

Principles of Administration

*Impressions of a student of a Post-Certificate Course
at the College of Nursing, Delhi.*

by Margaret McLean, R.N.

BBROADLY speaking, administration is the means or power utilized, to achieve the greatest quantity, of the highest quality, at the lowest cost. Quantity could be in material bulk, working hours or mental output. Quality relate to technical skill, finish, or accuracy; and cost is usually estimated in relation to time, money, materials or manpower. These all may be geared to the fulfilment of a plan and achievement of a purpose or aim. This can be observed in the realm of commerce, industry, and various trades.

Until recent months, principles were basic truths or facts, which usually only made their presence felt in the sphere of moral and social justice. Now we find that they have infiltrated into every nook and corner of our lives, making life so complicated that our identity has faded into insignificance, and we have become mere puppets dominated and 'wirepulled' by principles. We are told we live in an age of change, and all that we learn must be integrated into experience. Certainly, very rapid changes have taken place with principles, and, without being asked, have infiltrated and integrated into life itself. We cannot eat, sleep, breathe, or do any of the other hitherto simple occupations without accomplishing that act under the influence of principles.

Having accepted the inevitable penetration of principles into the common life, it is reasonable to expect them to be influencing other spheres, and in this particular case, it is administration. Who was it, who talked of oiling the wheels of administration? Doubtless the 'wheels' still exist and the rate of revolving has certainly increased, though not yet crashed through the sound barrier. Analysis of the 'oil' that is used reveals the presence of

elements of principles—workers representation, consultative committees, social welfare advisors, human rights, understanding the other fellow's point of view, recognising the margin of human error, regular working hours, a living-wage, respect for the individuality of personality—these all tend to dominate organisation, order, and obedience.

With so much emphasis on personnel, has it made any difference to administration? Has it ceased to be ruthless, domineering, uncompromising or cold? Does administration care what happens to its principles? Yes, changes in approach, attitude and thinking are taking place. Despite the fact that the organisation is as slick as this modern world, the cunning of man still keeps administration on its toes, for many and varied are the problems to be met. Administration has become more humane in its approach, opportunity for exchange of ideas are given, and in the process, administration is becoming more a service to those whom it administers.

The principles governing effective administration may be expressed in a variety of ways but basically they involve *looking, thinking, speaking, doing and hearing*. All the surveying, planning, scheming, allocating, organising, ordering, commanding, controlling, supervising, checking, evaluating, reporting and recording, involve the complete personality of the one administering. And yet to depend on personality alone, is unsound. Sound administration, taking cognizance of the personality factor though not exclusively dependant upon it, based on principles, continues to be effective for many weeks after the absence of the administrator.

This is very true in the life of a

hospital, where, everyone from the most senior to the most junior knows what is expected of her, the degree of responsibility that she shoulders, the extent of her authority, and to whom she may go for help and advice, if needed. From the time a prospective patient enters the precincts of a hospital to the moment he leaves, and even followed to his home, hospital administration through its personnel whether they be great, or small—is tuned, to the service and welfare of the patient. Just because the Matron or the hospital administrator is on protracted leave, the care of the patient continues to be the best that is possible.

"She slept in the Matron's Pyjamas", may serve as an example of the scope of hospital administration utilizing the principles. It was the nurse's day-off and she was visiting her home town. As a result of pitching over the handle bars of her bicycle, she was picked up by an ambulance and deposited in the casualty department of her former training school. The preliminary physical and X-ray examinations were carried out; (Survey). A bed was required but was not available through the normal channel of communication, so the Matron's office was informed; (Organisation). Matron's office checked the name and address of the patient and confirmed the rumour that it was a former member of staff; (Staff Records). A bed was made available in the nurses' sick Bay; (Order and Flexibility). The hospital chaplain, who happened to be in the hospital that afternoon, was notified of the existence of the nurse; (Co-ordination). For various reasons, the Assistant Matron took the patient to the ward, and on arrival Matron's pyjamas were handed to her for her use. Matron had

realised that the patient had nothing with her and it would be a while before her own belongings would arrive ; (Reality and Consideration). On the way to the ward the 'nurse-patient' had explained to the Assistant Matron that she was expected to go on call for theatre in her present hospital. For special reasons the theatre sister's day-off was following ; (The patients' problem). That evening the nurse was informed that the Matron of her hospital had been informed of her

whereabouts ; - (Inter-hospital Co-operation). This resulted in the Matron's Office in the second hospital going into action with temporary orders and reorganisation, the wheel of administration with all its principles, turned once more.

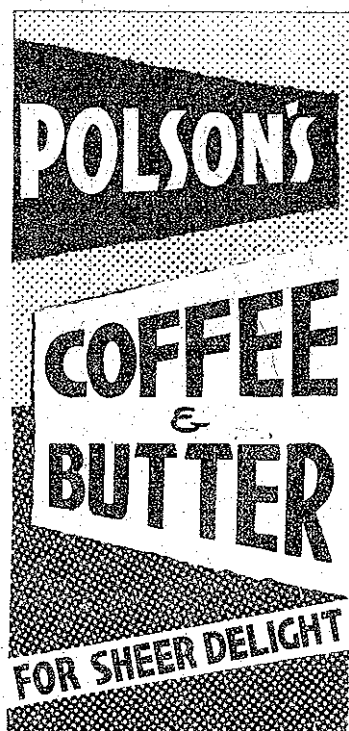
Successful administration has sometimes been likened to a full orchestra under its conductor, producing music and harmony rather than discord. Or it could be likened to a beautiful garden tended and

cared for by an experienced and patient gardener, wherein the good and beautiful is allowed to grow and flourish, and the weeds removed. And, in the life of a hospital it is gauged in the care of the patient and the general impression on the community whom it seeks to serve. The general community outside the hospital is not greatly concerned with principles or policies, but they judge on results.

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