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CURRENT ISSUES IN LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

PAPERS PRESENTED BEFORE THE LIBRARY INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, AUGUST 1–12, 1938

Edited with an Introduction by

CARLETON B. JOECKEL

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INTRODUCTION

The general subject considered at the third Institute for Librarians in Service in the series sponsored by the Graduate Library School—library administration—is at once old and new. It is old in the sense that questions of organization and management have long been discussed by librarians. It is new in the sense that the close and scientific study of library administration as a subject worthy of consideration in itself is only in its beginnings.

The title chosen for the series of papers presented at the Institute—"Current issues in library administration"—indicates the intent to concentrate attention on subjects and phases of subjects of immediate importance today. It would be clearly impossible to include all subdivisions of library administration or even all aspects of the topics considered. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that most problems in library administration are perennial in their nature; they vary from time to time in emphasis, but many of the general principles which underlie their solution remain more or less constant. For this reason, the papers in the volume should not be considered as too closely dated. Their importance is not necessarily seriously diminished by the passage of time.

"Library administration," it must be admitted, is a vague term. It is one of those overworked phrases which mean quite different things to different people, both in and out of the library profession. In library schools, for example, courses in administration vary widely in content. As compared with the more nearly standardized courses in cataloging, reference work and bibliography, and even book selection, these courses are relatively lacking in uniformity of

or at least to the appointment of research assistants. This practice is now common in public school systems, in government, and in business. Likewise, certain of the library schools should also share the responsibility for contributions to the analytical and factual study of administrative problems. Possibly the best results will be obtained when libraries and library schools co-operate more closely.

As already noted, the papers here presented do not constitute a complete treatise on library administration. Perhaps no composite work written by many hands can ever be entirely satisfactory as a general survey of so broad and so complex a field. This volume will serve its purpose if it emphasizes and clarifies certain phases of administration which are of current significance, and if it provides a stimulus for the more serious study and the closer analysis of the continuing and always varying problems of library administration.

This third Institute, like its predecessors, was made possible by the financial assistance of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The cordial thanks of the University and of the Graduate Library School are also extended to the speakers at the Institute and to the many persons who assisted in its activities—not least to the librarians in attendance. Special acknowledgment is made of the services of Mildred Guilliams Bosworth, who has prepared the papers and Index for publication.

The papers included in the volume are published substantially in the form in which they were presented at the Institute. In a few instances, authors' preferences have resulted in slight changes in the titles of the papers as originally stated in the program.

CARLETON B. JOECKEL

University of Chicago
October 27, 1938

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SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

FLOYD W. REEVES

Basic to the development of any science is the formulation of general principles. If there is to be a science of administration, it must be based upon general principles.

In a discussion of the meaning of the term "principle" as applied to public administration, Leonard D. White[1] has suggested that it would be desirable to restrict the use of the term to "a hypothesis so adequately tested by observation and/or experiment that it may intelligently be put forward as a guide to action, or as a means of understanding." This definition of a principle need not be limited to the field of public administration; it is equally applicable to administration in all fields. Furthermore, this definition seems to me to be at least as satisfactory as any hitherto presented.

A few writers in the field of administration have attempted to develop sets of principles of organization or of administration. Henri Fayol states that the number of principles of administration is unlimited.[2] He regards as principles all administrative rules and devices which strengthen the human part of an organization or facilitate its working. He would retain such rules or devices as principles

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[1] J. M. Gaus, L. D. White, and M. E. Dimock, The frontiers of public administration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 21.

[2] Industrial and general administration (Geneva: International Management Institute, 1930), pp. 19-33.

in seeing that their administration courses cover personnel administration more thoroughly and that their instructors have more actual, up-to-date experience in libraries, even if it involves occasional "practice work" on their part.

Also, I would urge on the part of the profession at large, which means each of us as individuals, wholehearted support of the fine work that our own national organization, the American Library Association, is doing in this field, of trying to solve the most difficult problems of both personnel administration and individual placement within the profession.

These, then, in my judgment, are a few of the factors that will hasten that better day which already is dawning for library personnel administration. If personnel is the key to all administration, and if the chief objective of library service is to direct the power of print in ways to benefit mankind, then whatever can be done to solve the problems of library personnel administration is more than justified.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

JAMES L. McCAMY

Public relations is an all-inclusive term. In public administration it covers all the relations between a governmental agency and any citizen or group of citizens. It covers the efforts of officials to tell their story to a public, as in publications, news releases, exhibits, or any of the numerous ways of communication. It covers the legally prescribed efforts to change habits and practices, as in health education, school and library work, or rural extension teaching. It covers the routine contacts between the clients of an agency and the public servant at the door, on the street, in the office, or behind the counter.

Obviously, a subject as broad as this must be tied down for purposes of discussion in the space of one lecture. I propose to take public relations as a distinct, planned, and specialized administrative practice, and within that definition the discussion will be devoted to (1) an outline of the objectives of public relations; (2) a reference to the audience; (3) a consideration of media; and (4) a conclusion on the role of deliberate public relations in representative government. The whole will constitute at best only an outline. (Having just written some eighty thousand words on the publicity work of federal offices in Washington alone, not touching public relations in general or in other levels of government, I am alarmed at the appalling flood of words one human being can emit on almost any subject, and feel safe in saying that this will be only an outline.)

The first question to ask when contemplating a program of public relations is: "Why? For what pur-

pose do we need the program?" It is, strangely enough, a question frequently overlooked by administrators unaccustomed to thinking in terms of manipulating public opinion. The great amount of talk about propaganda, the extensive propaganda that bombards us through advertising and other channels, and the rise of the professional "executive secretary" in a new world of chambers of commerce and industrial trade associations, which sometimes call themselves institutes, have all combined to create the uneasy feeling among executives that there is something to be gained from just any effort in public relations. An undergraduate in a small college once told me that one of the minor committees in the student government had decided it needed a consultant on public relations.

The practicing propagandist thinks in more specific terms. When faced with the need for communication with a public, he asks what are the objectives, what audience will be most useful, what media will reach the audience, and what content shall be put in the media? The objectives of a program of public relations will determine, in other words, what appeals will be made to whom, and how they will be made. Objectives themselves will be decided by an analysis of the whole program of the agency and the aims within that program for which public support will be useful.

Some of the specific purposes of present or possible public relations programs in public agencies can be detected. One large blanket objective that covers all is the old-fashioned larger appropriation. Good administrators see new horizons of expansion if they are interested in their work, and it takes more money to reach new horizons. They are caught, as well, in a social trend toward more and more government, which means increasing demands by various public groups for additional services from government. This trend in itself demands expansion for the administrative branch of government, but legislatures and certain other groups within the public will complain at constantly

rising taxes so that the administrator must face a lag between the services expected of him and the willingness of parts of the public to pay for them in expanded form.

The immediate technique of getting increased appropriations is through pressure brought in legislative committees or in the legislature itself through friendly representatives, but the background for all such pressure is the standing of the agency in a wider public than the legislature alone. If farmers have indicated an interest in the work of the Department of Agriculture, congressmen will show much less hesitation in spending money for services to farmers. The G-men have a secure place in the public attention, both inside and outside of Congress, so prominent a place that an official of another worthy federal agency once told me with some annoyance that every time he went into the field citizens ranging from bootblacks to hotel clerks immediately jumped to the conclusion that he was a G-man, simply because he worked for the government and came from Washington. Congressmen would hesitate a long while before making any drastic reductions in the appropriation for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Another objective of governmental public relations, close kin to the need for expanding appropriations, grows out of the increasing exercise of what might be called administrative statesmanship. Officials within the administration possess the facts from records and research which suggest new laws. They must themselves work for the adoption of these laws, so they turn to the techniques of public relations to accomplish their ends. It sometimes escapes us that the largest and most effective pressure group operating on a legislature is the executive branch of government. Like other pressure groups it sometimes goes to the public outside of legislative halls to get support and pressure from "back home." The attempt some three years ago to get a new federal food and drug

control act passed brought into action the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as one of the most active advocates of the measure. An exhibit was prepared; literature was issued; and friends of the bill inside and outside Congress were mustered as a part of the public relations program of the administration. The most relevant publicity for continued relief appropriations in Washington has come in the form of research statistics on unemployment and unemployables from various federal offices.

A third objective is to increase the use of the agency. The past condition when government was a policeman to be called on when needed and to stay out of the way at all other times has been succeeded by a condition in which government sells its wares as a way of performing its social duty. The recovery program that began in the depression included loans to stimulate home building and repair. Large publicity offices were established to tell citizens where and how money could be obtained and to urge the use of borrowed money for building. Tourist visits to the national parks and national forests have increased mainly because the automobile has become more prevalent, but another factor that cannot be overlooked is the consistent and excellent public relations programs of the National Park Service and the Forest Service.

If not directed toward increasing the use of an agency, the public relations program may center around clients for other purposes. Administrative operations can be smoothed remarkably if the regular clients are aware of the agency's program and procedure. Bad feeling as well as time-consuming questions can be averted by proper consideration for the client and his quite understandable suspicion and ignorance of routine practices. If a public agency wants support from the public in a crisis, it had better treat its clients with respect in the small things before the crisis comes. This means that administrative agencies should go to fully as much trouble as private agencies

to put up signs where they are needed to identify or point to departments or rest rooms, to prepare leaflets concisely stating where and how certain forms should be obtained and filled out, to answer standard questions fully, in simple language and convenient form, to anticipate the client's bewilderment and help him before he has to ask for help. This point cannot be stressed too much when many governmental offices give the appearance of being hostile to clients and of making negotiations as difficult as possible. This whole paper, in fact, might properly be devoted to the necessity for good client relations as good public relations, but the demands of the outline forbid.

Another aspect of good rapport with clients is the public relations program designed to promote the interests of client groups. The Department of Commerce commends an industry to public confidence; the Federal Housing Administration supplies advertising copy to building and real estate firms; the Bureau of Mines makes motion pictures in collaboration with business firms and associations; wardens of reformatories may argue that delinquents are not lost to good citizenship but deserve help. An acute need for this objective has appeared recently in relief administration.

Agencies must plan their public relations to maintain the morale of persons on relief by direct approach to them and must also attempt to convince the general public, and especially private employers, that these clients are not vagabonds, not mentally deficient, and not anxious to stay forever on the public emergency pay roll. A common type of contemporary citizen is sure that all persons on relief are morons and campaign workers for the Democratic party as well. The administrative agent dealing with unfortunate clients may have to take their part and boost their spirits.

Another objective of public relations is to maintain the agency's prestige, already secured through a

preceding program. The Army and Navy offer good examples of this type of program. Their standing has been built through a long and very successful program of public relations, involving such envied elements as parades on national holidays, special days set aside for their own glorification, a wide cultivation of youth through training corps in colleges and high schools, great sham battles, and the generous aid of civilian groups such as the Navy League, the American Legion, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Other types of agencies enjoy the same kind of secure repute on a smaller scale. Nearly any city has some institution that is well-respected year in and year out. Its public relations program is a matter of maintaining the service in a courteous fashion, of giving news to the press on request, and of giving consideration to appearances. A deliberate campaign for a specific new objective is seldom needed by such an institution.

An objective which no reformer likes to admit is that of promoting the political ambitions of the chief of an administrative agency. It is true, nevertheless, in many public offices, and candor demands an admission that in our time an impenetrable line often cannot be drawn between politics and administration. I use the word politics here in its narrow sense of running for office, keeping up fences, and distributing patronage; not in its broader sense of social leadership and control. A mayor would like to become a congressman; a director of the health department would like to become mayor; a deputy would like to become director of health.

Equally deplorable for responsible neutrality of administration is the occasional use of the techniques of public relations to thwart general policy in order to advance the particular cause of a single agency. All too often when administrative reorganization is suggested in any level of government, individual agencies rush to their public supporters to stir up

pressure for leaving things as they are. The recent display of going beyond Congress to the public which several federal agencies revealed when the Reorganization Bill was under debate, was a regrettable lapse of administrative responsibility. This was not working for legislation to improve the social conditions with which agencies were familiar from experience, but working against legislation which referred only to technical matters of organization and which had been proposed by the President as the chief executive of the organization. If neutrality of permanent staff had been enforced, several subordinate officials should have been disciplined in those discouraging days of the great distortion.

Publicity specialists seldom openly recognize attacks against their agency, but the countercampaign to offset attack may be a large objective in some programs. When the anti-Roosevelt forces were attacking the Social Security Act in the presidential campaign of 1936, much of the effort of the public relations division of the Social Security administration had to be spent in issuing counter releases. The political attack interfered with the administration of the act and it had to be met. Works Progress Administration was in the same situation in the campaign of 1936. It issued pamphlets and went to the radio to get its counter messages to the public.

The public relations program must also frequently provide for secrecy; hence the protection of administrative secrets can be added as an objective. Plans must be guarded until their fulfilment is assured; events that reflect unfavorably on persons outside the agency must be kept quiet, else the agency becomes liable for injury to a citizen; conflicts within the agency itself should be kept at home. One of the chief virtues of a professional public relations counselor is that he thinks always in terms of what the effect on opinion of acts and announcements will be. He knows too that reporters have shrewd ways of getting

at information, and he can advise the lay official on what not to say as well as on how to guard secrets.

A final objective is found universally. It is the reporting of routine news without reference to any aim save the general one, mentioned above, of keeping before the public. Offices with such reporting as their only objective limit their activities to writing releases for one or two outlets and giving information on request to clients and reporters. All other offices do this as well, but those engaged in working for several objectives at once plan their programs to include more than the mere reporting of miscellaneous items or mere facts from records and research.

This catalog of objectives does not exhaust the possibilities, but it does suggest that a public agency faces a variety of choice when it contemplates a program of managed public relations. It may seek one or more aims at any one period; it may follow one objective for a long period; or it may choose objectives that can be attained in a few months. The important thing is that the one or more objectives be identified clearly and that a conscious choice be made after weighing the possible aims. The choice of aims, furthermore, must be made in a careful contemplation of the whole program of the agency, for effective public relations cannot be managed except as a reflection of the underlying quality of the agency's work. No program of public relations can perform a miracle and maintain for any prolonged period a high prestige for an ineffective agency. The public may be fooled for a brief time, but the quality of the work which is being reported and explained through public relations is the fundamental factor in long-continued and increasing prestige. A false representation of the virtues of a public agency is socially immoral. It is also politically unsound in that an unstable edifice of prestige which might be created at first will not stand for long without a foundation of good performance.

Once the objectives are chosen, the program becomes a matter of reaching the audience. First the audience must be defined; and it is here, I suppose, that, next to failure to define objectives, most attempted programs of public relations fail. In precise analysis for purposes of propagandizing, there is no such thing as "the public." There is, instead, a collection of groups within society, some organized and listed in the city directory, others psychological and isolable only through exact testing, though useful nonetheless, without scientific definition, to the publicist who works from experience and logical analysis. Within these groups are individuals in agreement of attitudes to make a total weight in what is called public opinion. If enough like-minded individuals can be enlisted in favor of an object, it can be said to have public support. More exactly, it has the support of the particular publics that are involved. The question, then, is what groups are most available and most susceptible to appeal for the attainment of the particular chosen objectives.

Each agency will have to answer the question in terms of its own objectives. Some rather standard audience groups are always pertinent to every agency. The clients form one such group. The legislature is another. Organized groups with interests allied to the program of the agency provide other obvious audiences. The parks department should cultivate the Garden Club, the Wild Flower Society, the Audubon Society, the Plain Dirt Gardeners, and other similar groups whenever it needs public aid. The Navy is warmed by the friendly patriotic fire of the Navy League. A county agent or an agent of Farm Credit Administration does well to speak before rural clubs. These organized groups are more likely than not to be composed of individuals with the same general attitudes toward certain objects so that in most cases a psychological group is available. The publicist may, however, need to approach a psychological group

that is not identical with an organization. He may find such a group through issuing content that he knows from experience will attract the members of the group. If he has the time, he might even define a psychological group and locate its leader, though the technique for this is laborious.

More important than the selection of audience groups is the analysis of the attitudes already existent in the groups. Persuasion is a process of reorienting attitudes. The public official must know his audience before he approaches it, if he wants to win it; and to know his audience he must know what it already thinks of his proposals. Many a campaign has failed on mistakes in the symbols chosen for appeals. What are the words, stereotypes, ideas that will find the most cordial reception? What does this group already think about the specific proposal to be made? What does it think about some other propositions that can be turned to account by identification with the particular proposal? A precise answer again would come only through a scientific attitudes test, and unfortunately the techniques of such testing are so unhandy that a busy public official is denied their use.

Some more accessible ways of discovering prevalent opinion in the audience must be found. One such is the time-honored and useful common-sense analysis. We often say of a politician, "He knows people." Administrative officials can "know people" as well if they have been observant through their life careers and have piled up a store of experience to form the basis of their common sense. Short of the use of techniques of research, this sort of acquaintance with the ways and thoughts of folk in relation to their groups is invaluable to the public administrator. It is essential to be aware of the language of the audience, to know the connotations that may be attached to certain words, to know the etiquette of the group, to assume the appropriate level of language and ideas to conform to the level of the audience. A scholar, for example, in spite of a few notable exceptions, seldom makes a good politician because he thinks and talks in abstract words and ideas which mean something to him but remain mysterious to his audience. A county agent, on the other hand, fits his manner and his speech to the manner and speech of the farmers in the county of his work.

Sensitivity to the people of an audience is essential, then, in common-sense analysis based upon observation through experience. If the administrative official has neglected to be born in the right circumstances to acquire this sensitivity and experience, he should seek advice from some aide who has been through the typical career of the group. I sometimes wonder if every administrator should not have a good precinct captain for a friend to consult on public relations.

The less elaborate techniques of social research can also be used by public officials to supplement the common-sense understanding of an audience. Different ways of approaching an audience can be tried out on sample groups. One way of greeting clients may be much better than another for facilitating interviews and for putting the client in a friendly mood when he leaves the agency. If the answer to a stock question is phrased in language that means little to the client, he will probably not repeat the question but will leave with a sense of resentment. Jargon may damage good public relations. Various ways of phrasing can be tried until the most expeditious and most pleasant is found. In commercial public relations, the sale of eggs at the soda fountains of one drug store chain increased enormously after salesmen on malted milk orders started taking an egg in each hand, holding them over the stirring can and asking, "One or two eggs?" The customer might not have wanted any egg, but he was usually helpless in the face of the suggestion.

Written material can always be improved for purposes of public relations by criticism from sample persons of its designated audience. Visits to persons in the audience and conversation on both relevant and irrelevant topics is to be recommended for any administrator who deals with a public. Acquaintance with the books, magazines, movies, and radio programs favored by the audience is almost mandatory for anyone who wants to speak with meaning. A careful attention should be given to remarks of praise or complaint by clients, to questions by nonclients, to statements by such observers as journalists or intellectuals in an audience. A record of questions and comments might well be kept over a period to discover whether misunderstanding is focused on certain aspects of the agency's work.

In the realm of still more calculated studies, the public official can assemble some pertinent information about his audience. The census is required reading for its data on racial and occupational proportions. City directories are useful for locating organized groups and professional categories. Social, economic, and zoning maps reveal groups by location. Novels, biographies, memoirs, newspaper personals, and the obscure local histories that are being writte continually should be read whenever they deal with people involved in the public of the agency. The gro ing accumulation of social data from research will give even more reliable evidence. Such a highly significant study as that of reading choice, made by thi Graduate Library School, should be of great value to administrative officials in planning their public relations. Data on readability too is pertinent both to an understanding of the audience and to the preparation of written matter for it. The straw polls that use an approvable sampling, notably surveys by the American Institute of Public Opinion and by Fortune, touch upon many topics of interest in public administration. Surveys of radio listening show

roughly the proportionate distribution of taste groups in the nation at large. If economic categories are desired in selecting an audience, figures on rents paid, type of automobile owned, or position held can usually be ascertained for most individuals. Commercial market surveys frequently have this information gathered. If information of a special type is needed, the administrative agency might make its own survey through a questionnaire. Government offices have, in the ubiquitous public servant on the line, a large field force which has seldom been used for asking citizens directly what they think about their public administration.

Whatever devices are used to examine the proposed audience, the chief requirement for the administrator is that he be conscious of an audience and that he make some effort to form an understanding of that audience. If he fails in this, his public relations will be purely accidental and probably poor.

With definite objectives and the audience in view, the choice of media to be used in public relations becomes easier. The field of choice is enormous. It consists of all the many ways of human communication, both visual and auditory. Face-to-face contacts over the counter or in group meetings are important, for research has shown that personal address is the most effective medium of propaganda. Also included are pamphlets, strip films, slides, motion pictures, posters, exhibits, radio broadcasts, tours, demonstrations, photographs, letters and mailed-out circulars, throw-away leaflets, books, newspaper releases, magazine articles, special days and weeks, songs, and other channels.

What factors guide the public official in his selection of media? As usual, the cost is of major importance. The three major media of large-scale circulation—the newspaper and magazine press, the commercial motion picture theater, and the radio—are all privately owned. For the publicist this means

that the private owners pay the cost for the distribution of his messages to their audiences, leaving only the preparation of releases to be charged to his own expense. Since newspaper releases are the least costly to prepare, the newspaper is the most economical outlet in terms of money outlay in relation to number reached. Articles, also, can be prepared at little cost for local, regional, and trade magazines with relatively loose editorial standards. A writer with a good deal of skill is required to break into the national magazines, either under his own name or as ghost writer for the chief of an agency.

Motion pictures are costly in initial production but relatively cheap if a large circulation is obtained. For a national agency, the widest circulation is to be gained from showing in the commercial theaters, and to meet the standards of adequacy there a picture must be able to stand with professional products. So far the most promising types of film—good enough to hold their own in commercial audience interest—are the so-called documentary movie and the news trailer on prominent events. Such a film as "The plow that broke the plains," a thirty-minute short which cost about fifty thousand dollars, can get a showing, because of its quality, in enough theaters to justify its cost. "The plow ...," in fact, cost less than a cent per person circulated. Some three-minute trailers produced by the Social Security Board cost only .002 cents per capita circulation. The returns for "The river" are not yet announced, so far as I know, but it probably is comparable in cost per capita audience. The so-called educational film, which is the more common type produced by public agencies, has little respect among theater men and can seldom get a showing on a commercial screen. It costs less to produce than a picture that draws crowds, but, "playing the Sunday School circuit," it does not draw any crowds, and the well-directed, more expensive type of film may be cheaper in the long run.

Local agencies faced with slight means may consider the possibility of making their own silent films, now that small cameras are available and amateur photographers are to be found on every hand. A well-planned documentary movie of some local public job could be made exceptionally interesting to local semipublic groups if written, directed, and photographed by persons with imagination and a knowledge of the medium. I know a man who had the foresight to take pictures, with a cheap movie camera, of the stages of construction at Radio City. It is not a fancy film; it has no story; it simply follows the interest of an imaginative person who wanted to know what happened at each stage and who was sensitive to the human beings engaged in the task. This simple but commanding film has been shown to many private and semiprivate audiences in the United States and Europe; it has been placed in a collection of outstanding films to be preserved; and a print of it has been sold to the Soviet Government for circulation in the U.S.S.R. An amateur cameraman with insight might make an equally interesting and cheap film of a playground, water and power distribution, police procedure, school days, book circulation, or street construction. The great advantage of documentary motion pictures is in their presentation of familiar things. "Documentary relies exclusively on the belief that there is nothing so interesting to ourselves as ourselves," says Paul Rotha. "It depends on the individual's interest in the world around him."

The cost of radio releases, assuming that free broadcasting time can be obtained, depends upon the type of program to be broadcast. A speech costs no more than a news release. A drama may run into considerable money if the cast and musicians have to be paid by the agency. Local governmental agencies might consider the possibility of dramatic sketches written and acted by radio clubs and dramatic societies in the high school, though many of us, I am sure, shudder

at the thought of what might come out. A fifteen-minute talk, written for the radio, obedient to the laws of radio psychology, is perhaps the best available type of release for public administrators, and it is cheap. The radio owner again pays the cost of distribution.

Aside from these media of popular circulation, the cost of production falls upon the publicist, yet other factors in the selection of media may well recommend the use of more expensive outlets. The size and kind of audience desired may call for a specialized medium. Mass media, such as the newspaper and radio, cover a heterogeneous public with a variety of appeal. Government can only hope that its news in these media will be noticed by the individuals it wants to reach. On the other hand, a public official may go in person to an interest group and find his audience concentrated in some one spot under circumstances that allow him to speak to the group as a group rather than as individuals. A pamphlet sent to a selected mailing list can also allow more specialized appeal than can a general release through a newspaper. In some cases, personal letters to a hundred people might get better results than a news story in a paper of a hundred thousand circulation.

The content needed in a message to the audience may also demand the use of more expensive media. It should be noted that the publicist has control over such media as speeches, pamphlets, exhibits, and photographs, while control over the privately owned media of large circulation is in the hands of editors who operate in a pattern of editorial habit. News is defined in a remarkably inflexible stereotype by most reporters and desk men. If the desired release by a public official does not conform to this definition of news, it will not be printed. If the public official wants to go into more detailed explanation of his work than is considered appropriate by a newspaper, magazine, or radio editor, he must prepare his

own medium. If he wants to use illustrations, special format, and special language, he must use his own medium. He should know certainly what is considered proper content by editors and reporters and what he can and cannot say in the low-cost media.

The lack of control over the low-cost media may interfere further with their use when the content, while conforming to the habitual editorial definition of news, may offend the personal, political, religious, or economic biases of the owners and editors of media. News of the iniquity in food and drug manufacture has been notoriously excluded from the newspaper and magazine press which still benefits from the advertising of nostrums whose chief cost, in fact, is created by advertising rather than by ingredients. Venereal disease was taboo in the popular media for years until a federal publicity campaign broke the spell. Similar examples of editorial prejudice can be found in local governmental public relations. If a release is not refused space altogether, its meaning may be so distorted by editing and headline that it would have been less harmful if left out entirely.

The public official, then, must choose his outlets to the public in terms of cost, audience desired, and control over the media. The lowest cost will be found in the use of the privately owned media of large-scale popular circulation, but these are not directed toward a specialized audience nor are they subject to control. Releases to them must conform to the editorial standards prescribed by their own customs. If these standards prevent their use for certain types of content, the publicist must turn to media that can be prepared and controlled within his own office, even though the cost will be increased. Of first importance is the necessity for a careful analysis of the total situation in the program of public relations before any medium is chosen. The administrator must be aware of his objectives, his audience, and the type of subject-content he wants to deliver before he can success-

fully select the channels of communication which he will use to reach his public.

The discussion so far has been concerned with what a program of public relations for a public agency aims to accomplish and with the way in which communication between official and public is established. The major headings have covered a summary of the objectives of governmental public relations, a statement of the importance of defining the audience, and a summary of conditions affecting the choice of the media of communication. Underlying the whole presentation has been the assumption that public administrative offices properly engage in deliberate efforts to establish favorable attitudes toward themselves in the public with which they are involved. This assumption has been challenged by some honest and intelligent observers of government on the ground that public agencies in popular government must be submissive to the will of the public and must take no part in the manipulation of that will toward ends beneficial to government. Since 1913 a federal statute has forbidden the spending of any part of any appropriation for "publicity experts" in the federal administration without the consent of Congress. (The publicity experts as a result are called by a variety of titles that omit the word publicity.) Several of the more articulate journalists have objected to "government by mimeograph," "government by handout," and "Uncle Sam's ballyhoo men," to quote some of the titles of their articles. Judging from conversations on the subject, most thoughtful citizens would raise the same question about the practice of deliberate techniques of public relations by the executive branch of government.

It is reported that when a student in Thorstein Veblen's class asked one of those long, groping, bewildered, theoretical questions, Veblen replied, "I don't know. I'm not bothered that way." His reply might be borrowed for the introductory confession to the rest of this paper. The justification for such a

tranquil acceptance of what others call dangerous can be found, I submit, in the conditions and trends of representative government in the world.

It happens that legislators have become more and more dependent upon administrative officials for reliable advice. The complexities of public problems in the adjustment to social change are so great and the necessity for careful study and analysis of enormous amounts of data so acute that the administrative wing of government has grown steadily in its importance in making policy. Furthermore, as the adjustment to urban industrial conditions takes place, the amount of control exercised by government over the economic system steadily increases.

The gradual change toward more control has been accomplished up to now without the loss of personal freedom because the American executive has never adopted, for more than temporary periods, a formal use of violence and suppression of free speech as a technique of control. No ideology glorifying complete submission to the leader has been proclaimed to pain those who enjoy the democratic tradition of complaint. The executive, in other words, has gained in strength through political leadership by persuasion and possession of the essential facts of decision, rather than by stressing violence. Executives, under advice from experts in social adjustment, have often proposed and supported policies to alleviate the social dilemma caused by technological change. Government by executive leadership has become the prevalent way of government when effective adjustment to social change is demanded.

Administrative public relations have always been important in this process of executive leadership. The function will be even more important as the extent of control widens and more governmental procedures have to be represented to their publics. Deliberate practice of public relations will take to the citizen an explanation of why certain public policies are adopted,

will show him the benefits to be gained from certain practices, and will enlist his support for public agencies working in his interest. More than this, it may be the specialist in public relations working for a public agency who will be most effective in giving the citizen a sense of his own place in this bewildering, amazingly complex world so permeated by public administration. Various observers have pointed out that the greatest need in this modern perplexity is for people who can tell you and me and all others with appropriate symbols what is happening to us, why it is happening, and what our role as dignified individuals is in the semblance of chaos.

Simultaneously with explaining the purposes of governmental policy, the specialist in governmental public relations should be the one who keeps the administrator informed on what the public thinks and wants. He will have the techniques of opinion analysis at hand. He will also have an understanding of the opinion of his public as a result of an analysis of his audience in the practice of deliberate public relations. He can provide from these sources perhaps a better report on what the public thinks and wants than can legislators under their present methods of guessing at public opinion.

My argument is that executive leadership in American government has been established and will increase as government extends its control over the economic order. Executive leadership calls for the use of the techniques of public relations as a way of explaining policies and practices and of making the citizen feel his beneficial affiliation with his public agencies.

The danger in all this to those who value a freedom of the spirit and mind and who deplore the pathological indignity of totalitarian ideologies now in power abroad lies not in the trend toward increased government control in the United States but in the future location of authority and in the amount of

responsibility that can be attached to it. If the efforts, under executive leadership, to establish the social machinery to make adjustments to social change lead into an outright seizure of power by a party representing any one group—whether it be business, labor, or farmers—the consequence for democrats is apt to be painful, for an ideological myth necessary to the propaganda of such single-interest control will not favor liberalism. If, on the other hand, the end is a continued recognition of executive leadership by the elected executive and his bureaucracy of experts, under conditions of responsibility, there can be hope for the preservation of those elements of the democratic tradition that encourage human dignity and allow the arts and sciences to continue without the handicap of an imposed and contradictory set of premises.

Whatever the future, the present practice of administrative public relations by faithful public servants will not be responsible for any oppressive change. Contemporary public administrators are not working for critical revision of the location of power. The specialists in public relations who work in government merely reflect the basic public policy as it is decided by representative political bodies. Their releases compete with those from semipublic groups and commercial firms in a conflict of propaganda. Their objectives in the main are concerned with benefits for their public rather than for themselves.

Managed public relations in governmental administration, in a final summary, might be described as communication in a two-way flow. The public concerned with the work of a public agency asks questions, brings pressure, and forms an opinion. The public agency sends communications, through a variety of channels, to the public for the attainment of its objectives. The end is the development of a condition favorable to smooth, effective administration of the public policies adopted for the satisfaction of citizens.

So what can the library do about people? Well, it can reach a decision as to where to draw the line between sound education and sound recreation. It can plan its book selection, advertising, financing, and relations with other local institutions accordingly. It can recognize its deep ignorance of the facts by which such planning should be guided, and take inexpensive steps to secure the facts. It can say yes instead of no to the able students who offer to collect important facts for the library without charge, and most large libraries still say no. Finally, it can develop a teachable spirit, a professional attitude which this Institute has attempted to foster, an attitude of eager collaboration with other professional and academic groups from whom we all have much to learn in attempting to think clearly about the people and the library.

Over many American lunch counters hangs the sign, "The banks have agreed to sell no sandwiches and we have agreed to cash no checks." How about a sign in front of the loan desk, "Mike Flanagan's drug store, for obvious reasons of self-interest, has agreed to stock no books of importance to the serious reader, and we, for the same reasons, have agreed to stock nothing else."

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