

George H. HAMPTON

Directorate Member for Administration



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Like his predecessor S. A. ff. Dakin*, CERN's new Directorate Member for Administration was trained as a scientist. George Hampton, who took up his duties with the organization at the beginning of September, was born in 1920 in Manchester, England, and studied at the King's School, Macclesfield and Balliol College, Oxford University. As a senior boy at school — one of England's earliest 'Grammar Schools', founded during the sixteenth century — he had his earliest taste of 'administrative' responsibility. At Oxford, in a College whose history goes back 700 years, he studied chemistry and obtained his degree in 1940.

Then, like many others of his age he joined the Royal Air Force, as a communications engineer, and during the war served in England and various countries in the Mediterranean area. In Yugoslavia he was introduced to international co-operation of the kind found at CERN, when he served in the so-called Balkan Air Force, in a mixed wing that included Greek, Yugoslav and Russian, as well as British units.

In 1946 he returned to England and was then faced with the decision either to continue in aviation or to return to chemistry. He chose the former, and joined the Ministry of Civil Aviation as a communications engineer. This soon took him back to Cairo, and he spent the following two years flying between there and Singapore, acting as a technical adviser in the drive to establish radio facilities for the rapidly developing Civil Aviation Service.

After some years back in London he transferred, in 1954, from the technical to the administrative side of the Ministry, which by then had become the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Because of a principle that administrators should not be drawn from the ranks of

the corresponding technical staff, he had to leave aviation and deal instead with road transport. His main concern was with international problems, and it was then that he came to know Geneva, visiting the city some four times a year for meetings which were drafting a convention for unified contracts of carriage and a standard code of international road-transport regulations.

He was actually on holiday in Switzerland when he was offered the chance of joining the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. This was in 1956, the year in which the first nuclear power station at Calder Hall started operating. The Authority was expanding rapidly at this time, and when he arrived at Risley as a member of the headquarters staff of the Industrial Group, Mr. Hampton had an ideal chance to investigate in some detail and gain a better understanding of numerous administrative problems that came to light during the building up of the organization. As one example, he made a special study of the rate of growth of the Dounreay establishment in the far North of Scotland. As another, he investigated the administrative and legal aspects of water supplies — and discovered that if the Authority bought a lake they might own the water that fell into it as rain but certainly not the rest!

This experience stood him in good stead when the accident to the Windscale plutonium-producing reactor posed numerous problems of administration and of public confidence, which had to be solved rapidly. Some time after this he became Secretary of the Authority's factory at Capenhurst, where the fissile isotope of uranium, uranium-235, was being extracted from natural uranium by the gaseous diffusion process. He was there for two years and then returned to the headquarters at Risley, as Deputy Personnel Director. It is from there that he has come to CERN, where, he

says, he had often thought he would like to work.

The Directorate, which he has now joined, consists of three full-time members, in addition to the Director-general, and one part-time. Prof. G. Puppi is the member for Research, M. G. N. Hine is the member for Applied Physics, and P. Germain part-time member for Technical Management (in addition to his duties as head of the Proton Synchrotron Machine Division).

As member for Administration, Mr. Hampton is responsible for all matters affecting budgets, personnel, contracts and general administration of the organization, and for its external relations. His varied experience has given him strong views on the subject of administrative responsibility and he belongs to those who recognize the danger that people in administrative jobs can come to look on administration as an end in itself. This danger has always been less of a problem in CERN than in many other organizations because the building and operating of a new piece of equipment, the planning and successful execution of another experiment, give a continuing sense of purpose to everyone concerned. Even so it remains essential for administrative staff to be conscious of the fact that even if the teams at the accelerators cannot manage without them, they owe their very existence to those teams.

In Mr. Hampton's view, every member of an organization should be aware of the part he plays in the whole, without forgetting that he remains just a part. He quotes the story of the scientist-turned-administrator who was told by his friends that in future he should look in the mirror every morning when he shaved and say to himself: 'I am evil — but am I a necessary evil?'. George Hampton knows that his job is necessary, and is determined to minimize its evil nature to the best of his ability! ●

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