SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

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Dealing with people is probably the most important aspect of the role of the civil servant and it is probably the biggest problem you face as civil servants. Scientific investigations have revealed that even for such technical personnel as engineers, about 15% of one's success is due to one's knowledge and 85% is due to skill in human engineering - to personality and the ability to lead people.

I should like to discuss with you briefly today the matter of your relations with the public and the importance of those relations to the job you have to do as administrators in a democratic system of government.

My initial remarks will be in the nature of observations on some important characteristics of democracy and human nature. As much as possible I shall draw upon experience of myself and others in the field of public relations and public service to arrive at some valuable practical rules which will serve us well in working with people.

The Public Servant in a Democracy

I once worked in a public office which received over 500 letters a day from people in all walks of life and all of them requests for something. The rule of that office was service, expressed jokingly by the chief of the office in this way: "If one of those letters is asking for the dome of the U. S. capitol, send it to the man! But by all means, whatever he asks, answer his letter courteously and promptly."

This man was an elected public servant and elected officials must realize the necessity of good service and public relations, for if they do not, the voter will return them to office. The office rule of this public servant has been tested at the polls 15 times in the past thirty years and has always received overwhelming public approval.

The career civil servant, unfortunately, has no such effective reminder or check upon the success of his public relations. He must constantly remind himself of his role in a democratic society. He is, in fact, a servant of the public. And he will succeed only in the measure he realizes this fact, for the people shall forever be in search of men with that high quality and will only be satisfied when they find them.

Vietnam is in full revolution. The tattered rags and baggage of colonialism are being discarded for a new outfitting in the fashion of a mid-Twentieth Century democracy. The rapid changes wrought by this revolution affect first and foremost the institutions of government, in the midst of which the civil servant finds himself.

There is tangible evidence of change, the most outstanding of which is the work of the Constituent Assembly now drafting the organic law of the land. All prognosis and the actual text of the draft of the new Constitution indicate that the new governmental structure of Vietnam will be Republican in form, endowed with representative institutions premised upon the notion of the sovereignty of the people.

But the present revolution entails other far-reaching and, more frequently than not, less noticeable, changes in the institutions and procedures of government.

I refer specifically to the administrative services of the government. Most of the present governmental departments and agencies had their counterparts in the colonial administration and the provisional government under Bao-Dai. The status of their chief administrators have changed from colonial officials to appointees of Bao-Dai to designees of President Ngo-dinh-Diem, Aside from this, there has been change in the personnel of the various departments and agencies, and there has been and is a continuing change in the philosophy of administration.

For the exigencies of government have changed. The basic purpose and motives of a democratic national government obviously differ widely from those of a colonial administration.

The basic purpose of any colonial regime is to control the governed in the interest of the governing power. The extent to which such a regime serves the interests of the governed is determined in the final analysis by the foreign sovereign. Certainly, colonial regimes seldom depended upon their popularity for their endurance. Instead they depended upon instruments and techniques of control and of force. It is a matter of historical record that these regimes bore more resemblance to the absolutism of an earlier and more primitive age than to the modern democratic state.

The administrative services which Free Vietnam inherited were established to serve the interests of such a colonial power; and they were predicated upon concepts of control and force not upon concepts designed to curry the favor of the people. Once the power of the instruments of that force were broken by popular resentment to it, the regime crumbled. For a government which does not serve the interests of the populace must depend upon instruments of control.

A democratic regime is in the throes of birth. The locus of sovereignty has been transferred from a colonial power and is being vested in the people. The basic philosophy of government has changed from one of force to one of freedom and self-government.

Democratic government is frequently defined as government of the people, by the people and for the people. That is to say, the people are sovereign; they rule through their elected representatives in the legislative and executive branches of the government; and the government which they establish is essentially a positive means of advancing the people's interests through social programs that would equalize individual opportunity and reinforced political freedom and its necessary corally, economic security. At the center of this system is the people; they are the ultimate authority and it is for them that government is established.

It is this concept of popular sovereignty inherent to democracy that determines the role of the bureaucrat in the democratic order.

In any system of government the bureaucrat is the agent of the supreme power. But depending upon the character of the locus of power, the role of the bureaucrat varies widely. The requirements of such agency in the imperial court were much different than they were under the colonial regime; and the requirements change even more with the establishment of democratic institutions.

In democratic state, it is the basic task of the Chief Executive and his administration to evoke the maximum involvement and participation of the people in the programs of the government and in the determination of the governments objectives.

They seek to spread responsibility rather than to concentrate it, to avoid hierarchical organization in which special privilege and status differentials predominate.

Within this framework and context the civil servant acts as the liaison of the elected officials with the public. Civil servants are the ears, eyes and nose of the executive branch of the government -- you must be alert to the ever-changing desires and needs of the people, the determination of which demand full deployment of sensory perception. At the same time you are the voice, the arms and the legs of government in that you carry out government programs and policy.

In a democracy where the accent is on service to the public, the responsibility of the public servant, both to his Chief Executive and to the people is much greater than in an autocratic system. Since the career public servants meet the public much more than do the top executives of government, since the political success of those executives and the public confidence necessary for the effective implementation of government programs depends to a considerable extent upon efficient service and the maintenance of good public relations on the part of career governmental employees, their importance to governmental processes is enhanced.

But it is also characteristic of democratic civil service systems that the public servant has more rights and security than under autocratic forms of government. As long as the civil servant faithfully fulfills his role of service, as long as he responds to reasonable expectations and demands of the people and their elected representatives, democratic regimes assure the status of employees in government service. Such assurance is extremely important, for as President Ngo Dinh-Diem pointed out in his remarks inaugurating this series of lectures, civil servants are men, and as such they deserve all the rights and justice due free men, including job security.

I should like to explore with you three basic aspects of public service, namely, its substance, method and manner. By substance, I mean policy; by method, I refer to efficiency or the lack of it; and by manner, I have in mind the attitude of service. All of these must be so calculated as to meet the basic needs of the people, to satisfy their expectations of government and to win their confidence and cooperation.

Of the aspects. I shall give greatest emphasis to the last, the manner of service, since other lectures in this series are primarily concerned with administrative efficiency and, moreover, because it concerns the human side of public administration which, though it is the most obvious, is easiest to forget. This is especially true under revolutionary conditions when the accent is on rapid change, and hopefully rapid progress, which more often than not puts the emphasis upon efficiency to the detriment of human relations.

It is immediately apparent to all of us, of course, that efficiency and human relations are closely inter-related. I shall only attempt to emphasize this fact and to point up some of the characteristics of that inter-relationship in public service.

Public Policy Must Serve the General Welfare

Though final policy-making in a democracy is the function of the legislature, career civil servants at the higher levels participate in the policy-making process

through position papers, drafting legislation and appearance at hearings before committees of the legislative body. Moreover, once the policy is made, its implementation is in the hands of the administrator.

Both in the policy-making and the policy implementation, the promotion of the general welfare must be the guide. There is no room for favoritism in a democracy; nor is there room for the projection of pet programs which do not meet to general welfare test.

An example of favoritism under the colonial administration is often cited and, if true, is well-known to you. It is said that many good roads were constructed by that administration, but each of them led to a plantation or a concession of some sort. A similar story is told of Moscow, where the only four-lane highway in the city is said to lead from the Kremlin to the ritzy residential suburb where all the top commissars have their dachas. Reputedly this highway was closed much of the time to all but the big cars carrying the high Soviet officialdom to or from their offices.

In both cases, though the public was certainly served to some degree, these road building programs can hardly have been calculated to promote the general welfare. Had the general welfare been the criterion, more roads would certainly have been built, if not different and better roads.

A further case in point is the Teapot Dome Oil scandal which rocked the United States during the administration of President Warren G. Harding in the 1920's. It kept the public and the press in our country ringing with indignation for years.

Here are the bare facts of the affairs: Albert Fall, Secretary of Interior in Harding's cabinet, was entrusted with the leasing of government oil reserves at Elk Hill and Teapot Dome -- oil reserves in the Rocky Mountains that had been set aside for future use of the Navy.

Instead of calling for open competitive bidding for the lease, Fall handed the juicy contract outright to his friend, Edward L. Doheny, who in turn gave Secretary Fall what he was pleased to call a "loan" of one hundred thousand dollars. Then, in a high-handed manner, Secretary Fall ordered U. S. Marines into the district to drive off competitors whose adjacent wells were sapping oil out of the Elk Hill reserves.

These competitors, driven off their ground at the ends of guns and bayonets, exercised their right to recourse against the government in the courts of the land -- and blew the lid off the hundred thousand dollar Teapot Dome scandal.

Nothing like it had ever happened before in American public life within the memory of living men. The public was acutely aware that its interests had been violated. The protest was overwhelming that it brought an end to the Harding administration, threatened the Republican Party with extinction and put Albert B. Fall behind prison bars after he had had his day in court.

When public servants entrusted with the promotion of the general welfare violate that trust in a democracy, they are rightfully and viciously condemned by the public whom they betray. The courts of justice fix their due penalty.

The rules of the game are equal and fair treatment, equal opportunity for all. Justice, social, economic and political, precludes favoritism or privilege to special interests or a special class. To violate this code of ethics is to invoke the disfavor and the wrath of the people.

There is No Substitute for Efficiency

In dealing with the public, there is no substitute for efficiency. Obviously the amount of service which can be rendered the public varies in direct ratio with the efficiency of public servants and the organization in which they work. But this not only affects the conduct of government programs and the amount of service rendered; it also has an important psychological impact upon the public.

The slowness of processing papers concerning the regulation of commerce, for instance, slows down trade and thus adversely affects the economy. But at the same time, it angers a large cross-section of the population because their vital interests are involved, it destroys or lessens their confidence in the government and in turn affects the confidence of others.

The same is true for the processing of other government documents. Unnecessary delays, multiplication of formalities and of necessary trips to government offices is vexing to the people, to say nothing of its demobilizing him from useful service to society for what adds up to a considerable amount of time when the entire population is considered.

I recall a sign displayed in several government offices reading, "Be Brief. Time is Money." This sign was obviously in the offices for the benefit of the visitors, the public. But it might serve as a reminder for civil servants as well. Time is money to those who come to visit public offices out of necessity and who are forced to spend much more time on any given visit than the public servant concerned is required to spend. Speedy service makes the visitor, the public, happy.

Some Basic Rules for Success in Public Service

The key to success in public service in a democracy is the realization that people are important; it is the people that count. The people realize this, or rather each individual realizes that he counts; and as far as he is concerned he counts far more than anyone else. Furthermore, he is constantly seeking recognition of his importance.

There is one all-important law of human conduct which the public servant and anyone else who wants to succeed in public or private affairs must follow. If we obey that law, we shall succeed in maintaining successful public, and private relations. But the instant we break that law, we shall make endless trouble for ourselves.

The law is this: Always make the people you meet feel important. Professor John Dewey, one of America's foremost philosophers, has said that the desire to be important is the deepest urge in human nature; and Professor William James wrote: "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." It is this urge that differentiates man from animal. It is the urge that has been responsible for all human progress.

Philosophers have been speculating on the rules of human relationships for thousands of years and out of all that speculation there has evolved one important precept.

It is not new. It is one which we all know for it is near universal. Zoreaster taught it to his fire-worshipers in Persia 3000 years ago. Confucius taught it in China 2400 years ago. Lao-Tse taught it to his disciples in the Valley of the Han. Buddha preached it on the banks of the Ganges 500 years before Christ, and the sacred book of Hinduism espoused and propagated it a thousand years before that. Jesus of Nazareth, teaching among the stony hills of Judea nineteen centuries ago, summed it up in one thought -- probably the most important rule in the world: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

You want the approval of those with whom you come in contact. You want recognition of your true value. You want a feeling that you are important in this world, which might be one of the reasons why civil servants the world over are so predisposed to ceremony. You do not want to listen to cheap, insincere flattery, but you do crave sincere appreciation. You want your friends and associates to be hearty in their approval and lavish in their praise. All of us want that.

Remember this when someone comes into your office seeking your services. Try to imagine yourself on the other side of the desk. You know how it feels. You have been there yourself. The same is true when you go into the village.

The hallmark of a good public servant is his ability to identify himself with the humbler members of the society. I recently met a provincial agricultural extension agent in a village not far from Saigon who possesses this ability to a high degree of perfection. Everyone in the village was known personally to him. His warm and familiar greetings shouted out to the occupants of each house as we approached were given in the manner of a next-door neighbor or a lifelong family friend. It was not surprising that he received the warmest of responses. He is not just an employee of the government to them, he is their public servant. He is one of them. He knows that to serve their interests, his government's interests, and his own, he must have the confidence of the people. He has that confidence as do the provincial government, his ministry and the government in general because of him. The Department of Agriculture will find it easier to implement their program, to introduce new concepts of agricultural technology in that village, because that agent has truly succeeded in identifying himself with the villagers. He knows that to be successful in his work he must be their helper, not their master.

On the other hand, a public servant who has been raised and had tilled the fields in the village may naively declare that he knows all about the conditions of the peasant -- a dangerous pretension in any case, but as a matter of fact he may be quite unable to guess, much less understand, what is in the peasant's mind and motivates his actions. The exercise of power has given the public servant new experiences and new attitudes which tend to separate him from the people in the village. He has new status, new and perhaps superficial prestige marked by appearance at frequent ceremonies, new living donditions and manner of dress. Cocktail parties, official or officious dinners, paperwork and meetings tend to isolate the public servant from the people. He becomes indisposed.

How close to the people is the Chief of Province dressed in white sharkskin, riding in a chauffeur driven car and living in comparative luxury? How well does he understand and sympathize with the problems of the humble and simple folk of the villages in his province? It is not necessary, I am sure, to dress in black and wear a straw hat and wooden clogs to make the public feel that you are one of them. But external superficialities are often interpreted as manifestations of an attitude. It is certainly disadvantageous to the encouragement of a citizen-to-citizen attitude to

make a show of power, authority, and importance. If you act as though you are one of the people, you will find it much easier to convince the people of this fact. And I say that with sincerity, not with sarcasm. For while playing the role of a public servant, it is truly difficult to remember that you are a part of that public. It is the position which you hold and what you accomplish while holding that position which gain respect for you. You are a part of the public you serve. Their interests, in the long run, are yours. You are one of them.

Good Public Relations is Good Human Relations

A continual effort must be made by the public servant to meet and maintain rapport with the people of all stations and classes. See as many people as possible. And in doing so think of each person, for the people constitute simply a multitude of individual Anh Nam's. Think of each person with two thoughts: first, what can I learn from him, and second, what can I do for him?

Be genuinely interested in people. As Ralph Waldo Emerson, an eminent American thinker and writer has written: "Every man I meet is my superior in some way. In that, I learn from him." This is especially true of conditions in his own village or town; it is also probably true of his trade or his business. It is certainly true of what he himself feels about those matters.

This is important to the public servant, for if he is to be effective in his job he must know the thoughts, the drives, the expectations and needs of the people. An understanding of the public is derived only from an understanding of individuals.

But there is still another reason for being genuinely interested in people. By showing such an interest you at once humanize government. People like to talk about their problems. Just listening sympathetically can send someone who comes to your office with a gripe away with a smile and satisfaction, convinced that you and the government are good, or at least "not so bad after all".

What is the secret, the mystery, of a successful interview? There is mystery about it. Exclusive and sympathetic attention to the person who is visiting you is all that is necessary.

Simple, isn't it? You do not have to have your Licence en Droit to discover that. Yet government officials will build beautiful and expensive office buildings, equip them with the most modern facilities, plan elaborate programs to help the people, and allocate large sums of money for their implementation and then staff their offices with personnel who do not know how to be good listeners -- who interrupt their visitors, contradict them, irritate them and all but drive them from the office.

Take for example an experience once told to me by a New York businessman. The fact that the experience was with a business establishment is not important. It might well have been with a government office. The same principles of service apply in both spheres.

Our businessman had bought a suit in a downtown department store in New York. The dye in the coat rubbed off and darkened the collar of his shirt. Returning to the store, suit in hand, he found the salesman with whom he had dealt and made his complaint. Rather, he began to tell his story and was interrupted.

The salesman insisted that the store had sold hundreds of those suits with no complaints. But his tone was worse than his words. In the heat of the exchange, a second salesman joined the conversation insisting that all dark suits rub off a bit at first, especially suits in the price range of the one in question.

By this time the customer was fairly sizzling. The first salesman had questioned his honesty; the second had intimated that he had purchased a second-rate article. He was on the point of tossing his suit at the salesmen and leaving, when the head of the department arrived. This man knew that good service is good business and he turned an angry man into a satisfied customer.

First, he listened to the customer's story from beginning to end. Then, when the salesmen began to air their views, the department head took the point of view of the customer. Finally, he admitted he did not know the cause of the trouble and courteously asked the customer what he wanted to have done with the suit, offering to do anything the customer asked.

Only a few minutes before the customer had been ready to demand a refund. Now he answered that he would simply like advice. Was the condition temporary? Could anything be done about it? The department head suggested that he try the suit for another week, after which time he would give the customer a new suit if it was not satisfactory. The department head apologized for having caused the customer so much inconvenience. The customer walked out of the store, with the same suit, but satisfied. After the first week of wear the dye ceased to rub off on his clean white shirts and his confidence in the department store was restored.

Small wonder that manager was head of his department. And as for his subordinates, they will surely remain, at best, clerks for the rest of their careers, if they are able to retain their position.

In the same manner, the chronic complainer, even the most violent critic, will frequently soften and be subdued in the presence of a patient, sympathetic listener -- a listener who remains silent while the irate fault-finder dilates like a king cobra and spews the poison out of his system.

But in some instances the visitor to your office may want only a friendly, sympathetic listener to whom he can unburden himself of a problem.

During the darkest hours of the American Civil War, President Lincoln wrote to an old friend in his home town of Springfield, Illinois, asking him to come to Washington. Lincoln said he had some problems he wished to discuss with his friend. The old neighbor called at the White House and Lincoln talked to him for hours about the advisability of issuing a proclamation freeing the slaves. After the hours of talking, Lincoln shook hands with his old friend, said goodnight, and sent him back to Illinois without even asking for his opinion. Lincoln had done all the talking himself. It seemed to clarify his problem in his own mind. He seemed to feel easier after the talk, the old neighbor said.

Lincoln had not wanted advice, he had merely needed a friendly listener. And not only big men crave a good listener, ordinary folk do too. The Reader's Digest once published this truth in this form: "Many persons call a doctor when all they want is an audience." We might also say that many persons come to government offices for the same reason.

But, you may protest, I am a busy man! I don't have time to listen to people's problems. Yes, you are busy; but your purpose is to serve the people. Very often you can render that service best in these very human ways.

At least this is what President Magsaysay of the Philippines thinks. He maintains what he calls a Presidential complaint bureau which does nothing but listen to people's troubles. Each case is carefully investigated by a staff which he maintains for that purpose. If the complaint is a legitimate one against the government, orders go out to rectify the matter. If not, at least the citizen knows he has received a sympathetic hearing and the fairest possible treatment, which is in itself a boost to his morale. President Magsaysay himself has been known to jump on a plane, fly to a distant island of the country and right the smallest injustice done a person by the government or help solve a personal problem. Magsaysay's tremendous support in the villages of the Philippines testifies to the value of human relations.

One of the simplest rules of successful human relations is -- smile. Actions speak louder than words, and a smile says "Iam happy to see you." But a false smile does not fool the recipient. It is a genuine smile, a smile with meaning and honest friendliness which fosters good human relations. The employment manager of a large New York department store once said that he would rather hire a salesgirl who had not finished grade school, if she had a lovely smile, than to hire a doctor of philosophy with a grouchy face. Why? Because the store's main concern is pleasing its customers, and a sincere smile is the sign of a pleasing person.

And a smile has its affect on the giver as well. It makes you want to do things for people. A man wearing a pleasant smile is more likely to say yes to a reasonable request for service than the man with a turned-down mouth.

At one time or another we have all encountered people who looked as if they were incapable of saying yes to the simplest request. There seems to be a certain breed of government official whose favorite pre-occupation is saying "no". For some unhappy reason this type feels that he is not properly exercising his authority if he does not say "no".

I had the unpleasant experience recently of observing a disheartening example of this kind of bureaucrat in action. While awaiting my turn for service, I overheard the visitor before me pleading with the official. He was persistent; he continued his plea and his reasoning, which seemed not illogical to me, for about an hour. This in itself was no mean accomplishment since the official had not invited him to be seated. The official seemingly had made up his mind, for what reason he was not disposed to reveal, that he would not grant the request in question. At length, the official lost his temper telling the man to please leave him alone, he was busy and had already wasted much time talking to him. The visitor reminded the official that his time was valuable too, that he had spent a total of eight hours trying to solve his problem, and that it was the official's own fault that the time was wasted since he was asking only that which was entitled to him. The visitor then asked to see the Director, whereupon the official told him that he was unnecessarily complicating the matter. The visitor insisted, and finally saw the Director who granted his request in less than two minutes.

The effect of this treatment at the hands of a young official naturally created strong resentments in the visitor and in all who overheard the proceedings. Even if the visitor had been wrong, sympathy would have been with him because he was

treated rudely. Certainly, he will tell others of his maltreatment. If this type of treatment becomes general, soon the officer and the government will suffer considerable loss of respect.

In a democratic society, the press, civic associations and private citizens soon take such cases to the attention of their elected representatives or, if real injury to the person results, to the courts. The bureaucrat in question is censured, if not dismissed. But in the meantime, much ill-will is generated and confidence in the government damaged, all of which could be avoided if the official were to realize his responsibility to serve and to do it cheerfully, courteously and efficiently.

Then there is the civil servant, you all know the type, who is afraid to take responsibility for anything, so for safety's sake he simply does nothing. This may be one way of saving the government's money, but it certainly does not get the job done. Nor does it win favor with the people; on the contrary, that type of official is the bane of the public's existence and does much not only to slow down the workings of governmental machinery but to alienate the public from the government as well.

Much better is the rule that unless there is a good and overriding reason to say "no", you say "yes" or "I can do". This is the attitude that greases the machinery of government cheers the hearts of the people. Few people have the opportunity that accrues to the public servants to lift the morale of people and thus to create conditions for the fuller development of human personality which in turn benefits all society.

Another rule of human, or public, realtions worth mentioning is: Do not preclude the people from questioning your decisions or from giving criticism. On the contrary, the wise public servant will listen to criticism, and respect it. Not that all of it will be justified. Nor am I suggesting that the public servant should automatically alter his decisions or actions to suit his critics. The most important factor is that he be willing to accept criticism, indeed welcome it, and that he weigh each question and each criticism and become the wiser for it. Otherwise, how can he know what is most important for him to know: what the public thinks of his decisions or actions. Further, from criticism you may often learn ways of improving your actions, benefitting thereby from the thought and experience of others.

Your Front Line Public Relations

As we have already seen, it is possible, as in the case of the department head of the New York department store, to be keenly alert to the need for good public relations, only to be consciously or unconsciously sabotaged by lower echelon employees who have direct contact with the public. So it is with civil servants.

Every government office has a front line of employees who can do much to hinder or promote its public relations. That front line is composed of the telephone switch-board operator, the receptionist, the secretaries and the guard.

These people meet more people every day than probably all of the officials of the particular office put together. And the impression they make on people vitally affects their attitude toward you and your office.

How often when telephoning another office have you been greeted by a switchboard operator or a secretary by a grunt or a gruff "Allo!" or an indignant voice whose tone seems to admonish you for having disturbed its owner? Haven't you on occasions wanted to hang up or give the operator or secretary a lecture on telephone courtesy?

Experience has shown that a cheerful formula such as "Good Morning, This is the Ministry of Health. Can I help you?" pleases the caller and helps put him in a good frame of mind to talk with whomever he is calling. In some cases, such a greeting can even disarm the disgruntled person who is calling to complain. In any case, it is bound to make a good impression on your public and make your job as a public servant easier. And it certainly makes it easier for the caller to know the name of the office at the other end of the line, to be assured he has the correct number.

The same is true of your office receptionist. A cold stare or an indignant greeting is enough to turn away many a visitor. It can create dissatisfied citizen before you have even had an opportunity to talk with him to find out what he wants or what his problem is. Again the simple formula, "Good Morning, May I help you?" in a tone of voice that bespeaks the will to serve will warm your visitor and put him in a more pleasant mood for your interview.

To a lesser extent the building guard affects your public relations in the same way. Though normally he has less contact with the public, it is important that when he does he is courteous and helpful. Since there is seldom any real necessity for firm action or use of force on his part, he can be most helpful to your office by being courteous and helpful to people who come to your office.

But the advance guard public relations of the entire government is the police. While their control is beyond the sphere of authority of other government departments, as it should be, the manner in which the police conduct themselves personally and their business in general greatly affects the attitude of the people toward all government departments. If the police are courteous and helpful in the performance of their duties, they will soon be regarded as friend of the people and will do much to bridge the gap between government and the people. If they are rough and arbitrary, discourteous and bullying, they evoke anger and fear of government. Once again, police officers are public servants. Their duty is to maintain order; and in doing so they need to be possessed with a profound understanding of people and respect for their integrity. Nothing can do more to create confidence among the people in their government than an honest, efficient and courteous police force.

The Importance of Correspondence

Many of the people whom you "meet" you never see, nor have occasion to talk with personally; all your relations are conducted by correspondence. Consequently, the way you handle that correspondence is extremely important.

Let us return to the public office to which I referred earlier where an average of 500 letters a day were received. You recall the rule of that office: whenever possible do what the writer of the letter asks; send him a reply as promptly as possible; write the letter in such a way that he will know we are here to serve him. Why is this so important to this official? Because for him no one in the world is more important than the people he served.

A prompt reply is prima facie evidence to the sender of the letter that his request was important to you, a fact that will please him. A prompt favorable or affirmative reply of course will please him even more. But if a prompt decision or action is impossible, a brief personal letter telling him that you are giving his request consideration and a definite response will be coming soon will be appreciated. If the answer is "no", again write promptly and explain why it is impossible to do what he asks.

How to Get People to Cooperate Willingly

Many of you are concerned with the implementation of government programs which require the participation of some segment of the public for their success. This is true for most government programs whether it be agricultural extension, traffic safety, education, industrial development of sanitation improvement. In the implementation of these programs, therefore public relations must play a vital role.

When you stop to think about it, there is only one way to obtain public cooperation or, for that matter, to get anyone to do anything. Just one way. And that is by making them want to do it.

Of course, you can make a man want to give you his watch by sticking a revolver in his ribs. You can make an employee give you cooperation -- until your back is turned -- by threatening to dismiss him. You can make a child do what you want by a whip or a threat. And so you can threaten the people with arrest, and imprisonment if they do not do what you want them to do. But these crude methods have sharply undesirable repercussions.

In Red China, and we are told also in North Vietnam, programs of road and railroad building are underway. Because the regimes for some reason do not wish to rely upon voluntary participation of the people even as employed labors, they resort to forced labor. They may get the roads and railroads built, killing thousands of people in the process, but they will embitter the people and be forced to employ ever-increasing measures of force and terror to keep the population from overthrowing the regime.

Most of you recall the reaction of the Vietnamese to the alcohol taxes and forced buying imposed in not too remote days here. As far as I can learn, that program imposed upon the people by force created nothing but ill-will for those responsible for it.

In a democracy, there is no other way than to make the people want to do it. How do you do that?

In the first place, of course, your program must meet the need or desire of the people.

Personally I am very fond of strawberries and cream; but I find that for some strange reason fish prefer worms. So when I go fishing, I don't think about what I want. I think about what the fish want. I don't bait the hook with strawberries and cream, but I dangle a worm or a grasshopper in front of the fish.

A famous scholar and his son one day tried to get a reluctant calf into the barn. But they made the common mistake of thinking only of what they wanted. So they resorted to force; the scholar pushed and his son pulled. But the calf thought

only of what he wanted; so he stiffened his legs and stubbornly refused to leave the pasture. The Irish housemaid saw their predicament. She couldn't write essays and books, but, on this occasion at least, she acted more intelligently than the scholar. She thought of what the calf wanted and she put her maternal finger in the calf's mouth and let the calf suck her finger as she gently led him into the barn.

When working with people, too, the problem is to get their enthusiastic and willing cooperation. Just as it was easy to lead the reluctant calf to the barn once the obvious and simple technique was applied, it is easy to obtain the cooperation of people when you use the human approach. If you talk to them in terms of their own welfare and show them how they will be benefitted by giving their cooperation, they will give it willingly and be pleased that you have asked for their participation. Once you have achieved this, your problems are over, for the people will consider your program, their program, and so long as it is their own, you will have all the cooperation you can use. Convincing them that it is their program is the hardest part.

When approaching the people for their cooperation, begin in a friendly manner.

John D. Rockerfeller, Jr., provides us with an excellent example of how this is done. Back in 1915, Rockerfeller was confronted with a strike in the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company which he controlled. The strike for higher wages was one of the most bitter in the history of American labor. After weeks of meeting the people and studying the situation on the spot, Rockerfeller addressed the representatives of the strikers as follows:

"This is a red-letter day in my life," he began. "It is the first time I have ever had the good fortune to meet the representatives of the employees of this great company, its officers and superintendents, together, and I can assure you that I am proud to be here, and that I shall remember this gathering as long as I live. Had this meeting been held two weeks ago, I should have stood here a stranger to most of you, recognizing a few faces. Having had the opportunity last week of visiting all the camps in the southern coal fields and of talking individually with practically all the representatives, except those who were away; having visited in your homes, met many of your wives and children, we meet many of your wives and children, we meet here not as strangers, but as friends, and it is in that spirit of mutual friendship that I am glad to have this opportunity to discuss with you our common interests.

"Since this is a meeting of the officers of the company and the representatives of the employees, it is only by your courtesy that I am here, for I am not so fortunate as to be either one or the other; and yet I feel that I am intimately with you men, for, in a sense, I represent both the stockholders and the directors."

This speech produced astonishing results. It calmed the tempestuous waves of hate that threatened to engulf the disputing parties. It won him a host of admirers. And it presented the facts in such a manner as to permit a satisfactory solution to the miners and they went back to work willingly.

Suppose Rockefeller had taken a different approach. Suppose he had argued with the miners and hurled devastating facts in their faces. Suppose he had told them by his tones and insinuations that they were wrong and had tried by all powers of logic to convince them they were wrong? The results would have been the opposite. He would have stirred more anger and hatred and the strike would have continued further from settlement than when he had begun.

Notice that Rockefeller first visited the people personally to find out what their point of view was. This is important to you in the implementation of your programs. Try honestly to see things from the people's point of view. Be sympathetic with their ideas and their desires. You will have a much better program and much more success in gaining the cooperation in its implementation if you do.

Again, permit me to cite Abraham Lincoln in this respect. Here are his words: "It is an old and true maxim 'that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall.'" So with men, if you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart; which, say what you will, is the great high road to his reason".

A friendly approach will evoke a sympathetic "yes" response. This is especially true if you emphasize the identity of your ends and purposes. Get the people whose cooperation you want saying "yes", at the outset and, if possible, keep them from saying "no".

"A 'no' response," says Professor Overstreet in his book, Influencing Human Behavior, "is a most difficult handicap to overcome. When a person has said "no" all his price of personality demands that he remain consistent with himself. He may later feel that the "no" was ill-advised; nevertheless, there is his precious pride to consider! Once having said a thing, he must stick to it. Hence it is of the very greatest importance that we start a person in the affirmative direction."

In this we can take a lesson from Socrates. Socrates was a brilliant man in spite of the fact that he went barefooted and married a girl of nineteen when he was baldheaded and forty. He did something that only a handful of men in all history have been able to do: he sharply changed the whole course of human thought.

What was his method? His technique, now called the "Socratic method", was based upon getting a "yes, yes" response. He asked questions with which the person with whom he was speaking would have to agree. He kept on asking questions until that person had embraced his conclusion willingly when the direct approach would have provoked strong opposition.

This is an especially useful approach when your program steps on time-worn traditions or prejudices of people. All the argument in the world cannot convince them to change, but will only provoke their disturb and refusal of cooperation.

Another useful in seeking cooperation is to remember that most people, even the self-proclaimed realists, are idealists, are idealists at heart; they like to do things which have noble purppse. Make certain that your program is founded on such a purpose. You will find that this will enhance its acceptability to the people and assure their willingness to join your cause.

To awaken the people to the true value of your program, you will often find that the best way is to dramatize it. Very often this is the only way to place your program in true perspective before the people.

The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, one of America's outstanding metropolitan newspapers, had the following experience which illustrates this well. A few years ago the paper was being slandered by a dangerous whispering campaign. A malicious rumor was being circulated among advertisers that the newspaper carried too much advertising and too little news and was therefore no longer attractive to readers. Immediate action was necessary.

The Bulletin clipped from its regular edition all reading matter of all kinds on one average day, classified it, and published it as a book. The book was called One Day. It contained 307 pages -- as many as a two-dollar book; yet the Bulletin had printed all this news and feature material on one day and sold it for two cents. The printing of that book dramatized the fact that the Bulletin carried an enormous amount of interesting reading matter. It conveyed the facts more vividely, more interestingly and more convincingly than days of figures and more talk could have done.

Finally, when seeking the cooperation of the public, don't overlook the possibility that by stimulating competition, by throwing down a challenge to the people, you can often convince them to give their best to your program and you can therefore accomplish your goal quicker and with less effort on your part. By competition I do not mean a sordid, money-getting phenomenon, but rather the desire of men of spirit to excel. A challenge, the spirit of competition which excites men's desire to excel, can provide the momentum for the carrying out of many a good program.

Keep the Public Informed

In a democratic system there is probably no better way of pleasing the public than by keeping it informed of what you are doing in your agency or department. Purely apart from their right as the sovereign power to know what those they have delegated powers of government are doing with those powers, the people must be informed if government is to be successful. For an informed public is the best assurance of popular acceptance of, support for, and cooperation in your programs. Without these you and the entire government would be crippled.

The mistake is too often made of considering the public as gullible and naive, capable of being spoon-fed with selected information, half-truths or falsehoods. This is simply not possible for long. History has proven that you can fool all of the people some of the time, and perhaps some of the people all of the time; but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

Good democratic government is possible only when the people and the government are working closely together with mutual confidence. To have that confidence the public must know and understand what their government is up to. It therefore behooves public servants to keep a steady flow of information to the people through the press and radio, to enlist the support and cooperation of civic associations who can assist you in educating the public on programs you wish to implement.

More press conferences such as those held by the Secretary of State for National Economy this week will certainly be welcomed by the press and by the people. More and closer personal contacts with the gentlemen of the press and with private civic leaders can but have far-reaching beneficial results for every government office. Government offices in many countries find it most worthwhile to include among the staffpersonnel of the top executive a public relations officers who is continually looking for ways in which to gain public support and cooperation.

Experience has shown that only personnel directly responsible to the top executive of an agency or department can have the necessary personal understanding of that executive's personality and wishes and knowledge of the agency's or department's program for the kind of public relations which will effectively serve the ends of that program. Public relations, to be effective must be as personal as possible. It is not something which lends itself to central agency mass-production and distribution.

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I have mentioned many techniques of good public relations during the course of these remarks. But the central factor without which all the techniques are useless is this: The public servant must know, and act upon the knowledge, that the people are of central importance and that his duty is to render them service. Good service is good public relations, and vice-versa. Good service is the key to your success in government.

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