

CHAPTER X

Summary and Conclusions

« Service in the United Nations Secretariat has been — and always should be — regarded as a high privilege, as an honour and as a responsibility sought after by many. That the reputation and the prestige of the international service should be fully safeguarded is a constant aim of the Secretary-General's policy and he is convinced that it is the wish of every member of the United Nations. »

Trygve Lie¹

Duties, Obligations and Privileges

1. Experience both in the League of Nations and the United Nations has shown that an international civil service can be efficiently organized on the basis of international loyalty, neutrality and independence. But unless a conscientious effort is made on the part of each Member State as well as on the part of each staff member to foster international loyalty, a negative attitude may develop rather than a constructive spirit. In theory an official should be ruled strictly by his international loyalty, or, in the event of a clash between international and national loyalty, should offer his resignation. But in practice this precept may remain an

¹ Report of the Secretary-General on Personnel Policy (A/2364), *op. cit.*, para. 43.

intellectual and moral pretension, for international loyalty is still an anomaly in a world of explosive nationalism.

2. In order to preserve neutrality and impartiality, an international official should not engage in any political activities other than voting. This condition is not a question of infringement of human rights, but a question of one of the professional requirements of an international official. The choice is not between political ambitions and international service. The real issue lies in whether or not an international official can successfully pursue his career on his own merits, without political affiliation in one form or another. A civil service is not just a technical achievement but an outgrowth of a political community. The International Civil Service can, therefore, never be expected to rise above the political quality of the international community.

3. No international official can act impartially and loyally if he is subject to external pressure, and no government can always resist the temptation to interfere in international administration if an international official seeks instructions from it. An international official must be entirely free from any outside occupation or influence which is incompatible with the status of an international civil servant and which may have a corrupting effect on his integrity.

4. A point of capital importance in maintaining the independence of the international civil service lies in the provision that appointment power should be invested exclusively in the Chief Administrative Officer of an international organization, not subject to political pressure. Striking examples of independent civil service commissions for national service in many lands suggest that the establishment of an independent commission for international civil service would be a valid solution.

5. In order to discharge international functions effectively and independently, an international official must enjoy world-wide privileges and immunities, particularly in respect to legal processes, including in his own country. However, these privileges and immunities give no excuse for an official not to meet his private obligations, because these privileges and immunities are granted exclusively for official purposes. The international recognition of the *laissez-passer* as an unrestricted travel document is of importance to the efficient functioning of an international civil service.

Selection, Classification, Remuneration and Separation

6. Without doubt, the selection of international officials must be made on the basis of efficiency, competence and integrity on the one hand, and on the basis of representation from as many geographical areas of the world as possible on the other. But, paradoxically, to recruit a staff from different cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds tends to render international machinery inefficient, whereas to man an international service with personnel from a few homogeneous States, while possibly improving its administrative efficiency, strikes at the very roots of its international nature. So long as all States do not provide an equal level of experience and training necessary for international civil service and so long as there is no mathematical measurement of efficiency, competence and integrity, the question will continue to be one of the main problems of international administration.

7. To award equal pay for equal work, an appropriate classification scheme is essential. Early experience in the United Nations in applying a narrow concept of post classification proved that the League's system is desirable. The League system, modified, was accordingly adopted in 1951 in the United Nations and Specialized Agencies, but the need for greater flexibility in the use of staff is still widely felt. This may be achieved, for example, by recruiting fewer specialists and by transferring staff from one job to another during the early part of their career in order to broaden their experience. This will require a new approach in personnel policy on a long-term basis.

8. Both in the League of Nations and the United Nations, the salary scale was rightly on the basis of the best-paid civil service in the world so as to attract first-rate personnel from all countries. To do otherwise would be a serious, and in the long run, very costly mistake, because, in the final analysis, it is undeniable that the quality of service depends in no small measure on material reward. But from the standpoint of sound management, doubt has been expressed as to whether an international civil service should adopt a salary system on so competitive a basis with outside employment as to remove inducement to transfer to other occupation. Moreover, departure from the principle of equal pay for equal work which includes the separation of inter-

national salary scales from local salary scales and the interplay of wage policy with social policy is also debatable.

9. To maintain a loyal and stable international civil service, appointments must be made on a career basis. But, at the same time, the Service must provide an opportunity for a continuous inflow of fresh talent and for constant contact with the political and social reality of the world. This is necessary to prevent the growth of a bureaucratic and pessimistic spirit in the staff. However, whether internal promotion should be preferable to appointment from outside or not raises a delicate problem. It is recognized that promotion on merit is an indispensable element for maintaining high morale in the Service, but appointment from outside is also frequently desirable to refresh the international establishment and to enlist support from all parts of the world. Obviously, undue emphasis on internal promotion, or promotion for promotion's sake, would inevitably render the International Civil Service second-class.

10. Security of tenure is an essential feature of career service. Unless there is sufficient safeguard enjoyed by staff against arbitrary termination, no one would consider the service as a career. With the widening of the administration's discretionary power over staff termination, the institution of a political control (e.g. through annual questioning and debating in the governing body), and the intensification of staff participation in personnel management would seem highly desirable, not only for the protection of staff but, in the long run, for the development of a balanced and sound institutional tradition in international administration. Under the present set-up, administrative action is often taken without attracting public attention.

Staff Rights, Relations and Morale

11. Modern personnel management demands an adequate balance between the exercise of administrative power in the public interest and the protection of staff rights against arbitrary measures. This is particularly necessary in international civil service. To prevent administrative power from being abused, a number of devices of an administrative or judicial nature has been established, internally and externally, in respect of matters relating to appointments, promotion, termination, discipline and appeal. But the force of this machinery rests in its existence rather than in

its operation, because not infrequently it has its organic defects and power politics sometimes makes it powerless.

12. The necessity for the establishment of a special international judicial organ, an administrative tribunal, to deal with disputes arising from the contractual relations between an international organization and its officials, is due primarily to the fact that an international organization is not suable in any national court. The administrative tribunal has been considered as one of the most effective safeguards of staff rights, because to do justice between an organization and its staff is essential to its efficient functioning.

13. Experience in the development of Administration-staff relations in international organizations has shown that, in general, the staff associations have contributed considerably to the shaping of personnel policy and to the improvement of working conditions.

14. A high staff morale constitutes an unshakable guarantee for the success of any human organization, because a wholesome morale stimulates loyalty, co-operation and team-work. This is particularly important in the international civil service where homogeneity is absent and well-defined tradition is lacking. Common ideals, common purposes, common conditions of work and life, if properly enjoyed, can contribute substantially to the development of a high staff morale. To bring persons from all corners of the inhabited globe to work together for a common ideal is a noble undertaking, a new event in human history. Experience has shown that it can be successfully done. This, by itself, is an outstanding achievement in public administration.

Concluding Remarks

International civil service is a new profession. Within living memory, we have seen old organizations fall and new ones created, but the time-honored civil service has functioned well on an international plane. Whether the new profession will form a powerful, scheming and anonymous international bureaucracy, a « new Leviathan » which will cast its shadow over the future of humanity, or whether it will develop into a priestly-learned class in which the individual will work, not directly for his own enrichment, honour or glory, but for the progress of civilization, is for the prophets in administrative science to determine. But whichever tomorrow will bring, it is the duty of today to make international civil service work and work efficiently.