

Towards Integrating Government Tasks

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A review of John Garrett, *The Management of Government* (New York: Penguin Book, 1972), 303 pages.

THIS book is primarily concerned with the management of government as it is practised in Great Britain. Its keystone is the Report of the Committee on the Civil Service which was set up by the Labour Government in 1966, with Lord Fulton as the chairman. It has since come to be known as the Fulton Committee and the report as the Fulton Report. The Committee was in operation until 1968. During its existence, it attempted "to examine the structure, recruitment and management, including training, of the Civil Service and to make recommendations." Mr. Garrett presents the historical setting which brought about the initiation of the Committee, the most important recommendations of the Committee, and the implementation progress of those recommendations as of 1972.

John Garrett's credentials for such an undertaking are considerable. Aside from being a management consultant in a British consultancy firm (Associated Industrial Consultants Limited) and a writer of several arti-

cles on the public service (there are four listed in the reference section of the book ranging from topics such as the Prison Department to subjects like "Management by Objectives in the Civil Service"), he also served on the Management Consultancy Group of the Fulton Committee. This Group was responsible for investigating a number of blocks of work in the Civil Service. The Group "would examine the management and organization of each block, comparing these with the best practice in business firms, and would consider the responsibilities held by staff, the tasks performed, the skills the work called for and the relationship between specialists and administrators" (p. 40). The impression that Mr. Garrett gives is that the Management Consultancy Group was the '*sine qua non*' of the entire Committee. In commenting on the report, he states,

Drawing heavily upon evidence of the Management Consultancy Group it concluded that the structure and practices of the Service had not kept up with its vastly increased responsibilities (p. 44).

Many of its ideas were taken from the Management Consultancy Group's

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report, but in the translation from one report to another these ideas often suffered substantial distortion (p. 53).

With a professional industrial consultancy background and two years' service with the Management Consultancy Group, Mr. Garrett brings to this study a unique combination of public and private management experience.

In the author's words, "The purpose (of this book) is to promote discussion and experiment among managers in government and to provide an explanatory background for those who are interested in the modernization of our great public institutions" (p. 7). After an opening chapter which explains the structure and the workings of the British Civil Service, the book gives a short historical account of the Fulton Committee. The next six chapters deal practically and objectively with organization, planning, control, accountable management services and efficiency audit and personnel management, respectively. Generally, the particular area situation in industry (British, American and Canadian) is presented, followed by an account of the state of things in the British Civil Service, a statement of the Fulton recommendations and the progress being made along those lines.

For the non-professional Garrett provides an excellent survey of organizational theory from Weber to 'contingency theory.' In the planning chapter, the Planning-Programming-Budget System (PPBS) is dealt with

at length. The various processes in the three stages are described in detail with illustrative examples to concretize the theory. An evaluation of the technique in the United States and Canada follows, after which the possibilities for Britain are discussed. In the control chapter, Garrett draws the link between information and control. He shows that as the planning process continues to grow, information needs expand accordingly, as does the needs for increased accountability of managers. He sketches the growth of control functions from 'time and motion' studies to present day 'cybernetics'.

In his section on Accountable Management, the author sets down a very helpful explanation of the Management by Objectives (MBO) technique. The treatment deals with the various processes in a step-by-step manner, then discusses the main problems that MBO practitioners have encountered.

A history of management services, followed by the present situation in the field, makes up the bulk of the next chapter, with the comments on the audit function mostly confined to a comparison of audit systems in the United States, France, West Germany and Great Britain. The concluding chapter, on personnel management, is, along with the chapter on planning, the longest in the book. It concentrates on three areas; job evaluation, man-power planning and application of social (behavioral) sciences. The importance of each area to successful personnel management

is discussed. There is also a brief history of the 'behaviorists' school. As the Fulton Committee paid a great deal of attention to personnel, Mr. Garrett rounds off the chapter with a critique of the committee's recommendations.

In his two-page conclusion, the author points to the need for substantial investment in personnel management and management information, to make for a lack of investment in these fields in the past. His final sentence sums up his attitude, "Those who are concerned about the introduction of the best in management procedures into Britain's central administration are entitled to show guarded optimism" (p. 276).

The Management of Government is one of those books whose sum is greater than its constituent parts. In any one of the various areas covered, e.g., planning, personnel, one could find a more thorough treatment in the literature, but it is unlikely that one could find a volume which encompasses all of the management functions. It belongs to a genre, I will call 'lest we forget.' Four years after the Fulton Report was released, this volume presents a tally on how things are going. It is a reminder that all was not well and, even though there has been some improvement, all is still not well. Its importance for the British nation can not be denied. Its relevance to other nations, especially those who followed Britain into independence, i.e., the developing nations of the British Commonwealth,

who put a great deal of emphasis on the British Civil Service model, is equally important. Those nations which followed a different model, the Philippines for instance, can also benefit from the insights and recommendations of the author. The problems are those of man managing man, with cultural variations taken into account, there is such to be offered here toward their solutions.

From a look at the contents of the book, the reader can readily perceive the comprehensiveness of the study. The author's presentation attempts to demonstrate the interdependence and interrelatedness of the various areas in management. Garrett establishes the necessity of the planning function to be inextricably bound within the organizational structure. The information needs are intertwined between the control function and the planning functions. The information which is needed to supply a highly developed planning system will also serve the needs of the control function. These three areas come together in accountable management, which is the "delegating of specific authority" (p. 185) to a manager "over part of an organization's resources" (p. 185) and who, in turn, "is required to answer for the results he has obtained from the deployment of those resources" (p. 185). The various management functions culminate in the manager and unless he has the proper organizational structure, relevant plans, data for control and the authority to

exercise his unique function of managing, then, all is for naught.

In each of the areas explored, the basic elements are presented along with the problems. The author's view is toward those things which have worked in other places or which stand a good chance of working if certain problems can be worked out. When he presents criticism of an idea or a technique, it is sound and practical. Mr. Garrett is not doctrinaire. He employs an eclectic approach in presenting the many sides to various situations. Ultimately, he is in favor of greater delegation of authority in accordance with the accountable manager perspective, a greater involvement of all personnel in all phases of management and, in the personnel management area, a greater concern for the individual as a person, not just another cog in the machine.

The style of the book is clean and neat. The author's sense of humor is evident from his description of the debate on the Fulton Report in the House of Lords. "Lord Trevelyan was afraid of levelling down and thought that the Committee's analysis of selection procedures was Marxist" (p. 49). His eye for irony is reflected in his relation of an incident where the financial and establishment control mechanisms clashed.

For example, in one department during the cost-reduction campaign of 1969 a substantial increase in the vote for new construction was accompanied by a heavy cut in recruitment of architects, surveyors and engineers, so

that the expanded construction programme could not proceed (p. 170).

The footnotes are listed at the back of the book and, therefore, do not interfere with the reading of the text. They are entitled 'References.' It is unfortunate that the author did not see fit to include a bibliography. Even if it were just the books used as references, it would certainly have been welcome.

As stated earlier, Mr. Garrett's book is a resume of developments in the field of management and particularly, in government management in Great Britain. It is extensive, though not exhaustive; thorough, though not picayune; informative, though not dogmatic; and practical, though not expedient. In viewing the book from a Philippine perspective, it is interesting to speculate whether anyone is going to do an evaluative study of the 1972 Government Reorganization Plan. In this connection, it is of some import to note that writers of certain sections of the Plan e.g., Civil Service, were well acquainted with the Fulton Report. Evidence of this can be found by comparing Garrett's treatment of the Fulton Report's recommendation to have administrators and executives "specialize in their early years in one of the various areas of administration. This specialization should be organized on the basis of the *subject matter of their work rather than on the basis of the particular department in which the work was done,*" (p. 262) (italics mine) and the Reorganization Plan's statement of Functional Groupings

(Part III, Chap. 1, Article IV, 5 (f).) which states:

Members of the Career Executive Service shall be divided into a number of broad functional groupings based on *subject matter specialization, not on the particular department in which the work is done.* (italics mine)

Significantly enough in this regard is Garrett's criticism of the idea of specialization by subject category. He states that the idea would be very difficult to apply because it will be "extremely difficult to categorize jobs or men" (p. 264) and because "a large number of upper level jobs fall" (p. 264) into more than one cate-

gory.

Another contribution of the book is in relation to the new constitutional proposal for a parliamentary form of government, in this regard Garrett makes several comments on the limitations of ministers as managers of large government departments.

For Philippine civil servants at all levels, anyone who worked on the new constitution and/or the Reorganization Plan, students of public administration and all interested citizens, this book is highly recommended. It may not leave you laughing, but it most certainly will leave you thinking.