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## EXPANDING GOVERNMENT

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WHEN asked to give the first of a series of talks on "Expanding Government", I was struck by one thing about the choice of the subject – not "The Expansion of the Government" or "The Functions of the Government", but "Expanding Government" with the clear implication that it is in the nature of governments to expand, that there is something inexorable about this process of expansion of the government. I must confess that I am one of those who get rather uneasy at the mention of anything which moves on inevitably in a predestined direction and I started asking myself whether there was such a natural law which decrees that governments, like ivy, must grow. I had read the famous exposition of the Parkinson's Law in the *Economist*; but I had dismissed it as a rather amusing but somewhat malicious piece of clever writing. Like most of you, I could also recall the remarks of the Prime Minister about the growth of the administrative jungle in India, a jungle in which some 19,000 chaprasis stalk about now as against only 3,200 before the war; but here again, I had the feeling that there was something more to the growth of the Government than the increase in the number of chaprasis in the Central Secretariat. I, therefore, started with a number of questions: What really has been the magnitude of governmental expansion in India in recent years? Is this in any

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sense a unique phenomenon or is it shared by other countries as well? What have been the factors that are responsible for this growth? How far is it likely to grow in the future? And are there any problems which this process of expanding government creates and to which we must devote some thought?

Take, first, the question of the extent to which the Government in this country has expanded in recent years. This is a question to which it should be possible to give a neat little answer – that the expansion of the Government has been at the rate of so many percent per annum. But unfortunately, you cannot reduce the growth of a jungle to a simple diagram and in this respect at least, the Government in this country does resemble a jungle. But even a jungle has some broad dimensions and it is to these that I wish to draw your attention in the first place. I am afraid I will have to rely on a number of indicators drawn together piecemeal. With all the administrative and other changes that have taken place in the last two decades, a precise picture is not possible. But the broad picture that emerges is clear enough.

In 1939, the total number of employees on the pay-roll of the Central Government, exclusive of members of the armed forces and railway and post and telegraphs establishments, was of the order of 49,000. By 1951 the number had increased to nearly 170,000 and by 1955 it is estimated to have gone up further to about 190,000. In other words, between 1939-51, the civil establishments of the Central Government were virtually quadrupled. According to a census undertaken by the Central Statistical Organization a few years back, the numbers employed in the civilian establishments of the Central Government showed a slight decline between 1948 and 1951 so that the entire four-fold growth that took place during 1939-51 may be said to have occurred during the war and the early post-war years. The expansion in the Central Government continued even after Independence, but it has been on a much more modest scale than during the second world war. The increase between 1951 and 1955 works out at about 12% or roughly 3 per cent per annum. And if we assume, as there is reason to assume, that the civilian establishments at the Centre showed little change in over-all employment during 1948-51, the rate of increase since 1948 would work out to a little less than 2%

per annum.

The figures I have just been quoting refer to the civilian establishments of the Central Government exclusive of railways and post and telegraphs. If all categories of employment provided by the Centre are included, the picture for recent years would not be materially different as far as the rate of growth of the Central Government is concerned. According to figures published regularly by the Central Statistical Organization, employment in Central Government increased from 577,386 at the end of 1950 to 669,439 at the end of 1956 – i.e., an increase of roughly 16 per cent in six years, or roughly 2 1/2 per cent per annum. These figures are exclusive of employment in railways as the growth of railways is not strictly relevant to the present purpose. Employment in Indian Embassies and Missions abroad is also excluded; but contrary to the general feeling, total employment in Indian Embassies and Missions abroad is small in absolute terms – some 3,600 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1954 inclusive of locally recruited staff.

In a Federal country like India, the Central Government accounts for only a small part of the employment in Government service. The size of the Government should also take into account State Governments and local authorities and for some purposes, it is useful to include employment in government commercial undertakings such as railways. Unfortunately, the statistics on employment in India are woefully inadequate and it is not possible to point to any definitive figures to indicate the growth of governmental activity as a whole in recent years. Many of you will recall the long list of difficulties enumerated by the National Income Committee in their discussion on the measurement of the working force in India and its occupational distribution. No data are available in respect of employment in local governments, port trusts, municipalities etc. on a regular and comprehensive basis. The budgets of the Central and the majority of State Governments give an indication of sanctioned strength of staff; but this information is not made available in a readily useful form. Employment in defence service is not released for security reasons. The population census is taken once in ten years, and even here, the occupational classification leaves much to be desired. A teacher in a government school may be classified either as a teacher or as a government

servant. After making a number of qualifications, however, the National Income Committee ventured an estimate that total employment in government administrative services in India (inclusive of armed forces) was of the order of 39 lakhs in 1950-51. If we add to this employment in railways, posts and telegraphs and in other commercial departments of the Government, the total would come to some 55 to 56 lakhs. If we want to get an idea of total employment provided by the Government, we should also take into account the number of teachers, doctors and other professionals employed by the Government as well as the persons employed on government contract work. Unfortunately, we have no estimates of public employment in these sectors. But as a tough guess, it can be said that total employment of all kinds provided by the Government in 1950-51 was not in excess of 70 to 75 lakhs out of a total working force of some 143 million. Public employment in 1950-51 may thus be put at roughly 5 per cent of total employment – i.e., roughly one out of every 20 persons at work was employed by or on behalf of the Government. It is even more difficult to attempt an estimate for later years; but it is, I think, unlikely that employment in Government today should exceed the figure of 80 to 85 lakhs or some five and half per cent of the total of the total working force or more than 150 million.

This, then, is the rough picture we get of the expanding government in India – a very considerable expansion during the war and the early post-war years followed by a modest but steady increase in recent years, with the position reached today in which one out of every 18 or 20 persons at work in the country is working for the Government. This is a picture painted, as it were, with a broad brush. But how does it compare with the trends in other countries?

## II

My task in comparing the trends in India with those in other countries is rendered considerably easier by an extremely interesting study published recently by the National Bureau of Economic Research in the U.S.A. on "The Growth of Public Employment in Great Britain". This study surveys the growth of government

employment in Great Britain since 1891 with a comparative picture of the position in the United States and I recommend it strongly to any young aspirant for a Ph.D. degree. Any study on the same lines for India would, I am sure, earn a doctorate degree at any University in this country.

Let me mention some of the salient facts that emerge from the study I am referring to. In 1950, some 11% of the total working population in Great Britain was employed in the civilian branches of the Central and the local Governments. If armed forces are included, the share of government employment in total employment in Great Britain was 14% and if the nationalized industries and services are also taken into account, this share works out to as much as 24.3 per cent. Thus nearly one out of every four persons employed in Great Britain in 1950 was employed by the Government in the all-inclusive sense of the word. It is this figure which should be compared with the rough figure I gave some time back for India where one out of every eighteen to twenty persons at work is employed at present by the Government. Even if we make some allowance for the acts of denationalization since 1950 in Great Britain, the fact is clear that relatively to total employment, employment in Government service in Great Britain accounts for a much larger proportion than in India. If the experience of the U.K. is any guide, therefore, we can look forward to quite a considerable expansion of Government in this country notwithstanding the expansion that has already taken place. Surprisingly, the present position in India where some 5 or 5 1/2% of the working force may be estimated to be in Government service compares with the situation in Great Britain at the beginning of the present century when 5.8% of total employment in the U.K. was provided by the Government. Even in the U.S. for which the figures are not strictly comparable, the share of the Government in total employment was 4.7% as early as 1900 and had risen steadily to more than 12 per cent by 1950. In absolute numbers total government employment in the U.S. in 1950 was nearly six times as great as in 1900 – or nearly five times as great as in 1900 if defence forces are excluded. I had chosen the examples of the U.K. and the U.S.A. as they show a picture of expanding government over a fairly long period. International comparisons are always somewhat misleading. But I

think the conclusions I am driving at are unmistakable. The phenomenon of expanding government is universal and long-standing in character. It is by no means confined to India or to the period of the second world war. The present position in India compares roughly with that in the U.K. and the U.S. several decades ago so that a further sizeable expansion of the government relatively to the rest of the economy would seem to be a certainty if historical comparisons have any meaning at all.

What are the factors that have been responsible for the almost ubiquitous growth of the Government in the last fifty or sixty years? I shall come a little later to the special factors that have been in operation in India over the last two decades or so. But the phenomenon of expanding government is universal enough to demand a general explanation.

Essentially, I think, the growth in the functions and size of governments is a manifestation of two factors: of the growing complexity of modern life and of our growing awareness of the dignity and rights of human beings as human beings. I am aware that it is something of a paradox to explain the growth of governments in terms of greater awareness of the importance of the individual. The habit of thinking of the State as something in opposition to the individual is perhaps natural for the present generation which has witnessed so much cruelty and carnage unleashed in the name of the almighty State. But put in its proper historical perspective, I think it has to be recognized that the growing functions of the State everywhere are in part at least a manifestation of the general increase in social awareness. We are not content today with poor laws and the means test – the stern morality of Victorian days which explained poverty and misfortune largely in terms of individual short-comings is a thing of the past. Private charity is no longer as respectable as it used to be. Citizens of modern States demand certain minimum things as a matter of right. Two world wars and the common sacrifices demanded by them have given impetus to the feeling that those who must be prepared to die for the State have the right to insist that while they live, they must live tolerably well. The growing responsibility of the State or the Government for social security and for welfare measures – health, education, recreation facilities, cultural activities, old age pensions and so on –

is one of the most important factors in modern life. Whatever may be the differences in the view-point of different persons about the legitimate functions of government in the social and economic sphere, it is, I think, agreed on all sides that social security and a minimum of economic well-being are things which every State must provide to its citizens.

Consider, for instance, the phenomenal growth of the Ministry of National Insurance in the United Kingdom. This Ministry started its career in the first world war when it employed about 3,000 persons. It was disbanded during the inter-war years and revived during the second world war. In 1945, it employed some 5,500 persons and the number grew to more than 35,000 in 1950 – a nearly seven-fold increase in five years. Even in the United States, the Government has always taken a serious view of the minimum amenities of life that the State must provide to its citizens, and in one respect at least, it has had an almost unrivalled record in the world. I am referring, of course, to the increasing role played by the U.S. Government in providing free education to its young citizens. The number of persons employed in public educational institutions in the U.S. increased from 483,000 in 1900 to nearly a million and a half in 1950. The corresponding increase in the U.K. was from 150,000 to 330,000. Looked at from another point of view, one out of every forty persons employed in the U.S. in 1950 was employed in public educational institutions whereas in the U.K. the corresponding proportion was one out of every seventy employed persons. My point is that whatever the political professions of a country may be, there are at least some fields in which they all take pride in being the first in the world in providing a minimum of amenities to all its citizens.

It would, however, be a mistake to argue that the expansion of government in recent years has been entirely in response to the growing social awareness of people. It would, I think, be equally mistaken to consider that the growth of governments reflects essentially a change in ideology, from belief in *laissez-faire* to some other belief in Socialism or in the Welfare State or what have you. Changes in ideologies are more often than not a mere rationalization of changing needs. And in the case of growth of governments, the mounting complexities of modern life have as much to do with it as

the impact of changing ideologies. Governments, like doctors and lawyers, thrive on the misery of others. From time immemorial, it has been recognized that it is the duty of governments to get things right when something is amiss – that they must control and regulate things so that calamities like war and wide-spread starvation are avoided. We would be making a mistake, I think, if we flatter ourselves that the emergence of governments as trouble shooters is something peculiar to our generation. What seems to have changed is that with the growing complexity of the modern industrial system and with the growing interdependence of different countries, the occasions for conflict and disasters have also increased with the result that the State has to make more and more elaborate arrangements merely to keep things on an even keel. Waging of a war – or being prepared to defend yourselves – implies these days a mobilization of armies as well as of supplies for the whole nation. Thanks to the fact that we have all come closer together as nations, diplomacy has become an essential business for every country in the world. To the disasters of nature are now added fluctuations in demand from far off countries and slumps and swings in terms of trade. The economic influences which impinge on the well-being of ordinary men are so complex and so far removed from their ken or control that the State has to step in many ways to guarantee prices, control credit, negotiate barter deals with other governments and so on. Governments have to reckon with a whole host of uncertainties even if they are interested merely in performing the normal functions of law and order and defence and a measure of protection against unforeseen calamities.

I wonder if the nineteenth century liberals did not themselves dig the grave of their pet child, *i.e.*, *laissez-faire*, by advocating at the same time specialization and division of labour to the maximum possible extent. When you have a great deal of specialization, you also have a great deal of interdependence. And with each depending on the other, the chances of conflict increase and so also the need for someone to hold the scales even and to smooth things out. But be that as it may, it is I think clear that the phenomenon of expanding governments is something more than a mere moral or ideological phenomenon, that it is something inevitably linked with the nature of the modern industrial and international

system and that to that extent, at any rate, it is an abiding phenomenon.

## III

I have spoken so far in general terms about the factors responsible for the growth of governments. These factors have been in operation in India also in recent years. But speaking of the last two decades in India, there have been several special factors at work as well and the sequence of events has been in some respects different in this country from, say, that in the U.K.

The big spurt in governmental activity in India came during the second world war. The tradition of *laissez-faire* in this country broke down completely during the war even under foreign rule. With the entry of Japan in war in December 1941 and her initial successes India became an important base of operations, not merely in terms of military strategy but also as a supplier of the materials required for the prosecution of the war. Overnight as it were, the Government of India which till then had exercised only limited administrative functions had to transform itself into an active agency in charge of producing or procuring a large variety of goods. It is in this period that many of Government's activities in the field of promoting industrial development began. In its origin, for example, the present Development Wing of the Central Government is a war-time phenomenon. The procurement of war supplies inevitably led to the problem of war finance and the measures to alleviate the shortage of civilian goods. Looking back, the inflationary impact of the war on the Indian economy was left unnoticed by the then Government of India for an unconscionably long time. It was not until 1943 that the Government realized that there existed a problem of civil supplies in respect of essential commodities. The Department of Industries and Civil Supplies was then created and entrusted with the task of ensuring that prices of consumer goods were held in check. A great many devices of control and regulation were introduced, thereafter, and several of these, such as the textile control and the capital issues control, in a modified form survive till today. The Bengal famine highlighted the situation. The precarious agricultural and industrial base of the economy was also brought

out sharply during the war and a beginning was made with the preparation of blueprints for a number of developmental projects which have been taken in hand after the war. The Sindri fertilizer factory was conceived of during the war. In India, the transition from a *laissez-faire* attitude to a network of government controls and regulation and even positive participation in economic development was made swiftly during the war. The stage of the Government expanding its functions in the direction of social security or a Welfare State was skipped completely – or almost completely.

The war-time distortions in the economy continued even during the early post-war years with the result that there was no relaxation in the hold of the Government during this period. And with Independence, a number of new factors emerged giving a fresh impetus to the expansion in Government. Apart from the problems of rehabilitation and of creating the paraphernalia of a parliamentary democracy, the Government of India had of necessity to give a new dimension to some of the traditional functions of a government such as defence and external affairs. Even during the war, the responsibility of the then Government of India for defence was largely a nominal one. Much of the planning for defence was done in London and the Defence Department in New Delhi acted largely as an indentor on the basis of requirements worked out in London. All this had to change after Independence – the responsibility for defence and for organizing military supplies became a more real one and the Government had to set afoot a series of plans to promote production at home with a view to strengthening our defence potential. External affairs also acquired an altogether new meaning after Independence.

But the most important departure in regard to the functions of the State in the post-Independence years has been in the sphere of economic policy. I have already indicated the extent to which the traditional *laissez-faire* attitude to economic matters had given way under the stresses and strains of war finance. But with Independence, the responsibility of the State for promoting economic development and economic justice became a firmly established tenet of State policy. This new responsibility which was enshrined in the Directive Principles of the Constitution and the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 received a further recognition with the

establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950. A poor country with rapidly increasing population cannot lift itself from the quagmire of stagnation without a planned and integrated effort at raising savings and investment and at spreading the use of better techniques among millions of small and ill-organized producers. Without extensive effort on the part of the State to create the preconditions for enterprise and investment, the economy would for ever remain entangled in the vicious circle of low productivity, low savings, poor techniques and low incomes. That is why the State in India has assumed in recent years the responsibility for creating the basic social and economic overheads of development such as health, educational and research facilities, improved transport and communications, power and irrigation works, credit and marketing and warehousing facilities, community projects and national extension service, marketing boards for handicrafts and small industries and so on. An under-developed country bent on advancing economically has to provide afresh a lot of general amenities and facilities which are taken for granted in more fortunate countries. In the sphere of economic legislation also, we had to erect in a short-time the kind of super-structure that had existed for a long time in economically more advanced countries. The revision of the Company Law, of laws governing labour-management relations, or the regulation of industry or banks by legislative enactments are all examples of the kind of paraphernalia which most civilized States have created for promoting economic efficiency and justice. But in our case, the legal super-structure had to be created in a comparatively short span of time. More recently, the responsibility of the State in promoting industrial development directly has received an emphatic recognition in the new Industrial Policy Resolution and in the acceptance of a socialist pattern of society as the goal of economic policy. All in all, in economic and social matters, we have been attempting in the last few years to make up for the lag of several generations – a lag created by an attitude of *laissez-faire* on the part of the foreign rulers. What other countries built up by way of economic and social institutions and regulations or by way of basic social and economic amenities over generations, we are trying to build up over a decade or two. It is no wonder then that the functions of the Government and the

size of the Government have grown steadily over recent years. The surprising thing is not that the Government has grown in size but that it has grown so little in relation to its expanding functions.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the expanding functions of the Government since Independence – and one in respect of which there has been a definite new departure from war-time developments – is the responsibility assumed by the State for the cultural renaissance in the country. I am afraid the extent of the cultural revival in recent years has not received the attention it deserves from most of us. But any one who thinks of the activities of the government in the field of art, literature, music, dancing films, theatre, children's books, youth festivals and so on cannot but be impressed by the record of the last ten years in the cultural field. The expansion of the government, then, is not simply a dull and dreary tale of controls and regulations or even of projects and economic planning; there is place in it for a record of determined effort to bring some rhythm and colour and recreation to the life of the toiling masses.

So much for the factors responsible for the growth of the government in recent years. To turn to my next question, how far will this process continue in future? In a sense, I have already answered this question when I gave you a brief resume of the experience of the U.K. and the U.S.A. But apart from historical experience it is clear that while much has been achieved in recent years, we have a long way to travel yet before arriving at even tolerable living conditions for most of our people. The Indian economy has not yet reached that stage of dynamism when its further steady progress in future can be taken for granted. While a beginning has been made in many directions, we have yet to carry forward our effort in social as well as economic matters and the guiding and directing hand of the State will be needed for many years to come. I wish I could also say that the Government has made satisfactorily rapid progress in the direction of social security. We have made a beginning no doubt with provident funds and medical facilities for the bulk of industrial labour. But, by and large, the provision of security or a minimum of social amenities for all has to wait till sufficiency of production is achieved, so that in one respect at least, the expansion of the government is still largely in

the future. Anyone who doubts this can recall the figures I gave some time back about the U.S. and the U.K. and the shocking inadequacy of health and educational facilities in our country today. On the whole, therefore, we can confidently look forward to further expansion of the Government in the recent years to come.

## IV

This brings me to the last of the questions I raised in the beginning of my talk: What are the problems or difficulties that are created by the continued expansion in Government and how do we tackle these? The fact that not only has the Government grown in recent years but that it is likely to grow still further in the years to come makes it all the more necessary to examine the problems which are thrown up as a result of the expansion in governmental activity. I am afraid there are no simple solutions to many of these problems and I can do no more than merely hint at the problems.

Broadly speaking, the problems that arise in the wake of governmental expansion may be grouped under two heads: external and internal. By external problems in this context I mean the problems of the relation of government with outside agencies – i.e., parliament, the press and the people. Internal problems relate to the efficiency of the governmental machinery itself in discharging its functions. I shall have less to say on the external problems although, in my view, they are by far the more important and intractable. Most of us, I am sure, do not share the almost psychopathic fear of some people that any expansion in State activity inevitably leads to serfdom. But it must be recognized at the same time that the expansion of governments creates the problem of safeguarding individual freedom, of establishing sufficient communication between the government and those who are affected intimately by its decisions. Public relations, keeping the public informed, being attuned to the changing pulse of the people – all these things assume grater importance as governments cast their net wide over the life of the people. In parliamentary democracies certain safeguards are no doubt provided. But parliamentary democracies have their own set of problems – the problem of accountability to the Parliament, for example.

The security of governmental decisions by the parliament is an essential and indeed vital business in a democracy. But with the wide variety of functions that governments perform these days, the procedure for scrutiny must be appropriate to specific activities. It must, on the one hand, ensure the necessary degree of freedom of action for the executive without which efficiency and initiative would be imperiled, and on the other, inspire in it the appropriate sense of responsibility without which a parliamentary system of government would lose its essence. All of you are familiar no doubt with the controversies regarding parliamentary control over the management of public enterprises; these controversies show how very real is the apprehension in the minds of the representatives of the people that bureaucracy is somehow gaining the upper hand, as also how great is the need for understanding the complexities of administration in different fields, in the management of industrial enterprises, in the formulation of economic policy and in the enforcement of controls and regulations which are inseparable from planned development and indeed in every aspect of government. I have no easy solutions to offer; but it is clear that as governments expand, the problem of establishing satisfactory relationships between governments and parliaments assumed a more complicated garb.

In a democratic society, the relations between the government and the press and the people are no less important than those between the government and the parliament. The greater the range of governmental activities and the more rapid the rate of increase of these activities, the greater is the need for a vigorous and independent press to interpret and evaluate the actions of the government. No one who has been in touch with the Indian press in the last decade or so can fail to notice the comparative lack of clarity, vigour and sense of direction and independence in most editorial comments and the absence of critical evaluation of all but the larger issues of public policy. To a certain extent, the responsibility for the failings of the Indian press lies with the government in that the government itself has been unable amidst its myriad preoccupations to maintain an adequate flow of well-digested and analyzed information to the press. Many of our pronouncements of policy carry with them little background

information regarding the facts and objectives which warrant our policies. To some extent, the inadequacy of trained personnel in the country also makes for deficiencies of the press. But clearly, this is an aspect of expanding government which deserves some consideration on the part of those interested in public affairs in the country.

The relations between the people and the government are a perennial problem. The mere forms of democracy do not yield its substance. The proper interplay of governmental leadership and initiative on the one hand and of popular will on the other is a difficult enough business in any case requiring much experience and experimentation. The size and diversity of our country and the lack of education on the part of most of our people do not make our task easier. But the fact that popular reactions in India almost always degenerate into violent agitations or grossly exaggerated accusations of corruption, inefficiency and worse on the part of government servants and even Ministers would suggest that here again there is scope for a careful evaluation of the present state of affairs. An expanding government has to be all the more watchful of its relations with the people who ultimately give meaning to governmental activity in a democracy.

V

Coming to the internal problems that arise as governments expand, the most important one is that of coordination. As students of Indian history, we are all familiar with the tendency of local chiefs to carve out little kingdoms of their own as empires grow. And the same tendency towards departmental independence appears as governments expand. A certain amount of delegation and independence is no doubt essential in any well-run system. But with myriads of departments and agencies and with the growing interdependence of different things, the tasks of coordination – of ensuring that the different aspects of government policy dovetail into a rational and integrated pattern – assumes special importance. The task of coordination is particularly difficult in a federation where the party system has not yet crystallized into clear-cut ideological divisions. At the highest level, the joint responsibility of the Cabinet,

the National Development Council and the Planning Commission provide the requisite machinery for coordination. The National Development Council which is the supreme planning authority in the country has represented on it the Chief Ministers of all the States, the ministers of the Central Cabinet and the members of the Planning Commission. The meetings of this Council provide a useful forum for coordination of policies. The formulation of our five year and annual plans and of the annual capital budgets also provide opportunities for coordination at the highest level. In the Central Cabinet itself, there are a number of committees to formulate policies on specific matters such as the Economic Committee, the Oil Committee, the Heavy Industries Committee and so on. For the day-to-day functions of execution of policies, the co-ordination machinery is still somewhat in its infancy in India. In economic matters, the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance is responsible for bringing about the necessary coordination. But while nothing is easier than establishing a machinery, the substance of co-ordination can only be achieved when there is a well-established tradition in matters of co-ordinations, when a certain blending of outlook and personalities obtains among the co-ordinators and the co-ordinated.

There is the further difficulty that co-ordination pre-supposes a machinery for establishing facts – a machinery which works efficiently, expeditiously and impartially so that the facts are always at hand and seldom in doubt and the differences to be resolved are clear from the outset. This is far from being the case today, partly because of the very pace at which the government is expanding its activities and in part also because of the dilution of quality at the intermediate levels and the dearth of technical personnel with adequate appreciation of administration. In regard to the latter, departments have unfortunately not always been able to resist the temptation to use them – the technical personnel – as lawyers for urging specific points of view rather than as scientists looking at specific problems. But be that as it may, co-ordination is of vital importance in a growing organism. A certain amount of awkwardness and lack of co-ordination is perhaps natural in a period of rapid growth. We all know something of the tantrums of the adolescents whose hearts often run ahead of their minds or vice

versa and who do not know how precisely to carry their hands or their heads. And adolescents are highly individualistic creatures. But when all the concessions to human nature are made, pulling together there has to be.

Adequate training facilities is another problem that an expanding government has to face. I am not referring so much to the training required before the period of service as to in-service training or to training on the job. No one can grow into more and more difficult jobs without some apprenticeship, some guidance from more experienced people, some time to sit back and prepare for new assignments. But such is the pace at which government is expanding that those who are in a position to train others have no time to spare and those who are able and energetic enough to want to grow into higher responsibilities cannot be spared even the minimum leisure necessary for equipping themselves. Even for the technical personnel – economists, scientists, engineers, etc. – who are employed by the government, the necessary facilities for refresher courses, study leave etc. cannot be granted on the scale desirable for want of adequate personnel. This is a matter which deserves careful consideration for without the necessary investment of time and energy on the part of all concerned in training themselves or others, we are bound to remain in a situation where every expansion in governmental activity would find us progressively less prepared in regard to suitable personnel at the higher levels.

## VI

There is another problem which arises as governments expand and which has not so far received adequate attention. I am referring to the problem of the technical personnel in government. With the large number of specialized jobs that governments have to perform these days, it is no longer possible to rely only on general purpose administrators, however high their calibre may be. It is no coincidence that with the expansion of the government since 1939, the number of economists, statisticians, accountants, legal advisers, engineers, scientists and similar technical personnel employed by the government has increased considerably. The functions of these technicians, the conditions of their recruitment and their terms of

service, the relationship between technical and administrative personnel – these and similar problems deserve a great deal of careful consideration. Technicians have come to stay and administrators will circumscribe their own usefulness by studied indifference to them. I hope, on their part, the technicians can see some point in having general-purpose administrators. Controversies about the relative usefulness of the one or the other are as useless and childish as controversies about the respective contribution of the eye or the ear or the nose to human happiness. And yet, it is by no means easy to outline the best possible way of utilizing technicians? Should we distinguish between the different kinds of functions performed by technicians – functions of servicing others, functions of advice and functions of research? Is it a good idea to create a separate service or cadre for each specialized category of technical personnel or should we provide for a dovetailing into the regular administrative cadres at least in some cases? Is it sensible to obtain technical advice on the basis of permanent employment or should we, in the case of advice at the highest level at least, rely mainly on short-period deputations from universities and business houses? Perhaps the answer to these questions – as to most questions – is yes-and-no. We have had some experience of technicians being successfully in charge of the highest administrative posts in some departments and I for one see no harm, in principle, in experimenting further with this idea in suitable cases. It would also be desirable if we separate a little more the functions of advice and research in government, for even technical advice in day-to-day matters requires a little more than purely technical expertise. There is also need for giving greater security of service to technical personnel at junior levels without impairing the chances of recruiting suitable advisers at the higher levels for short periods from outside the government. From time to time, it would also be desirable to recruit technicians into regular administrative cadres – as we have done in connection with our emergency recruitments. There is no justification for a closed shop either in government or in industry at a time when there is general shortage of trained and tried personnel. Our experience in employing technical personnel in large numbers is only over a short period of years. But it would be worthwhile assessing this

experience and examining whether all is well with a system which has grown almost at random, often on the basis of purely personal relationships between particular technicians and the people in the government. It should not be difficult to find workable answers to the questions I have raised by assessing our own experience and that of other countries.

I have deliberately kept to the last the one problem which comes most readily to mind when we speak of expanding governments. Granted that the expansion of the government in India corresponds more or less to the growth of legitimate governmental functions, how do we ensure that there is not too much expansion, administrative waste and unnecessary proliferation of bureaucracy? He would be a bold man indeed who would profess that all expansion in the size of our government is justifiable. In a sense, the bigger the government grows the more difficult it becomes to check senseless expansion. The staff created for specific functions tends often to survive long after the functions have ceased to be necessary. The need for co-ordination is nowhere greater than in regard to elimination of waste and duplication. In the absence of proper co-ordination, the tendency naturally grows for everyone to appoint his own staff for all purposes irrespective of the existence of similar staff elsewhere. We have instituted various procedures for exercising a check on unnecessary expansion – the Organization and Methods Division, Economy Units in Ministries and so on. Paradoxically, these economy measures can themselves be sources of unnecessary expansion unless they are properly conceived. It is possible for the economizers also to proliferate far beyond the needs of efficient administration. Here again, it is not the existence of machinery which is of the essence of the matter but the kind of attitude on the part of everyone that is brought to bear on measures leading to expansion as well as economy. Your economizer is often penny wise and pound foolish. It is not always by appointing, less paid staff or abolishing posts that effective economy is achieved. Real economy measures must embrace a review of the totality of governmental operations, the procedures for taking decisions, the inter-connections between different agencies. The key to economy again is in co-ordination.

To conclude, the expansion of government – in India or

elsewhere – is not all a matter of Parkinson's Law. Dead-wood there undoubtedly is in this process and certainly some empire-building; and we shall have to be ever vigilant for getting rid of the former, and for keeping the latter under rigid control. But there are also other abiding forces that have been at work, forces which originate in man's desire to wrest from the complexity of modern life a secure and satisfactory future for all. The process of expanding government is by no means free from dangers. Nor is it something free from difficulties of its own making. But within limits, expansion is inevitable and desirable. To regard every expansion in government as a sign of inefficiency and waste or, worse still, of infringement of individual liberty would be to betray a gross misunderstanding of the social and other forces in operation in all civilized societies. Let us by all means be ever vigilant about this process of expanding government. The course of wisdom undoubtedly is to regard governments as subservient to human ends – as necessary as we consciously and collectively wish them to be, but circumscribed nevertheless by the ultimate supremacy of the ends in view. But if we as members of modern societies demand of our governments responsibility for ever-growing functions, it would be short-sighted indeed to develop uncritical hostility to expanding governments.

## 2

### DECENTRALIZED DEMOCRACY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

WE, people of this country, can justifiably congratulate ourselves upon the fact that we have deliberately chosen the way of democracy. We see what is happening all around us, and therefore it would not be wrong if we prided ourselves upon this achievement. We have given to ourselves, the people of India, a democratic constitution and we have chosen with our eyes open the democratic way of life. But I fear that many of us are apt to be satisfied more with the outward shell of democracy and lose sight of the substance of it. We have borrowed certain institutions and certain processes of democracy from the democratic countries of the West, and we are apt to feel that we have done our duty and that there is nothing further to do except to make these institutions work as well as possible. But even in the West, where the existing forms of democracy have gone through a long period of refinement and development, the people feel that the institutions and the processes that exist need reformation, sometimes radical reformation, and there are movements pressing for the particular kinds of reforms. But here, I find there is an aptitude amongst us – rather 'aptitude' is not the proper word – an inclination amongst us to look upon what we have taken from the West as more or less the last word, which I think is a very dangerous state of mind.

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