

SUB-THEME TWO:

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES

JOSEPH V. TABONE

Mr Chairman, Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the University of Malta and the Malta Institute of Management for taking the initiative to organize this forum. It is one that is very long overdue. I have now lived out of Malta for more than half of my life, and you will therefore have to excuse my use of English. While I excuse myself for that, I will not excuse myself for not sharing your sense of fatalism about the plight of the Service and its future. However, I do feel that, in order to successfully come to grips with the problems that ail it, one first of all has to understand the underlying causes: in other words, when we say it is not working well, before we administer a cure, we really have to have a good understanding of what the ailment is.

While several of the issues and causes are very clearly and articulately identified in the Public Service Reform Commission's report, what I would like to do is run through an overview of the Operations Review, and its findings.

There is nothing unique about the Government of Malta deciding to carry out an Operations Review: this is something that any large, responsible, visionary organization indulges in from time to time. Its purpose was, firstly, to look at itself, to look at its structures, in order to determine the extent to which its organization, structures, its policies are conducive to effective delivery of

its services. The second part of the Review tied in very closely with the work of the Public Service Reform Commission. The third element to the Review was the development of an information technology strategic plan for Government, and that is being finalised at this point in time.

The review identified three types of issues that were contributing to some of the dysfunctions of Government. Some of these concerned the organization structure itself; some were concerned with human resources, and a third, broader group had to do with environmental issues, as we call them for want of a better word.

Very briefly, with regard to the organizational issues that were identified, these had to do, firstly with the lack of structure in our institutions, - this goes back to the origins of the public service.

Secondly, there is lack of clarity of the mandates of some of these structures and as a result of that, lack of delineation between incumbencies within those structures, whether ministers, the senior and the junior ones, public servants and their interactions. Possibly as a result, we have a situation where, rather than being made at the lowest possible levels within organizations, decisions have a tendency to gravitate to the very top, either within the organization or, higher still, to Cabinet.

The system is lacking in capabilities in planning, policy analysis, and mechanisms for dealing with interdependencies within the

complex government of today, which is entirely different from the government which we had to administer twenty or thirty years ago.

The absence of effective communications is the result of a lack of structures: we may have some very good things that are going on at the top but, unfortunately, these are not filtering down sufficiently.

There is a lack of delegated powers to incumbents within organizations, starting at the highest level with ministers, working its way to the lowest levels of the organization, particularly in matters relating to financial management or people management. Suffice it to say that a manager working in the government environment as it is today, really has very little latitude in terms of the management of the area of his or her responsibility. This, coupled with an absence of guidelines in matters relating to fiscal, requisitions, staffing, etc., does not make his or her lot a very easy one.

The other thing that quite surprised me is the gap in so far as middle management is concerned, and it is really for this reason that I don't see what we're doing as much of a threat: I see it as an opportunity for many, because those gaps have to be filled before we move forward.

Lastly, in terms of organization-related issues, there is, I suppose, a lack of experience in managing our own affairs, and that is simply a factor of history.

In terms of **human resource issues**, I think those are spelt out very well within the Public Service Reform Commission's report, and I do not wish to waste time now in dealing with them.

Moving on to environmental support, the issues that were identified include the working conditions and the tools that people are given to work with; the telecommunications; the lack of information technology. Government, because of the nature of its business, is information-intensive, but it has so little by way of tools to help it in that regard. Given the way in which we have evolved, an average person in government departments has very little basic support to help him or her do the job.

As you can see, the list is a long one, and I merely tried to go through some of it quickly. The mistake that is often made when we talk about the state of the public service, is that too much is attributed to one factor: this happens consistently, and I am at a loss at how to deal with it. In talking to one individual, invariably, the focus is on one particular issue, one particular deficiency: if you talk to a civil servant, it invariably has to do with the interference of ministers or it may have to do with the poor conditions in which people have to work; ministers talk about the lack of support from the public service. In reality, all these are contributing factors, and we have to successfully deal with all of them, before we can move forward, due to the extent to which they are so closely inter-twined. I don't want us to delude ourselves that we can deal with them tomorrow, but in recognising the totality of

these, we can develop a strategy, collectively and, over a period of time, overcome them.

The range and the complexity of the issues posed is, no doubt, quite daunting. But, far from being impossible to deal with, if we keep an open mind, we can come up with the solutions. One thing to be resisted is the temptation for tinkering. This report has tried looking at issues quite exhaustively, and I think that there is a danger that we may get too selective in terms of how much of it is adopted and how much is cast aside. It is vital to remember the breadth of issues that it started off addressing.

It is because of the recognition of these wide-ranging issues and their complexity that Government has announced the setting up of an organizational entity to address the issues, and that is the Management Systems Unit. Again, this is not a novel initiative, unique to Malta. The government of Britain did this about ten years ago; the government of America was doing this quite recently; the government of Canada has established structures to help the organization get over hurdles that it may be trying to overcome.

The Management Systems Unit is a multi-disciplinary group, with competences in the areas of general management, financial management, human resource management and information technology, and its role is that of facilitator. That is very important: its role is in no way intended to undermine or to supplant the

line; the unit is there specifically to help line management implement these complex changes.

The priority of Government in staffing the organization is, first of all, to try to find as many practising civil servants as possible to join the team. If sufficient people are not found within the Service, Government has advertised and would like to identify other capable or qualified candidates in Malta. As a third order of preference, Government is looking to Maltese people who have done well in some field of endeavour in another country; it could attract them to help out. All else failing, it would look for foreigners who could help the organization for short periods of time. One of the things that is very important is that quality is not sacrificed in the interests of doing it "the Maltese way".

The key to success in dealing with these issues lies in the wisdom, the maturity, the professionalism, the teamwork that we show in the coming months. It is also knowing when to call for help: what distinguishes a good manager, is knowing where to get the job done, as opposed to being able to do it himself. I understand that there is some sensitivity about the concept of breaking with tradition and going outside the public service to fill some of the key posts.

I have no doubt that, if we can inspire confidence in our actions, people will rise to the challenge. Having been in every ministry and in every department, I have come across a great deal of frustration. But, at the same time, I feel very encouraged by the

quality of some of the people that I met, their interest in making the system function better.

Thank you all very much.

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JOSEPH R. AQUILINA

Mr Chairman, Hon Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although I speak in my personal capacity, I would like to be allowed to base my talk on the work done by the Human Resources Division of the Federation of Industry, which went into an exercise to look into the public service and to be involved with the Public Service Reform Commission in terms of submissions for the betterment of the Service.

First of all, I should like to begin by expressing my appreciation of the work of the Public Service Reform Commission in producing this first stage report - partial though it may be. Irrespective of whether we agree or disagree with the Report, wholly or in part, I think it is only fair to say that the Commission has addressed itself very professionally to the task placed before it. I think that it has produced a serious and comprehensive study. At the very least we are fortunate today to have a calibre document on which mature comment and formal suggestions may be based. I am sure that it was not easy for them to come to this and I have to acknowledge their wisdom and the hard work that must have gone into the presentation of this report.

If I look at the faces of the individuals that make it up, the public service is very rich in human resources, in terms of many parameters that one can think, education-wise, experience-wise, integrity-wise, and any other-wise. No matter what the detractors of

the public service say, I think it is still a fact that the Service holds within it and attracts from outside persons of good-quality timbre. If I look at the Service as an entity, I see a totally different picture. It is a paradox that the Service as an entity, is in what I would describe as a negative synergy situation, ie, the sum total of the service is much less than the arithmetical sum of its constituent parts. Why?

The report of the Public Service Reform Commission has gone into great detail into analyzing why this is so and it has suggested some ways of how we can unleash and tap the potential that is inside many officers and to bring these to a cohesive whole to improve the functions, to improve the performance, to meet the new, challenging demands that our economy is making today.

When one talks of "Service", what is it exactly that we mean? Allow me to give a definition that is lifted out of the report of the Commission: the public service should be a service-delivery system. Does it deliver? To what extent? If we are not satisfied, what can be done to remedy the situation?

I think, by and large, there is general consensus that the system does not deliver as it should. The most vociferous opinions that I hear in this regard come from some of my friends in the public service. Some of them voice frustration; some of them voice even anger. I find this positive evidence that the spark of the will to work is still there and I look on the report of the Commission as one which will give us a reform which will allow these persons to

get on with the job that they would like to do. Of course, the malaise of the public service in its various manifestations and in the various public complaints cannot be lightly overlooked and cannot be too easily summarised. They are many and various and even the report does not go down in sufficient detail to address the complaints and perhaps the hardships that our citizens have to face at the hands of the public service machine.

Talking to public officers, they will say that responsibility for the public service ultimately rests with them. However, I believe that the Service needs to look a long, hard look at itself in the mirror, and it needs to see also what it can do for itself. Having said that, when we were working within the Human Resources Division of the Federation of Industries, we came to the conclusion that the civil service of itself and within itself, could not solve its problems, because we were of the opinion that one of the fundamental obstacles hindering the improvement in the quality of the service and performance of the public sector is the intrusion of politics and partisanship in the managerial and administrative functions. We felt at the time that there was an understanding that for the public service to carry out its functions efficiently, politics and partisanship had to be eradicated from its ranks, to be replaced by professionalism or commercial business practice and professional business techniques and management techniques, where applicable.

The FOI had felt then that the public service's first priority was for the Service to be depoliticised and we had made some strong, perhaps even radical, recommendations in this regard. We were of

the opinion that it was absolutely essential to have a very clear, sharp distinction between the functions of ministers and the functions of members, administrative and executive, of the public service. We felt that a minister's main functions should be to establish government policy, within the parameters of Cabinet decisions, within the mandate given by the electorate, together and in consultation with all the interested parties involved in the process. At some remove from the date of the writing of this requirement, I have to note that there has been much that is positive done in this direction.

We also feel that another ministerial function should be to monitor all the factors affected by government policy pertaining to the particular ministry, and to formulate legislative changes as and when these become necessary, and to act as a watchdog over the public service to ensure that government policy is being properly and effectively implemented within the parameters of established and agreed targets...the concept of management by objectives from minister to head of department.

We felt that the function of the public service should be to execute and to faithfully administer government policy, and that the public service had a considerable effort to make in this regard to return to the impartiality of former times. We felt that it would be in the interests of the government of the country if ministers did not have direct executive power over the civil service, in the sense that ministerial functions should be exercised only via policy directives given to heads of department with whom targets and time-frames

could be agreed, on the understanding, of course, that heads of department or heads of public corporations should be held accountable to the minister for the implementation of these directives and targets.

The FOI had felt that Act VII of 1975, which empowered ministers to assume all or many of the functions and responsibilities of heads of department, should be suitably amended so as to revert the situation to the status quo ante and to restore to the heads of department the responsibilities, accountability and functions that were assigned to them prior to the promulgation of the Act. What we were saying, in fact, is that we had a deep-seated desire to see a separation and a distinction of the political functions and to leave these where they belong with the politicians at Cabinet level and at ministerial level, to make sure that the public service, either on an individual basis or collectively, did not interfere in this, but, on the other hand, to ensure that the political masters of the day, having established policy and having then established guidelines, did not interfere, and adopted a 'hands off' approach from the actual execution of the policy that they wished to implement.

Perhaps multi-party discussions are required to arrive at a consensus on the lines which I have described. Or am I dreaming?

The next point that I would like to come to is the point of managing change, which I feel that the Reform Commission report has gone into quite satisfactorily. First of all, lest we castigate our public service too harshly, from some exposure that I have from

the side of industry, to British, Italian and German bureaucracies, I have to say that it results that our situation is not unique: there are differences in a matter of degree. But, even though, in these Services, the concept of institutionalised reform has been going on for a long time, they still have some of the problems that we ourselves suffer from. This perhaps indicates that reform of public service is a time-consuming process, one that perhaps cannot be carried out within the short political time-frame of one legislature, but which requires unrelenting, long-term commitment, if it is to bear results.

One point that struck me about these Services, even at the lowest level of their operation, was their consciousness of customer-service, was their consciousness that tomorrow is another day, and that the systems need to change. They were not afraid to be self-critical and they were themselves pushing for the self-criticism to be converted into reformative action on a constant, updating basis. Therefore, it is for this reason that I strongly agree with the Commission's recommendation to institutionalise change, and I also agree with the principle or the principles for the chosen mechanics of this institutionalization.

Human resource management is a term which has come to replace personnel administration. It is not just a buzz-word. The idea behind it is that one looks at the persons making up an organization as the richest source for that organization's possible success. Human resource management, however, being by its nature a maturing process paralleling what happens in mother nature, is

sometimes painful. I think that we have to be mature enough to accept and deal with this truth. There are no easy recipes, there are no easy solutions, and it is going to take a lot of effort on the part of everybody, and some personal sacrifices in terms of lowered expectations as well.

No matter how strong our beliefs in social justice are, life cannot be seen solely through the perspective of social justice, and the pursuit of national goals might lead us to have to be prepared to walk through other ways and to revise our expectations. On the other hand, judicious human resource management will afford as many facilities as possible, to accommodate as many people as possible with the least degree of inconvenience. It is for this reason that the FOI had strongly recommended further and more enhanced early retirement schemes and the serious consideration of financial and other measures to make it easier for people to accept changes.

Another problem that looms in front of reform is the very size of the public service. In most countries, the realization has come about that the benefits of having one single, unified service are, at this point in time, far outweighed by the disbenefits of keeping homogeneous control and harmonized systems, within the framework of such a size. Therefore, I believe that while there will always be a very strong case for a highly qualified generalist class of public officer, especially at the policy formulation level, today's demands in administration call for increasing specialization.

I believe that the functions of government should, in general, be decentralised to make them as effective as possible. Many of the line functions of departments – in fact, perhaps entire departments – could be more efficiently handled on an agency basis. Small is not only more beautiful, small is also more manageable, and the results are more tangible. This recommendation is strongly in line with current developments in the British civil service, on which ours is still patterned. For example, the most recent development is that a social security benefits department is going to be turned into a social security benefits distribution agency. There were many other points that I would have liked to cover. I would like to close by commenting on two small points.

We have far too many control systems: it seems to be a national malady that, whenever an abuse comes to light, a new control system is planned to prevent a repetition. I believe that abuses started on the first page of Genesis and, whatever we do, they will continue to the last page of the Apocalypse. The public at large has the impression, if not correctly so, that the Public Service Commission bends over backwards in order not to find people charged, guilty. In the meantime, control systems have multiplied, and an honest civil servant cannot give an honest day's work. It is an uphill struggle all the time for anybody who wants to get anything done.

I will end by quoting one young lady from the House of Representatives who last night mentioned trust. In the context of the stagnation and the blocking of much goodwill amongst many

officers in the public service, by an overabundance of systems and control systems and checks and counterbalances, is it possible to ask: 'How far are we prepared to reform on the basis of trust? How far are we ready to let go of some of the cumbersome, duplicated and superfluous control systems? Are we ready to dispense with this? Are we ready to introduce trust over and above any other consideration?' Of course, this on the understanding that if anybody is caught doing what he should not have been doing, he would have to face the full consequences of his actions, if necessary, right up to dismissal and criminal prosecution.

As a senior civil servant said yesterday, the Service is now ready to take over itself the running of the reforms arising out of the report of the Reform Commission. I believe that the Service can do this and that today's forum is but a step towards arriving at a common consensus of what we all need from the Service, and what everybody is prepared to contribute to the Service. Let us have more of these meetings, let us arrive at an agreed framework of what we want to do and, having done that, let's get on, and let's do it.

Mr Joseph R. Aquilina worked in the public service before joining private industry. He is active in the Federation of Industries, where he served as Chairman of the Human Resources Division. Mr Aquilina served as Chief Executive of the Employment & Training Corporation.

JOSEPH R. GRIMA

I consider it a privilege and a pleasure to be invited to talk about a subject in which I have taken a keen interest for quite some time – the reform of the Civil Service.

I believe in the Civil Service and in what it is meant to be doing. I believe Malta, like any other country, can only get a Civil Service that it deserves. I believe the Civil Service can do far better than it is doing at the moment. I also believe that the Civil Service deserves better in several respects – and these are the four underlying themes that I shall be implicitly talking about when I consider the management of human resources in the light of the PSRC Report.

Yet it is with some caution that I shall approach the subject. Not that I am hesitant to talk about the field in which I have laboured these last thirty-three years, but it has to be recognised that the civil service overcoat that I am wearing tonight is, at the best of times, heavy and sometimes also awkward to carry.

As the only serving public officer on the panel, I thought I should desperately try to ferret out of my talk, if my talk is to have any value, any self-interest-induced-bias I may have about the subject. I shall try to be as objective as I possibly can.

In this regard I also wish to state at the outset that the organizers invited me from the civil service not to speak on behalf of the

Civil Service but to give my personal views on the subject. And that is exactly what I am doing tonight. The views I shall express are exclusively mine. I have no brief to speak on anybody's behalf. In fact even the papers I quote are mine.

After last night's meeting, however, I felt that I should pause here for a moment to make a point or two.

Two or three weeks ago, at a Seminar in this same hall, I was shocked to learn that of the 100 Government accountants who graduated between 1983 and 1989, sixty have already resigned. Again, of the 50 students at present in the second year of the Bachelor of Commerce Course there was not a single student who showed enough interest in public administration to choose public policy as a subject. So, in the face of this typical situation, what exactly were we saying last night? Were we saying that everything was OK with the Civil Service? Or were we saying that we need reforms but not those proposed by the Reform Commission? Does this mean we have to set up another study group and wait for another 3 years for a Report? Is it possible that there is nothing in the Report with which we agree? If there is then, what is wrong in saying so? If we don't agree with two or three measures proposed, are there not enough recommendations on which we agree to make the reform work? Are we looking a gift horse in the mouth? To my mind civil servants simply cannot afford to miss this opportunity. If they do, they would be the losers, and the country with them.

The public service has been the subject of reform the world over for quite some time and for different reasons. Locally too, there has been a relatively subdued but consistent call for reform of the Civil Service.

With my press cuttings I have headlines which tell stories of reform in Britain's civil service designed in turn by Lord Fulton, Lord Rayner and Sir Robin Ibbs. I have write-ups on the Devlin Report prepared by the Public Services Organization Review Group about the Irish Civil Service, published in 1969. Some years ago I was given a copy of the Giannini Report submitted to the Italian Parliament in November 1979 about the main problems of the Italian public service. The United States, too, had its own civil service reforms and major changes were packaged in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

The International Institute of Administrative Sciences, in one of its journals, listed some of the beliefs which gave rise over the years to demands for reform of Government personnel processes in the United States. If I repeat them here it would be observed that the statements are not unfamiliar and probably the basis of reforms in many other countries. These are:

1. "Government employment should be more responsive to political needs, which reflect the will of the people.

2. Partisan politics and personal friendships should have no influence on the selection and advancement of Government employees.
3. Government personnel processes should not impede but should support the ability of agency heads to manage their programmes with flexibility and speed.
4. Government should be a model employer, hiring persons of excellence, providing attractive pay and benefits, consulting systematically with employee representatives concerning conditions of employment and reassigning or dismissing ineffective employees."

But it is not only developed countries that concern themselves with the public service and its reform. Developing countries too have attached much importance to civil service reform and with good reason.

"Governments in developing countries have long realised that effective public administration systems are essential to the achievement of national development objectives." This is the opening statement of a United Nations study on administrative reform in developing countries published in 1984. Mention is made of the various initiatives taken in Latin America, Africa and Asia to bring about reforms.

In the case of developing countries the study makes reference to three important factors which contribute to administrative reform. The first "relates to the discontinuities between a colonial administrative system and the needs and demands of sovereign Governments." The second refers "to the need for an administrative apparatus adequate for performing the expanding role of Governments in managing the economy." The third was identified as "the desire to change the orientation and attitudes of civil servants and to introduce modern management techniques and processes in order to make the administration more efficient and effective in the delivery of services to the public." The UN Study adds, however, that some catalytic event or situation has to occur in addition to the foregoing factors to give rise to reform activities. A new party government after a long period of rule by another party was quoted, amongst others, as an example of such an event.

With this international background information as a reassuring backdrop that we are not alone at all in getting to grips with the fundamental problems of the public service, I would like to ask whether there is a real need or expectation for administrative reform in Malta too.

The editorials and articles that have appeared regularly over the years in a wide range of local opposing newspapers and magazines, and of which I shall quote the headlines of only a small sampling, are indicative of the consensus that exists about the need for reform in the Civil Service. Some constituted bodies too had prepared formal studies of what needed to be improved in the

public sector. As usual, however, most comments focused on the shortcomings rather than on the remedies.

"Ic-Civil" was the innocuous title of a full-page article in March 1981. "The Civil Service: What is wrong?" asked a headline in a weekly in October 1983. "Qed iberraq fic-Civil?" asked another headline in February 1986. "Ic-Civil - x'sar minnu?" asked rhetorically the leading article in a monthly magazine in December 1986. "There is widespread agreement in the country to-day that the public service needs urgent attention" stated the opening sentence of an editorial in November 1986. "Yes, Minister!" asserted another headline in January 1989.

To me it is evident that the need for reform of the public service is strongly felt in Malta too but, as pointed out in the 1984 UN document, and I quote, "the pressure groups for reform within the administrative system are usually less vocal than those for other goals. The latter are often well organised, articulate and persistent." Other demands are usually "highly visible, command wide interest and public support and have political influence". In this context the organisers of the present forum ought to be congratulated twice over for taking this initiative and Government too for setting up the Public Service Reform Commission.

What is this Civil Service? It is often stated that Malta as a nation has no natural resources other than its workforce and that if it is to survive or improve its lot, in this competitive world, it can only do so through the effort of its people.

Given that so many people are engaged in the public sector, it must matter more than a little to the prosperity of this land what this large army of people are doing for their country and how they are doing it.

But here, tonight, this forum is concerned with only one part of the public sector, namely, the traditional Civil Service proper: the 26,000 – odd permanent employees in Government departments, whom the Constitution defines as "public officers", from the dustman to the Head of the Civil Service, and including amongst others, nurses, teachers, policemen, architects, heads of departments, administrators, executives and clerks.

What are my views of the PSRC Report? I think that, for the first time ever, we now have a compact yet comprehensive report drawn up by a Maltese commission about how the Maltese Civil Service should operate in Sovereign Malta.

The Report addresses issues which have never been directly addressed locally before and it does so in a responsible manner. The Report is not only about the conditions of employment or about a long overdue revision of salaries of Government employees. The Report goes deeper than that. It is about the Civil Service as an institution and about its proper management, especially the proper management of human resources.

The Report is largely positive, balanced and innovative in its approach. No attempt is made to put the clock back nor to suggest

cosmetic solutions. There are no pious hopes of how things could improve. There is a huge yet specific agenda of hard work. There are no inferiority hang-ups that the Civil Service cannot excel. A spirit of optimism pervades the Report.

I suppose there are many in the civil service who can argue, rightly in my view, that the relatively low profile given to the compensation issue, after an extraordinary long period of austerity, betrays a lack of sensitivity on the part of the Reform Commission to a predicament which is very real. Vocal paralysis should not be mistaken for contentedness, nor unwittingly should it be allowed to lead to apathy, despondency or bitterness.

Yet to my mind, the Report is not looking at the interests of the Civil Service as a group in isolation. It is at the same time also looking at the governance of Malta and at its prosperity. It is also looking at the interests of John Citizen who deserves to be served better in every field of public administration. In other words, I believe the package of reforms, in its totality, is addressed to meet the needs of the country as a whole rather than those of a particular sector. In the proposed process, however, it is hoped that everybody would be a winner.

Not many would quarrel with the proposed objectives and goals set out in the Report, although it is very probable that not everybody would agree with all the measures that are being proposed. I would like to think, however, that on most measures underpinning the fundamental issues, there could be broad agreement.

Which are to me the fundamental issues concerning the management of human resources as identified by the Reform Commission? The Reform Commission seems to be saying that only an accountable, competent, and productive civil service "can efficiently respond", to use the words of the Commission's terms of reference, "to the changing needs for effective Government" and in its Report it is showing the way how these qualities can be achieved. In a nutshell, I think the Reform Commission is submitting that Government cannot possibly hope to have the Civil Service accountable for things over which it has no control, or competent in fields in which it is not trained, or productive unless it is motivated, respected and well paid.

These are the tough fundamental reforms with which forward-looking civil servants cannot but agree.

The inter-relationship of most recommendations in the Report is such that their cohesiveness would be lost if only one or two recommendations were to be singled out for particular importance. But at the centre of the whole reform exercise, I would place the question of performance together with that of training and development.

The Report is proposing that pay and advancement, reward and discipline, in the Civil Service, as in the private sector, should be linked to performance. It is also being suggested that performance should be judged as closest to the place of work as possible, even if subject to the most rigorous audit scrutinies that are considered

necessary. The topmost commitment in the Report is to revamp motivation and prime every initiative.

Surely one cannot really quarrel with such arrangements if a sustained effort is going to be made to increase productivity. There is no good way a manager could possibly run a profitable business or provide a service and be held accountable for the end results, if he is expected to turn a blind eye to the performance of his personnel or if he has no control over his personnel.

The Reform Commission is proposing that the manager in the Civil Service should have the competence, the authority and the resources to match the responsibilities that he is asked to carry. It is being recommended that, similar to managers elsewhere, the Civil Service manager should exercise the basic management functions of planning, organising, co-ordinating, directing and controlling.

The Reform Commission is also proposing that every manager in the Civil Service, at whatever level, should at the same time be held accountable for results, that his performance should be measured, but that he should be given managerial freedom, support and inducement to reach the goals set for him by the Government of the day. In other words, it is being proposed, that the Civil Service as an organization should become results-oriented.

The stigma of mediocrity has a high price attached to it. Small nations like us are embarking on national campaigns promoting devotion to excellence as a way of life, with the sub-slogan "Together we can achieve even more." The PSRC speaks highly of excellence and only cynics would take a jaundiced view of the recommendations made regarding excellence and integrity.

Dr J.G. Vance, in his book "Leadership and Life", observed: "we may say confidently that integrity is the grandest of all human qualities; it has a harmony and beauty all its own. It is the source of greatness, of sincerity, of responsibility, of honour. It is the root of those high attributes which make leadership faithful, fruitful, and effective. Its value is beyond the power of words to express".

In its own words, the PSRC Report focuses for the greater part on human resource management. New structures and better systems are being proposed but the 26,000 jewels in this complex clockwork of reforms are the people. People of all sorts and at all levels. They are all very important and every single one of them matters. By deeds, they have to be reassured that the proposed reforms are meant to be of benefit not only to every sector of the community at large but also to them personally.

There are bound to be pockets of resistance that would play on the fears and doubts bound up with the unknown. And here I do not mean the resistance to an odd measure or two but to a reformed Civil Service. Besides the slum-dweller syndrome of resistance to change at all costs, there would be some who are either tired or old

to consider change. There would be some who are, for one reason or other, comfortable with the way things are.

Others, simply anti-establishment, or else with false or anachronistic sentiments of nationalism of colonial days, still tend to identify the Civil Service with "the faithful servants of the Crown" and they would like to see the machinery of Government grind to a halt. There would be others who would consider the Civil Service as their kingdom or as the spoils for which they are prepared to engage in a bitter campaign.

Finally, there would be those who with a misguided sense of social responsibility feel that the cake of the Civil Service should be shared with those less fortunate in the community when in fact it is the national cake that should be made available for this purpose. These too may find it difficult to understand the proposed reforms.

I submit with all due respect that Government, Unions and the Civil Service should weigh carefully the PSRC Report and obviously listen sympathetically to each other and to any other representations that may be made about the Report but then, agreement should be reached with deliberate speed, even if implementation is going to be phased over time. Some of the reforms brook no further delay.

The Reform Commission states that "the scale and nature of changes can only be realised gradually." Unfortunately, time is not

on our side. This is a huge challenge and the soonest we start measuring up to it the better. In the concluding part of the U.N. document that I mentioned earlier, it is observed that "strong political support is necessary for administrative reform efforts to be successful."

I confess I would have gracefully declined the honour to speak at tonight's forum had there not been some tangible evidence of Government's commitment to the Reform. Indeed more than Lm800,000 are voted in the 1990 Budget to set up the Management Systems Unit, the Human Resources Development Programme, the Information Technology Strategy and a Communications Strategy under the heading "Public Service Reform Initiatives". It is now up to the Civil Service to play its part.

It may be appropriate to quote here a short extract from the Irish Devlin Report:

"Change, such as we describe and feel is necessary, requires fire in the belly; there must be an enthusiasm and urgent desire for change and the desire cannot be imposed from without - it must burn from within..."

The PSRC Report makes no claim to infallibility nor to absolute finality in its findings. In its concluding part it states that the Report points to the direction that the management of the public service should take in the coming years: it is not an immutable blueprint or a once-and-for-all solution to problems present and

future. On my part, I submit however that it would be folly not to accept the Report almost in its totality as the long term plan for the Civil Service. I think the Report should be looked upon as the framework which is flexible enough to accommodate change yet firm enough to provide stability and direction at least on the fundamentals.

We all know the local constraints and difficulties inherent in bringing about the needed change. The obstacles perceived in implementing some measures or the strong objections we have in accepting the odd recommendation or two, out of the sixty six recommendations made, need not jeopardise the whole exercise. In my view there is ample room for a huge programme of reforms within the present provisions of the Constitution.

I think the proposed programme of reforms is another challenge that the country has to face. Indeed, it is a golden opportunity to give to our country the efficient and effective Civil Service that it deserves. Obviously, this would have to be done at a price, but to do without the Reform, the price would be even higher.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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