

The Balance of Work

At the Board of Studies meeting of 22 December 1967, some doubts were expressed about the decision which had been reached at the previous meeting, that outside earnings should be reported to the Director, and I was asked to prepare a paper.

The issue of course, as two or three Fellows have rightly pointed out, is not outside earnings at all; it is the amount of time that we devote to matters which are of low priority. Whatever the practice of some institutions, I personally cannot see that there is any harm at all in somebody accepting and keeping, say, £50 for an outside lecture - though it would be pretty flagrant irresponsibility to agree to give a lecture, with or without such a fee, if doing so meant missing a meeting of the Board of Studies or one of the Institute's fortnightly seminars, or failing to produce a paper by the date promised. The true test of the contribution of a Fellow is not the money he makes on the side but the time he devotes to building the Institute up.

This raises the question: What does build it up? Ultimately, we would all accept that this means developing the subject of development by research and fieldwork, as a subject cutting across several disciplines, and conveying what we know through our seminars, conferences, technical assistance, lectures, supervision sessions, papers and books, etc. etc.

However, this is too general to be helpful. How is it to be done? One extreme view, not I imagine held by any of us, is that we should ^{concentrate on} write a series of brilliant papers,

based on original research. At the other extreme would be the view that we should concentrate exclusively on the bread-and-butter tasks of building the Institute during its early years - obtaining additional financial resources, and forging institutional links at home and overseas.

We must strike a balance somewhere. This means a list of priorities establishing/and agreeing on how time should be allocated between them in the present formative period. Just as a first cocksby may I suggest the following:

Proposed Classification of Fellows' Work by Priority

	<u>Administration</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Teaching</u>	<u>Short seminars and conferences</u>	<u>Consulting</u>
A High Priority	Attending Institute's committees; helping develop its publications; building up contacts with British government departments, overseas governments, international organisations, foundations, British university and other institutions, by correspondence and by receiving and paying visits; recruiting staff; finding and selecting candidates for study seminars.	High-yielding group projects leading to IDS publication or projects sponsored and financed by ODI.	Planning, directing and teaching study seminars, aid administration courses, and other courses run by IDS.	Organising or attending meetings with a high yield.	High-yielding official work provided (i) it gives us useful contacts; (ii) IDS is relieved of need to pay salary during the time involved.
B Low Priority	Preparation for development of IDS as a documentation centre	Other high-yielding projects where costs and time of Fellows and any research assistants are fully covered.	Supervision of <u>graduate</u> students at Sussex University, and lecturing in its M.A. programme.	Attending meetings of lower yield, in which costs are fully covered.	Work of lower yield with the same two provisos, or of high yield without one of these provisos.
C No Priority		Other research	Undergraduate teaching	Other meetings	Other outside work

A number of questions are begged in this table by the words 'high yielding'. From the Institute's point of view the professional yield of a research project or a conference or consulting work is high when it deals with a central problem of aid or development, which is of more than sectoral interest - for example evaluation of technical assistance and training policies of national or international aid agencies, or principles of national planning, or the structure and content of educational systems, or the syllabus ^{of} development courses. Such work would of its essence be interdisciplinary, ^[of governments or international organisations] if it involved close contact with decision-making.

The institutional yield of such work is high if it develops links with the overseas departments in London, with ministries of aided governments, with the secretariats of international organisations, with other universities or research organisations, or with foundations.

If this is anything like the right order of priority, we are at present spending most of our time on work of low priority. It was, for example, interesting that while the Board of Studies meeting on 22 December decided - correctly on the above criteria - that the biennial conference and the one which the Government of Ceylon had requested us to organise were both of high priority, especially the former, it turned out that everyone was too heavily committed, in some cases with work of lower priority, to undertake the responsibility of organising either of them. Fellows are often unable to attend ~~Board of Studies meetings, or to~~

receive visitors, or to take on administrative responsibilities.¹ No Fellow felt he had time to supervise production of the first publication explaining our work programme, the newsletter; moreover, one of the arguments advanced against publishing a journal has been that we would be unable to afford the time even in 1969. Rarely do half the Fellows attend the Institute's own seminars, ^{or staff meetings} and we cannot even get a full attendance at the Board of Studies. There is always an embarrassing silence if I ask for volunteers to direct study seminars. Yet three qualifications must be made. The first is that we would not want Fellows, even if they were willing to do so, to forego writing their own papers, book reviews etc., and devote all their time to administrative work (which is the highest priority within the first category). This would probably even be counter-productive.² Moreover, we may gain in the longer run from individual research projects in any field of development, even if this research is not integrated into the Institute's programme of work, and if there is no outside source of finance to cover the Fellow's salary. Such projects may lead to results which can be used for our seminars and published in papers of distinction - though the author concerned may be biased as an estimator of what the level of distinction will be!

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1. Practically every Fellow has asked to be relieved of one or more of the fields of administrative responsibility assigned to him, usually on the grounds that 'this is really a job for the Director'; although strictly one of the first principles of administration is that no individual field should be the responsibility of the Director.
 2. The reasons for this cannot be explored here - they follow from the conditioned attitudes British academics have on their own role.

Secondly, IDS gains from quite a number of jobs which appear of low priority (such as work for governments or international organisations, even where the Institute still pays the salary, and where the field is specialised) provided we use the opportunity to help build the Institute - for example by giving lectures about the Institute's work and interviewing candidates, ~~at capitals~~ en route.

Thirdly, some Fellows have told me privately that their budget cannot be balanced unless part of their time is spent on double salary.

The commitments we have taken on for research and in categories B and C conferences/for the next 18 months are so heavy that this can be little more than a period of marking ^{for the Institute} time. We cannot afford to continue like this for the whole of the first quinquennium, however, and I suggest that we should drop the proposal on outside earnings but agree among ourselves:- (i) to wind up as many commitments as possible in these categories by September 1969 so that after that date we spend not more than one-third of our time on leave and work of category C, taken together, and not more than one-third on category B. These could either be in terms of months per year, or days per week, or some combination of the two; (ii) we should all try to be here, at least for that one year, 1969-70, which is likely to be the year of our first one-year course; (iii) we should see that remaining commitments under headings B and C were sufficiently flexible to allow any work of high priority to be taken on at short notice.²

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1. Richard Jolly said that the real question was whether Fellows should be free to work on their own account for 6 weeks or 3 months. The answer implied here is 4 months.
 2. In some cases of course such work may be boring or unpalatable - this is inevitable in building up an institution. If I may make a rash generalisation, it is that those who are in principle/proponents of planning are rarely willing to be covered by it themselves.
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The fraction of time that can be spared for low priority work will no doubt be higher in our second quinquennium, i.e. after April 1972, provided of course that the Institute has been built up in the meantime.

I would appreciate the views of members of the Board of Studies on the system of priorities and on the three suggestions in the last paragraph but one, before I put some questions to the Governing Body on the priorities they wish us to follow.