

Chapter Three

Recruiting and Managing Staff

Senior education administrators in small states have to be in constant touch with people; their colleagues on the job, parents, students, all members of their small community. Although they are often required to make and take decisions on their own, their multiple occupational roles bring them in frequent contact with superiors and with subordinates. Very often they have a determining say about who and under what conditions their colleagues and subordinates work in the service. Senior education administrators are responsible for establishing staff complements, for setting recruitment policies and procedures — both, usually in the context of public service communion directives — and for managing their staff by making the best utilization of the human resources available in the restrictive economies of their countries.

Recruiting Staff

The recruitment and the management of competent personnel by the educational systems of small states is beleaguered by the general and familiar problem of limited resources. As a result, a restricted pool of trained and educated individuals is sought after by state and private organizations, themselves short of resources. Contrary to the normal rules of supply and demand, however, these people cannot draw high salaries or attain reasonably spaced promotions. The economies of most small countries are poor, funds are limited and career openings are few and far between. Unless one considers job security in state employment as an overriding factor, monetary and career inducements in education do not constitute major recruitment attractions.

Furthermore, employment in centralized systems of small states often implies demands on one's commitment, resourcefulness and adaptability that become more taxing as one advances along the thin career path. Even the few who attain senior positions on the basis of

high qualifications and expertise in a specific area soon discover that they are required to deal with multiple problems and fulfil multiple roles for which they have not been trained and which they have to learn to cope with on the job. Consequently, those responsible for the recruiting of staff in small states need to give priority to such qualities as flexibility, adaptability, ingenuity and improvisation as well as expertise and commitment. Senior education administrators who themselves form part of the limited cadre of state officials have to employ significantly different recruitment strategies from their colleagues in states where resources, career openings and the nature of work are different.

Recruitment Demands

Senior officials in small centralized systems are often involved in a whole range of staff recruitment and appointment exercises in ways that are not found in larger systems with more specialized personnel functions and a more rational distribution of roles and tasks. Such a requirement not only overtaxes the workload of these administrators but also overstretches their competence, especially when they are involved in recruitment areas in which they have limited knowledge. For instance, it is quite normal in small countries that officials from one sector of the civil service sit on selection boards from another sector so that the education officer for English will be asked to interview applicants for a foreign service post, the education officer for Mathematics will be asked to help select staff for the Finance Ministry, the technical education officer will assist in the recruitment of technical hospital staff, etc. These tasks become time consuming, especially when senior officials cannot delegate them to subordinates. Civil service rules in many countries stipulate a certain level of seniority between candidates for a post and the members of the selection boards. The major benefit derived from such exercises lies in that most senior officials in the service become well acquainted with the expertise available in the country and develop a network of information and acquaintances which they draw upon when required.

The social milieux tend to complicate the process of recruiting or promoting staff. Personal relationships, political influence and family ties can exert overbearing pressures to the extent that senior officials in small states envy the impersonality and anonymity of their colleagues in larger countries. In the absence of bureaucratic screens, experienced officials in small states set clear parameters for promotions and staff recruitment and budge from them only with

great caution. There are very compelling reasons for such a strategy: (a) the resources of small states are often too limited to allow for wrong choices and wastage, (b) the outcome of mistaken decisions are immediate and too transparent to be absorbed easily in small organizations, and (c) the human interaction is too close and personal to allow even hints of preferential treatment. Furthermore, the time of a small core of senior officials is too precious to be wasted on unnecessarily complex litigations when well-thought out and clear procedures can render the recruitment exercise smooth and straightforward.

The first task in the recruitment or promotion exercise is to establish the precise needs and nature of the post. Clear answers will be required to the following questions:

- a. What are the actual causes that have led to the need for the recruitment or the promotion of people for this post?
- b. What changes, innovations and improvements are expected to result from the filling of this post or the awarding of a promotion?
- c. What priority should be given to this particular need in relation to the needs of this and other sectors?
- d. Is the filling of the post or the promotion really necessary? Will the re-deployment of duties or the purchase of equipment eliminate the need of the post altogether?

Identification of the real, in contrast to the claimed or presumed needs, will help senior education administrators in small states move to the next step and establish precise criteria for selection.

Establishing Recruitment Procedures

With clear recruitment requirements established, senior education administrators have to get down to the detailed procedures required to fill the post. It will benefit those responsible to pay particular attention to the details of the recruitment or promotion exercise. The selection and the appointment to government posts in small states generate a great deal of attention as well as possible suspicions of foul play. Senior education administrators would do well to avoid all possibilities of entering into a social and bureaucratic quagmire which would reflect negatively on the efficiency of the organization and their own professional credibility.

The most tempting solution in these instances is simply to follow past procedures, to bring out the previous call for applications and replicate it. Such action has its attractions as it saves time, work and

worry. It also offers the ready excuse of precedence, but it does not ensure efficient results. An alternative approach would be to seek the advice and assistance of one's colleagues to establish clear, and written, guidelines which the selection process should follow. One can rightly argue that such procedures should be regarded as normal and routine for recruitment and promotion exercises in both large and small states. However, the case for clear and strict procedures is stronger in the latter where resources, social and political pressures can lead to expensive and time-wasting litigation as well as unnecessary personal acrimony.

Recruitment Guidelines

Senior education administrators in small states may wish to consider the following points when devising staff recruitment procedures:

a. Job Descriptions

- i. Do job descriptions for the post exist already? Will these be altered to take into account changed circumstances?
- ii. If the job description is to be changed, will it be a vague or a detailed one (see next section)?
- iii. Once a candidate is selected, will public service regulations allow changes in the job description to fit the particular expertise of the candidate?
- iv. Can the job roles be negotiated to maximize the expertise and work satisfaction of the incumbent?

b. Qualifications Required

- i. What are the minimum academic qualifications required for the job? Will grossly over-qualified candidates be considered?
- ii. Is work experience necessary? Does it have to be specific work experience, that is closely related to the job, or will any type of work experience suffice?
- iii. How will it be ascertained that the claimed academic qualifications and/or work experience are authentic?
- iv. How are a candidate's flexibility and adaptability to be assessed: through referees? through past personal rating reports? during a specified term of probation? or a combination of all or any of these criteria?
- v. What happens if none of the candidates have the minimum academic qualifications and/or work experience? Will lower qualifications be considered?

c. Age Requirements

- i. Will a minimum or/and maximum age limit be imposed?
- ii. Will selected candidates continue to occupy the post on reaching a certain age?

d. Conditions of Work

- i. What are the general conditions of work: working hours, working environment, support services, etc.?
- ii. Are there specific conditions of work: special requirements, such as travelling alone to remote areas, dangerous assignments, frequent overseas travel, frequent after office-hours work?
- iii. Does the job entail the use of special equipment (for example, a car for frequent travel)? Will the equipment be provided by the incumbent or supplied by the service?

e. Salary

- i. What is the stipulated grade and corresponding salary?
- ii. What is the promotion path for the job and the prospects for promotion?
- iii. What are the opportunities or limitations for overtime?
- iv. Will the incumbent be allowed private work?
- v. Are there special allowances for higher qualifications, for further training?
- vi. Are there special production bonuses?

f. Issuing Calls for Applications

- i. Who will formulate and issue the call for application: the departmental section, the Department, the Ministry, the Public Service Commission?
- ii. Who will undertake its printing and distribution?
- iii. Will applications be limited to employees already in the service, or will it be open to the public in general?

g. Receiving Applications

- i. Who will be responsible for accepting applications?
- ii. What will be the closing date? Will late applications be considered at all? How late?
- iii. How and where can applications be submitted: personally or by post, at a central office, at regional offices? If at the latter, how will applications be transmitted to a central processing location — is

there a need for security?

iv. Will applications be acknowledged?

h. Selection

i. Will selection be based on;

— the information supplied in the application form and accompanying documents?

— following an interview, a test, an examination, or a demonstration/practical session?

— a combination of the above?

ii. If more than one assessment method is to be used, what weighting will be given to each method?

iii. Who will be the members of the selection board, on what criteria will they be chosen, who decides on the selection of the selectors?

i. Publication of Results

i. Will a time limit be set for the publication of results?

ii. Who will issue the results?

iii. What method will be employed to notify the selected as well as the non-selected candidates?

iv. Will the results be final, will requests for revision of results be entertained? If so, under what conditions?

j. Non-conclusive Results

i. What procedures will be set in motion if none of the candidates is found suitable for the job? Will it be re-advertised or will an alternative solution be sought?

Establishing detailed answers to these questions may appear mundane and cumbersome. However, most senior education administrators will readily admit that at one time or another they will have to deal with each point. It will save time and avoid confusion if they can deal with various points in an orderly and systematic manner.

Job Descriptions

Careful attention to drafting a good job description will serve as a most important early step in the recruitment and retaining of efficient, committed staff. Public service job descriptions usually fall into one of two contrasting types: too vague or too detailed (see box below). Job descriptions that are too vague lead to misinterpretations and labour disputes. When too detailed, they place the service and the incumbent

Job Descriptions

The following are reproductions of two authentic job descriptions issued in a small country advertising the post of Education Officers:

1. *A Vague Job Description Resulting in Vague Role Indicators*
 The Education Officer:

- is responsible for administrative duties related to the teaching of a Foreign Language(s);
- is required to advise on matters related to the subject(s);
- must perform any other duties compatible with the post.

2. *A Detailed Job Description Resulting in Overloaded Role Indicators*
 The Education Officer, Technical, should:

- advise heads of school and teachers on matters related to the curriculum, teaching methods, choice of textbooks, equipment and teaching aids;
- advise the Director of Education on curriculum development, choice of textbooks, equipment and teaching aids, so that standards of teaching in schools can be maintained and improved;
- in conjunction with other education officers, heads of school, etc., ensure integrated programmes of activities and studies in schools;
- help organize and conduct educational and cultural activities and collaborate with the University in the organization and conduct of in-service courses;
- inform the Director of Education of work being carried out in schools;
- carry out administrative work related to the area of his responsibility, for example, collection and dissemination of relevant documentation to schools; help in drawing up lists of books and equipment and checking on their distribution and proper maintenance in schools;
- liaise with other Government departments, parastatal bodies and industry, with a view to drawing up training programmes and courses to satisfy the industrial needs of the country at craft/technician level;
- ensure that the policy of the department is efficiently carried out;
- carry out other duties compatible with the post.

How do the job descriptions issued by your service compare with the above?

in a strait-jacket which restricts the flexibility and improvization so necessary in the limited labour environment of small states.

When compiling job descriptions, senior education administrators in small states may bear in mind the following considerations:

- a. *The Needs of the Organization:* Job descriptions have to be directly related to the specific needs of the employing organization or institution. The duties of the selected candidates have to reinforce those of their colleagues. Their roles have to link with those of their superiors or subordinates. It is not uncommon to discover that certain job descriptions are made to suit the specific aptitudes and qualifications of an individual and not according to the needs of the recruiting body. Big and affluent organizations may, perhaps, be able to absorb such extravagances; small ones will be devoting valuable, scarce resources to peripheral services at the expense of essential requirements.
- b. *The Status of the Incumbent:* A good job description indicates the nature and extent of the relative authority, power, responsibility and accountability of the incumbents and the place into which they fit as members of a team. It identifies clearly the specific part which the holder plays both individually and collectively. If, for example, one of the duties of education officers is to organize in-service courses, the job descriptions should be clear about those functions that they can decide on their own, those they should delegate to others, and those that require the approval of their immediate superiors. Otherwise these officials either end up doing everything themselves or leaving things undone. Clear indications of one's responsibilities and duties lessen the chances of bureaucratic mix-ups and personality clashes.
- c. *Accountability:* Consequently, a job description should indicate clearly the incumbents' position in the organizational structure, to whom and for whom they are accountable. This particular aspect may prove difficult to define in the organizational set-up of small states where the diffused occupational nature and the multiplicity of roles of officials inhibits very formal hierarchical structures. What is the position, for instance, of the schools' architect whose main duties are with the Education Department but whose substantive post is with the Public Works' Department and when both make heavy demands on his services? Again, what

priority should the Chief Technical Officer give to the demands of the Manpower Training Commission when his/her services are almost fully committed to the technical education programme and when the Manpower Training Commission does not form part of the Education Ministry?

- d. *Legal Requirements:* In writing job descriptions it is always advisable to comply with current local policies and regulations. It pays to discuss them with higher authority (in some countries it is obligatory to obtain the prior approval of the 'Establishments Division') in order to avoid unnecessary complications. This requirement deserves special attention in small systems where job duties are closely related to the relative grades in the public service. Relativity is jealously guarded by the various trade unions involved so that discrepancies are, or can be, interpreted as attempts to disrupt the established relativity, or to alter existing conditions of service.
- e. *Flexibility:* It may be necessary to re-negotiate the job description with the incumbent where circumstances have changed. It is wise, therefore, to include an appropriate clause in the call for applications allowing for possible changes. The need is particularly pertinent in small states with centralized educational systems where the turnover of staff is often limited, especially at a senior level, and where changing circumstances dictate changing responsibilities in an official's already multi-functional role. Changing job requirements, organizational innovations and technological advancements are likely to render certain job specifications inadequate after a few years. The multi-functional duties of most officials in educational systems in small states demand flexibility.

Managing Staff

In most ways, the general management of staff in small educational systems is not drastically different from that in larger entities. Therefore, it is not necessary to deal with the subject in detail here. The major telling difference, as mentioned throughout, arises from the close personal relationships and the transparency that exists in small communities. These significant variables cannot be ignored by the senior education administrator. Set policies and clear lines of management can be bent or thwarted in conditions where "friends-of-friends" have telling influence, where employees or subordinates can

obtain inside information and unofficial support, where family loyalty forces officials to close an eye to an individual's misdemeanours.

In these conditions, discipline and the efficiency of the organization suffer. Senior education administrators, for example, find it difficult to censor incompetent personnel who are backed by powerful superiors, or who have political clout. Similar constraints arise when they have to post personnel to duties and localities that the individuals concerned are loath to take up, when they have to write reports and make comments which will not please influential people in the service or the politicians.

One approach in these situations is to act the maverick, the fearless (or reckless) upholder of set policies and regulations. A more pragmatic approach is to use tact, diplomacy and patience mixed with responsibility and honesty. Inflexible attitudes lead to unnecessary antagonism and opposition that in the long run create insurmountable barriers and limit the authority and effective power of the senior administrator. At the same time, easy compromises and giving-in to political and personal pressure cost senior education administrators their integrity.

Unfortunately, in the restrictive organisations of small states, officials who are publicly or unofficially discredited have no distant posting to run to, or an opportunity to have a second chance in a different post within a different set-up, in a different region. They have to face the consequences of their actions not only on the job, but also in the community and within the family circle. The official, community and family limits are too close and interwoven to be kept apart.

Adherence to the following principles may help the senior education administrator in small states to keep on top of the demanding management problems that, more often than not, have at their root, a hidden human factor.

- a. Be sensitive to the needs of all people, sections and institutions under your charge. One major advantage that senior education administrators in small states have is the scale factor where the number of people and often the short distances involved allow easy and frequent personal contact. This would help you be aware of people's concerns, their worries, their problems and their assets. Being kept informed second-hand through intermediate officials is important but should not be the sole line of communication.
- b. Listen to all views, complaints, comments, observations, criticism

How to Develop Mutual Trust

Here is the secret of creating within your organization a spirit of mutual trust and respect for others. When this occurs, exceptional performance will become the norm.

Build mutual trust and respect

Be honest and open in all matters. Deal with all matters as they occur: don't hold anything back. Focus on issues, not personalities. Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Work in a manner that maintains self-respect and dignity.

Create a desire for mutual success

All parties must win. If there is a sense of only a single winner — somebody losing so that someone else can win — then this will undermine a state of mutual trust.

Encourage co-operation

A mutually supportive atmosphere must be created and all must agree to work towards a common goal. Mutual trust can be destroyed in a minute by an inappropriate decision or action.

Communicate effectively

Communication is usually poorly done. Its absence is a frequent complaint — especially in management teams that espouse a participative style.

Provide immediate feedback

Evaluate and discuss the accomplishments and shortcomings of your efforts with your team. Coach those who need help.

Encourage innovation and creativity

Foster co-operative brainstorming, xeroing in and lateral thinking to address the issues. Tackle problems together.

Share the results

There is harmony in a relationship where people work together. Part of this harmony can be attributed to the manner in which benefits are shared and recognition is given.

The Practising Administrator, Journal of the Australian School Administrators, File Away 85, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1988.

— Would you say that the spirit of mutual trust and respect for others exists in your institutional set-up? What can you do to reinforce it?

and praise; but check them out. In the interwoven, complex relationships of people in small states, there is some truth, even in the most outrageous rumour. At the same time, even the obvious truth may not be the whole truth. It is wise, therefore, to listen — but verify. Never act rashly without first looking at a situation from every angle. In small states, perhaps more than in large states, things are not always what they appear at first glance. Further analysis may reveal aspects that were not apparent initially.

- c. Keep notes of meetings, interviews and think-tank sessions. In the multi-functional role, it is difficult to keep track of all, or even the important decisions reached, the facts that have to be checked out, the follow-up action that needs to be taken. The process of switching from one job to the next, from one difficult situation to a more complex one, often means the relegation of the less pressing action to a later period when the time-lapse can play tricks on one's memory. Reference to written notes makes it easier to refresh one's memory and renders it less necessary to depend on other people's perhaps subjective or selective recall. In the process one lessens stress and mental fatigue. The greater the diversity and multiplicity of roles in which the senior education administrator is engaged, the greater need for written references.
- d. Act on the assumption that there are no secrets in small states. Confidential matters always find a way of leaking out. Confidences uttered to most trusted friends and colleagues have a way of becoming known, first among a wider circle of friends and colleagues and later to a much wider audience. This does not mean that senior education administrators should not keep secrets or should reveal confidential matters. It is a well-known phenomenon, however, that private beliefs and actions eventually become public. The transparency of the small community seems immune to secrets. In these circumstances, senior education administrators can best retain their credibility by being consistent in their dealings with other officials and the general public. It simply does not pay to tell one person something, and another something else, to treat one individual in one manner and the next in a different way. The Machiavellian types may be regarded as clever and astute at first; eventually, however, as their wheelings and dealings become better known, they lose their credibility, and their administrative clout.

How Does One Learn to Lead?

The best way to learn to lead is to lead. This does not mean that a person must dominate. It means being 'fired up' and having the enthusiasm to get something done. A leader must have a desire to serve, to achieve goals, and to leave things better than they were when the leader found them. It also means that potential leaders must study leadership. It has been written elsewhere that, to learn leadership, the following five-point programme should be adopted:

- a. Study the qualities of recognized leaders.
- b. Study yourself. Recognize your strong and weak points.
- c. Work at being a good follower. Those who cannot obey cannot effectively lead.
- d. Learn as much as possible about group action. Make sure you understand your group.
- e. Develop a plan of learning and improvement in leadership and work to your plan.

Remember that leadership is a function. It is something a person does. It is not a group of personality traits.

The Practising Administrator, Journal for Australian School Administrators, "File Away 2", Vol. 7, No. 1, 1985.

— Do you feel that your superiors and colleagues have leadership qualities? How can you tell? Do you think you yourself have the necessary leadership qualities for your job? Why?

Sharing Human Resources

Owing to the limitations of finance and personnel, when setting up recruitment policies, senior education administrators have to anticipate the need to share expertise among the various sectors of educational systems. Here, specialised services entail high unit costs. These can be reduced considerably when utilization is maximized by spreading the service of specialist personnel among the highest number of possible users. This requirement might mean (and the corresponding job-specification and call for application may have to indicate) that the Department's accountant will be required to teach Accounts at the Business School as well as the Sixth Form College; the physics laboratories and their technicians are needed to service courses at the University, in-service courses for science teachers, as well as the country's 'standards control unit'.

The logic for such arrangements sounds compelling; however the logistics for their implementation often prove problematic. Sources of difficulty include:

- a. People who feel inconvenienced by the need to share, attempt to undermine the pooling of resource arrangements.
- b. People who exploit the demand on their services and expect unreasonable monetary rewards or special treatment for the performance of their duties.
- c. People, including students, who exert pressure to stay at or move permanently to the institution with the better facilities or environment. Variations of this pressure demand that “our” school or institution and not “theirs” should house the specialist services; alternatively, “our” school or village should have the same facilities that the neighbouring school or village has.
- d. People who offer a cool reception to the “visitors” entitled to share the specialized services or facilities. The latter are made to feel as uncomfortable as possible in the “alien” surroundings when, for example, during scheduled visits, equipment systematically fails to function and specialists suddenly turn ill or unexplainably become occupied with more urgent tasks.
- e. People who abuse the logistical problems, such as conflicting timetables, transport difficulties, wear and tear of equipment, etc.

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 * **Why Share?** *
 * It is an underlying assumption of economics that people, acting as *
 * individuals and in groups, have many wants but insufficient resources *
 * to satisfy them all; it is assumed, for the purpose of economic analysis, *
 * that we live in conditions of scarcity. In such circumstances people *
 * must make choices, and these are concerned with using their limited *
 * resources to satisfy some, but not all, of these wants. *
 * *
 * Thomas, Hywel (1987), *The School as an Economic System* *
 * (unpublished), Department of Social and Administrative Studies, *
 * University of Birmingham, England. *
 * *
 * — To what extent is the sharing of resources exercised in your *
 * country’s educational system? Would you say that the practice *
 * needs to be expanded or reduced? *
 * *

Regardless of the problems, many small educational systems are finding it necessary to devise organizational arrangements that exploit

the pooling and sharing of resources and services in order to reduce expense and increase efficiency. Ever-increasing needs for sophisticated equipment and its operators, coupled with the shrinking buying power of their budgets make sharing unavoidable. However, the people who have to do the sharing do not always appreciate the need, and senior education administrators have to devise strategies whereby services are given and acquired equitably. They have to adopt methods which overcome people's deep-rooted reluctance to relinquish or even share the services offered by their particular sector even when they readily admit that they are public servants and their utilities are "public" property. Full consultation with the people involved, negotiations that involve give and take, and clearly spelled out and delineated agreements on usage contributes to a lasting solution. "Ad hoc" solutions that encourage facing the problem when it arises hardly ever work, especially in cases where the need for people's services involve close co-operation.

When the sharing parties have to present their case every time the issue is raised, much time and administrative energy are wasted to solve a recurrent problem. If no problem seems to exist, it probably means that one claimant has overwhelmed the other into silence. Both instances are not conducive to the best utilization of one's assets. In contrast, a good manager of human and physical resources flushes out such problems, indeed anticipates them and takes action before they become insurmountable. A good starting point occurs when staff are being recruited. At this stage, senior education administrators should try to attract staff who are amenable to innovative ideas, adaptable to changing circumstances, and ready to face new challenges even when these entail personal discomfort. Senior education administrators who consistently succeed in acquiring and retaining this type of staff are very fortunate indeed.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES***Activity One:******Analysis of Your Own Job***

Write a detailed description of your own job. Compare it with that issued when you applied for the job. Re-write a new job description as you think it should be.

Activity Two:***Job Specification and Qualifications***

Identify a post that is likely to become vacant in the near future and, under three columns, draw up:

- a. The ideal job specifications that you would aim for, and
- b. The things that you would compromise on, knowing the possible limitations of the country.
- c. Indicate clearly the qualifications required, the conditions of service, including any special circumstances under which the selected candidate may have to work.

Write a detailed description of the procedure that needs to be followed in the entire process of filling this post. Include in the list the people to be consulted, the approvals to be obtained, the agencies to be informed, the time-schedule to be drawn and the places for meetings to be identified.

Indicate the percentage weighting and the criteria that the Selection Board should adopt in allocating marks qualifications, years of service, relevant experience, personality, leadership and other pertinent qualities, such as flexibility and adaptability.

Activity Three:***Pooling and Sharing of Staff***

The Department wants to ensure that all students in Forms IV and Forms V of State Secondary Schools are to receive basic computer education before they leave school. How would you tackle the problems, taking into consideration the facts that there is a serious lack of equipment, qualified personnel, space, and finance?

Activity Four:***Case Study: Vacant Post, Chief Technical Officer***

The long column of applicants for the post of Chief Technical Officer has been short-listed to three apparently equally deserving

candidates. The three have been interviewed at length, but the selection board has not yet found it possible to take a decision. As the evaluations ensued it became increasingly apparent that the members of the board are very much looking upon you, as Chairman of the Board as well as the official who will be working closely with the selected candidate, to take the lead.

Your evaluation of the three candidates can be summarized thus:

Candidate A

He has been in the section for the last fourteen years, and deputy to the retiring Chief Technical Officer for the last five. He is thoroughly competent with most things mechanical, but has had difficulties with electronic equipment. He knows the ropes in the department and, having worked in all its sectors, has first hand knowledge of their demands. He knows his subordinates on a first-name basis, and his affable manner renders him a popular man with the workers in his sector and beyond it. You would not hesitate to recommend his appointment if it were not for his weak knowledge of electronics, a factor that takes an added importance at a time when the government has embarked on an extensive programme of updating the equipment in the technical and trade school sector. In this exercise the Chief Technical Officer plays an important role.

Candidate B

He has been in the department for six years, having transferred to government service from industry, as he readily admits, for the “job-security”. When he was probed further during the interview it became clear that he prefers the less stressful atmosphere in the department to the competitive nature of industry, even if the latter pays better. He is well qualified in electronics and during the interview he demonstrated a revealing insight into the problems that are likely to arise in the equipment upgrading exercise referred to earlier. It is difficult to evaluate his relationship with his colleagues as his extremely quiet nature tends to cut him off somewhat. However, he is respected as a hard worker and has a reputation for never getting flustered. You would recommend him except that you have doubts about his leadership qualities, especially if his future subordinates expect the promotion of, and have more empathy with, Candidate A.

Candidate C

If it were on academic qualifications alone you would definitely

recommend him. He has an electronics degree and has followed with great success a hand-on familiarization course in the mainland country which is donating the bulk of the upgrading technical and trade school equipment. Indeed, the aid officials of the donating country regard him as their blue-eyed boy and have hinted discretely that he should be the next Chief Technical Officer. But he is 28, has been with the department eighteen months, has no administrative experience, and does not seem to want to bother with matters that are non-electronic. But again, he has a most pleasant personality, learns quickly and has an easy-going approach that endears him to most who come in contact with him. The department badly needs his expertise which can be lost to industry, if his talents are not rewarded. Yet you hesitate in the fear that his youth and inexperience will render him easy prey to the sharks in the sector.

The selection board reconvenes soon and, although it will be an open and frank discussion, the other members of the board will be waiting for you to give them a conclusive lead. What recommendation will you propose?