not fail to shock public confidence at home, and produce a deplorable effect upon opinion abroad.'

In the report it was pointed out that, over and above its written code, embodied in legislation, regulations and general orders, the Public Service has its unwritten code of ethics and conduct for which the most effective sanction lies in the public opinion of the Service itself. 'The first duty of a civil servant is to give his undivided allegiance to the State at all times and on all occasions when the State has a claim upon his services.' With his private activities the State is in general not concerned, so long as his conduct therein is not such as to bring discredit upon the Service of which he is a member. But to say that he is not to subordinate his duty to his private interest, nor to make use of his official position to further those interests, is to say no more than that he must behave with common honesty. The Service exacts from itself a higher standard, because it recognises that the State is entitled to demand that its servants shall not only be honest in fact, but beyond the reach of suspicion of dishonesty. A civil servant is not to subordinate his duty to his private interest, but neither is he to put himself in a position where his duty and his interests conflict. He is not to make use of his official position to further those interests; but neither is he so to order his private affairs as to allow the suspicion to arise that a trust has been abused or a confidence betrayed. These obligations are, we do not doubt, universally recognized throughout the whole of the Service; if it were otherwise, its public credit would be diminished and its usefulness to the State impaired.

'It follows that there are spheres of activity legitimately open to the ordinary citizen in which the civil servant can play no part, or only a limited part. He is not to indulge in political or party controversy, lest by doing so he should appear no longer the disinterested adviser of Ministers or able impartially to execute their policy. He is bound to maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs and more particularly those with which his own department is concerned. And lastly, his position clearly imposes upon him restrictions in matters of commerce and business from which the ordinary citizen is free.'

The report contented itself with laying down the general principles, without seeking to elaborate these into any detailed code, if only for the reason that their application must vary according to the position, the department and the work on which the official is engaged.

Performance of Outside Work.—As the public servant has to devote himself exclusively to his public duties during office hours, he is precluded from taking on any activity whatsoever which requires his attendance away from the office during this time. Nor is this all. He should not undertake any outside occupation which will in any way conflict with the interests of the Service, or be inconsistent with his position, or in any way impair his usefulness as a public servant. The Service does not encourage officers or employees to seek employment in their own time outside the department in which they are normally employed. All proposals to engage in such activity, whether it is on a remunerative or unremunerative basis, must be submitted to the departmental head for his consideration. Approval must be obtained before such activity is undertaken. If you feel that some conflict may arise between your public service post and your intended interest in any association or society, firm or company, or other form of activity whatsoever, consult your Senior Officer. You may not be the best judge of the reaction of others to your engaging in the particular activity.

Without actually forming part of your job, certain forms of outside activity may be bound up in some way with your duties, e.g., writing, lecturing, broadcasting and the like. If you wish to make any use of official time or official papers in this way, you should tell your department about it and seek permission before going ahead. You should also seek permission if you have been asked to undertake any work, paid or unpaid, for another Government department, even if you propose to do it in your own time. On no account, should you use any confidential information or publicly comment upon any departmental action or upon the administration of any department except in a general way, as a member of the public.

Purchases and Sales, Contracts.—You should in no circumstances deal in your official capacity with any matter affecting a purchase or sale or contract in which you are interested in your private capacity—for example, as a shareholder.

Apart from ordinary public transactions like buying stamps, no purchase may be made by the Government from, and no sale made by the Government to, a civil servant, unless with express permission.

Private Financial Affairs.—Here again, a higher standard is expected of the public servant, as any doubts about his financial position may impair the efficiency and work of a public servant. Ownership or part-ownership of any concession, land or house property in Malaya without the consent of the Chief Secretary is forbidden. No officer may lend money at interest to any other officer or to any person residing in, possessing property in or carrying on business in Malaya. Officers are forbidden to sign promissory notes or acknowledgments of indebtedness in any form either as principals or sureties except in favour of the Government or a registered Co-operative Society. Any officer who does not inform his Head of Department immediately of any pecuniary embarrassment is liable to dismissal.

Borrowing in order to meet the daily running costs is folly for a large organisation and it is folly for an individual officer. If you would like to be ready to meet any unexpected event, illness, or some sudden large expenditure, then join one of the Thrift and Loan Co-operative Societies: when you need any help, they can give it to you on fair and reasonable terms. If you have been unwise enough to get in the hands of a moneylender, pluck up your courage and tell your supervisor or the Chief Personnel and Welfare Officer who will be able to help you.

Political Activities.—There is some division of opinion about whether public servants should participate in politics. On the one hand, it is argued that active participation in politics not only destroys confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the public service, but is fraught with dangerous consequences that may affect the tenure and status of officials. This view emphasises that the public service is unique and that official neutrality is a prime condition of a permanent and an efficient public service. The other view is that public employment should not deprive an official of his ordinary civil rights, and secondly that the exclusion of officials from active politics restricts the field from which the community might choose its representatives.

Both sides would agree that it is inadvisable for any public servant to do anything likely to cause the general public to think that information given or services rendered were in any way affected by political considerations. There is general agreement also that the senior official, whose responsibility it is to advise on the formation of policy, or any officer aspiring to senior status, should so act that his loyalty to whatever Government may come to power in the course of time may not come under suspicion.

This idea of the separation of politics from administration derives from the British Act of Settlement, 1701. From this Act, which precluded paid officers of the Crown, other than Ministers, from sitting in Parliament, there developed in the course of time, the principle of separating the political offices, filled by popular election, from administrative offices, filled by appointment. No member of Parliament may be appointed to a permanent administrative post without resigning his seat, while no public

servant may sit in Parliament without resigning from the Service. So public servants have come to enjoy security of tenure and other privileges at the expense of effacing themselves and being willing to carry out the policy decided upon by the popular representatives.

The rules regulating the conduct of Public Servants in regard to political matters are clearly stated in General Orders and you should make a careful examination of them to see how you yourself are affected.

Briefly, the civil service is divided into two classes. An officer in the *restricted* class shall not engage in any political activity whatsoever. An officer in the *unrestricted* class may engage in certain political activities and may offer himself as a candidate for election to the Legislative Assembly or any statutory body representative of the community. Administrative arrangements are laid down in General Orders by which officers in this unrestricted class who have resigned in order to serve as elected members of such bodies may in certain circumstances be reinstated in the Public Service at the end of their elected service.

There is of course no intention to deprive any officer of his personal right to cast his vote according to his political opinion. Neither do any of these rules absolve any officer, in whatever class he may be, *restricted* or *unrestricted*, from observing the code of the Public Servant which lays down that he shall not subordinate his duty to his private or political interests, and that he shall not make use of his official position to further those interests.

While this legal provision exists you should ponder on the implications before taking any active part in politics. Efficiency in many positions in the public service requires sound judgment and integrity. Your efficiency may therefore be more easily challenged if you place yourself in a position where there could be a clash of loyalties.

Remember too, that employment in the public service frees you from many of the anxieties and insecurities found in non-government employment and in many cases gives you benefits not found outside. You in effect enjoy privileges.

Privileges carry with them obligations. Your obligation is to respect those traditions that have been built up by your predecessors on the foundations laid by Northcote and Trevelyan to make public service secure as a career. A career public service should be secure for you and provide better service to the public because of the provisions that restrict political interference from without.

CHAPTER 6

RIGHT OF ASSOCIATION

THE RIGHT of staff associations to present claims on behalf of their members has been generally recognised in the Civil Service. When an association can show that it has in its membership a substantial proportion of the total strength of any grade, it may be officially 'recognised' as representing that grade.

This means that Government will normally consult the association before introducing any appreciable change in the conditions of service of the grade, so that the association can say what the staff are likely to think about the change; as far as possible changes will be made by agreement with the association.

You are not only allowed but indeed encouraged to belong to a staff association. Besides it being a good thing for the individual civil servant to belong to an association, which can support his reasonable claims and put his point of view before the authorities on all kinds of questions affecting his conditions of service, it is also a good thing for the Civil Service as a whole that civil servants should be organised in representative bodies. It is only commonsense to meet the wishes of the civil servant about his conditions of service as far as possible, for a contented staff will work much more efficiently than a staff which feels that its interests are being completely ignored by the 'management'. But it is hopeless to try to find out the wishes of a scattered unorganised body of individual civil servants each of whom may express a different view. When they get together in representative associations, their collective wish can be democratically determined and passed on to the 'management' with real force and agreement behind it; the 'management' know where they stand and can act accordingly.

So join an association and do your bit to see that it is a 'live' and really representative one.

Besides the method of negotiation through separate staff associations for different grades, there is in the Civil Services of many countries now another method known as the Whitley system. This was introduced into the United Kingdom as a result of recommendations made in 1917 and 1918 by a committee under the chairmanship of the Right Honourable J. H. Whitley, M.P. This development is still in its infancy in Singapore and is likely to develop in strength in coming years.

A Whitley Council in the Civil Service is a joint body consisting of representatives of the 'Official Side', i.e. the Chief Secretary, Heads of Departments and other senior civil servants who are part of the 'management', and the 'Staff Side' i.e. the principal staff associations representing the rank and file of the staff. There is a Whitley Council

in Singapore called the Singapore Civil Service Joint Council, covering the whole Service, and there are Departmental Councils in the larger Departments.

The general object of these Councils is 'to secure the greatest measure of co-operation between the Government as employer and the general body of civil servants, with a view to increased efficiency in the public service combined with the well-being of those employed; to provide the machinery for dealing with grievances; and generally to bring together the experience and different point of view of representatives of the different civil service grades.'

Their functions include:—

(*a*) provision of the best means of utilising the ideas and experience of the staff;

(*b*) means for securing to the staff a greater share in and responsibility for the determination and observance of the conditions under which their duties are carried out;

(*c*) determination of general principles governing conditions of service;

(*d*) the encouragement of the further education of civil servants and their training in higher administration and organisation;

(*e*) improvement of office machinery and organisation and provision for the full consideration of suggestions by the staff on this subject;

(*f*) proposed legislation so far as it has a bearing upon the position of civil servants in relation to their employment.

With these purposes clearly in front of them, both sides meet to discuss their problems. The 'official' side has received its brief from Government, the 'staff' side has received its brief from the staff associations representing all the various classes of public servants. Subject to the limits set by those briefs, both sides try to reach agreement, either wholly or by compromise. The Council is not a Commission set up to tell Government what to do. It is a way by which Government can explain its personnel policy and serving officers can put forward their views on the conditions of civil service life so that the Public Service can develop its efficiency in the smoothest possible manner.

These Whitley Councils are working well and their effect on different Services is generally agreed to have been good. They have made possible frank and responsible joint discussions with the widest co-operation and understanding by each side of the other's difficulties. Whitleyism is 'a spirit rather than a piece of machinery'. It is up to you, by taking an interest in it and keeping it alive in your office, to carry on its successful working in Singapore.

CHAPTER 7

THE TRADITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

LEGALLY a public servant serves the Queen. In practice, this means he serves the Minister in charge of his department, and through him the Council of Ministers, which is the Executive Government in Singapore. The Ministers comprising this Government are responsible to the Legislative Assembly; through them we serve the Legislative Assembly and so, the whole community.

This chain of responsibility should never be forgotten. Governments come and go, but the Public Service remains, and it is the particular task of the Public Service to serve the government of the day while conserving the continuing interests of the Colony and the community.

The function of your final superior, the Permanent Head of the Ministry, is to render assistance to his Minister in the formulating of policy and in executing the will of the Legislative Assembly. The permanent head of a Department is responsible for its general working, and for all the business thereof, and advises the Minister in all matters relating to the Department. The permanent heads, and through them the Public Service, participate in the formation of policy by studying all the factors that bear on policy. The permanent head organises, manages and controls his department in the executing and administering of policies adopted by the Minister, the Council of Ministers or the Legislative Assembly. For instance, when the Legislative Assembly passes an Ordinance saying that certain benefits are to be made available to certain classes of persons, the responsible Minister, assisted by his departments, has to make detailed regulations about the conditions on which the benefits are to be granted; and offices have to be set up as required to receive applications for benefits and to ensure that the regulations are properly applied to individual cases.

Relationship to Ministers.—The elected representatives of the people, as Ministers or as members of the Legislative Assembly, settle the broad lines of policy on which Singapore is to be governed. The Minister holds office because he belongs to the dominant party or group of parties in the Legislative Assembly, from which the government has been formed. He must be able to give an account to the Legislative Assembly of what his department has done on any matter; and by firm parliamentary practice, the Minister is precluded from blaming any public servant if things go wrong. The responsibility is his. Responsible representative government means that the elected representatives are responsible to the electors; ministerial responsibility means that each Minister is individually responsible to the Legislative Assembly for his own and his department's executive or administrative actions. (Co-

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

whatever functions or services the people choose through their parliamentary representatives and to carry these out at the least cost and with the best effect.

Public service methods certainly involve much formality in the sense of form-filling; yet this springs, at least in part, from the necessities of administration in any large enterprise whether public or private. Whenever, in private business, large blocks of work are handled by large blocks of staff, the concern soon introduces standardised methods and proceeds by rules and regulations. In this sense, there are more 'bureaucrats' in the City of London or in Collyer Quay, than in Whitehall or Empress Place. It is the peculiar position which the Public Service occupies in relation to the Legislative Assembly and the community as a whole that gives rise to the formalities so often seized on in the press or by public critics of the Service.

Public Administration and Private Business.—As its critics are apt to measure the Public Service against the standards of private business, let us compare the necessities of the Public Service with the opportunities of the private business.

Government business, unlike private business, is organised on the principle of ministerial responsibility. The Minister is responsible and may be questioned on, or criticised for, every act of his department. The public servant is, therefore, a trustee and must weigh his decisions and actions in the light of this responsibility. He works to the glaring light of publicity, close public scrutiny and often partisan criticism. He is preoccupied with considerations of equity and public justice. He must work out reasons for decisions, which his Minister may have later to defend, paying strict heed to precedent. Hence the need for paper work or red tape; for recording, minuting, reporting, checking and filing. Also, he must be consistent; that is, he must preserve a reasoned relation between previous and current decisions, and between decisions in one class of cases and decisions in another class of cases.

The public would be the first to protest at rough and ready administration. Yet to meet the present-day needs, a quicker handling of government business is required Decisions must be given promptly as well as correctly. The old idea that nothing positive flows from government—if it ever were right—is certainly wrong to-day, and the modern public service must be alive with initiative and constructive ability and be fully enterprising within the limits of policy laid down. On the other hand, the public servant must be conceded the human tendency to occasional error.

The Service will grow into this new attitude by experience and experimentation. It will have 'to combine vigour with tact, imagination with efficiency, courage with realism' (Political Quarterly, London, Vol. 15, page 95). Senior officers should make special efforts to encourage young officers to question constructively the practice of the department and to propose improvements in methods and procedure.

Private business, on the other hand, is governed more by expediency and less by consistency. A head of a private business can decide how

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.

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

and more work is being done by personal contacts, by meetings and conferences, or by telephone; and the value of these more informal methods of conducting business is perhaps not yet fully appreciated. Yet the fact remains that, for every important action, a record is still required in order that a response may be made to future parliamentary or other public inquiries, and as a guarantee of consistency of action. We can never do away with formal methods entirely. Moreover, contact by telephone can be overdone. Personal or telehpone conversations, if over-indulged in, are great consumers of time. Paper work, in its proper place, has the advantage of exactitude and precision, and sometimes, speed. Try to keep the telephone and paper work in their proper relation. You must, in determining the method to be used, reconcile speed with economy and accuracy.

The Value of Method

'Despatch is the soul of business' wrote Lord Chesterfield, 'and nothing contributes more to Despatch, than Method.' As there is so much paper work in the Service, you will find it necessary to adopt deliberate methods of keeping your papers in order and on the move. Unless you take pains to adopt these methods, your papers will be misplaced more often than not, while your table or desk will always be in a mess. Besides making your office life seem more pleasant because it is better ordered, the habit of keeping your desk tidy and your papers in order pays dividends. Our minds seem to grow clearer and better ordered in proportion as we cultivate methodical habits in our daily actions. Moreover, a spell of more or less mechanical work in sorting out papers rests and refreshes the mind.

Among the files and papers that find their way to you, you may occasionally find something apparently not meant for you. Before passing it on make quite sure, first, that it is not a matter of concern to you, and second that you are passing it on to the right officer. If the papers have been going the rounds for some time, draw this specially—but not officially—to the attention of the officers concerned, so that they may deal with them quickly, or at least send interim acknowledgments. In making sure who deals with particular matters, you will have added to your store of knowledge of the office. Here are a few hints on method and the maintenance of the flow of work:—

(1) **Dictating letters** is one important way of keeping your files moving. Help the typist by giving her the file and thus avoiding confusion and misplacement of file copies, etc.

(2) **Always quote file numbers** in your correspondence and refer to previous letters. This will help on the flow of work in other offices. Make it your business to visit the Registry or Records Section and find out just how it works.

(3) **Minute your files clearly.**—Help the records clerk by indicating on the file cover or action sheet the next action to be taken, e.g., 'file', 'K.I.V.', etc.

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

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

procedure and other documents, charts, summaries, etc., to provide quick reference in your work.

To complex questions, our first reaction is often uncertain and confused. This is a good sign if the question is really new to us and difficult, for we often jump to the wrong conclusion unless we keep an open mind on a question until we have looked all round it and sized it up. When the time for decision comes, our minds will be fresher and our judgment sounder for our initial hesitation and doubts.

The Need for Decisiveness

The important thing is to be decisive at the right time. But decisive we must be. Some men seize as eagerly on excuses for postponing action as other men grasp opportunities for making decisions. The favourite pretext for indecisiveness is the need for mature deliberation, but we find that in practice indecisive men are less apt to think things over seriously than others.

So after taking up your tasks in the order of their importance and thinking them over fully, make up your mind promptly and decisively. Sometimes your study of a question will disclose certain matters of policy that should be decided first by someone higher up. State these and obtain a decision, then suggest a course of action on the matter you are concerned with. Add a draft, if you think a letter or other communication is called for. Always take the action along as far as you can towards a final conclusion. Your department is organised into branches, divisions, sections, etc., through which runs a power relationship, the line of authority, according to which each matter should be dealt with to the full at the lowest level so that only matters of the highest importance are dealt with at the highest levels. It is your duty, therefore, to make the case as clear as possible for the next senior officer.

Do not be put out too much if your recommendation is not accepted or if your drafts are altered. If your chief knows the elements of control and leadership, he will not alter your drafts without good reason, and when he does, he will usually indicate the reasons. These will help you next time. And although your recommendation may not be accepted, you will have clarified his mind and helped in the decision.

Improving Work Methods

Again if your chief has good sense, and you go about it the right way, he will appreciate any suggestions that may occur to you on work methods—on what or why or where or when or how your work, or work in the office generally, should be done. Of course, if you are wise you will first make quite sure that you really understand the job, and the reasons behind any of its tasks, before suggesting improvements.

The important thing is, having decided on the various operations involved in present methods, to look at them again and see whether some of them can be cut out or modified, *Simplify*, *standardise* and *co-ordinate* wherever possible. Especially in large repetitive jobs this can prevent congestion, lack of balance, inefficient duplication and overlapping of duties.

Always be ready to exchange ideas and information with other officers. This makes for pleasant personal relations in the office and improves team work. It also leads people to pass on ideas to you in return. Sharing ideas has the further advantage of coaching understudies, thus enabling you to pass on to a higher post more readily. Aid thus given has often decisive effects on a man's career.

Your Relations with the Public

From all kinds of contacts, the public gathers impressions of the public servant—in government offices and on the telephone, in meetings of private associations and in post offices, in streets and on buses. It is just because these impressions are piece-meal, and incomplete, the product of innumerable chance contacts, that public servants should take special care in each of their relationships with the public.

It goes without saying that the public servant should be courteous, fair and, within the limits of his department's powers, as helpful as possible. Courtesy is desirable in all public contacts—in the corridors of public offices; at public counters; on the telephone and in letters. Always direct or, if possible, accompany people who are apparently puzzled and astray in office corridors; never leave a caller standing at a counter while you talk to another officer; receive incoming telephone calls in a friendly tone and see that the caller finds the right officer if he has been wrongly connected. From these small, kindly and reasonable actions you and your department can determine the reputation of the whole of that department, and perhaps of the Public Service generally, in the mind of each person he deals with. We should behave officially and privately so that we give to the Public Service a good reputation and in turn membership of the Service will mark us as good citizens.

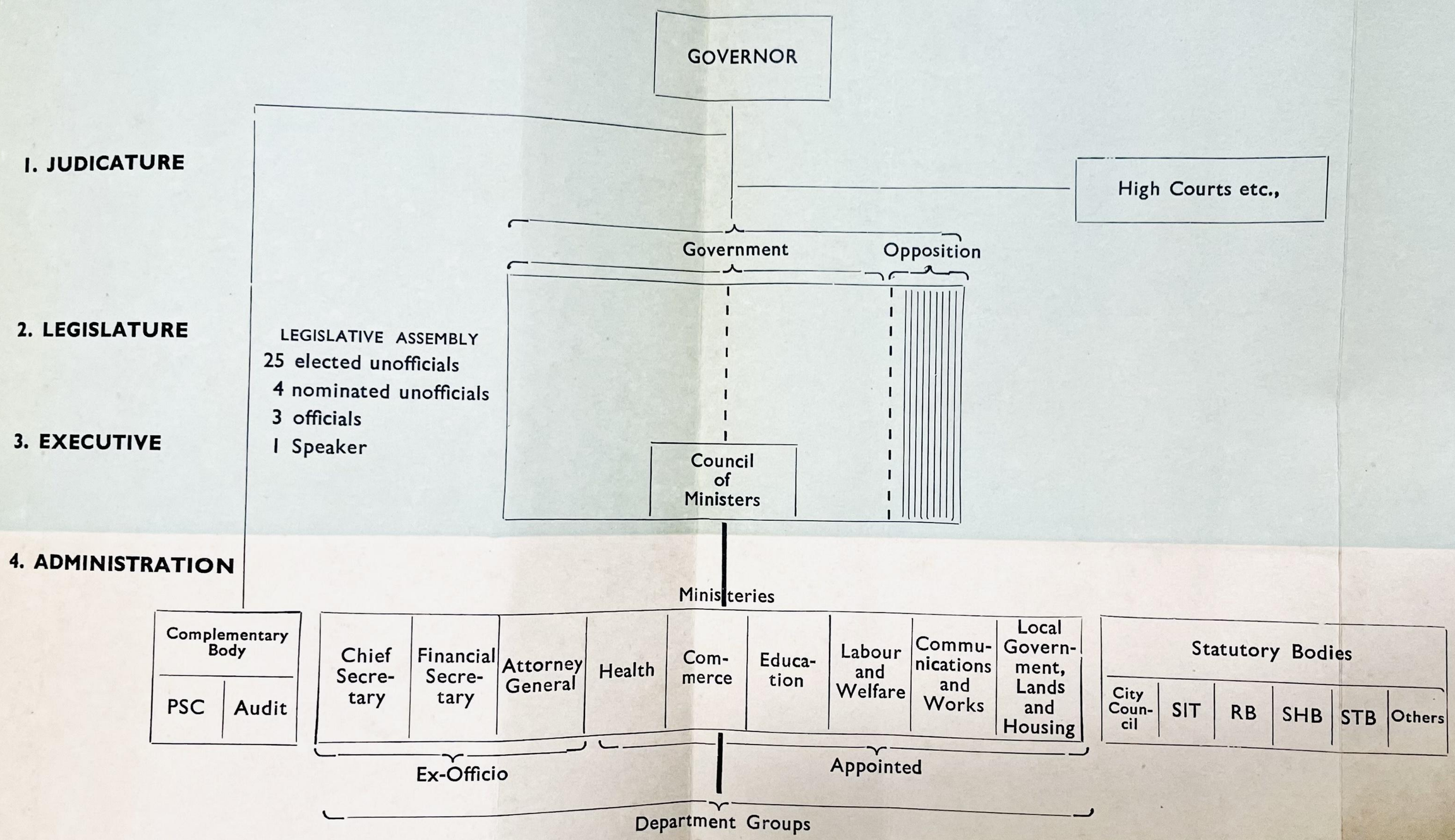
As a civil servant you belong to an interesting and a useful profession. What has been said in this handbook, only scratches the surface of it; the rest you will find out gradually, by training, by experience, and sometimes no doubt by your mistakes.

Take full use of any staff training schemes that are available, keep abreast of what Government and your Department particularly is doing by reading the Gazette and official reports; continue to broaden your mind by studying or joining groups formed to study your particular interests; improve your control of language by both intensive and extensive reading.

If you think you have a grievance about anything, or if you feel unhappy about your personal position in the service, or if you need help on some personal problem, ask to see your head of department. However busy he is, he will always be prepared to advise you and explain things to you as far as he can. If you feel you want other advice, the association which represents you will always try to help.

Good luck to you in your career in the service of the public.

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT
SINGAPORE 1955



1. Council of Ministers – consists of all Ministers, conventional policy forming body of Government, executive arm of government. Governor is President.

WHOM WE SERVE

Minister	Subjects	Departments
A.—Ex-Officio Ministers		
Chief Secretary	External Affairs Commonwealth Representatives Consuls Pilgrimage Malaya House United Nations Affairs Christmas and Cocos Islands Passports	
	Internal Security Law and Order Banishment Naturalisation Press Legislation Religious Affairs	Police Prisons Chemistry Chinese Affairs
	Defence	Singapore Volunteer Corps Royal Malayan Navy M.R.N.V.R. M.A.A.F. Civil Defence Corps
	Public Relations British Council	Public Relations Printing Broadcasting Film Censor
	Ceremonial	Gardens
	National Registration Elections Marriage Registration Birth and Death Registration Archives Establishment Organisation and Methods Office Accommodation	Statistics
Attorney-General	Legal Advice Prosecutions Bankruptcy Trusteeship	Official Assignee Public Trustee Custodian of Property
Financial Secretary	Financial Policy Revenue	Customs Income Tax Estate Duty Stamp Duty

Minister	Subjects	Departments
	Banking Insurance Accounting Exchange Control (policy) Currency	Accountant-General Foreign Exchange (policy)
B.—APPOINTED MINISTERS		
Commerce	Commerce Industry Production Trade Policy	Commerce and Industry Imports and Exports Supplies Foreign Exchange (Administration) Agriculture Veterinary Services Fisheries Fisheries Research Co-operative Development Registration of Companies Registration of Trade Marks Registration of Business Names
	Shipping	Marine Marine Surveys (Relations with) Singapore Harbour Board
Labour and Welfare	Labour	Labour Workmen's Compensation (Relations with) Central Provident Fund Board
	Welfare Immigration	Social Welfare Immigration
Education	Education	Education Museum and Library (Relation with) University of Malaya, Singapore Polytechnic

Minister	Subjects	Departments
Local Government, Lands and Housing	Local Government Lands Housing Town and Country Planning (Local) Island Administration	(Relations with) City Council and Rural Board Lands Survey (Relations with) Singapore Improvement Trust
Communications and Works	Communications Road Transport Civil Aviation Works	Posts Telecommunications Railway Civil Aviation Meteorological Services Public Works
Health	Public Health	Medical Services

APPENDIX III

AIDS TO GETTING ON

Documents, etc., with which you should become acquainted and/or familiar are:—

(*a*) General Orders;
(*b*) Colonial Regulations;
(*c*) Manual of Administrative Procedure;
(*d*) The Government *Gazette;*
(*e*) C.S. Circulars;
(*f*) Treasury Circulars;
(*g*) Departmental Orders and Instructions.

These books will help you to increase your control of the English Language:—

(*a*) A B C of Plain Words	...	Sir E. Gowers	... H.M.S.O.
(*b*) Plain Words ...	...	Sir E. Gowers	... H.M.S.O.
(*c*) Good English ...	...	G. H. Vallin	... Pan
(*d*) Better English ...	...	G. H. Vallin	... Pan
(*e*) A Dictionary of Modern English Usage ...	...	H. W. Fowler—$7.50—O.U.P.	