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The Industrial Relations Counselors and the Professional Status

Roger Chartier

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Article abstract

Can we really look upon the Industrial Relations Counselor as a professional? It is significant that the question is still being raised even within the new Society of Industrial Relations Counselors which, for almost two years, has enjoyed a fullfledged legal status like other older professional groups. The purpose of this working paper is not to prove at any cost that the question should be answered in the affirmative. Quite the contrary it is in no way based on any preconceived idea, but simply attempts to furnish the principal elements of an answer to our question and to provide food for thought on the criteria of the professional status insofar as they apply to the Industrial Relations Counselors.

The Industrial Relations Counselors and the Professional Status

Roger Chartier

Can we really look upon the Industrial Relations Counselor as a professional? It is significant that the question is still being raised even within the new Society of Industrial Relations Counselors which, for almost two years, has enjoyed a fullfledged legal status like other older professional groups. The purpose of this working paper is not to prove at any cost that the question should be answered in the affirmative. Quite the contrary it is in no way based on any preconceived idea, but simply attempts to furnish the principal elements of an answer to our question and to provide food for thought on the criteria of the professional status insofar as they apply to the Industrial Relations Counselors.

Introduction

a) BRIEF DEFINITIONS

More precision and details will be given later on the definitions which follow :

1.—Occupation

A social structure composed of all individuals engaged in the same economic activity, to whom it provides a given level of remuneration and social status, who use specific techniques and possess the same type of qualifications around which they are grouped. The word « occupation » is the generic term under which trades and professions are classified. The word « job » is more closely related to the individual person who is working.

CHARTIER, ROGER, M.Sc.soc., directeur général du personnel de la Commission hydroélectrique de Québec, études de doctorat en sociologie à l'Université de Chicago.

2.—*Profession*

According to the traditional concept, the profession may be defined as an occupation characterized by extensive and specialized intellectual training, by the utilization of an advanced technique based on a certain theoretical content, by the creation around it of a specific professional association, and also by the notion of services provided for clients in exchange of fees, usually outside the salary-earning context. It is important to stress the difference between the latter definition and that of the *organic profession*, which groups men not according to their position in the labour market, but according to the industrial branch of the economy to which they relate. The profession is not necessarily related to work whether the professional be self-employed or salaried.

3.—*Corporation*

The legal form given to the profession. It groups all the persons who exercise the same trade or the same profession; it is thus a mixed group; and membership to it is compulsory.

4.—*Trade*

Any manual or mechanical occupation.

5.—*Professionalization*

Dynamic process within the occupation through which the trade gradually changes into a genuine profession.

b) SOCIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF STUDIES ON THE PROFESSIONS

Sociology takes in all occupations, and especially the professions, as a basic element of all societies, as the pass-key to a full understanding of social structures. Spencer has even said that the development of professions is the essential characteristic of a civilized society.

The evolution of professions has a deep influence on the economy of a country. Any occupation, as we shall see, gradually extends from the level of a simple trade to that of the traditional profession, but often at the expense of certain characteristics when this revalorization takes place in the context of large modern bureaucracies (industrial, commercial, governmental, military or even ecclesiastical).

c) THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION

Why this impulse towards professionalization?

« What other models are there available for occupations to copy? The itch for professionalization has roots that go deep into present-day

society. Ours has become a society of enormous urban communities, of almost countless occupations, and of immensely large corporations. In such a society modern man tends to become an anonymous digit in the enormous community; an undistinguishable specialist among a myriad of specialists; and a mere cog in a bureaucratized corporation. It is against this background of changes in society, in the world of occupations, and in the world of corporations that we can see the conditions that encourage the growth of professions. The professions represent the most luminous patterns in the total web of occupations; they are peculiarly distinct in contrast to the amorphous features of the bureaucratized job in the corporation. »

« Over and above all this, the professions have another dominant feature which is reflected in the adjective, frequently applied to professions, « independent ». Historically, the ancient professions had this characteristic. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they had something more, they had a kind of social power. The doctor could command the patient to follow his orders, the lawyer could specify what was proper advice, and the priest could issue orders which cut across two worlds. Indeed under the label of independence the historic professions wielded so much in the way of social power that they stand in stark contrast to the modern worker, whatever his technical or intellectual level, who is caught up in the web of assorted bonds which characterize the modern industrial or commercial corporation. « ¹

The fact that professionalization has made tremendous headway during the last decades can be explained more precisely by the mechanical and industrial revolution, the amazing progress of sciences (engineering, chemistry, physics), and also by the accompanying social and economic revolution which has resulted in a multiplication of specialists and intellectuals of all kinds (professional managers, financiers, accountants, actuaries, land-surveyors, etc.)

Lastly there is the fact, and it may be for our purpose the most important one, that in our North-American society, man defines himself above all by the work in which he is engaged. For us, values not derived from man's working activity deserve very little consideration against those that are so derived. And since one is defined and evaluated first and foremost by his occupation, it is therefore normal and even imperative that one should try constantly to protect and revalorize his occupation by assuring that, if at all possible, it be granted the full attributes of professional status.

This explains the gradual rise towards the professional status of occupations once considered as being strictly of a commercial nature

(1) HALL, OSWALD. « Some Unfinished Business in the Professionalization of the Personnel Man », *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 1961, pp. 315-323.

(banking, publicity), without any real autonomy (drawing), or somewhat remote from economic activity (general administration, philanthropy, scientific research).

II — The Various Phases of Professionalization

If one speaks of professional status, as we have seen, one must first of all speak of professionalization, that is, analyse this *dynamic process moving along a continuum* by which occupations use the technical and scientific knowledge to push their intellectual specialization to the point where it will become a full-fledged profession. This dynamic element itself makes it very difficult to determine the essential and necessary features of the professional status, since an occupation which is considered as a trade is always *aiming at* being granted professional status, by passing through the various phases of labourer, semi-skilled worker, skilled worker, professional semi-skilled worker, professional skilled worker, semi-professional employee and finally, truly professional.

It is this very wide range of phases which led Nelson N. Foote to state that : « Labor itself is becoming professionalized . . . The prospect of a society in which everyone becomes a professional — the equal of colleagues in his own, and the equivalent of members of other professions, despite unlimited qualitative differentiation — is that toward which advanced industrial communities seem to be moving. » ²

In the same vein, Carr-Saunders and Wilson wrote that : « Under a system of large-scale commercial and industrial organization, all those who occupy important positions will gradually come within professional associations, or at least under professional influence » ³ The same authors write the following so as to be more explicit : « In other words, there will be a considerable extension of professionalism outwards. But will there also be an extension downwards? Those who are not in business and do not belong to a recognized profession are engaged either in intellectual routine occupations or in manual labor. Among them vocational organization has already gained a firm hold. But these vocational organizations do not now exhibit the characteristics of professional associations because they are not engaged in preserving and applying an elaborate technique. In fact they are at present largely devoted to protective aims. This need not be permanent. Social and industrial changes are rapid; the « laborer » is becoming a figure of the past. It may be that even if all men do not come to be trained in some elaborate technique, everyone will belong to a vocational association upon which will be devolved a responsibility for the good conduct of some aspect

(2) FOOTE, NELSON N. « The Professionalization of Labour in Detroit », *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LVIII, No 4, January 1953, p. 379.

(3) CARR-SAUNDERS, A.M. & WILSON, P.A. *The Professions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, p. 493.

of social or industrial organization. In this manner there may be an extension of the professional attitude downwards as well as outwards. » ⁴

There is no doubt that this blending, this overlapping of the characteristics of the trade and that of the profession led Pierre Naville to say : « At the outset, jobs were no more manual than they were intellectual, and these two elements are still inseparable. The hand cannot function without the head; and the head without the body would also be powerless.

The activity, the behaviour of man cannot be divided. There is not, therefore, any physical work energy distinct from an intellectual work energy. » ⁵ Everything is a matter of emphasis, of dosage, of proportions which are variable.

This being established, it is important to note that today, notwithstanding an increase in professionalization, one can only count, out of some 30,000 occupations, about forty professions recognized as such.

What are then the usual *phases in the process of professionalization*? Without attempting to place these phases in an infallible chronological order, we can rightly put them in the following logical order.

- 1) *Full-time work* in a given specialized activity.
- 2) The establishment of an *association* which reflects on the profession, determines the content of relevant professional duties, determines standards of admission and rejection so as to improve recruiting, and either changes the title of its members or invents a new one which it monopolizes and popularizes.
- 3) *A university education* or studies supervised by a university : academic degree, scientific research, standardization of the curriculum, stricter prerequisites and prolongation of studies, which quickly become a formal condition of access to the profession.
- 4) *The separation of the « competent » from the others* becomes more and more refined as the professional duties and requirements are given more precision : Practicians tend to separate into two groups, according to their background : namely, experience without a university education *against* university education with or without experience; a specific diploma in industrial relations *against* a university diploma in a different field or discipline. Young graduates are tempted to look upon older practicians (which are often without any specific or non-specific

(4) *Idem.* In *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. New York: Macmillan, 1933, Vol. 12, p. 480, under « Professions ».

(5) NAVILLE, PIERRE. *De l'aliénation à la jouissance*. Paris: Marcel Rivière et Cie, 1957, pp. 470-471, Vol. I of a series entitled *Le nouveau Léviathan*. (Our translation.)

university diploma, and for good reason!) as obstacles to professionalization.

- 5) *The struggle against neighbouring professions* is inevitable, especially in the field of human relations where contacts between the various disciplines or fields activity are so close and overlapping, so frequent. For the human sciences are young and the lines of demarcation between them are still vague and hazy.
- 6) *The professional code of ethics* takes shape. It proves the social usefulness of the profession, puts forward the notion of service to the client and of the welfare of the community, stabilizes the ideals and the standards of behaviour of the profession in an even more precise manner, draws a list of the standards of rejection of the incompetent or dishonest practitioner, limits the competition within the profession and protects the clientèle. Ethics, however, is still a field where it is difficult to impose practical sanctions; subtle disciplinary measures are more efficient, especially when aimed at : desire to maintain professional prestige; fear of being despised by one's colleagues; will to maintain a good reputation; and in certain cases tough disciplinary measures, help to educate members. Finally, there are striking cases of conflict between the common good of society as a whole and the private interest of the profession or that of the individual member; such cases are particularly painful.
- 7) *Political action* to influence the legislator in order to obtain legal recognition of the social usefulness of the profession and of its members, of its jurisdiction and its powers. The law will first protect the exclusiveness of the professional title; later on, it could even enact legislation making a crime of the « non-professional » act performed by a « stranger ».
- 8) *Efforts by the profession to control university training* is an intervention which is at the same time frequent, understandable and risky, and which goes with a solid organization of the professional group. The latter, well aware of the needs of the « market », seeks to impose its standards on the university or at least to try vigorously to participate with it in the establishment of the curriculum.

III — Criteria of the Profession

The criteria of the profession, that terminal high point of the occupational continuum, have already been partially and implicitly mentioned in the preceding analysis of the various phases of professionalization. It is difficult to determine the extent to which such criteria are the exclusive property of the professions, since they are sought by all occupations. Be that as it may, these criteria, which are based on social relations, are closely *interdependent*. What then are those criteria, some of which are more important than others?

A first insight of these criteria may be obtained from *Appendix I* of this paper. In it, Professor Oswald Hall presents in a graphic and summary manner the characteristics of *all* phases of the professionalization continuum, from trade to profession. Professor Hall has entitled his table : « The Profession, the Position, the Job ». The distinctions between these three levels are clearly shown as to form of remuneration, assignation of job, required training, type of relation to the organization and to others in the organization, image of self, and social identification of the individual.

In second place, it will interest Industrial Relations Counselors to know the definition which the American *Taft-Hartley* law gives of the profession : « A Professional is any employee engaged in work (1) predominantly intellectual and varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical, or physical work; (2) involving the consistent exercise of judgment in its performance; (3) of such a character that the output produced or the result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of time . . . An employee performing work requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning, as distinguished from a general academic education; or any employee who has completed the course of specialized instruction and study described, and is performing related work under the supervision of a professional person. »

From the two above paragraphs, from the preceding description of the various stages of the professionalization process and from the definition of the profession anteriorly proposed, it is now possible to draw a list of *the features of the profession*.

1) LONG PERIOD OF INTELLECTUAL TRAINING

We are interested here in *all* of the training of the individual, from the elementary school through the university. For, if one were to consider in a given discipline, and with a specific profession in mind, only the period of academic studies, the length of this period could, in certain cases, be not much more than that of specialized studies which lead to the full possession of a trade; the latter studies have, on the whole, a content which is less theoretical and abstract than the studies which lead to the full profession. The professions will find it profitable to be linked to the university, beyond the prestige which is usually connected with an academic background, only if the university, over and above the technical elements which could be easily taught in the vocational or technical schools, impregnates its teaching with that *universalism*, that general knowledge which makes the whole man.

According to French poet Paul Valéry's fine distinction, the *urgent* which forcibly guides the practitioner must never be confused with the *important* to which university teaching is bound. In the field of industrial relations as in any other field, university teaching must shape the mind, give the professionals broad horizons, make them easily adaptable and capable of quickly solving particular problems which they should always be able to place in their proper, larger context.

The professions must resist the temptation of imposing on the university faculties their definition of the professional man himself. This does not mean that they must reject the idea of any dialogue with the university; on the contrary, the university has a great need for the views of the practicing professional so as to have a better understanding of the needs of society. But beyond the mediums of meetings and conversations, the university must maintain its academic standards and train professionals of a high calibre, according to its own terms of reference, but taking into consideration the demands of the socio-economic reality.

2) HIGH DEGREE OF SPECIALIZATION

As other modern occupations, and ordinarily *more so*, professions have the distinctive feature of having a very complex division of labour, a highly competent use of science and an expert rendering of services, a *relatively* exclusive reservoir of technical and scientific knowledge and, therefore, a certain monopoly of the relevant science and practice.

3) NATURE OF THE SERVICE RENDERED

Without bringing in the notion of « sacred vow » or of « vocation », the following statement is *generally* true: in the profession, the notion of service to the client and to the community prevails or must prevail on that of individual gain, be it in the form of money or in the form of prestige; and it is inside the profession, as against other occupations, that one normally finds a deeper sense of social responsibilities, of devotion, of abnegation, of unselfishness. The above statement does not hide, unfortunately, the individual exceptions which may appear from time to time. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to oppose devoted service to material gain to the point where one could affirm that the professional, the purest of the pure, is so absorbed by the service-to-the-community aspect of his profession that he is completely devoid of any desire for wealth and all that it provides.

This service, as the sociology of occupations shows it and as Professor Hall bears it out so well in the afore-mentioned article published in *Industrial Relations*, possesses the following features.

- 1.—It is *specific*, exclusive in a sort of way, and rendered solely by the relevant professional, who exercises a monopoly not only with regard to the member of another profession but with regard to the client himself.
- 2.—It is *original*, unstandardized, in the sense that each case is, in some way, unique, and requires a service which is alien to routine and the product of an *ad hoc* judgment. As Dr. Hall states, « the more the exercise of an occupation is dependent on specific judgment, the quicker and the more completely does it professionalize itself. » (p. 324). Intended for the client, the service rendered is at the same time technical, human and social; it is not, therefore, a mere prescription impersonally filled out at a shopping-centre drugstore, but a truly inter-personal relationship.

A client is not, then, a vague interchangeable consumer; and the service rendered for his welfare is not a mere manipulation of impersonal objects (instruments, tools or machines). Fully confident, but incompetent himself, the client relies completely on the professional and between them a tight link is established.

This relationship is, as a general rule, a discontinuous one, made up as it is of definite contacts in specific and compelling circumstances so as to solve urgent and serious problems of an episodic nature.

This relation is therefore direct, immediate, without any intermediaries.

4) PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

The professional group can function at various levels : local, provincial, national or international. It binds the members together, protects them against any abuse or exploitation, sustains the professional prestige, encourages communications, maintains the monopoly by the profession in whatever measure possible, watches over relevant protective legislation, evaluates the qualifications of future members, establishes the standards of the profession, lays emphasis on professional ethics, draws out the distinction between the members and the rest of society, and at the same time differentiates amongst its own members according to a certain scale of social stratification.

5) PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

The profession aggressively upholds the freedom of the professional to render his services in all liberty as regards the choice of his methods and the « layman », his client. Accordingly, the professional wants to be the sole judge of a colleague; in practice, however, the client and society are also determined to pass judgment by themselves on the technical and moral conduct of the professional.

6) CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The profession wastes no time in giving itself a code of deontology which specifies the standards of professional behaviour and performance of the member towards his colleague, his client, groups, institutions and society. The code encourages the communication of information and discoveries interesting the profession and stimulates overall internal cooperation in matters pertaining to the strict choice of candidates and the upholding of professional prestige.

7) LAW OF THE PROFESSION

It very often happens that a law, inspired and requested by the representatives of a new profession, gives public and solemn sanction to the obligations and privileges of the profession (as for example, in matters of licensing, or at least of professional title, fees, etc.).

8) SPECIALIZED LITERATURE

The authentic professions, bent on theoretical knowledge and on research, do not waste any time in setting up a literature which is formulated and spread in a specialized terminology.

Here then is a list, briefly described, of criteria of the traditional profession. To be considered a full profession, must the occupation eminently possess *all* and each of these criteria? Or is it sufficient that on the whole it reveal these features in a general way, permitting itself, here and there, a few weaknesses and omissions? Is it not true that, in view of the gradual and universal progression of occupations towards the professional status, one finds (in an embryonic manner at first and more clearly defined later on) the previously described features just as much in the trades and semi-professions as in the professions themselves? Lastly, would it not be useful to distinguish between the *essential* features and the *secondary* features of the profession? Those are just as many disturbing questions to which it is not easy to give definite answers, so

moving is the field of occupations. Who will determine with precision on the continuum separating the trade from the profession the exact point where an occupation becomes a full profession? The above features, it seems, are found only *grosso modo* and in varying emphases in given professions; especially when it is relatively new, the profession has solidly established characteristics alongside weak points which must be corrected.

The again, in matters pertaining to the criteria of the profession, the distinction between the essential and the accessory is as tempting as it is difficult. Professor Hall, again in his article published in the *Industrial Relations* (July 1961) to which we have already referred, has tried to apply this distinction in relation to the traditional profession. Here is the line of demarcation which he has so established :

- a) The following characteristics of the profession are *essential* : high degree of specialization, specific service, unstandardized work, personal, episodic and direct relationship with the client.
- b) The following are *secondary* : university training, licensing and professional association.

This somewhat arbitrary distinction by Professor Hall did not go without certain risks. For, even if one keeps within the traditional perspective with regard to the criteria of the profession, one can legitimately ask why the university training and the professional association in particular (even if these features are very alluring and like a magnet attract, somewhat superficially, the occupations not yet professionalized) could not be considered today as essential features, as valuable and realistic as extreme specialization (which one can find at all levels of all occupations), as the specific and unstandardized nature of the services rendered (which a lot of occupations, semi-professional or not, have in common) and as the direct and episodic personal relationship with the client (which one now finds only in an ever-decreasing number of cases, relatively speaking).

It would no doubt be more pertinent, if one were obliged at any cost (and, in the end, it may not be necessary) to filter the essential from the accessory, to hold as *essential*, even in the traditional point of view of the professional « mold », such criteria as a prolonged intellectual training, certain aspects of the nature of the services rendered, and also the professional association which is at the base of the autonomy, the code of ethics, the legislation and the specialized literature of the profession.

IV — The Professional as a Salaried Employee Within the Large Modern Enterprise

Professor Hall proposes another « mold » in which the profession is exercised and that is the *bureaucratic* model. Before examining, in the

fifth and last part of this essay, the consequences such a model has on the modalities of integration within its structure of these new « professionals » (a term which may be readily applied to the Industrial Relations Counselors), we should analyze at this point, from the broadest possible point of view, the nature and the amplitude of the converging elements and, especially, the diverging elements which are situated at a point where the traditional professional model meets up with, or even clashes with the more recent bureaucratic model.

a) THE BUREAUCRATIC MODEL

The bureaucracy to which we refer here is that which has been defined by sociologists such as Weber, Simmel, Mannheim, Parsons, Merton, Friedrich, Bendix, Blau and Gouldner, amongst others, and not that of the usual definition, too often and wrongly applied to the civil service, and which is synonymous of nonchalance and administrative red tape. On the contrary, the « bureaucratic » firm or institution or organization (which, as we have already seen, can be found not only in the Government, the Army or the Church but industry, Commerce, Education or the Unions as well) is entirely centered on a maximum efficiency, which it intends to define strictly on its own terms, according to its own standards which it holds as being the only rational ones possible. Accordingly, the « bureaucrat », or salaried employee of a large organization, holds a job to which, in theory at least, he claims no vested rights, to which he has access and from which he rises according to very rigid rules of promotion.

He is held to a strict rendering of accounts within the sharply defined limits of his responsibilities. He is freely chosen by his superior as an individual possessing a certain technical know-how, satisfying needs which are determined by the logic and the objectives of the organization. He sees in his job a career excluding all others and requiring all his attention and loyalty. He does not own that which he administers or utilizes. He must submit, even in the very exercise of his power of command, to a strict *discipline* and an *impersonal* hierarchy. Should he fail to respect the rules of the game, he is subject to sanctions. He acts according to clearly defined modes of activity and procedures firmly established with respect to the objectives of the organization. His authority is vested in his position and not in his person. He lives in a context much impregnated with formalism and marked by his social and hierarchical level. In a few words, as has been so well noted by sociologist Georg Simmel with his insistence on sheer numbers as such as a determining element of the various forms of social life, this numerical dimension is so often a necessary condition without which certain social structures cannot be established. Thus, at a given stage of its numerical growth, a group must give itself structures and institutions by which its progress and permanency are assured, and which never become necessary for a smaller group; then, after a while, certain qua-

lities such as intimacy, spontaneity and simplicity, usually found present in small groups, will have been lost by the larger groups.⁶

Such is, drawn in strokes too large to give a clear and complete image, the large « bureaucratic » enterprise of today. Would anyone be surprised, considering the description previously proposed of the criteria of the profession and of the characteristics of the professional man himself, that the latter would feel ill at ease, wrongly utilized, mistreated, irritated, suffocated, frustrated? In what manner will the old dreams and the high standards, deeply rooted in the traditions of the profession, adapt themselves to the brutal and compelling reality of the large modern enterprise? The result of this opposition must of necessity be *a compromise which will lean heavily, it would seem, in favour of the bureaucratic structure*. We will then be witness to a movement of two processes, each towards the other: the professionalization of the bureaucrats and, *above all*, the bureaucratization of the salaried professionals, true members of this « employee society » described by Peter Drucker. And as long as these converging movements will last and the equilibrium be not reached, frictions and conflicts will be the lot of the salaried professionals and the large enterprises.

Let us now briefly examine some of these points of conflict.

b) PROFESSION VERSUS « BUREAUCRACY »

1.—*Prolonged Intellectual Training*

The entrepreneur (a generic term which will cover, for lack of a better word, all the top executives or administrators of large « bureaucratic » organizations) may, drawing from his experience, pass a very harsh judgment on the so-called professional « product » which this or that university faculty prepares and, independently of the professional titles accumulated, he may refuse to engage such or such a professional and even all the professionals trained in one given university institution; the entrepreneur may even utilize after his own fashion the talents and the knowledge of the professionals which he hires, often in a manner not consistent with the high opinion which the latter have of their own value and the respect which is due to the dignity of their profession. In a few words, *the entrepreneur is bent on being the sole master of his decisions in matters relating to the recruiting, selection and placement of all of his personnel, whether professional or not*. And this holds true, inevitably, *in matters of transfer and promotion*. Very strong pressures will have to be exercised, as would for example, a

(6) SIMMEL, GEORG. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated by Kurt Wolff. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1950, pp. 87, 95-97.

very stringent legislation, to get the entrepreneur to abdicate his right to be the sole judge in these matters. And that is because he thinks of himself alone as qualified to appreciate the aptitudes of any employee, professional or not, to fill a given job.

2.—*Specialized Training*

In a large enterprise, the monopolistic and exclusive aspects of the science and practice at which the professional aims invariably come in conflict with the « inalienable » right which the entrepreneur reserves for himself to determine the nature and the hierarchic structure of the jobs or the positions which constitute the very backbone of his organization. Again the entrepreneur, on the other hand, feels solely capable of determining the standards of production of the many jobs in his enterprise. In other words, he wishes to choose in all liberty the means best suited to reach the objectives of his enterprise; and in defining job contents, it matters little to him whether his lines of demarcation and his hierarchy coincide or not with those which an « outside » professional association proposes or seeks to impose. Here again, it will require very strong pressures or much subtlety to bring him to compromise; for in the enterprise, the zone of competence, even if it demands very solid technical knowledge, is not necessarily exclusive. Moreover, the administrative hierarchy within the enterprise does not necessarily correspond with the scale of prestige and values accepted within the profession. Lastly, the *managerial definition of efficiency is not necessarily the same as that of the professional association.*

3.—*Characteristics of the Professional « Bureaucratic » Services*

The professional who decides (in most cases he has no other choice) to offer his services permanently to a large organization realizes, at least implicitly, how far away he is getting from a professional ideal formed at a time when the activity of individuals as such dominated the economy, and, at the same time, how closer he is getting to an ideal based on a system where goods and services are produced by *large organizations* which *are*, in a final analysis, the modern expression of the profession. From now on, therefore, he will serve the community, but *through the enterprise* which, channelling and coordinating all the professional efforts required, will thus dispense his services to society. He will serve the enterprise and earn his living by means of a *salary* and not by means of fees. This salary will be paid by *one client only*, his enterprise; and he will have

earned this salary with the same skill and as much devotion as his non-salaried colleague will have earned his fees.

His services, as we have previously seen, will not always have the same degree of specialization and exclusiveness as that of the professional who is autonomous; they will not be *original* in the sense that the salaried professional's work will not vary from case to case and according to each client (since he has only one); but they may be rendered with the same acuity of judgment as the traditional professional services, and often with more difficulties and merit still, since the salaried professional will have to integrate with the multitude of other departments in a very complex network of inter-personal relationships. It is therefore *through a great number of intermediaries* that the salaried professional will serve, in a continuous way; and in this he clearly distinguishes himself from his colleague, the traditional professional. Finally, the impersonal climate of the large organization is in sharp contrast with the very personal relationships of the traditional professional.

4.—*Professional Association*

The professional association, which serves to tighten the bonds between its members, instills in them a collective conscience and demands a loyalty without reserve in exchange for the protection it provides; it comes in conflict with the large organization which, in the same way, needs all of the loyalty of its personnel, whether it be professional or otherwise. If, in such a context, the salaried professional does not exercise a dual loyalty, according to certain modalities of compromise and equilibrium, he shall have to either quit his firm or give it his full allegiance by escaping a conflict of sentiments which can only destroy him; or again, having resort to a middle-of-the-road solution which will not necessarily exclude his loyalty to either the enterprise or his profession, he can always set up with his other colleagues within the enterprise a new professional association, union-inspired or not.

5.—*Professional Autonomy*

This characteristic is closely related to the preceding ones. In the large organization, the liberty of the professional with regard to the choice of his objectives, his professional methods and rhythm of work is inevitably limited by the imperatives of the organization itself. It is the entrepreneur who intends to define *the order of urgency and the order of importance* of the professional actions which have to be made, according to the distinction made by Paul Valéry. It is the entrepreneur who wishes to remunerate his professional personnel according to

the internal logic of the enterprise and the external logic of the free market, by opposing, as vigorously as possible the monopolizing efforts of the profession. It is he again who wishes to determine freely, forever consistent with the needs of the enterprise, the training required by salaried professionals; in this matter, the opinion of the professional association may be of some interest to him, but he will not easily accept that this opinion bind him.

The enterprise, as can be readily seen, cannot give the salaried professional full liberty to choose his problems and his field of activity; where he may want to expand, it will decide to contract: the « scientifically-minded » professional will often be in opposition to the « profit-minded » entrepreneur; what will be essential to the former will often only be secondary to the latter, and vice-versa; the entrepreneur will have a tendency to be more rushed than his professional subordinate; again the professional will at times be tempted to reject as « idiotic » formal orders from his superior or administrative procedures otherwise very valuable. In other words, the entrepreneur and the salaried professional often have very diverging definitions of scientific and administrative efficiency.

6.—*Professional Code of Ethics*

The entrepreneur is often not too preoccupied by ethical standards established by the profession, if they tend to limit his administrative authority and his disciplinary powers. Besides, the code of ethics often means very little to the salaried professional in the reality of his daily work.

7.—*Law of the Profession*

Again in this case, certain restrictive or normative clauses, contained in the law which gives the profession its juridical framework, may come in conflict with the powers of the entrepreneur or with perfectly legitimate administrative standards; the salaried professional will then find himself dangling between two stools.

8.—*Specialized Literature*

Articles, essays, conferences, research reports help the progress of the profession and sustain the prestige of the professional. Nevertheless, the entrepreneur, for motives such as economic competition or « better » immediate utilization of his professional personnel, may be hostile to such participation, preferring silence and abstention.

V — The Industrial Relations Counselors: Are They Professionals?

All the previous remarks made on the various professions (medicine, law, engineering, accounting, political science, sociology, economics, administrative science, etc.), and on their integration in the « bureaucratic » context, apply perfectly to the Industrial Relations Counselors, the new « professionals » who were recently recognized by the Government in a formal way. However, this young profession, as many others, finds in its path obstacles which must be clearly seen and on which some meditation is in order.

- 1.—The profession is very *young* if we compare it to the traditional professions such as law and medicine. One cannot therefore expect it to have solidly established structures, a long tradition, a time-tested « esprit de corps », a deeply-rooted social prestige. These are elements which are only fashioned with the years and which require endless efforts.
- 2.—Its *organic law*,* which formalizes certain elements of the profession, follows twenty years of university teaching in Industrial Relations and was passed after the alumni association had been in existence for fifteen years. In this atomic age, can one maintain that it came too soon, that it preceded rather than followed a real awakening of many of the members of the profession? Normally, as we have seen, professional status is reached in quite the opposite manner: collective thinking *precedes* the juridical structure. The legal status, as useful as it can be, must not allow the members to forget that in their profession, everything is just really beginning.

In its present form the law (bill 139), empowers the Society to make by-laws relating to its internal management as, for example, the manner and conditions of admission of members of various categories, membership fees, and the professional conduct of its members. The Society may also « make agreements » with educational institutions. (art. 10) Only a member in good standing may use the title « member of the Corporation of Industrial Relations Counselors ». (art. 12) However, and this is an important exception, « no person shall be obliged to be a member of the society to practise the profession... » (art. 11) It is both much and little. And this is well indeed, at a time when all the members, and the Society itself, have still much ground to cover before they are fully conscious of the existence of the profession, its usefulness, even its necessity. Notwith-

* An Act Respecting the Society of Industrial Relations Counselors, passed by the Quebec Legislative Assembly on February 14th, 1963.

standing a great deal of sympathy on the part of the legislator towards the profession, the latter would do well to resist the temptation to obtain from the former more powers over the Industrial Relations practitioners in Quebec.

- 3.—The profession must never, neither in the present nor in the future, be the refuge or the instrument of the incapable or the ambitious. As paradoxical as it may sound, one could wish that it would only rely on those members who were able to carve a good career for themselves without its help and who can still do without it to maintain and improve their career. Ideally, it is not for oneself, but *for others* that one must be active within the Society of Industrial Relations Counselors.
- 4.—The very *heterogeneous* character of the Society of Industrial Relations Counselors must be underlined, as it otherwise shares this characteristic with other professional associations. One will find in it members with multiple loyalties, the warmest of which do not necessarily go to the association itself. In the S.I.R.C., the members define themselves by *a common sphere of interest or activity* which itself is divided into *four great sectors* (industrial — commercial, university, government and union) in *which many disciplines* may be legitimately interested, as has been previously shown.

On the other hand, attention should be drawn to the very great diversity of professional duties which may be assumed by the members of the S.I.R.C. Some, generalists in the large, medium or small organizations, will be employed as Personnel or Industrial Relations directors. Others, specialists, will deal with, exclusively or otherwise, job analysis, remuneration, management-union relations, employment (recruiting, selection and placement), industrial engineering, organization, training, safety, welfare research work in economics, sociology, psychology, administration, etc, or act as welfare workers, organizers or technical counselors for management or union, conciliators, mediators and arbitrators, university professors or members of a Public Relations or Legal department, and so on.

Another complication arises from the fact that some members of the S.I.R.C., and these are very few in number, are not specialized in any particular field: having not completed their university training, their only claim to fame is a wide experience. Where then can one find a common denominator, a common interest, a link amongst this remarkable mixture of practitioners without university training (one can only count about fifteen of them on a total membership of 200) and university-trained men with or without experience having studied Social Sciences (Industrial Relations in most cases, Political Science, Sociology,

Economics, Social Work), Law, Engineering, Theology, Commerce? For example, where will lie the sympathy of the lawyer who has specialized in Industrial Relations and who now works for unions? And the engineer who took to the field of personnel administration at a time when no courses in industrial relations were given: is he first an engineer or is he a member of the S.I.R.C.? And what happens, as far as « loyalties » are concerned to the graduate in Industrial Relations who is now engaged in a permanent career in the field of Public Relations? If one must, at all costs, find a common denominator for the members of the Society, it must be defined on the basis of *competence* and the pooling of the diversified, often diverging experience rather than by « peace at any cost » and « cooperation »; the first two will derive naturally from the last two. The S.I.R.C. must group its members around the notion of quality and calibre and not around moral oburgations based on « harmony » and « justice ».

- 5.—If, finally, the S.I.R.C. wanted to press on too quickly and make its presence felt from a juridical point of view by far too reaching regulations, it would quickly find in its path related and competing professions, threatened on their own private grounds; it would also meet the opposition of a good number of its own members, in view of the conflict of loyalties described above.

As a matter of fact, no occupation is recognized as a profession without a struggle any more than a specialization can develop itself, within a profession or a scientific field, without frictions. For the professional man identifies himself so closely with his occupation as a bread-winner and source of social prestige that he will defend or stand up for it passionately against all « squatters » (these being invariably « charlatans ») who will pretend that they can regulate much better than he can cases which up to now were strictly within his own field.

On the other hand, no profession has ever been ousted by another following a series of practical tests showing that its pretensions to technical efficiency were vain and without foundations. An art is not evaluated easily in the lab and by test tubes. One will prefer global theoretical condemnation, without any specific proof.

Finally, professionalization is above all a gradual institutionalization of the various relations between the profession and the other elements of society. Accordingly, the clientèle, the institutions or the society will grant autonomy to the profession inasmuch as its members are capable and desirous of self-

discipline; these elements of society will concede remuneration and high prestige to the professional inasmuch as his competence justifies them; and they will not give any exclusivity to the practice of the profession unless this profession has shown that it is *sole* master of its specific art.

Conclusion

We have underlined, at the beginning of this paper, the sociological importance of the profession which we defined summarily and which we situated in its historical context. After describing the motives and the stages of professionalization, an eminently dynamic process, it became possible to circumscribe the criteria or distinctive features of the traditional profession. All these criteria were then reexamined within the framework of the large « bureaucratic » organization with its salaried personnel, whose distinctive characteristics are all as compelling as those of the traditional profession. An acceptable compromise for the salaried professional must result from this opposition, particularly for the enterprise itself which will generally have the last word. Finally, we have examined with special attention the precise problem of the Industrial Relations Counselors.

These have rapidly passed the many milestones of the road to professionalization : if one place oneself in a large historical perspective, the majority of them work full time and are members of an association which already possesses its organic law; and the majority also enjoy more or less specific university education. Each member, in his own way, is more or less specialized. Each of them renders a service, but the great majority render it in a « bureaucratic » context where the characteristics of the traditional professional service cannot adapt themselves very easily. This being the case, it cannot be said that they are autonomous, professionally speaking at least; besides, the professional is really not very autonomous in the presence of clients and society who are watching him even more closely. The S.I.R.C. will no doubt possess in the near future its code of professional ethics. Finally, this humble attempt at self criticism may be considered as a first contribution to a « specialized literature ».

It then is not because most of the members of the S.I.R.C. are working in the bureaucratic context of the large organization that they are not already in possession of nearly all the criteria of the profession, even in its traditional aspects. *The Industrial Relations Counselors are therefore full-fledged professionals*, even if they are young, even if they are looking for a firmer and clearer manifestation of a soul of their own,

even if they are searching for their own entity because, from many points of view, they resemble each other very little, even if their professional structures are still somewhat vague, even if they share other loyalties which are perfectly understandable and valuable, and even if their normal growth will inevitably irritate the susceptibilities of this or that competing profession or of some of their own members.

The Industrial Relations Counselors must from now on define themselves from the « bureaucratic » model, because it is the large modern organizations which hold the instruments of production and engage the professionals who, as all human beings, must earn their living. This process is irreversible; one must therefore start from the « bureaucracy » if one wishes to fill and evaluate the new type of professional known as the Industrial Relations Counselor; thus it is only within the « bureaucracy » and by respecting its inevitable imperatives that we will be able to build this new but authentic profession. So, in the ever far-reaching forms of the active collective life of the modern « bureaucracies », there is a necessity to save the truly human values : the professional values are of this kind!

Appendix I

The profession, the position, the job

Where lies the hospital administrator? Although most administrators believe they form a profession, or aspire to professional status, this analysis by a professor of sociology suggests the administrator fills a « position ».

In the modern state, the individual must increasingly earn his (or her) living by providing service to large scale organizations — industrial, governmental and institutional.

Such a scheme, or work model, is described * by Dr. Oswald Hall, professor of sociology, University of Toronto, as having three main levels of activity. Disregarding the entrepreneur, they are: the profession, the position and the job.

The self-image of each of these broad classifications of occupations is dramatically different, one from the other. The form of remuneration, the assignment of duties and responsibilities, training required, the individual's relation to the organization, how the individuals and organization orientate themselves toward outside groups, conception of the working self, the social position enjoyed by the occupation — all contribute to this image.

* From a luncheon address by Dr. Hall, to the Ontario Hospital Association convention.

A simple table comparing the three occupation levels as they are reflected in these various attributes and attitudes suggests itself:

	The job	The position	The profession
Form of Remuneration	By wage, roughly on quid pro quo basis.	Salary	Fee. Recipient has little voice in the amount. Profession sets.
Assignment	Duties clearly defined. Job simplified, precisely described.	Employee expected to fill in, to have a sense of the needs of the organization.	Colleagues establish standards of work. Profession rooted in the traditional, the historic. Clear canons of behaviour.
Training	Casual, informal, brief. Need only get the « knack ».	Training received within the organization — diffuse process. « Learn the ropes ». Individual can transfer to only limited degree.	Special instruction. Long period of training. Intellectual discipline.
Relation to organization	Contract can be terminated.	No contract, no job security.	The profession strives to maintain its autonomous aspect. For the professional as staff member in an organization, no alternative occupation.
Relation to others in organization	Individual pays deference to authority, but does not enjoy it in return.	Individual involved in a chain of positions. Deference paid and received, but not demanded.	Individuals not sensitive to organization requirements. Colleagues are brothers.
Image of self	Reflected in the « team ».	Limited to a small part of the organization.	Relates to the past. Heroes, saints, great men. The prestige of succession.
Social identification	Individual identifies with the organization — wishes merely to « get by ».	Incumbent believes he, and those like him, are essential to the survival of the organization.	Around the professions is society built. « The majesty of the law ».

* Reprinted from *Hospital Administration and Construction*, 1961, with the kind permission of the publisher. This magazine is now known as *Hospital Administration in Canada*. (Southern Maclean Publications Ltd., 1450 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, Ontario.)