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I am happy to be here with you this evening. This is indeed the only opportunity which your Constitution and the prevalent practice gave me of thanking you for electing me as your President and also bidding you farewell in that capacity. The high mission with which this Institute was established and which has animated its activities throughout its existence is of the greatest national importance. In our constitutional set-up public administration occupies a unique position. In the welfare state there is hardly any aspect of civic life which does not come into contact with public administration. When activity of an individual has to be regulated in the interest of the common weal. Administrative Law and Rules assume great importance. What should be the equipment of the administrator and what should be the pattern of his behaviour are matters of deep concern. Moreover, in a democratic society which is passing through rapid changes of great magnitude, new problems arise. Public administration has to adapt itself to new conditions and must possess sufficient elasticity and strength to meet new

challenges. All this requires close study of social changes in the country and also of the problems thrown up by these changes to provide effective answers in the administrative field. Equally important is the appreciation of the impact of forces generated by social, economic and political conditions on the life of man, necessitating a change in the attitude and behaviour of the administrator, his education and training. This requires intimate study of the public law and allied disciplines which touch and affect public administration.

Growing political consciousness among the people, the impact of modern science and technology on human affairs and the necessity to satisfy the needs and demands of the people require a new orientation to the education and training of the administrator. That he holds a key position in the economic life of the nation is clear from the fact that without efficient administration, developmental process loses all significance.

In essential particulars, the government machinery has continued unchanged since we inherited it from British times. No doubt some changes have been introduced as a result of the report of the Administrative Reforms Commission. But in the main, the system has remained unaltered and enough does not seem to have been done. The common man wants speedy action and quick disposal of his case. It is a general complaint that there is a plethora of rules and regulations resulting from multiplicity of laws. Some of the forms a citizen has to sign contain lengthy details quite often incomprehensible to him; his file travels from table to table and passes through too many hands before a final decision is reached. It also sometimes happens that no reply is vouchsafed to him for months; in some cases none at all.

Corruption has been a universal complaint. It is not a new malady. The First Five Year Plan (1952) called for "a continuous war against every species of corruption within the administration as well as in public life". Tarlok Singh, a civil servant in his *Indian Development Experience* quotes Myrdal as saying, "Where corruption is widespread, inertia and inefficiency, as well as irrationality, impede the process of decision-making and plan fulfilment". Tarlok Singh opines that in the circumstances, "the objectives of development

and social change are equally endangered". There are laws which punish corruption. But has it diminished ? This matter deserves serious and earnest study. Why cannot this blot be removed from public administration?

The present conditions make demands of an unprecedented character on the administrator in some spheres. Political agitations sometimes becomes violent and magistrates and police personnel receive injuries. They have to control huge crowds and make instant decisions on the spot. Strikes disturb public life and result in heavy financial losses to the nation. The trends in our democratic life involving sometimes basic issues are matters which call for close examination.

I am glad to find that some of the subjects with which the Institute has dealt are matters of vital current interest. Let me on this occasion congratulate the Institute on the fine work it has been doing through its various activities. I place on record my appreciation of the high quality of the Journal which the Institute has been publishing.

Brain drain from India is a matter of deep concern for the economy and the progress of the nation. Various reasons have been assigned by eminent persons for this fact of our national life. A deep study into the causes and cures seems to be urgently called for. The authorities concerned may consider the possibility of creating such conditions as may help the solution of this problem.

Administration in public undertakings and in universities and other educational institutions require constant attention. The former has a vital effect on production and economic progress; the latter is directly affecting the nation-building process so important for the future of the country.

Special attention has to be given to the rural areas where bulk of our population lives. Public administration should be so oriented as to solve the peculiar problems of these areas. One notices a reluctance on the part of the medical and other officers to work in those areas. They prefer the amenities of urban life. Cannot conditions be created which may attract the administrator to such areas?

The civil servant is put to real test during periods of emergency, economic depression and social upheaval. Changes in the Government do not affect his efficiency and he must continue to discharge his duties and serve the people in complete disregard of the political changes around him. He never takes sides in politics. He is always neutral. High standard of impartiality, courtesy and consideration for the citizens' rights, equal treatment for all persons, irrespective of social and economic considerations must be his watchword. This alone can ensure confidence in public administration and mutual cooperation between the civil servant and the citizen, so essential for good government.

Article 40 of our Constitution enjoins the State to take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of the self-government. This appears in line with the thinking of those who hold that planning must start from below. Unfortunately Panchayat Raj has not succeeded in the manner envisioned in the Constitution.