The Problems of Change for Staff of Residential Institutions

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CORRECTIONAL RESIDENTIAL establishments often seem to exist for more than one purpose at the present time, and public attitudes towards them are so ambivalent as to place the staffs in difficult and uncertain positions. Whether the institution is called a school, a borstal, a detention centre or even a prison, most staff would want to say that the primary purpose was in some sense a reformative one. By this they would mean that they hoped that the effect of the institutional process on an individual committed to it would be such as to make him more accepting of social rules and himself more socially acceptable than he was on entry into the system. This seems fairly clear, but to push on from this is to enter the confusion of apparent multiplicity of purpose. To ask for a precise answer to some such question as: "What are you supposed to be doing with, or for, these individual youths?" is often to force the answerer into an account of his limited speciality, e.g., "I am the teacher—the P.E. instructor—the gardener—the farm foreman", or into the unhappiness of insecurity which follows from being unsure of what he is about. If one is asking the question in a borstal, a detention centre or a prison setting there is an additional set of answers which are different because of the existence of what are often called discipline grades who have no speciality comparable, say, to that of a teacher. Because of this they have no specific technology by use of which they can reassure themselves that their job is being carried out. Perhaps the same can be said of the approved school housemaster.

But if the questioner gets his answers from the specialists, he may nevertheless want to point out that if there is a need common to the inmates of the institution, it is not that of academic educational attainment, or vocational skill, nor are the inmates made similar by common urges to acquire whatever may be available in the institution. Usually, the only certainly shared experience is that of having been committed to the establishment by the process of law. It does not follow, therefore, that rectifying their special deficiencies will have the primary social effect which it is the institution's purpose to produce. Almost all staff of

correctional residential institutions recognise this fact in one way or another, if only by complaints about their special contribution being nullified, or perhaps excessively difficult to make, because of the circumstances. Equally, almost all staff would recognise their role as being, at least in part, one of influencing inmates. The discipline staff of borstals and prisons and the housemasters of approved schools have to put this task first and are often at a loss, or not in agreement with each other, as to how this can be done. This, very superficially, is the background against which one must examine change in corrective residential institutions. One begins, as it were, at a higher level of uncertainty than in comparable fields, before one so much as introduces concepts of change.

CHANGE

The prospect of change threatens most, if not all, people. It is a prospect which implies many frightening possibilities such as the disruption of understood and accepted situations, the loss of much that appears to be valuable and even the unhappiness of uncontrollable chaos. Fantasies about the ramifications of change seem to link closely with magical thinking, in the sense that those people who seem threatened, from within or without, by the possibility of change, tend to perform rituals of living which seem to have the function of preserving their personalities against the dangers of flexibility and change. This is to take the fear of change to the neurotic level and to attempt to influence general events by adherence to particular personal stability —in other words magical thinking. Implied by this approach, whether at a neurotic level or kept within more normal bounds, is the feeling that decay is the most likely effect of change. An analogy obviously derived from natural processes.

On the other hand, a great deal is said about the values of change. Change represents healthy growth, or, at least, no healthy growth is possible without change. The notion of growth implies progress towards a better condition, one nearer perfection, and it would be presumptuous to claim at any point that perfection had already been reached.

Being caught in such ambivalences suggests a human feeling that continuous movement is only possible in one direction or another, that there is no alternative to progress or decay and that to unleash the forces of change necessarily takes us in one way or the other. Since it may often seem to be impossible to ensure that the movement occurs in the desirable direction, the attractions of maintaining the existing situation are obvious. In spite, however, of these attractions, and the probable fact that they appeal strongly to most of us, change takes place continually in most spheres of human life and activity. Not only in economic, industrial, scientific and

social theories and practices, but also in primary areas like the family and individual relationships. This emphasises one of the threatening aspects of change, namely, that when it takes place in one area it is difficult, if not impossible, to prevent its effect spreading to others. For example, change in industrial organisation has produced change in family relationships and there are many instances of this, some plain and some subtle; changing socio-psychological theories and practices about the make-up and rights of individuals, produce change in the basis of criminal law, and so on.

This is an important feature of things which must be reckoned with when attempting to assess any change or to understand the resistance to it which often arises.

Given an existing situation, which includes human beings whose inclinations tend towards maintaining its existence, for a variety of reasons, what kinds of factors initiate change?

Any situation described as "existing", in the sense of being permanent and not susceptible to change, is an abstraction from reality and can only be studied as such when artificially conceived as being insulated from realities which might impinge upon it. Individuals within it are always in process of change, as also are material components. Immediately the concept of change is used, the situation must be described as dynamic and it has to be studied as such if reality is to be preserved. Change, therefore, is inevitable and it may be that our feelings of resistance to it, or our unwillingness to study it realistically, are, in some sense, reaction formations against unpleasant and unwelcome reality.

Problems connected with change, therefore, are always likely to exist and the special problems of residential institutions in this area may be logical developments of the general. To appreciate these special problems accurately we should first examine what meaning can be attached to the notion of an "existing state" in an institutional context, realising, of course, that any description is, at best, an abstraction. In order that the complex organisation can be assumed to be static, we need the further concept of balance. Without this we would be obliged to try to hold in our mind a picture of an unbalanced organisation arrested in movement, and logic would force us to the conclusion that our concept was useless as a tool of examination. In other words, having seen the imbalance we would know that the static state was unrealistic and that we were looking at a point which occurred during the process of change and that nothing could be revealed to us about the cause of change. An earlier state in the process would take us nearer to the point at which change began, and further back still we would reach a point at which no change

seemed to be occurring. That is the point at which the organisation or system was in balance. One might define "system", in this context, as being a complex of means to achieve a given end and entailing the linking of its parts in balancing relationships. While this is the case, there is no tendency towards change in the short run, and equilibrium has been achieved.

Purely mechanical systems can be described in this way and, provided the system is isolated from the world outside, it will continue to function for as long as no internal change develops, i.e., until the fuel runs out or the material deteriorates sufficiently. Our systems are not entirely mechanical, however, the internal factors are both human and material, the former being notoriously inconstant and the latter as liable to organic decay as any engine component. At best, therefore, any equilibrium achieved in a residential institution is precarious and relatively short-lived.

Residential institutions are not the only institutions involving systems of organisation which include human beings and material resources. Schools and factories are obviously others which are, currently, non-residential more often than not. Obviously these organisations also have to deal with change. Is it more or less difficult for staff of residential institutions involved in changes, compared with non-residential conditions? If it is more difficult what is the reason for this?

As far as one is aware no one can supply answers to the first questions which are incontrovertible, but it seems to be reasonable to assume that residential staff do find greater difficulty. If this is only a feeling that one has, there are, nevertheless, facts about residential institutions which would tend to substantiate its validity, and these facts follow from the nature of the institutions themselves. For both inmates and staff the residential institution is an organisation which absorbs most, if not all, of their lives for a lengthy period. They are "total" institutions in the sense that they claim a disproportionate amount of the lives of the individuals who either work there or are residents there because of some need which compels their presence. Any equilibrium which is achieved has to be much more complex, i.e., must include many more permutations of human relationship and more frequent awareness of the material resources than might be the case in a non-residential setting. For both inmates and staff the normal refuge of living one's life in insulated compartments is not available. Work, recreation, and even domestic living is all undertaken with the same people, or, at least, with sections of the total mass of people. What is done during recreation may have repercussions during the working period and table manners may

determine friendships. Non-residential institutions are comparatively free of this complexity and their members may escape from each other and relax much more easily.

Another element of difference between institutions which can, however loosely, be described as penal, and others, whether residential or non-residential, is often the vagueness of the primary task and the absence of any specific technology which can effectively be utilised to achieve this goal.

Rule 1 of the borstal rules runs as follows:

> "1. (i) The purpose of borstal training requires that every inmate, while conforming to the rules necessary for well-ordered community life, should be able to develop his individuality on right lines with a proper sense of personal responsibility. Accordingly, officers shall, while firmly maintaining order and discipline, seek to do so by influencing the inmates through their own example and leadership and enlisting their willing co-operation.
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> (ii) The objects of borstal training shall be to bring to bear every influence which may establish in the inmates the will to lead a good and useful life on release, and to fit them to do so by the fullest possible development of their character, capabilities and sense of personal responsibility."

Rule 1 of the prison rules is similar, if considerably briefer, and runs as follows:

> "1. The purpose of the training and treatment of convicted prisoners shall be to encourage and assist them to lead a good and useful life."

It might be argued that approved schools have the advantage of a more specific primary task, in the sense that paragraph 2 of the handbook for managers of approved schools outlines the main ingredients as:

> "Education (in the formal sense), religious education and guidance, practical and vocational training, attention to health and the use of leisure, social training (how to live with others) and personal casework (help with personal problems)."

In so far, however, as the common feature which is shared by most pupils is similar to that of older inmates in penal instiutions namely, evidence of criminality, there is nothing in these provisions which can be claimed specifically to reduce the tendency towards criminality in a direct way.

The history of most penal institutions in this country, it seems to me, is one of collecting remedial techniques which are apparently intrinsically worthwhile but which are neither clearly related to the task of effecting permanent changes in the attitudes of delinquents, nor are they practically integrated, one with another, to produce a mutually reinforcing effect on individuals.

In the circumstances, what is created in many, if not all, of our residential penal institutions, is an uneasy compromise between the various interests which are separately occupied in dealing with the inmate, whether they are young or old. The resultant form of equilibrium, enables the establishment to achieve some of its secondary objectives but is maintained at the

cost of failure to achieve agreement on the primary task. Lacking such agreement it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to evolve effective and identifiable methods of reaching the main objective and this produces a marked tendency to under-value therapeutic method and an equally marked tendency to over-value personality as a major factor in the exercise of good influence.

Change in residential institutions, therefore, is more than usually threatening and difficult to handle, first, because of the complexity of the equilibrium necessary to maintain a viable situation and, secondly, because of the predominence of staff personalities, as distinct from methods or techniques, as the factors in the equilibrium.

To the question of what causes change in these circumstances one must add the further one, namely: "What is the effect on staff of any change which is initiated?"

BORSTAL X

It may be helpful at this stage to describe an example of change which has taken place in a residential institution. Borstal X was originally planned as a small open establishment to cater for about 90 young men, ages about 19 to 21, criminally unsophisticated and of high intelligence, in fact, the best selection of young men from the borstal system. The trade training to be provided was the most advanced available at that time, namely, motor mechanics and engineers' pattern making, and these courses, with the usual cookery course and general maintenance work, were expected to absorb most inmates. Education was planned to take place as much as possible outside the institution, using local educational facilities up to any level thought to be appropriate.

It was possible to envisage a great deal of self-reliance, even self-government by the men in these circumstances and the function of staff was primarily to offer guidance rather than rigid control.

The living accommodation was adequate, there being two residential houses in military-type wooden huts and a third building in similar style adapted for general purposes, such as theatre (with TV), library, chapels, classrooms and so on.

The number of staff was quite typical of a borstal institution of this size, governor, deputy (both of whom had responsibilities for another camp), two assistant governors, three principal officers, 14 discipline officers, one P.E.I., one cook, two vocational training instructors, a matron and engineer's maintenance staff.

For several years this institution functioned quietly without any major changes other than those involved in staff moves. These almost always happened singly and were, therefore, tolerable. Some eight years after the opening of the institution a nearby farm was offered for sale and the Prison Department bought it. As a result of this transaction it was decided that the population of the borstal

would have to be increased in order to meet the new work commitments required for the farm. The figure of 120 was decided upon by negotiation between the governor and the Prison Department. In fact, however, because of increased committals throughout the country the numbers of inmates quickly rose to 150.

Apart from the provision of the necessities of existence, i.e., increased stocks of food, clothes, beds, etc., no major alteration in the accommodation was possible in the short run. Each house lost a recreation room as it was converted to a dormitory and for the rest it was a matter of stretching everything to the limit. No increase in staff was made because there is no necessary relationship between population and staffing, such that an increase in population automatically entails an increase in staff. Each member of the staff, therefore, had to undertake a greater task.

Clearly, the relationships which existed in the balanced situation, and on which the function of the establishment depended, were drastically changed in the new situation. In many instances, mere attenuation would be the result, perhaps in other cases there would be neglect because needs were not recognised or were ignored. However, at roughly the same time that these changes became inevitable, the governor of the establishment was changed, and this greatly complicated the situation. The incoming governor was not, of course, inhibited by any wish to preserve a system of equilibrium which was not even visible to him. His arrival alone would have tended to alter the situation since he could not be expected to be identical with his predecessor and would inevitably have to be integrated with the rest of the establishment in a different way. But, added to any personal impact which he may have had, were the forces generated by different and substantial changes. He was concerned, therefore, to deal with the situation as he saw it and to meet inmates' needs, which were being made clear to him in a testing out period. The situation was fraught with conflict, sometimes seeming to be between governor and staff on a personal basis, at others apparently a professional battle, with social personalities in "good relationships". Staff divisions appeared on quite other lines also, with the usual attempts to enlist the governor on one side or another. All the evils of uncontrolled change were present and, perhaps significantly, a great many staff constantly harked back to the "good old days," usually claiming that the previous governor was more competent and more understanding and so on—he was, of course, always said to have been very capable of keeping *"them"* in their proper place—"them" being the inmates. The primary

aim of treatment of delinquent youths was either lost in argument about secondary aims, or by simple failure on the part of staff to communicate with one another. Hardly anyone seemed to see that the major change lay in the increased numbers without there having been corresponding increases in resources and, as often as not, the unhappy conditions were attributed to the change of governor and/or the change in the quality of the inmates.

Two points here are worth emphasising:

1. In a process of change there is often a wish expressed to return to what existed before. This wish, expressed as a moral imperative, i.e., what we ought to do, always ignores the facts of change and the impossibility of reversing the movement.
2. Any conflict may be fought out in terms of personalities even when these happen to be more or less irrelevant factors.

In the example given all the symptoms of a sick institution were present. An unhappy and apparently apathetic staff, an unhealthy inmate culture, and the spread of bad staff/inmate relationships affected the whole work of the institution. Violence amongst inmates increased, discipline reports on inmates by staff increased. The more the remedies of either increased control or increased permissiveness were attempted the more they were misunderstood and the worse the situation became.

The start of change here seems to have been quite determined by external forces and the pattern of change equally determined by past omissions. Because there was no mechanism which involved staff consciously in the change, there was no opportunity for them together to face its inevitability and the need for concerted action to mitigate its worst effects. Basically, the difficulties probably arose from two factors which were mutually reinforcing. On the one hand, the overcrowding caused excessive friction amongst the young men and increased their need to be controlled. On the other hand, the deterioration of the staff/inmate ratio effectively precluded an increase in staff control and drove the inmates back on their own resources.

But it is equally interesting to note that at this new state of confusion and deterioration in staff communication, there is an inherent necessity for further change. Although one can only use hindsight, it is reasonable to suggest that one way or another further change had to take place because of internal forces and conflicts which had been generated. Flight is a solution for individuals, of course, and in the worst development possible all individuals, staff and inmates alike, can depart from an open institution. In the event, deliberate action was taken to

restore the establishment to a working balance, but, failing some such action, it is probable that the situation would have reached crisis proportions.

The incentives to change an unhappy situation are obviously more likely to be shared by most of the people involved than otherwise. In view of the prevalence of confusion, however, the initiation of further change is still fraught with possibilities of conflict. Magical thinking will tend to require the restoration of a previous state and this is the one solution outside the powers of institutions in these sorts of situations. The factor of loss of effective control by the staff has its positive aspects, and the tendency to assume control on the part of the inmates is a feature about which most of them are ambivalent. On these facts constructive effort can be based and since it is staff who are permanent and with whom we are concerned at this moment, it is their development we should now scrutinise.

The essential beginning seemed to be an effort to free communications and to allow all staff to express feelings freely about the situation, before they could work through these to a point where they could together look at effective remedies. At the same time it was necessary to demonstrate to the inmates that their welfare and problems were being taken seriously. An experiment in institutional casework dealt with the latter to some extent, whilst the starting of regular staff meetings and the involvement of individual officers in rudimentary casework under supervision, did something towards the former. By the time these movements got under way a further development from outside the institution took place and this helped considerably. This was an official estimation that the population would increase by a further 30 and a request from H.O. for replanning of existing resources to make the extra accommodation available. As it turned out, this estimate was very much mistaken, but the complete restructuring, including the provision of a new house, and refurbishing which took place probably made a very beneficial contribution to the improvement of the general atmosphere. Experimentation with casework served the purpose of exciting the interest of staff in more specific treatment methods in which they could all participate and also drew their attention to short-comings in their skills. Demands for further training were soon raised and dissatisfaction frequently and strongly expressed about the roles which many felt they were forced to play in the traditional borstal system. Having reached this level of participation, and linking it with the structural alteration going on, it then proved possible to produce a plan which extensively varied the traditional borstal system and also

to devise the beginnings of training in new skills. These changes, one should emphasise, were undertaken following staff consultation and were, therefore, geared to conscious needs.

This development continued and as skills developed so also did the need for further training and supportive arrangements, but each step followed from staff consultation. Relationships with and responsibilities for the young men of the institution dramatically improved and one could say that this, with better inter-staff communication and understanding, enabled a new equilibrium to be reached. Since this position includes a variety of supportive and consultative features it must be different in quality from that which existed a few years before. If a further change proves necessary, and the governor has already been changed again, it should be an easier and more consciously directed process.

There are many other examples of change in institutions which one could use to illustrate the point that a probable effect on staff is the production of great stress. Perhaps these two examples of change in the same institution will be enough to enable us to project some conclusions on to a hypothetical situation which may arise in the future. These conclusions might be:

1. Stress may become excessive where staff feel themselves to be completely out of control.
2. When stress becomes excessive irrationality rises and impedes understanding of the nature of the change.
3. Movement towards a new equilibrium must take place, whether consciously planned or not, if the institution is to survive. (Disintegration is not a form of survival.)
4. Accepting the inevitability of change increases the scope for planning based on its positive aspects.
5. Planning with staff consultation tends to reduce stress to a point where it can be not only tolerable but lead to learning.
6. A sound institutional equilibrium includes the features which will facilitate necessary change.

THE WHITE PAPER*

That section of the White Paper which makes proposals relevant to our present subject is paragraph 39. Under the heading "Youth Training Centres" it says: "It is proposed to merge and reorganise the present borstals and senior approved schools into a comprehensive system of residential training catering for the wide variety of types coming before the courts. The Home Office would take over

*When this paper was originally prepared, it was for use in the discussion called for by the White Paper, "The Child the Family and the Young Offender". Readers will appreciate that legislation may not follow from such a White Paper, or, if it does, it may not include specific provision for the development discussed here.

the responsibility for the senior approved schools and for the organisation of the comprehensive training establishments. It is proposed that the minimum period of training should be nine months and the maximum two years. Experience with borstal training has shown that the present minimum period of six months is too short to enable good results to be achieved. The actual date of discharge would depend on the response to training of the young person concerned."

There can be no doubt that this paragraph states the intention of the Home Office to "take over" some or all of the senior approved schools. It follows from this that committals to the new youth training centres will be on a national basis rather than a local one and although considerations of regional origin may be influential, in the last analysis it will always be dependent upon assessments of overall need by the central organisation. It seems also that the new sentence is to be very similar to the present borstal sentence, the only change being the change in the minimum sentence. Together, these basic facts seem to me to ensure that the rules which will govern the youth training centres are more likely to be similar to the present borstal rules than to the approved school rules. Even the weight of numbers underlines this. At present the borstal population is probably around 5,200 and increasing, these being housed in 25 establishments, 13 of which are open and 12 closed. Legislation based on the White Paper would increase this number further by the proportion of the 900 young prisoners who would have to be dealt with in other ways than by a short sentence of imprisonment, namely, a Y.T.C. sentence, a D.C. sentence, or a term of imprisonment exceeding two years. Perhaps, then, about 5,700 who would have received borstal training, with the staff it would have taken to run that system, as compared with about 900 youths who would have received senior approved school training, and the staffs involved with them. In terms of establishments, 900 senior approved school youths represents about 10, the average population of senior approved schools being around 88. If it is argued that the wording of the White Paper ensures a complete reorganisation of the whole system, it is probably too much to expect that this can mean anything more than a re-naming of the old borstal system, in the absence of evidence that fundamental rethinking of that system, as distinct from reorganisation, is being undertaken. But, in any case, this would merely add to the degree of change and to the numbers of people involved in it without altering very much the fact that the former approved schools staffs will be undergoing the most change.

Referring back to what has been said about change in general, it has

to be assumed that the present senior approved schools exist in their own condition of balance or equilibrium. This is more or less stable and in the ordinary way would only be changed within the context of the system, e.g., a new headmaster, major changes on the school management committee, or an unexpected rise in the population, and the new equilibrium would also be found within the same context. But the change which must be seen in prospect for the schools is of a different order, it originates further outside the system than that kind of change which we examined earlier in Borstal X and it is not easy to see what might be the eventual resolution of the situation.

It is worth speculating on whether this new move constitutes a change in the way one would define it for one establishment within a reasonably constant system. Perhaps it could be argued that this is too much of a change to be a change and that really this means the ending of one system and the creation of a new one. Certainly this could be said if the matter could be reduced to taking over buildings with the former staff being disposed of by distribution to the remaining approved schools. There are problems of individual change and integration involved in such a move which will be serious enough for those concerned, but not of a comparable magnitude to those following from the alternative of incorporating, say, ten former approved schools into a centralised Y.T.C. system probably similar to the present borstal system. At present there are no adequate clues indicating which way the problem will be tackled and whilst the basis of the new system is there its effects are largely hypothetical because of these uncertainties.

The basic difference between an existing approved school and any borstal is that between local and central responsibility. In the approved school the Home Office influences and advises, perhaps exercising an ultimate control through financial provision, but the power seems really to be in the hands of the management committee. Their terms of reference lay down that:

1. They stand *in loco parentis* to the boys.
2. They are responsible for premises, including new developments under advice.
3. They are responsible for finance, estimating, spending and accounting.
4. They are responsible for the appointment, suspension and dismissal of the staff at the school.

In all these respects the Home Secretary will assume responsibility on the take-over and the power will be exercised by the department set up to administer Y.T.Cs. (this may simply be the

existing borstal administration under the Prisons Board). Some of the responsibilities will be delegated of necessity to governors of establishments, as they are now, but local autonomy is likely to be drastically reduced. Any approved school has, presumably, included the powers of the management committee within the working equilibrium it has achieved. The removal of the power will drastically alter the balance of the institution. What effects will this have? It may be, for instance, that the old management committee will be asked to constitute something similar to the present borstal board of visitors in the Y.T.C. as it will become. Remember the powers which were previously enumerated and compare them with those given to boards of visitors in the Borstal Rules, as follows:

"75. *General Duties of Boards.*

(1) The board of visitors for a borstal shall satisfy themselves as to the state of the premises, the administration of the borstal and the treatment of the inmates.

(2) The board shall inquire into and report upon any matter into which the Secretary of State asks them to inquire.

(3) The board shall direct the attention of the governor to any matter which calls for his attention and shall report to the Secretary of State any matter which they consider it expedient to report.

(4) The board shall inform the Secretary of State immediately of any abuse which comes to their knowledge and shall have power in any case of urgent necessity to suspend any officer until the decision of the Secretary of State is known.

(5) Before exercising any power under these rules (other than Rules 50 and 55) the board and any member of the board shall consult the governor in relation to any matter which may affect discipline.

76. *Particular Duties.*

(1) The board of visitors for a borstal and any member of the board shall hear any complaint or request which an inmate wishes to make to them or him.

(2) The board shall arrange for the food of the inmates to be inspected by a member of the board at frequent intervals.

(3) The board shall inquire into any report made to them, whether or not by a member of the board, that an inmate's health, mental or physical, is likely to be injuriously affected by any conditions of his detention."

Such a comparison illustrates dramatically the changes involved in this centralisation. On the one hand the management committee is exercising a clear responsibility for management in all its ramifications, on the other hand the board of visitors is performing a safeguarding function largely intended to protect the inmate against arbitrary injustice.

No doubt, in many approved schools the real power is wielded by the headmaster, and his committee is content to take ultimate responsibility. This is an almost inevitable development since the management committee chooses the headmaster (with Home Office approval) and if they have chosen a competent man who gains their confidence they are not likely to try to do his job in detail for him. It can be said, therefore, that the headmaster exercises the powers of the management committee, or a substantial portion of them. For example, he probably decides or substantially influences the choice of staff, and this seems reasonable. How does his position compare with that of a governor in these respects? Generally speaking a governor of a borstal has to deal with three elements, the provision of which he cannot control. These are:

1. The buildings and material resources.
2. The staff resources.
3. The young men sent to him from an allocation centre.

He is free, of course, to make comments, suggestions, even pleas, and to advance arguments and make out cases, all bearing on these elements, but he does not and cannot control them. The headmaster who becomes a governor will have to accept, for instance, that with a few very minor exceptions, all his staff are established civil servants with career prospects and expectations related to a national service. Recruitment, transfers and promotions are decided by centralised methods which use wider criteria than the immediate good of the local establishment in establishing their priorities.

Both these examples are of reduction in power following centralisation, but there are other probable aspects of the change which are worth noting. The change in methods of administration, for example, cannot be brought about by merely providing a new rule book and substituting one set of books for another. Inevitably, the executive and clerical grades in the civil service will have to be introduced and, equally inevitably, part of their task will be the negative one of telling ex-approved school staff that former methods are no longer open to them. It might be also that other grades, concerned with training and treatment, such

as assistant governors and basic grade officers, will be added to existing staff for the purpose of facilitating change and similar negative aspects will show as they attempt to set up the system with which they are familiar.

It would be tedious to go on illustrating the point that such a move as this creates conditions in which stress on staff is increased to a point where it may become intolerable. Little or nothing has been said of the young men for whose benefit the organisation exists because of this primary concentration on the staff position. The danger is, of course, that the irritation inevitably arising from the necessity of changing ways, escalates and is projected upon living people who are held to represent either the old order or the new. The man who has to say frequently that things cannot be done is held to have a personal interest in obstruction. Once this sort of conflict is generated it attracts feeling which ought to have been extended in other directions. Many institutions fight out the wrong battle at the wrong time and between the wrong people. In penal institutions the usual effect is the minimising of training and treatment, in other words, the trouble continues at the expense of the inmate.

The fact that the future problem can be indicated or outlined ought to mean that action is possible to reduce its significance even if complete avoidance is unlikely. Staff consultation is a vitally important step to take in any attempt to control the onset and spread of stress and since more than one kind of staff is involved the consultation should be as much between them as between the Home Office and the separate staffs. Full control of the change cannot be invested in any institutional staff since its origin is in the legislature but the acceptance of that fact realistically will help to control the effects of change. Irrationality and fantasy can only be diminished by the provision of opportunities to match these against reality. The ex-borstal staffs need to understand that their new colleagues are undergoing profound strain, the ex-approved school staffs need to understand that the organisation is weighing on them rather than malignant individuals.

Failing some action like this I suspect that the new Y.T.C. system will reverberate with fables about difficult people; both the approved school system and the borstal system are already prone to produce such fantasies. There is a practice which always ought to be followed when dealing with so-called difficult personalities. It is simply to discount the tales about character until one has had a very objective look at the demands which their organisation is making upon them.